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The Maine Commission for Women Staff

The Maine Commission for Women

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May 1990

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Inform

Published by The Maine Commission for Women

Editor: Marion A. Higgins

FROM THE CHAIR

In the last issue of *Inform*, I talked about accountability - the process of measuring the Commission's progress against the goals we have set for ourselves. Now that we are two-thirds through this program year, it is time to assess that progress. Can we feel a sense of pride in our ability to make a difference? Is the quality of living for Maine's women and girls a little bit better because we have a Commission for Women?

I offer the following review of our year's activities as testimony to the importance of our continued existence. We believe we have been, and will continue to be, successful; that the Maine Commission for Women has added a strong and clear voice to the growing groundswell of support for justified and long-awaited change. We hope you concur.

Buoyed by the reaffirmation of the appropriateness of our mission, Commissioners began the fall season by zeroing in on a theme for the year. "Celebrating Choices" came out of a discussion about focus for the newly expanded Women's History Month program. In the process of sharing our excitement about the possibilities open to women in the 90's, we hoped together that our young people would have the courage to embrace change with hope, enthusiasm, and high aspirations.

It was a logical next step to adopt the theme of "Celebrating Choices" as a basis for not only specific activities like Women's History Month, but also for our vision of the best that is yet to be. Sweatshirts with the "Celebrating Choices" logo are in the final design stage, and will soon be offered for sale.

**Is the quality of living for
Maine's women and girls a little
bit better because we have a
Commission for Women?**

With the help of Marion Higgins, our Commissioner/Editor, we have been able to redesign the format and layout of *Inform* so that it is more attractive and readable. Although this year's budget reductions meant we had to cut back from four to three copies, we are pleased with qualitative improvements and remain hopeful that external fundraising will enable us to add back the fourth copy next year.

In the legislative arena, the Commission played a key role in advocating for removal of the sunset provision from the Family Medical Leave Act, a law that requires businesses of 25 or more to grant an eight week unpaid leave of absence for women and men with family medical emergencies.

We have recently finished drafting and editing a series of legal rights fact sheets, supported by a Bar Foundation grant (IOLTA). A distribution plan is currently being developed, to be implemented in the next few months. The fact sheets are targeted to Maine's disadvantaged population, and represent a long-awaited and much needed initiative.

Planning is underway for next October's New England Conference for the Commissions for Women, which we will host. The Planning Committee is working on funding proposals and program development for the Saturday public employment conference which will follow the New England session. Our new internship program will offer research support services to enhance the goals and follow-up activities generated by both events.

Outreach has been an important priority for the Commission this year. We say we represent *all* the women and girls of

Continued - back page

FROM THE EDITOR

A most sincere thank-you to Gordon Hammond and Kathryn Olmstead of Echoes Press, Inc., in Blaine, Maine. Gordon and Kathryn regularly publish an incredible nationally circulated magazine called *Echoes*, a magazine about the people, the history, and the scenic beauty of Aroostook County. Generously, they gave us a large piece of that most precious commodity, their time, and their expert advice, to assist us in revamping our *Inform*. Gordon, Kathryn, thank you both.

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EVENTS CALENDAR 1990

Unless otherwise noted, all contact numbers given are in Maine, area code 207.

- April 28 5th Annual Maine Women's Studies Conference
"Challenge and Change: Women in the 1990's."
Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine 04011.
Contact: Martha May, Director,
Women's Studies Program, 725-3000.
- April 29 - Apprenticeship and Training Council
May 4 46th Annual Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference.
Hotel Concord, Kiamesha Lake, New York, (518) 457-6820.
- May 5 Business and Professional Women - Bath
Spring Seminar "Tools for Achievement in the '90's"
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Kresge Auditorium, Bowdoin College,
Brunswick, Maine, 725-7927.
- May 18 Maine Commission for Women
Blaine House Tea Award Ceremony for winners of the
Women's History Month essay/drawing competition.
2:30 - 4:00 p.m., 289-3417.
- June 4 Maine Gerontological Society
Second Annual Meeting.
University of Maine, Orono.
Continuing Education Units available, 581-2487.
- June 25 Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services
"History Retold: A Multi-Cultural Approach to
Women's History for K-12 Teachers"
Sebasco Estates, Sebasco, Maine, 289-4482.
- August 2 - 4 ACOA/CoDependency Conference.
Sheraton Hotel, Burlington, Vermont.
Sponsored by U.S. Journal Training and *Changes* Magazine.
1-800-851-9100.
- October 27 Maine Commission for Women
"Women and Employment" Conference.
Sonesta Hotel, Portland, Maine, 775-5411.

