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The Maine Commission for Women

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Inform

Published by The Maine Commission for Women

IN AND AROUND MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN:

There have been a number of new Commissioners appointed and interns working since you last heard from us. Starting with our next issue, we will profile Commissioners and what they do, but in the meantime, a hearty welcome to the following newcomers.

Joanne D'Arcangelo—Executive Director, Maine State Democratic Party-Portland

Patti Burgoin—American Word Processing Consulting Services-Augusta

Gena Canning—Sales Representative for Pine Tree Tobacco and Candy-Augusta

Gwen Gatcomb—Carlton Mills, Vice President AFL-CIO-Winthrop

Mary Cathcart—Director of Spruce Run Shelter for Women-Bangor

Also Wendy Kindred (Ft. Kent) has just been elected to serve on the statewide board of the Maine Civil Liberties Union. Congratulations.

The Commission is fortunate in that we have attracted some very fine interns and work-study students who help the Commission tremendously.

Cyndie Lamoreau (Bowdoinham) served as an intern from the University of Southern Maine this spring. She is a junior majoring in Political Science with a concentration in Women's Studies. She is a volunteer counselor with the Portland Rape Crisis Center. While with us, Cyndie did a great deal of legislative work and research during the session that was invaluable to our success.

Sally Rose lives in Union. Sally comes to us as a work-study student from the University of Southern Maine. She is a junior majoring in Women's Studies with a minor in

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been a long time since you have heard from us. With the busy legislative session, our two-person office could not produce *Inform*. We are now back on track and you will be receiving *Inform* regularly.

The summer is a very exciting time at the Maine Commission for Women. Although it is usually a time for vacation and relaxing it is the time here when we can get started on all non-legislative projects that were forced to the back burner during the legislative session.

Before I outline the projects in which we are involved, let me introduce myself to those of you who don't know or haven't met me. I am Betsy Sweet and am pleased to have been the Executive Director of the Maine Commission for Women since October 1. (I replaced Jeanne Bailey McGowan who now serves as the Executive Director of the Family Planning Association in Augusta). Formerly I was the Executive Director and lobbyist for the Maine Women's Lobby and a national Program Director for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I am very excited about the Commission's work and have enjoyed working with you so far and look forward to working with all of you whom I've not met.

What follows is a brief section of some of the projects in which the Commission is involved. If you are in any way interested in one or more of these projects and would like to get involved, please call or write us.

Fall Public Hearings: This fall the Commission will hold a series of public hearings around the state to inform people of what MCW is doing, and more importantly, to gather testimony and information from Maine citizens on what they believe are the

most vital issues women face. We held one very successful 'pilot' hearing in Portland and are excited about the rest of the hearings. The information gathered from the hearings will be compiled and used as a basis for forming the MCW's 1986-87 agenda. Please join us and tell us your views. The schedule is as follows:

- Presque Isle—September 23
- Rockland—October 1
- Farmington—October 8
- Bangor—October 29

If you cannot attend one of these meetings, please feel free to submit your comments in writing.

New England Association of Commissioners for Women Meeting: The annual NEACW meeting will be hosted by MCW this year, October 25 and 26 in Portland. Final plans have not been set, but the theme is Women and Economic Power. Tentatively the schedule will include a series of issue workshops on Friday followed by the development of the New England Action Strategy and a reception and a keynote speaker Friday night. All of Friday's events will be open to the public. Please mark your calendars now.

Economic Development: The MCW has as one of its top priorities economic development and power for women. We have taken on a wide variety of approaches to this area and are currently looking at the

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TALKING WITH ME.

Interview and article by Sally Rose

With this issue, *INFORM* begins the regular column "Talking with ME." We will highlight women in Maine: famous—infamous, extraordinary—ordinary, well known and "not-so-well" known, so that we can all know the people and personalities who are working so hard for equality.

If you have suggestions for featured people or would like to do an interview and write the article, PLEASE let us know!

Judy Guay is a woman of self-determination, focused energy, and a sense of empathy for the poor and disadvantaged. In her position as outreach worker for the WEET, Welfare, Employment, Education Training program in Bangor, she uses these skills to instill a sense of strength and positiveness in the welfare recipients she counsels.

When asked to talk about her philosophy on women who make the transition from low income or poverty to financial comfort, two phrases kept surfacing—get involved, and support network.

Judy's main task at the WEET program is to encourage welfare recipients to find jobs or begin a training program. In a soft spoken, polite but firm voice her first sug-

gestion to a client is to build herself a support network. Judy feels when a woman is fearful and unsure, a support group can provide the impetus to make that first important decision to change your life. Just recognizing the fear of the unknown as a universal one is the first step forward for many. This support group can be family, neighbors, or one of the many organizations formed for welfare recipients such as Displaced Homemakers or a group from the WEET program itself. Judy puts it simply, "People who don't have a support network, don't succeed."

