



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

JANUARY 2006

Women in the Media: At Home and Abroad

Whether we rely on newspapers, magazines, television or radio, we are all dependent on the media to provide information and keep us in touch with the world from domestic politics, science, health or fashion to international issues. The roles of reporters, editors and management in the media are of great importance in shaping what is covered and how it is transmitted to us and to governments around the globe. We need to be aware of the position of women and how they are faring in their careers in various fields of the media.

Our speakers reflect widely diverse backgrounds and varied careers in journalism:

Bonnie Erbe is well known as founder, producer, and moderator of *To the Contrary* on public television and radio, a very popular weekend program discussing women's issues as viewed by an always lively panel of liberal and conservative women. She also writes a weekly column in 400 papers, has a law degree, and has covered major economic and political issues in the press.

Mal Johnson was the first African American female journalist employed by Cox Broadcasting and covered five US Presidents for them over 27 years. She was the founder of the National Association of Black Journalists and has been a leader in many feminist organizations. She attended all the U.N. Conferences on Women and recently organized a conference for 58 women journalists from around the world.

SPEAKERS: BONNIE ERBE, Host, *To the Contrary*
MAL JOHNSON, Int'l Association of Women in Radio and Television

TOPIC: Women in the Media: At Home and Abroad

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, January 24, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle. Please come a little earlier than usual because there is a new, slightly more time consuming, sign-in system. In case of a snowstorm and/or closing of government offices, the meeting will be cancelled. Please listen to radio reports.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Program Summary – November 2005 Meeting

Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment

At the November meeting, CWI members Bernice (Bunny) R. Sandler and Harriett M. Stonehill discussed their recently published book, *Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment K-12*. Sandler is a nationally recognized expert on the legal implications of sexual harassment, and strategies to prevent and respond to it; Stonehill has extensive experience in dealing with schools and school/community programs.

Sandler introduced the program with an old nursery rhyme: *Georgie Porgie puddin' and pie, Kissed the girls and made them cry,* pointing out that today Georgie Porgie would be called a sexual harasser. Stonehill asked "What kind of person will Georgie Porgie grow up to be if the school and his family do not teach him that this behavior is not acceptable?"

In recent years there has been growing awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace, but few schools have developed policies, provided staff training or offered educational activities to deal with unwanted sexual behavior among young boys and girls. Stonehill and Sandler wrote the book to increase awareness of the seriousness and extent of this increasingly critical problem, how to respond when it occurs and how to educate staff, students and families to prevent student-to-student harassment from occurring. There is not enough information about the subject, and administrators, teachers and families need help in establishing policies and methods for handling sexual harassment incidents.

Stonehill explained how student-to-student sexual harassment is a form of bullying: one student attempts to intimidate another using sexuality as a weapon. It may be verbal or physical, or both. It may be between students of either or the same gender; and sometimes it involves a group harassing others. Whereas bullying

generally is not illegal, sexual harassment is. She pointed out that public institutions are liable for damages if such activity is ignored, and added, "Although some schools have anti-bullying programs, they rarely include sexual harassment, and it is often neglected in schools because staff may not recognize the seriousness of such behavior."

Sandler stated that unwanted sexual behavior among youth takes place at all levels of the K-12 system, occurring more frequently in middle schools. Surveys have reported that 70 to 90 percent of students (K-12) say they have experienced some form of harassment in school. In contrast, only 30 percent of students experience traditional (non-sexual) bullying. Six out of ten students reported that student-to-student harassment happens regularly; 52 percent of girls and 47 percent of boys, and more than 67 percent of African-American girls experienced unwanted sexual attention and behavior. Gay and lesbian students were more likely to be harassed than any other groups.

She gave examples of peer sexual harassment, which includes sexual comments, offensive touching and groping, and pulling down underwear. Sandler served as an expert witness in one case in which "an 11-year old boy put a door stop into his pants, pretended it was his penis and then told the girls what he wanted to do with them." Harassment also includes sexual jokes, graffiti, obscene gestures, and insults: calling girls sluts and whores, calling boys fags and pussies. In one case, a girl with big breasts was called a cow and boys "mooed" at her. Computer harassment and telephone messages are emerging areas of concern, she said. Incidents happen in bathrooms and school buses, but occur also in classrooms, hallways, lunch rooms and on the way to and from school.