MCW INTERN PROJECTS

The MCW intern project is well under-way.

Carol Mallory and Ellen Freedman, both seniors from Bowdoin College, are researching statistics on women in the home and in the workforce. They will be using their research both as a basis for an independent study and to help us gather statistics to be used at the MCW fall conference on women and employment. Carol and Ellen's contribution to our program has already paid off. The research they conducted on single- and female-headed households, working women with children, and child care issues has been used as background for a recent TV show on the "Faces of Poverty."

Kirsten Ek, a Bowdoin senior who is majoring in English and has a special interest in medicine, will begin work this spring on health and insurance issues for women. In addition, we have had several inquiries from students and faculty who may wish to participate in our research projects.

Kay White, a graduate of USM's Public Policy and Management Program and an experienced community leader, has volunteered to help the MCW. She will meet with interns soon to plan her involvement as the coordinator of the intern project.

The MCW wants to acknowledge the wonderful cooperation of Maine's colleges and universities, in helping us implement this project. It is an excellent partnership which benefits both the colleges and their students and the MCW.

"Women should be treated equal!
The only difference is their sex. I mean
people are people. They should be
treated equal. It's not that hard to do."

Mark

Age 8

St. Thomas Consolidated School

From Women's History

Month contest

1990 THIRD ANNUAL MCW MEETING

On Friday, March 16, Commissioners, Regional Commissioners, Progress Award winners, and friends, colleagues, and supporters of the MCW gathered at the Senator Inn in Augusta to review the MCW accomplishments for 1989-1990.

Betsy Levenson, MCW Chair, highlighted the Women's History Month program, the MCW theme, "Celebrating Choices," recent changes to our newsletter *Inform*, legislative advocacy work, the internship program, state forums, the legislative and business and professional advisory committees, and the upcoming fall conference on Women and Employment.

**...the "We Can Do It"
Players...did an upbeat comic
review, "Working Women,"
which portrayed popularly
perceived stereotypes of
today's working women.**

Guests were privileged to be entertained by the "We Can Do It" Players as they did an upbeat comic review, "Working Women," which portrayed popularly perceived stereotypes of today's working women. Actor and organizer Barbara Eberhardt is a member of the Southern Regional Commission for Women.

The Commission presented the three Progress Awards to Judge Harriet Putnam Henry, USM Child Care Services, and the UNUM Human Resource Department. (See article on Progress Awards.)

A dramatic feature of the evening was a

**A dramatic feature of the
evening was a display of
sixty-four sketches of
women's faces by Gardiner
artist Charlotte Agell.**

display of sixty-four sketches of women's faces. The two panels, black and white, highlighted women worldwide. The MCW was pleased that Gardiner artist Charlotte Agell was able to join us for the evening.

All in all, it was a pleasant evening with time spent highlighting the accomplishments and contributions of women statewide.



ELIZABETH P. LEVENSON of Portland, Chair of the MCW, is the principal of E.P. Levenson Associates, a consulting firm specializing in new program development, short-term project/event management, non-profit development and political management. Long active in community affairs, Betsy has held leadership positions with the United Way, the League of Women Voters, the Center for Voluntary Action, the women's issues task force

established when Governor McKernan was in Congress, the Community Leadership Institute, and numerous local, state, and national political campaigns. In addition, she chairs the nominating committee for USM's Horizons Advisory Committee and is Senator Cohen's representative on the U.S. Senate's Japan/America student exchange program. She and her husband Alan have three daughters, two in college and one in high school. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)