Once the client has built the support around her, Judy's next and perhaps strongest suggestion is "to get involved somehow in your life, in your neighborhood, your child's classroom, a community club." Getting active in and excited about your life seems to be the key that brings a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence that will be carried on into the job market.

In her words, "You can do almost anything for one day—you don't have to plan out the whole year." She encourages her clients to take one step at a time, set goals by having one large goal, and then using plateaus or steps to reach that goal.

The fight to climb financially upwards is not an easy one for women. Judy speaks of this difficulty: "It's hard for women today. Society is really set up for them not to succeed. The combination—being on AFDC; being a single parent; no education; no incentive to be free of help money; and the realization of once you get a job, chances are you will get paid less than a man for the same work. You have to almost be made of steel to succeed. But it can be done."

And no one knows this better than Judy Guay herself. She is married, 43, has a high school diploma, and is the mother of 5 children. Judy was brought up in a foster home and graduated from Old Town High School. She married, and with five preschoolers, she and her husband decided to move to Bangor in the hopes of finding subsidized housing they could afford for their large family. After four years on a waiting list, their move to Bangor paid off and Judy soon after launched herself in a chain of community action programs.

When her oldest child started school, Judy went into the school volunteering so she could "remain involved in her children's lives." This community volunteering has blossomed and turned into a life of advocating economic justice and equal opportunity for the disadvantaged. After several years of volunteering, she founded the Parent Teacher Organization and presided over it for six years. During those six years, Judy became increasingly more aware of the school system's problems. As President of the PTO, she began taking the organization's questions and suggestions to the School Committee. In front of this Committee she found her own voice and realized her capabilities. The thought began to hound her, "Can I be one of them—Can I be a School Committee member?" As she heard her ideas being accepted and watched her own effectiveness with this School Committee, she gained the self-confidence to run for election. Now, four years later, Judy is considering running for her third term on the Bangor School Committee where she serves on the Region 4 Vocational Education Board as well as the Region 4 Special Education Board. In her words, "The School Committee was a breakthrough because I was a female. There had been only one or two other females elected to any of the Bangor city committees. I was also the first low-income elected official."

Judy also served for 20 months as a Vista worker where she helped organize Community of Pride, a tenants organization in the Bangor area. She is vice-chairwoman of the Board of Pine Tree Legal; president of the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, a statewide coalition of low-income organizations. Judy has been an active Sunday

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Communication. This summer, working four days a week, Sally plans to put as much energy as possible into a public information project and also a MCW referral service for women and children in the state. In the fall she will be spending two days a week in the office.

Stacey Kabot is a senior Economics major at Bates College, who just returned from London where she was interning for the Amnesty International. In London, Stacey became very aware of how important legislation was to protect and provide women's equality and looked up the Commission as soon as she returned. She is now on independent study and working on the public information project.

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relationship between economic development and employment/training/welfare programs and how that relationship can be improved. This inquiry includes working with a group from Coastal Enterprises, Inc. on developing a strategy of cooperation with the Displaced Homemakers around entrepreneurship for women and doing research as to "what works"—looking around the country for successful women's economic development models that can be adapted to Maine. Women's number one problem is economic inequality and we are determined to redress that inequity.

Publications: We are pleased with the success of our updated "Job Search Guide" a guide for people seeking employment. By mid August, our Non-Traditional Occupation brochure and our Maine Commission for Women information brochure will be available for distribution. We are just beginning to develop a brochure for pregnant teens—guiding them to people/agencies who can help and encouraging them to seek emotional support from parents, family, friends, and clergy.

... And the list goes on. We continue to answer lots of phone calls on a daily basis from women and men who want information, need statistics, need help, a referral, you name it. We also continue to serve on the Advisory Council for AFDC, Displaced Homemakers Advisory Council, the Rape Coalition and of course have already begun work with the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition in preparation for next year's legislative session.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Inform*—so much is happening. I look forward to seeing you all at our public hearings this fall.

TITLES

My grandmother was a lady.

My mother was "one of the girls."

I am a woman

My daughter is a doctor.

Natasia Josefowitz

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK REPORT

“Real Women” Essay Contest

In January, the Maine Commission for Women sponsored an essay contest for Maine students, grades K-12. The topic was “Real Women.” The purpose was to raise the awareness of teachers and students about the wealth of women's history that has been left out of standard texts used in public schools today.