Program Summary – November 2005 Meeting

Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment continued

Most incidents of student-to-student harassment go unreported, Sandler declared. School personnel are often present when incidents occur, but may ignore the behavior. In part, this is because policies are not clear or they do not know what to do. Students often do not know to whom they should report incidents or what will be done if they do. They worry that they will be blamed for the harassment or if they report it, it may get worse.

“Many schools do not recognize the fear that sexual harassment can cause,” Stonehill said. Unfortunately, the impact of sexual harassment on recipients is serious. Students feel unsafe, she said. They may become fearful and uncomfortable; they may feel shame and humiliation; they may become unable to concentrate. Staff and parents often think of peer harassment behavior as a normal part of growing up, and they sometimes argue that the child will become stronger if he or she learns how to deal with unwanted behavior. (“Boys will be boys.”) Yet the impact on victims often lasts throughout their adult lives. In addition, students who harass others are learning poor social skills. What is learned in grade school becomes the foundation for adult behavior later.

It is important for adults to listen to children and encourage them to speak about their experiences. However, some members of the audience, during the question period, wondered if we go too far with rules, especially for younger children. They worry, for example, that children are not allowed to play many games or touch each other in innocent play. It was pointed out that, the aim is not to prevent “innocent play” but to prevent harmful sexual harassing behavior.

Sandler noted that “We have to teach children the difference between tattling and reporting. To tattle and get someone in

trouble is very different from reporting an incident that hurts anyone or threatens someone’s safety.” Schools need to help students understand what will actually happen if they report incidents; they need to know that they will be protected against retaliation. The reporting process can be made easier by having multiple ways for students to report harassment –to a teacher, the nurse, a guidance counselor, or a hot line, instead of, for example, requiring a written report or requiring that all incidents must be reported to the principal.

Lawsuits are increasing, with schools paying damages or settlements of several hundred thousand dollars, some in excess of \$500,000. Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions, also prohibits student-to-student harassment. Criminal laws prohibiting sexual assault and abuse and civil laws which address such issues as “intentional infliction of harm,” may also apply.

Stonehill said, “Schools are not the only institutions that need to develop an awareness of sexual harassment behavior in young boys and girls. Other community groups, such as scouts, churches, athletic teams, and youth activities of all kinds often become a setting for harassment.” She added, “An effective way to develop awareness is to bring groups together to develop a wider understanding and develop policies that deal with harassment throughout the community.”

The bottom line, Stonehill and Sandler say, is teaching staff, students and families about respect. Schools are ultimately responsible for protecting students and culpable when they do not protect them from harassment. The book includes more than 700 suggestions for dealing with the K-12 sexual harassment problems.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to all! We have 32 productive years behind us and are ready for many more. We have great plans for 2006 as our programs continue to focus on public policy issues of concern to women. Spread the word about our excellent speakers who graciously share their experiences and knowledge with us. As always, your input and suggestions are most welcome.

Cheers! Ellen

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

LINDA FIELLY: Linda has served as CWI treasurer since 2001. She also served several years as vice president for membership in the 1990's. Linda is a retired federal employee, having spent much of her career as an occupational specialist in the Office of Personnel Management. She is active in a number of women's organizations, including the Women's Action Coalition of Prince George's County, the Southern Prince George's Business and Professional Women, and Maryland NOW. She served for many years on the board of directors of the Family Crisis Center, Inc., of Prince George's County and continues to support activities that have to do with providing services to victims of domestic violence. Linda lives in Prince George's County, Maryland, with her husband and two dogs.