ANNE H. STICKNEY HEIMANN of Yarmouth, Vice-Chair of the MCW, is Vice-President and Treasurer of D.I.C., Inc/Deering Family Restaurants. Anne also serves as a Chair of the MCW Regional Commissions. Anne received a B.S. and a Masters from Babson College. She is an active volunteer for the Madeira School, currently serving as Chair of the Regional Representatives and Second Vice-President of the Alumnae Council. In addition,



Anne serves as the Board Vice President of the Catherine Morrill Day Nursery in Portland and is a past board member of Home Health Care, a non-profit home nursing agency in Wilton, CT. As a working mother of two girls, Anne wishes to better women's position in society by working to change public policy on issues which relate to women's work in the home and in the workplace. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)

MCW: WHO WE ARE

The Maine Commission for Women (MCW) is comprised of 17 individuals, nine of whom are appointed by the Governor, four by the President of the Senate, and four by the Speaker of the House. Originally created by Executive Order in 1964 as the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, the Commission was made a permanent agency by the Legislature in 1975. The MCW was placed within the Executive Branch of the State Government.

The mission of the Maine Commission for Women is to represent the women and girls of the State by promoting, implementing, and coordinating programs designed to improve their opportunities. The Commission will take a lead role in the development and evaluation of public policy in all areas of personal well-being of Maine women and their families. In performing this role, the Commission also will: identify and research issues of importance to women; educate policymakers and the public about these issues; act as an advocate for women and girls; and actively promote the increased participation of women in policymaking roles.

The work of the MCW is accomplished through its committee structure and through a small staff. It was not until 1979 that funds for staff were provided within the State's budget. Currently, the Commission employs two staff people, in addition to Executive Director Leslie B. Anderson.



PATRICIA C. BOURGOÏN of Gardiner is the owner of Word Processing Consulting and Services in Augusta. Patti served as the MCW Chair for the past two years. She continues as an active member of the MCW, serving on the Executive Committee, and as Chair of the Progress Awards Committee. A Maine native, she received a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Maine and is a graduate of the New England Regional Leadership Training Program. Patti's current civic and community activities include: President of the Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Maine Citizens Against Sexual Abuse, Board of Directors of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors of the Gardiner Rotary Club, and she serves as a public member on the Board of Osteopathic Medicine. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)



JULIE NORTON CASHWELL of China, Co-Chair of MCW's Education and Women's History Month Committee, is currently Vice Principal at China Elementary School. Julie also represented the MCW on the Blue Ribbon Task Force for Sex Equity in Education. Julie has a Masters Degree from the University of Maine in Educational Administration. A native of Calais, Julie has long been active in women's issues, including the effort to pass a national and a state ERA. As a working mother of two and a former teacher, Julie is particularly concerned with equality in education both for students, teachers, and administrators. Julie sees the MCW as an excellent vehicle for studying issues relative to women's role in our society. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)



LINDA S. CARD of Portland is a Systems Consultant with AT&T. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Community Alcohol Services and a member of the Junior League of Portland. A former chair of the Woman to Woman Project, Linda is Alumni Vice President of the University of Maine class of 1978. She is also a member of the American Association of University Women. Linda wants to actively participate in the process of ensuring that women are treated fairly in the Legislature. She wants to work with MCW in promoting non-traditional job opportunities for women and developing programs which address the issue of women's self-esteem, which she believes to be fundamental to improving the social, economic and political future of women. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)

SEVERN TOWL of Waterville received a Masters of Divinity from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1989, and now serves as a minister of the Universalist-Unitarian Church of Waterville. Until her recent move to Waterville, she had lived on eleven acres in Guilford since coming to Maine in 1973. From 1979 to 1984 she owned an herb business (Herbcraft). Severn received the "Outstanding Citizen of Piscataquis County" award from the University of Maine Extension Services in 1984. From 1981-1986 she was Director of Womancare/Aegis Association, a program she founded in 1978 to help abused women in Piscataquis County. In 1985, she was appointed to serve on the Special Select Commission to Study the Financing and Administration of the General Assistance Programs. Severn serves on the board of the Sunset Retirement Home and is a member of the Crisis Intervention Team at Waterville High School. As a new member of the MCW, Severn believes that it is critical to seek input from all women in Maine so that we may address the special issues of concern which will ensure economic self-sufficiency for women. Severn is the mother of 19-year-old Nat, who is currently living in Florida while he takes "adventure time" off from college. (Appointed by Senate President Pray.)