One goal of the contest was to have students focus directly on women in history, to dig out some of the information which has been relegated to the back shelves. The impression has been given that throughout history women stayed home, nursed babies, and dipped candles. If one were to take the average high school history book seriously, you might be lead to believe the world was settled and developed single-handedly by white men. History books pay token attention to a few women. Most have heard about Rosa Parks, Jane Addams, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Everyone knows of the midnight ride of Paul Revere. However, few people know that a 16 year old girl accomplished virtually the same feat in 1777 in Fredericksburg, New York, to summon militia reinforcement for Connecticut troops (Sybil Ludington). A woman, Caroline Green was instrumental and vital to the development of the cotton gin. As women couldn't file a patent in those days, it was Ely Whitney who filed the patent and history has ever since given sole credit to Whitney for the invention.

A 17 year old woman, Vinnie Ream, sculpted the statute of Abraham Lincoln that today is in the Capital Rotunda. We've all heard about Harriet Tubman, who in 1845 escaped from slavery and returned repeatedly to the south to rescue other slaves. However, relatively little is heard about Elizabeth Blackwell, who, that same year (1845) graduated as the first licensed female doctor in the U.S. (after being rejected by 29 medical schools) and then went on to establish the first women's medical college in this country.

The Maine Commission for Women was very pleased with the results of the contest. Over 200 essays were received from students of all ages, from Kittery to Fort Kent.

It was not only the students who benefited from this contest, however. The judges and staff were enlightened about previously unknown facts and feats, both serious and not-so-serious. For example, it was new information to the staff that there is a famous opera singer from Farmington; that Harriet Tubman had a “dent in her head;” and that Jackie Kennedy Onassis was “paid a lot of money to stay married to President Kennedy.”

On March 25th, finalists, winners, parents, school superintendents, teachers and legislators were invited to join Maine Commission for Women members at a Blaine House reception for the top essayists. Governor Brennan gave out awards to the students in a ceremony held in his office later that same morning.

The winner of each category was awarded a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of the Maine Congressional Delegation.

The Maine Commission for Women wants to extend its heartfelt thanks to the members of the panel of judges for their time and patience in reading and rating the essays, all of which were winners in their own right.

The 1985 judges were:

Robert Boose, Commissioner
Department of Educational and Cultural Service
Senator Larry Brown
Senate Chair of the Education Committee
Elaine Kruse
Women in the Curriculum Program
University of Maine
Dorothy Healey
Curator of Women Writers Collection
Westbrook College
Jane Riley, Title IX Coordinator
Department of Education
Gloria Skinner
President's Office
University of Maine-Augusta
Joanne Clarey
Women's Studies Director
Commissioner, MCW
Stephanie Irvine
University of Maine at Orono
Commissioner, MCW

The 1985 “Real Women Essay Contest” Winners and Finalists Are:

ELEMENTARY

1st Place Winner:

Allison Hewett, Pownal, Maine
School: Pownal Elementary
Woman Featured: *Joan Benoit*—Maine woman, first to win in the Women's Olympic Marathon in LA last summer

1st Honorable Mention:

Lisa Boudreau, Wells, Maine
School: Ogunquit Village School
Woman Featured: *Mother Teresa*—75 year old woman who in 1979 won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor and hungry in India

2nd Honorable Mention:

Ricky Brochu, Brewer, Maine
School: State Street School
Woman Featured: *Margaret Chase Smith*

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

1st Place Winner:

Elizabeth Luetje, Portland, Maine
School: King Middle School
Woman Featured: *Prudence Crandall*—In 1833, she admitted a black girl to an elite all white school, which she ran, in Connecticut. Crandall was severely criticized, stood trial, had her school closed, yet still managed to overcome all, and succeeded in having the student enrolled and attend school.

1st Honorable Mention:

Heather Lee, Wayne, Maine
School: Maranacook Community School
Woman Featured: *Laura Lee*—(Maine woman) great great aunt of the student. Was an artist, designer of women's clothing and an ardent worker in the women's suffrage movement.

2nd Honorable Mention:

Tammy Snowdeal, Rockland, Maine
School: Rockland District Junior High
Woman Featured: *Thelma Marr*—(Maine woman) grandmother of the student. Founder of Toys for Tots in Maine

HIGH SCHOOL

1st Place Winner:

Katherine Raymond, Augusta, Maine
School: Cony High
Woman Featured: *Frances Perkins*—Was Secretary of Labor under FD Roosevelt. Was the first woman ever to be appointed to a presidential post.

1st Honorable Mention:

Sharon Duchesneau, Bangor, Maine
School: Bangor High School
Woman Featured: *Margaret Chase Smith*—First woman to serve in both the House and the Senate.