MINIMUM WAGE

Working women and people of color are the largest group that would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage of \$5.15, which has been in effect since 1997. It is not adjusted for inflation and since 1997 it has lost 17 percent of its purchasing power and is now 56 percent of the average U.S. wage. A full-time minimum wage worker earns about \$10,700 a year, which is \$5,390 below the 2005 poverty line for a family of three and \$8,650 below the poverty line for a family of four. Although at the bottom of the wage scale, these workers earn too much to receive cash welfare assistance, and need many other government services to get by. Democrats in Congress, including Senators Ted Kennedy and Hillary Rodham Clinton, are encouraging an increase to \$7.25. Various news reports assert that during this same period, the House and the Senate have voted themselves seven raises and eight raises, respectively.

(Culled from the Center for Policy Alternatives and the Oakland County Welfare Rights Organization Newsletter -Michigan)

FROM WOMENS eNEWS:

CHEERS: Gov. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, an anti-choice Republican, now supports a new state law that requires hospital to offer emergency contraception to rape victims, reversing a previous stand. (Dec. 10)

A \$160,000 federal sex education grant was rejected by the state of Maine (Nov. 29) because of requirements that it be spent on abstinence-only education. This possibly conflicted with a state law and mandates teens be taught about contraception. To receive the grant, Maine also would have been required to spend an additional \$120,000 in matching state funds.

2006 Women's Legislative Briefing

Sunday, January 29, 2006 from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m.

National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

You are invited to attend the 26th annual Women's Legislative Briefing to learn from a distinguished group of experts about important legislative initiatives affecting women and families that will be introduced in the upcoming sessions of the Maryland General Assembly and the U.S. Congress.

PROGRAM

12:30 - 1:00p.m. REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS

1:00 - 2:00p.m. OPENING

Keynote Address **Susan F. Wood**, the former FDA official in charge of women's health issues who recently resigned her post to protest the politicization of science when the FDA ignored scientific and clinical evidence, overruling its own staff recommendations regarding "the morning after pill."

2:00 - 2:30p.m. PLENARY SESSION

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

2:45 - 4:00p.m. WORKSHOPS

Understanding the Budget and Legislative Process
 Reforming Health Care
 Protecting Women's Bodies
 Ensuring the Economic Well-Being of Our Families
 Confronting Issues Impacting Immigrant Women

4:00 p.m. RECEPTION

To Register Online go to www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw or call (240)777-8330.

WOMEN WORK! NATIONAL CONFERENCE – Arlington, VA – APRIL 5-7, 2006

Join Women Work! for our 2006 annual conference, *Programs, Policies & Partnerships: Building for the Future*. This year education and training professionals, women leaders, advocates, and government and corporate officials will gather to build skills, strengthen networks and increase opportunities for women. Plan now to attend the premier conference on the issues of women, work and economic security! Early registration is available until February 17, 2006. For more information or to register call the conference planners The Balcom Group at (703) 807-2281 or email womenwork@balcomgroup.com or visit <http://www.womenwork.org/>

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their requests by e-mail to cwinwsltr@aol.com. The newsletter will be sent in PDF format. The first issue after the request is received, the newsletter will be sent via e-mail and U.S. mail. The following month, the newsletter will be sent via email only, unless cancelled. Requests to discontinue the email version and re-establish the regular mail version can be sent to the above email address. If you have questions concerning these procedures, please call Sheila Willet, newsletter editor at 202 408-1777.

COMING EVENTS

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- JANUARY 24 CWI Meeting. Topic: Women and the Media. See page 1.
- JANUARY 29 2006 Women's Legislative Briefing. National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase, MD. See page 5.
- FEBRUARY 1 Deadline to Submit articles and event announcements for February CWI Newsletter. Email your submissions or questions to cwinwsltr@aol.com
- FEBRUARY 9 National Capital Chapter Older Women's League Meeting
12 n – 2 pm Topic: Medicare For All. Call 202 408-1777 for location.
- FEBRUARY 28 CWI Meeting. Topic: The Importance of Organizing Younger Women: Issues and Strategies in Building the Next Generation of Women Leaders
- APRIL 5-7 WOMEN WORK! NATIONAL CONFERENCE See page 5.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.
Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



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FEBRUARY 2006

PASSING THE TORCH: THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZING LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

This presentation will explore the successes and challenges of building and organizing the next generation of women leaders. Alison Stein will examine why feminism has become a "dirty word" and why many young women are uncomfortable with the way women's issues are currently being framed. What are some of the innovative ways younger women are "doing" feminism, what are their issues, why do they need to organize? Her insights are drawn from founding and developing a coalition of women in their 20's and 30's from across the country through the National Council of Women's Organizations.