MARION ALEXANDER HIGGINS of Presque Isle, MCW *Inform* Editor, has been District Office Manager for Congresswoman Olympia J. Snowe since 1981. Active in the field of women's rights since 1973, she established a women's network that year in Sacramento and then in Presque Isle in 1984. Marion is former Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Aroostook Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, an active member of Pioneer Playhouse of University of Maine at Presque Isle, a graduate of the Presque Isle Leadership Program, and is one of the first women admitted to the Kiwanis Club of Presque Isle. Formerly a staff writer for TravelHost Magazine in Sacramento, Marion is presently a regular columnist for the Fort Fairfield Review. Marion is particularly interested in representing the concerns of women and girls of Aroostook County, not only regarding legislation but also in an oversight role involving the implementation of programs and policies which directly impact on their lives. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)



DIANE BENOIT DEERING of Hollis, MCW Legislative Chair, is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire with a degree in government and history. Diane is presently a staff assistant to Senator Bill Cohen in the Biddeford office. She has previously held the position of Youth Director and Dean of Women for the South Shore Congregational Youth Conferences and worked in the field of financial aid at the Harvard School of Public Health. Diane is a delegate to the Saco River Corridor Commission and serves as alumni secretary to her class at UNH. In addition, her volunteer activities include work with the local parent-teacher group and the Girl Scouts. As a working mother, Diane believes that it is extremely important to dispel gender role stereotyping by educating children in the younger grades about the many choices available to both men and women in the home and in the workplace. She resides in Hollis with husband David and three daughters, Liz, Abby and Emily. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)

RENE ATTEAN of Old Town, is a new member to the MCW. She has just accepted a job at the Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity in Newton, MA. She states that as a Penobscot Tribal member, her main interest in serving on the MCW is to bring a cultural dimension to policymaking bodies, increase the visibility of Native women's perspectives and to challenge the stereotypes that mainstream America has of Native American people, women in particular. (Appointed by Senate President Pray.)

RENA MURPHY of Millinocket is a ward secretary in the Millinocket Regional Hospital. A grass roots organizer, she is active in the struggle to get post-secondary education, both academic and vocational, in the Millinocket area. Rena is currently working full-time while nursing her husband back to health following a stroke. She sees MCW as a way to make people aware of how difficult it is for women in the work force, especially given the competing demands on their energies. Rena believes MCW can effectively work with other women's advocacy groups to push for changes to improve women's lives. (Appointed by Senate President Pray.)

ELLEN GOLDEN of Days Ferry is the Chair for the MCW 1990 Women and Employment Conference. Ellen has worked in the field of community economic development since 1978. Currently a Project Developer at Coastal Enterprises, Inc., she has worked for the past five years developing resources for and advocating on behalf of women business owners. She has been involved in research and the design and implementation of programs that provide technical and financial assistance to women-owned businesses and microenterprises. She initiated and manages CEI's Women's Business Project. She is a co-founder and former board member of the Women's Business Development Corporation and a board member of the Maine Women's Lobby. In 1987, she was co-recipient of the Small Business Administration's Women in Business Advocate of the Year Award for Maine. A graduate of Barnard College, she is currently enrolled in the Graduate Program of Public Policy and Management at the University of Southern Maine. She looks forward to using her experience with women's small business and women's economic development issues to benefit the work of the Commission. (Appointed by Speaker Martin.)



MYRT WILLEY of Gardiner (Hallowell), owner of T.W. Dick Co., Inc., is Vice Chair of Governor McKernan's Business Advisory Committee and is on the Board of Corporators of the Gardiner Savings Bank. She is a member of the Associated General Contractors of America/National Association of Women in Construction Liaison Committee, as well as a member of the National Association of Female Executives, Owners and Executives of the U.S.A., and is on the Steering Committee of the Maine Society of Entrepreneurs. Myrt is currently serving as Governor of District I, Zonta International. She recently received the Kennebec County Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year Award in 1990. Myrt believes in a more visible MCW, representative of all women in Maine. Much of Myrt's life has been dedicated to helping women in one way or another. Myrt hopes the MCW will be one more vehicle for doing just that. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)