2nd Honorable Mention:

Rebecca Zorach, Brunswick, Maine
School: Waynflete
Woman Featured: *Harriet Tubman*—Abolitionist, head of the underground railroad, union spy, guide and liaison between the black and white soldiers.

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Essay Contest Winner—Elizabeth Luetje accepts award from Governor Brennan

112TH LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

The Maine Commission for Women was very active in the state legislative process during the first session of the 112th legislature. On the heels of the ERA defeat in November, we felt it was more critical than ever to utilize the legislative process to move the State of Maine toward the goal we believe all Mainers share: full social, political and economic equality for all of Maine's citizens.

With that goal in mind the Maine Commission for Women joined with the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition (WLAC), a coalition of twenty-one organizations in its second year, to introduce an "Agenda for Equality." We held a press conference at the beginning of the session to announce our ambitious agenda: ten pieces of legislation designed to provide "equality in economic matters, equality in the workplace and equality and safety in the home."

Eizabeth Crandall, Representative to the Coalition from American Association of University Women and the Maine Home Economics Association, reminded people of the absolute necessity of these measures in their press statement:

"Throughout the past year, one thing was clear—the people of Maine want equality. We have not achieved equality in this state:

When AFDC families in Maine currently receive only 75% of the poverty line established in 1975—a decade ago.

When child care and support services are not adequate for the needs of women in the labor force, for those returning to school, or for those in job-training programs; and

When equitable pay for women is considered to be "the looniest idea since loony tunes came on the screen."

"There is not equality in this state:

When harrassment and discrimination on the job remain commonplace, but women do not know their rights or are afraid to file complaints because of adverse publicity; and

There is not equality in this state:

When older women are barred from apprenticeship programs because of arbitrary age limits; and

There is not equality in this state:

When rape laws are so antiquated that a man can rape his wife without legal consequences;

When battered women and children in our rural areas have no place to go;

When our communities' response to all domestic violence and abuse is totally inadequate.

The legislation which makes up our agenda includes specific, concrete and

practical steps toward eliminating these inequalities. In addition, we will vigorously oppose any attempts to erode a woman's "right to choose" or attempts to take away rights or programs that women currently have.

This is an ambitious agenda, but the Coalition is larger and stronger than last year and more committed than ever to see that these specific pieces of legislation become law. The people of Maine want equality, and we are confident that the 112th legislature will enact these legislative recommendations and move us further toward that goal.

Apparently the legislature and the people did hear our message and *do* want equality. Of the WLAC legislation and additional legislation the Commission worked on this session, we can count eleven wins, five partial wins and five losses. 15-5 is a record we are proud of, particularly at a time when political analysts told us the "tides were against our issues." What follows is a brief summary of and commentary on legislation that the Commission was involved in this session. (WLAC bills are starred, MCW commentary in italics)

VICTORIES:

LD 69

An Act to Remove the Small Business Exemption in Pregnancy/Disability Insurance.

This bill removes the exemption in business of 15 employees and under from providing disability insurance on pregnant women if (and only if) they provide this type of disability insurance for other purposes.

LD 235

An act to Designate the Third Week in October as Maine Business Women's Week.

This was a bill sponsored by Maine Business and Professional Women. In conjunction with them, the Maine Commission for Women will help to celebrate and provide resources for that week.

LD 607

An Act to Amend the Statute of Limitations in Cases Involving Incest. This Bill Extends the Statute of Limitations in Incest Cases to Six Years from the Time of Majority.

This is a very important law which not only recognizes the trauma of incest, but the denial mechanism which operates for so many victims. By extending the statute of limitations more victims will be able to talk about and prosecute perpetrators of incest.

★ LD 660

An Act to Establish a Living Will. This bill allows people to write a "living will" which states their desires to not be kept alive on artificial life support systems.

Originally this bill had a pregnancy exemption clause that would take the right to have a living will from a pregnant woman. The Maine Commission successfully argued that such a decision should be left to a woman, her family, and her doctor and the clause was deleted.

★ LD 710

An Act to Increase AFDC Benefits. A 5% increase for one year was passed.

The original bill requested a 10% increase in both years in an attempt to raise the level of payment above a 72.5% of a 1975 standard of need. Since we were told nothing would be granted because of lack of funds, we were pleased with a 5% increase as a start.

★ LD 772

An Act to Amend the Statutes on Sex Offenses. This Bill Removes the Spousal Exemption in our Rape Statutes.

The Maine Commission for Women was heavily involved in this bill, drafting it, formulating a strategy and getting it enacted.

★ LD 780

An Act to Fund Children's Programs of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services. Money was moved into the Part II budget to provide services for children of abused and battered women. \$247,043.00 given over two years.