Crystal Lander will discuss strategies of organizing diverse groups of feminist women on two and four year college campuses. Recognizing the idea that the majority of young women become social justice activists during their college years, it is during those years that a connection must be made. Crystal has had success energizing and mobilizing the next generation of women advocates, supporters and leaders through such issues as health policy, human rights, and global reproductive rights. Audience participation follows.

SPEAKERS: Alison Stein, Director, Younger Women's Task Force, NCWO
Crystal Lander, Director, Feminist Campus Program, Feminist Majority Foundation

TOPIC: The Importance of Organizing Younger Women Leaders

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, February 28, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

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Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Program Summary – January 2006 Meeting

WOMEN and the MEDIA

The speakers at the January CWI meeting were Bonnie Erbe, journalist, and founder, producer and moderator of the PBS weekly program, "To the Contrary," and Mal Johnson, founder of the National Association of Black Journalists and a leader in many feminist organizations.

"Women and the media are in big trouble." began Bonnie Erbe. Before elaborating on this statement, she wanted to make sure that her listeners understood that she is non-partisan in her political views. Specifically she is to the "left" on issues concerning abortion and women's rights but to the "right" on fiscal matters.

Using data from the Women and Politics web site, Erbe reported that President Bush's ties to the evangelical movement have caused difficulties for women in many ways. The number of women serving in state legislatures has dropped and there are fewer women going into politics. There is less political pressure on companies to promote women and the vitality of the women's movement has declined. She asked, "Where is the outrage?" Women on college campuses are quiet and the situation in the media is not encouraging.

Erbe noted that no woman has ever been president of a network, but even if one were, she would be constrained by the policies of the high-level corporations that control the media. She added that women and minorities are getting fewer federal contracts and monitoring their progress has been reduced.

Even at PBS Erbe has to struggle to keep her program on the air and at a good time. She noted that she is only talking about one half hour a week that is devoted to a panel discussion among liberal and conservative women and yet there have been questions whether this feminist outlook has outlived its usefulness. "The consciousness of women moving forward is not present as it was years ago." she said.

The idea that feminism has achieved all its goals appears to be the prevailing attitude today. "Women's groups have less and less influence than they had ten years ago ...and abortion remains a flash point."

She said that even if Roe vs. Wade is not overturned, the courts will continue to "punch holes in it" until it is too weak to be very effective. It appears that the strategy is to eviscerate abortion bit by bit. She thought that the defeat of ERA had blunted reform efforts among women and perhaps an unanticipated effect of overturning Roe vs. Wade might be to galvanize women into action.

She pointed out that attacks on women's issues go far beyond abortion. For example, the Bush administration recently wanted to scuttle statistics that report whether employees were male or female on the grounds that it required too much bookkeeping. In fact, all it requires is checking a box. If the proponents of that move had succeeded, Erbe noted "It would be much more difficult to see how women were progressing in reaching high-paying jobs." She called this a "passive-aggressive move to make women's problems go away."

She added that there is more emphasis on female beauty on conservative news channels while males dominate serious news programming and news analyses on all channels. All one has to do is view the news and analyses programs on Sundays, Erbe said, to see the absence of women and minorities.

Mal Johnson noted that more women and minorities are leaving media jobs because "they can't grow in these jobs." Ironically more women than men are in broadcasting jobs but, she emphasized, not in leadership positions. Cable television is a leader in hiring women but there has been a drop from 25 percent to 23 percent in female news directors, who had a small power base to begin with. She added that "Power

Program Summary – January 2006 Meeting
WOMEN and the MEDIA continued

won't come to women. We have to grab it and we have been awfully lazy about doing that."