JO KARR of Kittery Point, Co-Chair of the MCW's Education and Women's History Month Committee, is a seventh grade teacher at Dover Junior High in Dover, New Hampshire. Born in Texas, Jo moved to Maine in 1980. She is very active in the Democratic Party, having served as Chair of the Maine Jackson '88 Committee and the Maine Jackson Delegation to the 1988 National Convention, as well as Co-Vice Chair of the Maine Delegation to the same convention. She is presently serving as Chair of the Maine Democratic Platform Committee, Secretary of the Maine Democratic Committee, and Chair of the York County Democratic Committee. Before moving to Maine, Jo was a civil rights and labor activist in Texas and Michigan. She participated in Clamshell Alliance actions at Seabrook. As an activist, Jo has worked on a wide range of issues from student rights in education to collective bargaining in the workplace to nuclear impact on the environment. The implications of the Webster decision however, have caused Jo to focus her energy on the MCW and a woman's right to choose, whether the issue is day care, insurance, education, employment, or family planning. She believes that we must speak out strongly or we may lose our right to make these choices. (Appointed by Speaker John Martin.)



THERESA MUDGETT of Milo is a graduate of the University of Maine at Machias, with a B.S. in Education. Prior to becoming employed by the Training and Development Corporation of Bangor as an instructor in the Dover-Foxcroft Learning Lab, Theresa was a substitute teacher and

teachers' aide in Milo. She continues to work for M.S.A.D. #41 one night a week as a GED instructor for the Adult Education Program. Active in her community, Theresa serves as a board member of the Charlotte White Center, which trains mentally retarded and mentally ill clients, Chair of the Christian Social Concerns Committee for the Northern District Methodist Women Executive Committee, and Chair since 1984 of the Piscataquis County Democratic Committee. She has also served on the Maine Democratic State Committee. Theresa is pleased to be newly appointed to the MCW, as she believes it will give her an opportunity to gain tremendous insight into what is being done to better the quality of life for women in our state. She believes this will also help her to better counsel her TDC clients by assisting them in making positive changes in their lives. (Appointed by Senate President Pray.)



BRENDA HUMPHREY of Portland is a freelance journalist and teacher. A native of North Carolina, Brenda received a Masters from Howard University in Washington, D.C., in City and Regional Planning. Brenda is also an active Democrat, having served as Co-Vice Chair of the last Maine delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1988, and as spokesperson for Maine's Jackson Presidential campaign. This fall, at the University of New England, Brenda was co-presenter (with Peggy McIntosh of the Center for Women's Studies at Wellesley) of a forum on gender issues. At present, Brenda teaches a course "A Global Enlightenment" at the University of Southern Maine, and is very active in Central American issues. Last fall at a NOW conference Brenda presented a workshop "Beyond Borders" on El Salvador's CO-MADRES (Mothers of the Disappeared). Living in Liberia from 1974 to 1976 gave Brenda an opportunity to explore the complex issues of mother/child health care. In Liberia, the high infant mortality rates only began to change when women themselves began to organize. From her experiences, Brenda is convinced that bringing women together to work on common issues is the best direction for women to take. (Appointed by Speaker John Martin.)



CAROLINE GENTILE, Presque Isle, is an Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, and holds the distinction of being "Dean" of the Commission as a member of the MCW since 1978. Caroline graduated from Sargent College, Boston University, New York University, and pursued doctoral work at Columbia University and the University of Wisconsin. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the Presque Isle Recreation Association, and is active in the BPW, AAUW, Delta Kappa Gamma, and the Maine and American Associations for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Caroline will be installed as President of the Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women in June. Caroline believes the MCW is a vital link and a powerful avenue for the study and implementation through recommendations/legislation of women's issues. She hopes the MCW will look to the continued growth/development of the Regional Commissions which she believes will provide the grass roots information critical to the work of the Commission. (Appointed by Speaker Martin.)