Currently the children who arrive at battered women's shelters fall through the cracks, with no one available to help these kids who are often witnesses or victims of abuse themselves. These funds will provide staff specifically for the children at the shelters.

LD 784

An Act to Provide Adequate Assistance for Victims of Rape and Incest. The bill requires Department of Human Services to provide a listing of physicians who will provide medical services free of charge to victims of rape and incest.

Originally, this bill would have provided medical aid funds for victims of rape and incest who wished to terminate their pregnancy.

★ LD 1315

An Act to Fund Community Response Programs to Reduce Spouse Abuse in Maine Communities. This bill provides \$175,000 to develop pilot community response projects.

This money was requested to train community officials, health care workers, police, etc. on how to deal with the problem of domestic abuse. The pilot projects will be based on a similar and very successful program in Minnesota.

★ LD 1390

An Act to Establish an Office of Child Care in Maine. Two positions granted to Department of Human Services to establish an Office of Child Care.

This bill originally called for three positions in the office and three additional licensing workers. The bill was a result of the recommendations in the Department of Human Services/Department of Educational and Cultural Services report "Child Care in Maine: An Emerging Crisis." The Maine Commission for Women was heavily involved in both the report and the legislation. We are very disappointed with the failure of DHS/DECS to include recommendations of the report in their own legislative packages. There is much work to be done with legislators to make them realize the economic necessity of child care.

★ LD 1559

(Redraft of LD 1202). An Act Relating to Collective Bargaining over the Compensation System for State Employees.

In essence this bill allows for the negotiability of the comparable worth study now underway in Maine. Results are expected this fall.

STATE BUDGET PART II

★ **Displaced Homemakers Project:**

\$90,000 requested over two years to upgrade staff and expand Displaced Homemakers Project to rural areas. The legislature added more funds to establish an Aroostook County project.

★ **Welfare, Education, Employment Training (WEET) Program:** Received \$200,000 to provide support services (child care, transportation, etc.) to AFDC clients who are training for work.

★ **Maine Commission for Women:** Received \$36,000 to upgrade current clerical staff to program staff and add a clerical position.

LEGISLATION SUCCESSFULLY DEFEATED

★ LD 134

An Act Requiring Presence of Second Physician when Abortions are Performed after Viability—Withdrawn

★ LD 387

An Act Relating to Parental and/or Court Consent Prior to Performing an Abortion on a Minor—dies in non-concurrence.

This bill was defeated as the House and Senate agreed to different versions of the bill. Already 75% of those minors seeking abortions have talked with their families. While everyone agrees that good family communication and support for these young women is critical we did not believe that good family relations can be mandated by law. The Maine Commission for Women is currently working on a brochure for pregnant teens as to where they can turn for help beginning with, of course, their parents.

LD 804

An Act to Establish a Maine Commission for Men.—Withdrawn

This bill was introduced by men and women particularly concerned with the inequity in custody laws. While the Maine Commission for Women agrees that there are inequities that must be addressed, we did not feel the establishment of a Commission for Men was the proper vehicle.

LOSSES:

Bills Defeated—

★ LD 72

An Act to Remove the Age Limitations for Apprenticeship Program in the Maine Human Rights Act.

This bill would have removed arbitrary age limits from apprenticeship programs. These age limits—often set with no particular reason—have the effect of keeping older women who must return to work out of the higher paying trades.

★ LD 1001

An Act to Fund New, Expanded, Innovative Child Care Programs in the State—Withdrawn

See comment for 1390. The establishment of adequate day care in Maine is, and will remain, a top priority for the Maine Commission for Women.

★ LD 711

An Act to Allow a One Time Energy and Clothing Allowance for AFDC Recipients—Withdrawn

LD 1015

An Act to Extend Medical Assistance to Families moving from AFDC to Employment—Withdrawn

LD 1247

An Act to Include the Term "Sexual Orientation" to the Maine Human Rights Act—Defeated

Already, the work must begin for the second half of the 112th session. The MCW will continue to work with WLAC to provide information and to see that equality in Maine becomes a reality. If you have questions or ideas, please call us at 289-3417.

TALK WITH ME.

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School teacher, as well as the recipient of a twenty-year pin for working with the Girl Scouts of America.

Guay has been very active in the legislative process, lobbying for the policies she believes in. Her greatest victory was successfully lobbying two years ago for a landlord-tenants law to prevent discrimination in renting to families with children.

She presently sits on the Haymarket Funding Board of Boston, a group that funds community organizations.

Judy adds that her interest in poor people stems, at least in part from the fact that she has been a low-income person and feels she has a natural trait for dealing with people. "I had all the fears that everyone else has, fear of the unknown. I learned these things through trial and error." And she quickly adds, "You haven't lost anything by trying. To make my life better, I had to become part of it. The past has made me the person I am. I love what I am doing and I feel good about it."