She also presented a global view, based on her work with an organization of women in the media in 58 countries. She cited excellent documentaries developed by women in India, challenges to the government of Romania by media women, and a struggle by women in Ghana to buy a station. It is also important "to recognize that there is now more technology to access news and information now than ever before."

The concentration of media ownership is particularly dangerous. For example, NBC is owned by General Electric and CBS by Westinghouse - both powerful developers of nuclear power - ABC is owned by Disney World, FOX by Rupert Murdoch, and AOL is part of an organization that also owns Time Warner, CNN, HBO Cable, People Magazine and much more. Although two women inherited and own Cox Network, men run the organization.

An example of the way in which corporate control constrains free speech can be seen in Clear Channel's decision not to allow anti-war songs or songs by the Dixie-Chicks because they talked against President Bush. Both speakers agree that the consolidation of media ownership poses a serious threat to important public concerns.

Erbe pointed out that it has become difficult to keep the progress that has been made. When she came to PBS in 1964, 28 percent of all programming was dedicated to community service. Today most community service programming is off the air. To support this point, a representative from the American Association of University Women later said that that organization has been unable to give a Metro Area Media award

for two years because no local program has focused on women and children. The loss of local programming has meant that important issues that do not fit into corporate directives are gone. The Federal Communications Commission, responsible for "media democracy," has "betrayed women and is in bed with corporate people."

Johnson stated that young women in the U.S. do not appear to be active. In spite of the problems in the U.S., she said, "The concern that worries me most is the struggle that women in other countries have to access information." She spoke of her admiration for the courage of women leaders in Ghana, Liberia, Chile, and Germany

In response to a question from the audience about whether conservative women play a more active role in politics, Erbe noted that even they have no power with decision makers in the Republican Party. She stated that many Republican women, such as Harriet Meirs, have been treated quite badly. She pointed out the women have some responsibility to fight for fair news. Few women make an attempt to respond to the Rush Limbaughs of the media. She believes that "We have to try harder to make our comments heard," and she added that PBS is sensitive to letters from viewers and women could have a big impact on what happens in this arena.

The speakers believe that women do have a different viewpoint on current events, a greater concern for how the news affects one's life, more interest in children and education. Johnson said, "It is essential that women's voices be heard." She said that we all bring a perspective based on our backgrounds. "To the degree that women and women of color are not heard, that perspective is lost," Johnson concluded.

Bonnie Erbe's show "To The Contrary" is carried on 251 PBS stations in the U.S., Canada and internationally. In our area, it is aired at 10 a.m. Saturday morning on WHUT (Howard U.) and on WETA at 9:30 Sunday mornings.

YOUNGER WOMEN'S TASK FORCE LAUNCHES NEWSLETTER

The Younger Women's Task Force (YWTF), a project of the National Council of Women's Organizations, has launched a bi-monthly newsletter and review of Younger Women's news. Entitled, *The Younger Women's Movement: news for younger women*, is the first national electronic newsletter with links to news stories of interest to younger women in alternative and mainstream media alike," states Alison Stein, Director, Young Women's Task Force. To learn more about this newsletter, attend the February 28 meeting, or go to www.ywtf.org.

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

HARRIETT M. STONEHILL is an educator and administrator who serves as director of the Megaskills Education Center in Washington, DC. She has trained Megaskills Leaders in 48 states and internationally, involving schools, community organizations, corporations, and educators. She has coauthored comprehensive training guides with Dorothy Rich for training programs that build teacher/parent partnerships, a noted speaker and a contributor to journals. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of the District of Columbia.

WOMEN/ INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, installed as president of Liberia last month, is not only the first democratically elected female president in Liberia, but in all of Africa as well. An economist from Harvard and a former World Bank official, one of her first actions was to fire the entire staff of the country's finance ministry in an effort to fight corruption. (She said they were an embarrassment to the country.) She is now the leader of the continent's oldest republic, founded by freed American slaves in 1847.

Finland's president, Tarja Halonen, was recently elected for a second term in a closely contested campaign that focused on security policy and the non-aligned country's relationship with NATO. A candidate of the left, she got 51.8 per cent of the votes in the second round of the election against her opponent from the Conservative party.