LYNDA CLYVE of Bangor, the MCW Public Relations Chair, is Executive Director of the Bangor/Brewer YWCA. Long active in community activities, Lynda is a Trustee of Eastern Maine Medical Center and a member of the Private Industrial Council of the Training and Development Corporation. In 1983-84, Lynda was the guiding spirit of Bangor's celebration of its one hundred and fiftieth birthday. In 1984 she was office coordinator for Senator William Cohen in the second Congressional District. She is presently the Penobscot County Chair for Senator Cohen's re-election campaign. Lynda is also a member of the Bass Park Negotiators Advisory Committee and a member of the Bangor Rotary. All in all, a surprising career for one who originally trained as a research chemist! Lynda sees the YWCA as being an organization that provides programs and services to women and girls that they may achieve a better quality of life. This is exactly how she perceives the mission and the opportunity of the MCW. (Appointed by Governor McKernan.)

REGIONAL COMMISSION REPORTS

EASTERN REGION

The Eastern Regional Commission for Women (ERCW) welcomes the last decade of the century with a renewed commitment to improving women's lot in several areas.

At our public meeting in October the voices we heard the most clearly were those of women living at the subsistence level - health care, child care, job training, legal rights, the daily struggle to be viewed as productive members of society, the fear that their children will be caught in the welfare trap.

We have had an active Women in Poverty Committee for over a year...but perhaps "active" is too imprecise a description. Let's try again. Our Women in Poverty Committee has been meeting for over a year. For many months the problems of low-income women seemed so overwhelming, so monumental, that we were overwhelmed. Finally, we have discovered that part of the problem where we feel we can make a difference: tracking legislation which affects low-income women and children. Kay Richards, our tireless leader, has spent hours digging through bills, laws, rules, regulations and bureaus. With her help the committee is slowly becoming more knowledgeable about the human services delivery system in Maine. Stay tuned for developments!

Another of our standing committees - Women Veterans - has received renewed emphasis. Jane Kenney, one of our new members, is a veteran herself, and active in the WAVE organization in Maine. Jane has been charged with tracking the activities of various women's veterans groups and helping us to identify areas where the ERCW can be supportive.

Our ERCW Pro-Choice Committee has evolved into the Bangor chapter of Maine NARAL. Cathy Pope, its local chair, has resigned from the Commission to devote her volunteer time to NARAL. While we are sorry to lose her as a Commissioner, we fully support her commitment to the very important struggle to keep abortion safe and legal in Maine; she can maintain contact through Commission members who are NARAL members.

We are now well into our third year as a Regional Commission. We began the 90's with six new members: Julia Cote and Theresa Sappier, two native American women to whom we look for leadership in helping us understand some of the problems unique to them; Madonna Flanders, who has recently moved to the Bangor area and become Executive Director of the Good Samaritan Agency; Louise Regan, an administrator at Husson College; and Priscilla Torrey-Keller,

a substance abuse counselor at Allied Chemical Dependency Services at Eastern Maine Medical Center.

In April the ERCW and the MCW will co-host a day-long meeting with the Maine Commission. Julie and Theresa arranged for the meeting to be held in the chambers of the Native American Tribal Council on Indian Island. We look forward to many such joint meetings and hope we can always provide such interesting meeting places.

Martha Wildman
Chair

EVENTS CALENDAR 1990

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 27, 1990
Sonesta Hotel, Portland
MCW contact: Ellen Golden
289-3417

SOUTHERN REGION

The Southern Regional Commission for Women (SRCW) has been concentrating its recent efforts on recruiting new members and conducting a series of focus groups in Southern Maine. The purpose of the focus groups is twofold: to get out in the community and speak with women about their experiences, needs and suggestions for change; and to foster an awareness with women in Maine of both the function and availability of the SRCW and the Maine Commission for Women (MCW). In addition to being a very effective way to gather information and make contact, focus groups are fun.

Recently, we held focus groups with senior citizens, with women at the Training Resource Center and with WINGS, a support group for single parents. More focus groups are planned for this spring, including a large open forum to which we will invite the community at large, currently scheduled for Thursday, May 17.

We wish to welcome as new members of the SRCW: Laurel Andrew, Barbara Cohen, Deborah Galarneau and Polly Meinders. We are still recruiting for open positions, so interested candidates are encouraged to call Cindy Arn at 775-6371 (days) or write to the SRCW c/o 333 Blackstrap Road, Falmouth, ME 04105.