The Governor signs LD 69 "An Act to Remove the Small Business Exemption Regarding Medical Benefits Because of Pregnancy Under the Maine Human Rights Act." Present at the signing (from left to right) Rep. Carol Allen (D. Washington), Betsy Sweet (Executive Director, MCW), Rep. Charlene Rydell (D. Brunswick), Ken Baily (lobbyist, Maine Women's Lobby), Governor Joseph Brennan, Pat Ryan (Executive Director, Maine Human Rights Commission), and Charles Priest (D. Brunswick).

MARITAL RAPE: SOON TO BE A CRIME IN MAINE

Right now, in Maine, a person is acting within the law (MRSA Title 17-A, Section 252) if he compels his wife to have intercourse with him by "use of physical force, a threat of physical force or a combination thereof which makes a person unable to physically repel the actor or which produces in that person a reasonable fear that death, serious bodily injury or kidnapping might be imminently inflicted upon that person or upon another human being."

In September of this year, as a result of legislation supported by MCW, men who rape their wives or live-in girlfriends, will no longer be protected from prosecution for rape.

The Maine Coalition on Rape submitted a bill in December, an Act to Amend the Sexual Assault Statutes, sponsored by Senators Nancy Clark and Charlotte Sewall, Representatives Patricia Stevens and Ed Kane.

The Rape Coalition consists of the 8 rape crisis centers around the state, several family planning centers, the sex offender project at the Maine State Prison, the Maine Commission for Women, Franklin County Sheriff's Department, mental health professionals and individuals.

Each of the rape crisis centers provide 24 hour crisis intervention and counselling for victims of rape. In fiscal year '84, the centers provided 59,066 hours of emergency service. At minimum wage, that translates into a quarter of a million dollars of services provided free of cost to victims of sexual assault. In July of '83, the rape crisis centers began keeping formal and uniform statistics. From July of '83 to February of '85 the centers reported a total of 1,153 rape victims. The Uniform Crime Reporting Division of the Department of Public Safety indicated a total of only 919 rapes were reported to the police over the past six years.

The people rape counselors see are:

- victims of 'stranger rape,' a person whom they've never seen before that has jumped out from the bushes;
- victims of incestuous rape; unable to defend themselves from a determined relative;
- victims of 'date rape' or 'acquaintance rape,' women who were unable to convince or fend off a person with whom they had hoped to spend a pleasant evening;
- and they are victims of marital rape. Women who have been forced by use of weapons, threats against their lives or the lives of their children, or through brutal beatings to engage in sexual acts with their husbands against their will.

Forty-nine states have removed this spousal protection from their laws in one form or another. In twenty-seven states, marital rape can be prosecuted even if the couple are living together (as in Maine's

new law). In twenty-two states the couple must be living apart or have filed for divorce before a charge of rape can be prosecuted.

IF YOU NEED HELP

If you are a woman who is or has been a victim of sexual assault by your husband or live-in partner and want to talk with a specially trained counselor, call one of the 24-hour hotlines listed below. ALL CONTACT IS CONFIDENTIAL* AND ALL SERVICES ARE FREE.

PORTLAND

Rape Crisis Center, Inc.

HOTLINE: 774-3613

BANGOR:

Rape Crisis Center

HOTLINE: 942-7442

NORWAY/SOUTH PARIS:

Rape Counseling Project, Inc.

HOTLINE: 743-9777

BATH/BRUNSWICK:

Rape Crisis Helpline, Inc.

HOTLINE: 725-2181

LEWISTON/AUBURN:

Sexual Assault Crisis Center

HOTLINE: 795-2211

WATERVILLE:

Rape Crisis Assistance, Inc.

HOTLINE: 873-0270

FARMINGTON:

Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services

HOTLINE: 778-9767

PRESQUE ISLE:

Sexual Assault Helpline

HOTLINE: 1-800-432-7805

*Rape Crisis Counselors must report to Department of Human Services incestuous assaults that involve a minor child.

MARITAL RAPE: FACT OR FICTION

1. Fiction: "MARITAL RAPE ISN'T AS SERIOUS AS RAPE BY A STRANGER"

Fact: Marital rape is just as violent, just as degrading, and more traumatic than rape by a stranger. It is perpetrated with knives, at gunpoint, repeatedly, brutally, in front of others, and often is the final violent act culminating a series of physical abuses.