Chile has just elected Michelle Bachelet as president of this "male-dominated, prosperous and deeply religious nation of 16 million." She's an agnostic, a physician, a former exile who lived part of her childhood in the U.S., and also is "a guitar-strumming child of the 60's." (N.Y. Times)

A proposed change in the law in Japan would allow Princess Aiko, the only child of the Crown Prince, to ascend to the throne. The present law embraces the male-only tradition in the monarchy. There have been protests to the succession change and a large rally against it is expected this month.

In September, Angela Merkel, leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), prevailed in a close election to become chancellor of Germany. According to the BBC, "as a protestant East German woman, (she) broke the mold of the CDU, traditionally dominated by West German Catholic men."

LOSSES

We acknowledge the passing of three activist sisters: Wendy Wasserstein, Coretta Scott King, and Betty Friedan. A number of our members knew Betty Friedan well from the inception of the feminist movement. If any of you have memories that you'd like to share with us, please send them to roslyn.kaiser@starpower.net

BETTY FRIEDAN

Betty Friedan died on Feb. 4th, her 85th birthday. The N.Y. Times in a front page obituary described her as "the feminist crusader and author whose searing first book, "The Feminine Mystique," ignited the contemporary women's movement in 1963 and as a result permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world ...with its clear-eyed analysis of the issues that affected women's lives in the decades after World War II; (the book) is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century." She is further credited with "a great many aspects of modern life that seem routine today – from unisex Help Wanted ads to women in politics, medicine, the clergy and the military – the direct result of the hard-won advances she helped women attain." Friedan was one of the founders and the first president of the National Organization for Women and helped establish the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971.

GILDA MORSE

We also note with sadness the untimely death of former CWI board and longtime CWI member Gilda Morse, who died this month following a stroke during surgery. At her memorial service, many tributes were given for her dedication to family and community, her concerns for social justice and her advocacy efforts. After a satisfying professional career, Gilda's pro bono volunteer activities included tutoring, working for organizations including AARP, Footlights, and the Older Women's League; she often wrote program notes for the CWI Newsletter. Gilda had a wide variety of friends and never had a disparaging word. She was deeply appreciated and loved and she will be long remembered. (Ruth Nadel)

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women's eNews, looking forward to Women's History Month in March, has created a special page that links to all the pieces on women they have run this year (they call it Our Story). The special collection can be found at: <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2597/>

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See page 1.
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CWI Newsletter. Email your submissions or questions to cwinwsltr@aol.com
- MARCH 8 International Women's Day
- MARCH 28 CWI Meeting. Topic: Women and Museums
- APRIL 5-7 WOMEN WORK! NATIONAL CONFERENCE in **Arlington, VA**
"Programs, Policies & Partnerships: Building for the Future." Early registration is available
until 2/17/06. To register call the conference planners at (703) 807-2281 or go to the web
site <http://www.womenwork.org/>
- APRIL 24 CWI Meeting. Topic: Women & Feminism: Women's Studies & Gender
Studies

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MARCH 2006

WHY WOMEN'S MUSEUMS?

A LOOK AT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SHAPING AMERICAN SOCIETY

The speakers will explore historic and potential roles of women in American society and history.

Susan B. Jollie will explain the need for a permanent museum dedicated to women near the mall in Washington, D.C. She has served as President and CEO of the National Women's History Museum since 2001. In this capacity, Ms. Jollie blends a life-long interest in history with the experiences gained as an attorney dealing with high visibility legislative, regulatory, and corporate affairs in Washington, D.C.

Amy Conroy is the Executive Director of the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, one of the premier women's history sites in the country. A National Historic Landmark, the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum celebrates women's progress toward equality and their continuing contributions to our society. The museum is committed to preserving the legacy of the historic National Woman's Party – the campaign for women's equal rights – and bringing this history to life for future generations.