Cindy Arn
Chair

NORTHERN REGION

This winter, the Northern Regional Commission for Women (NRCW) has actively promoted Women's History Month. The NRC is soliciting funds to publish a booklet with the "winning" essays and drawings from each class in Aroostook County to participate in the sixth annual Maine Commission for Women student essay/drawing contest. They plan to distribute the book to participating students and school libraries. In addition, the NRCW is hoping to present an award to each winning student.

This spring the NRCW will hold a public forum in Houlton. This will present an opportunity for women in Southern Aroostook County to voice their concern on issues of interest to women and girls in that area. Not only is this forum to be used as an information gathering tool for the NRCW, but as a membership drive to attract interested members in this part of the state. The NRCW will be soliciting funds to help defray costs of the forum.

Martha Grant
Chair

MCW Staff

Executive Director, Leslie B. Anderson
Assistant to the Executive Director A/C,
Debora H. Noone
Clerk/Typist, Cynthia C. Masiero

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women have come along (sic) way because of one person. That was Susan B. Anthony. She held a strong speech for women's rights. I respect that. Susan was brave to hold that speech. Now women can vote, be doctors (sic), they can make money, they can go to college, be nurses, be teachers, and be authors.

I can't wait to grow up. It's all because of Susan B. Anthony, the leader of women's rights.

Emily
Age 7

Harpwell Island School
From Women's History Month contest

MAILING LIST UPDATE
See last page for details

1990 THIRD ANNUAL PROGRESS AWARDS

The Maine Commission for Women presented its third annual Progress Awards to three recipients: One individual and two organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the economic and social advancement of Maine women in the MCW priority area of women, work and family.

This year's awards highlighted the Commission's theme of "Celebrating Choices..."

This year's awards highlighted the Commission's theme of "Celebrating Choices" by recognizing those who have been instrumental in expanding women's opportunities through changes in policies and programs which affect the choices available to women in the home and in the workforce.

The MCW congratulates Judge Harriet Putnam Henry, USM Child Care Services, and UNUM for their continued dedication to improving the lives of working women.

The first award was presented to Judge Harriet Putnam Henry, one of six female judges in Maine. While making significant strides in her career, she has taken the extra step to advance the rights of women by serving as a role model for women in the judiciary and as an advocate for advancing the status of juveniles. Judge Henry has played an important role in advancing the lives of women and children by actively working to improve the laws in the areas of child abuse and neglect, and child support.

The second award was presented to the University of Southern Maine Child Care Services for its leadership in developing child care initiatives for its employees and students, alumni, and the community

at large. As one of the largest employers in this state, the University has taken major steps to ensure affordable, quality day care.

USM Child Care Services supervises three separate centers, one on each campus and one intown Portland. This model program integrates a broad range of related child care services, such as sick care, evening care, before and after school care, and youth vacation and summer programs. USM has demonstrated to both public and private employers that it is not only possible but important to combine the work and family lives of their employees.

The third award was presented to the Human Resource Department at UNUM for their innovative child care subsidy program. They were cited, in a recent magazine article in "Working Mother," as one of the sixty best companies in the nation for working parents. Their newly established (January 1990) Child Care Subsidy Pro-

gram provides further assistance to employees by providing monetary support to alleviate the strain imposed on employees by high child care costs.

UNUM continues to develop new benefit plans as the workplace needs of their employees change. Dependent and eldercare are a few of the benefit options UNUM will be researching in the future.

The MCW congratulates all three award winners for their continued dedication to improving the lives of working women. The MCW was pleased that the awardees received public acknowledgement by being highlighted on the 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Channel 13 News as the evening's feature story.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

L.D. 1908

An Act to Amend the Law Governing Family Medical Leave
Prime Sponsor: Rep. Marge Clark

This bill became law on March 23. Passage of L.D. 1908 removed the sunset provision and ensured continuation of the FML law enacted in 1988 (26 MRSA, Sections 843-849). An amendment to L.D. 1908 requires the Maine Department of Labor to include FML in its employment regulation bulletins.

An Amendment to L.D. 1908 requires the Maine Department of Labor to include FML in its employment regulation bulletins.