2. Fiction: "MARITAL RAPE ISN'T OFFENSIVE—AFTER ALL, A WIFE HAS HAD SEX WITH HER HUSBAND BEFORE."

Fact: A woman raped by a stranger has to live with the memory of that experience. A woman raped by her husband has to live with her rapist. Many wife victims, trapped in a reign of terror, experience repeated sexual assaults over a number of years.

3. Fiction: "MARITAL RAPE IS A BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL ACT AND DOESN'T NEED LEGISLATIVE ACTION."

Fact: Most experts consider rape to be the most under-reported of all crimes and marital rape even more so. Over a third of women who appear at battered women's shelters report being sexually assaulted by their husbands.

4. Fiction: "WHEN A WOMAN MARRIES, SHE CONSENTS TO SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH HER HUSBAND."

Fact: Sexual expression in love is one thing. No one consents to violence by marrying.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK ESSAY COMPETITION 1985 Quotable Quotes

—in the eighteenth century women had many hardships. They couldn't vote and they couldn't get many jobs. In 1920, a wave came over women as the century went on women got tired of staying home. (elementary student)

—when I was a little boy... my mother said that I would probably have a better chance at being famous than my Aunt Becca (the artist) because I am a male. I wondered, to myself, what that had to do with it. I asked my mother. She told me about male chauvinism. I thought to myself how unfair it was, how women could never get a shot at a good life. (elementary student)

—One family has a husband who is the kind of man who likes to keep his wife barefoot and pregnant (if you will excuse the expression). (elementary student)

—I'm glad I have the right to be what I want to be, due to the women that have fought because they wanted their rights to be equal for better pay, better jobs and equal opportunity. (junior high student)

—Women are the most important thing on this earth. They've helped it in so many ways that I would take up so much room just naming them. (junior high student)

—women have the most responsibility in the world today. They have to watch their children and their career too. (junior high student)

—my mother possesses many leadership qualities which I admire, besides being the co-coordinator of our home... (junior high student)

—I live in a family with four males and two females. There is a somewhat large amount of discrimination in my family, especially between my brother and me. He never thinks I'm strong enough to lug wood or things like that... It's the same with my father who teases me because he doesn't think I'm strong enough to do certain things. In a way that is a type of discrimination... they don't give me a chance to prove myself. (junior high student)

—Some of the countries most famous and important females in our history are more important than the males, such as our first ladies. They are the ones who kept our Presidents in line. (junior high student)

—"General" Tubman commanded their respect. It is in some ways a failure of society that the greatest compliment paid to her was to refer to her as a man... Perhaps it is because of this that she even appears in history books at all, her life generally condensed to one sentence. Other women of similar spirit are not granted even this. (high school student)

—The time is right to bring memories of Anna Shaw and other women of history, who have slipped from front page news to a tiny paragraph on an encyclopedia page, back to American minds. Anna Howard Shaw is not the only woman lost in the depths of time... (high school student)

THE AGING WOMAN: ON THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC PARITY

by Sheila Comerford, Research Associate
Romaine Turyn, Director
Maine Committee on Aging

Noted gerontologist Robert Binstock has stated, "Elderly are representative of society: some are very well off, many are moderately comfortable, many are extraordinarily poor." Just as single female heads of households are the poorest of the non-elderly, so single elderly women are the poorest of the elderly.

The aging woman, it has been said, is at a double disadvantage. She not only faces the narrowing horizons of old age, but also must deal with the traditional discrimination against her sex. Is this the reality for older women in Maine today? If it is, how can we help modify this reality to allow all aging women to enjoy the remainder of their lives in social and economic security.

According to the Department of Human Services' Bureau of Health Planning Development estimates in 1984, there are approximately 90,550 women 65 and over residing in Maine. Compare this number with the male population over 65—59,600 and it is immediately evident that women far outnumber men in this age group. The disparity in numbers grows even more dramatic with increasing years. Sixty-four percent of the 75-84 age group is female, and a whopping 73% of the 85+ group is comprised of women.

In economic terms, women also differ from men. In 1979, the average yearly income for males age 65 and over was \$8,161; for a female 65 and above, only \$4,770. Sixty-five percent of widows would be poor without government transfers. Yet, even with government transfers such as Supplemental Security Income, nearly a quarter (22%) of widows remain in poverty (only 7% of married aged women are poor). And 90% of those receiving minimum benefits under Social Security are women, many of them elderly and living near the poverty line.

According to Jean Rosenblatt in her book, *Women and Aging*, the social realities for a significant number of elderly women today are very grim. Let's look at some national statistics:

- Women over 65 are the poorest segment of the American population.
- Sixty percent of all single and widowed women over 65 have as their sole source of income Social Security benefits averaging under \$300 a month.
- Only 20% of retirement age women receive either public or private pensions based on their own or their husband's employment record.
- While men's earnings potential increases with age. Women's earning potential stagnates and even declines in later years.

As one can clearly see from those statistics, in order to allow women the economic dignity deserved in retirement years, it will require the restructuring of pensions, insurance and the Social Security system, which women pay into while they are young. The policies that discriminate against younger women employed in the work force must be corrected to enable older women to live in economic security.

Additional pressures are threatening older women's already stretched incomes. The Medicare Program, the health insurance program for older persons, has been paying a decreasing portion of an individual's health care bill. The Medicare Program now pays only 45% of the elderly individual's medical expenses, and older people are expending as much out of pocket for their health care as they were before Medicare was enacted. Medicare's protection has seriously eroded, with older persons paying a full 20-25% of their income (probably a higher percentage of average income for women) on health care. An adequate income is becoming increasingly necessary for an older person to maintain essential health care.

Fortunately some restructuring has already begun. The 1984 Economic Equity Act, P.L. 98-397, will precipitate some major changes in pension requirements. Under the EEA, widows cannot be denied survivor pension benefits because of arbitrary age and length of service requirements. The age for participation and vesting in pension plans is to be lowered. The EEA also gives courts the right to take pension benefits into account in a divorce settlement. In addition, the Act ensures accrued pension benefits despite maternity /paternity leaves. Other significant gains through the EEA are the inception of spousal IRA's and nondiscrimination in insurance.

The Economic Equity Act is a major step forward for the economic survival of older women. Future legislative battles that need to be won include the "Discrimination in Insurance Act" and the "Fair Insurance Practices Act," both of which were introduced but not acted on in the last session of Congress. Both will be reintroduced in the next session of Congress. Each bill was designed to ban limited access to insurance and different rate structures for the same coverage for males and females.

Another priority for the next session of Congress will be enactment of legislation to provide women with greater equity under Social Security. The Task Force on Women and Social Security of the U.S. House Select Committee on Aging held hearings on the various proposals during the 98th Congress. The Task Force hopes to see the 99th Congress make significant progress toward the goal of economic equity under the Social Security program.

Legislative efforts both at the state and federal level to address economic inequalities which manifest themselves in a women's later years have just begun. Further advances are necessary to bring women up to economic par with their male peers. Such advances, in order to be successful, require the collective effort of women, young and old, to advocate against discriminatory policies, however subtle, which create barriers to full economic equity.

SISTERHOOD IS GLOBAL

The 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace will be held in Nairobi, Kenya on July 15-26. The World Conference will be composed of official government delegations, representatives of inter-governmental agencies, and official observers. The conference will review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1976-1985, and develop strategies for improving the status of women, and make recommendations to the United Nations General

Assembly. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) will sponsor a parallel international meeting called *Forum '85* in Nairobi, July 8-17. Everyone concerned with the status of women may participate in *Forum '85*. Topics related to the themes of the United Nations Decade for Women: equality, development, and peace, and the subthemes: employment, health, and education will be discussed. The purpose of *Forum '85* is to exchange information and plan for action to improve the status of women. The *Forum* will not take positions or adopt resolutions.

NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

The Maine Commission for Women is pleased to announce that our Non-Traditional Occupations brochure will be available for use and distribution on September 1.

The NTO brochure is a mailer/poster that is useful for schools, guidance and career counselors, job training participants, anyone who is interested in obtaining or promoting non-traditional work for women.

The brochure includes a "work force quiz," the positive and negative aspects of non-traditional work, and interviews with six

Maine women who hold non-traditional jobs.

Consider that the overwhelming majority of working women work in low-paying, deadend jobs. The NTO brochure is a first step up-and-out of the "women's work" ghetto.

Order from Maine Commission for Women, Station #93, Augusta, Maine 04333. Single copies free. Contact us for bulk order information and cost.



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN MEET IN MAINE!

The New England Association of Commissions for Women's annual meeting will be held in Portland, hosted by the Maine Commission for Women, October 25 and 26, this year.

The focus of the meeting will be Women and Economic Power. Our primary objective will be to formulate an educational plan for the women of New England and to develop strategies to implement such a plan. Friday night we will have a keynote speaker and public meeting. Please join us. Mark your calendar now and watch for details in the September newsletter.

EVENTS CALENDAR

If your organization is planning an event, of particular interest to women, send us a sheet containing the information listed below. All information received 4 weeks prior to publication of Inform, will be printed in each issue.

ALSO, while planning an event, if you want to check a date to avoid conflicting with other happenings, call the MCW at 289-3417.

DATE (list first, please), Event, sponsoring organization, who/where to call/write for further information and no more than three standard lines of event description.

Inform

MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
STATE HOUSE STATION 93
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