Testifying at the February sponsor hearing in support of L.D. 1908 were Rep. Marge Clark, co-sponsor Sen. Nancy R. Clark, Betsy Levenson for the Commission, Martha Grant from the Northern Regional Commission and her client, and ten others. The Maine Commission for Women (MCW) wholeheartedly supported this legislation as a way of continuing to protect the jobs of working people who

The law provides employment protection for workers who take up to eight consecutive weeks unpaid leave in a two-year period.

must take time off for childbirth or adoption, to care for seriously ill children, parents, spouses, or for serious personal illness.

The law provides employment protection for workers who take up to eight consecutive weeks unpaid leave in a two-year period. It applies to all public employers and to private employers who have 25 or more employees at one site. Eligible employees must have been employed by the same employer for at least 12 months.

During the hearing process, we spoke with several individuals who have benefited from using FML since 1988. As part of our ongoing assessment on the impact of this law, we will continue to collect comments and anecdotes about experiences with Family Medical Leave from both employers and employees. Please forward any information to the MCW at Station #93, Augusta 04333.



FROM THE CHAIR

CONTINUED

Maine, and yet, how can seventeen women know what is in everyone's best interest? How can we stay in closer touch with our constituency? Serve you better?

To address these important concerns, we have made a serious effort to ask, to listen, and to move around the state, touching base with women everywhere. Our new advisory committees and our two new direct service efforts - recommending women for state boards and commissions and offering information and referral for general inquiries about women's services - are only a few of the ways we have actively sought a stronger link with all of you.

In February we joined the Southern Regional Commission for focus groups in Portland. We met with senior citizens and women in job training programs. On April 20 we will co-sponsor a focus group with the Eastern Regional Commission at Indian Island in Old Town, and in July we head for Aroostook, timed conveniently to coincide with the Potato Blossom Festival.

Representatives of the Commission have participated in several task forces, coalitions and ad hoc committees throughout the year, including the Sex Equity in Education Task Force, the Medicaid Advisory Committee, the *Common Core of Learning*, the Child Care Advisory Com-

mittee, the AFDC Advisory Committee, the Insurance Consumer Advisory Committee, the Insurance Consumer Advisory Group, the Robert Wood Johnson Committee, the Choice Coalition, the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition.

Our work on the Insurance Consumer Advisory Committee gave birth to an interest in the equity issues involved in using gender as a risk factor for insurance premiums. We adopted insurance as a study item for the year, with commissioners attending several workshops, and speakers making presentations to the full Commission. We have found that gender neutral insurance is a very complicated issue, one which will require even more study and analysis before we are ready to make any public recommendations for action.

In closing, it's been a very busy year - one with a lot of hard work, many successes, and a full agenda stretching far into the future. We, as a Commission, have been around in one form or another since Governor Reed first established an advisory committee in 1964. Have we made a difference? Are your lives better because we exist? You - the women and girls of Maine - are in the best position to answer that question. We think we have earned your continued confidence and support. We ask that you be the judges.

Betsy Levenson, Chair
Maine Commission for Women

ELLEN BETH FREEDMAN

Ellen was born (1968) and raised in New York City. She attended Fieldston High School in Riverdale, New York. Presently, Ellen is completing her final semester at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. She will be receiving a B.A. in East Asian History with a minor in Women's Studies. After graduation, she hopes to live in Maine or Massachusetts and pursue a career in Women's Studies, government or education.

INTERN BIOS

CAROL MALLORY

Carol was born in Newport, Rhode Island, on April 21, 1968. She moved to Portland, OR at the age of 7 and then to Ogden, Utah at age 14, where she graduated from St. Joseph High School. Carol spent her high school junior year as an AFS exchange student in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. She will graduate this year from Bowdoin College with a major in Government and a minor in Women's Studies. Carol spent her junior year at Bowdoin studying abroad in St. Andrews, Scotland. Carol hopes to pursue a career which will incorporate her interests in government with issues concerning women.

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NOTICE

The MCW is updating its mailing list. If you have not already done so, and want to continue receiving the newsletter, please return your address label, with any changes, to the MCW office within 15 days.