SPEAKERS: Susan B. Jollie, President and CEO
National Women's History Museum

Amy Conroy, Executive Director
Sewall -Belmont House and Museum

TOPIC: Women's Museums: Today and Tomorrow

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, March 28, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

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Program Summary – February 2006 Meeting

The Importance of Organizing Younger Women Leaders

The speakers were Alison Stein, Director, Younger Women's Task Force, National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) and Crystal Lander, Director, Feminist Campus program, Feminist Majority Foundation.

Ms. Lander began by noting that in 1996 the Feminist Majority officially organized the first campus program that started the following year. Today it is funded by the Ford Foundation and is the largest program in the Feminist Majority organization.

The campus program has been the "first" in many areas. It had the first web site of any woman's organization. Today there are nine staff representatives — 6 in the East and 3 in the West — who work on programs with campus groups and affiliates. The staff members rose from the ranks of campus workers and represent a variety of diverse schools, different majors as well as different ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Alison Stein began with a story of Anne, a 33 year old engineer who suffered workplace discrimination for over a decade. Anne was about to change fields and searched out women's groups for advice when she learned about The Women's Task Force inviting people like her to attend a conference to talk about working issues.

Ms. Stein continued with her own story about wearing high-heel red shoes on her first day of work at a women's organization where an older woman declared, "We have fought for forty years so that you wouldn't have to wear shoes like that." Alison replied, "I thought that you fought so that we could wear whatever we want."

She realized that she was too old for college groups and too young for many established feminist groups where the average age was 50. She became determined to begin a program for women in their late 20s and 30s. This group had traditionally not been

organized, but as noted by Martha Burk, then president of NCWO, the program would be more effective if developed from within an established organization. Today, the Younger Women's Task Force sponsored by NCWO has 150 chapters in 42 states, 2500 members with an average age of 29.

Ms. Stein stressed that chapters do different things. Each Task Force is organized to work on issues that concern them. For example, in D.C. the women met to discuss transportation safety. A central coastal California group had a real estate seminar for younger women. Another Task Force sent invitations to church groups and non-traditional feminist organizations with this message: "Come talk about issues that affect your life." Once women were there it was possible to talk about traditional women's issues as well.

In contrast, Ms. Lander stated she does not shy away from the feminist word, but admitted that sometimes she does not want to argue about it. Feminism is a huge umbrella and women may want to change the terms they use.

A main issue during the discussion was how one keeps women engaged in advocacy and social issues after they leave school? Ms. Stein noted that in some ways they are easier to organize since many run into discrimination for the first time when they enter the work force. Yet, today time constraints limit women's availability for participation in group activities. The group must meet real needs. For example, in Philadelphia five women ran a full day of financial training. While they were there, it was possible to discuss other concerns and literature about issues was available.

The meeting continued with questions from the audience:

Program Summary – February 2006 Meeting

The Importance of Organizing Younger Women Leaders (continued)

Q directed to Ms. Lander: How do you like working in an organization with a powerful leader?

She replied that she enjoys working in an organization where her opinion is respected. She added, "I can only talk about what I am doing. I'm making a difference and making the organization better."

Q: What is the difference between organizing college women and older women?

Ms. Stein stated that 20% of the members in the Task Force are mothers and in two chapters, 50% are mothers. The number one issue still relates to jobs. For example, being the new girl at work, or crying at work. For one chapter after discussion on this topic, membership doubled.

Q directed to Ms. Lander: How to connect pan-Hellenic groups with other women?

She replied, "As a member of a one hundred year-old black sorority, I can say most sororities are traditional, but now as they get older, there is considerable dialogue about other concerns.

Both women noted that their organizations are non-partisan and apolitical. If discussion in the local group does become political, it is usually related to the PTA or city council.

Q directed to both women: How do you counteract anti-feminism?

They replied that they try to be positive and not defensive. They indicated that they try not to do traditional organizing. They give women a great deal of information and encouragement. Since recent anti-feminism seems to originate from other women, they emphasized that it is important to stress the commonality among women and to dialog civilly about the divergent issues.

Discussion returned to concern over the term "feminism." Ms. Stein stated that most chapters of young women's groups do

not use the term. But it is noted that any word can be picked on and used against women. The important thing is to do whatever needs to be done locally and chase no one away.

They indicated that non-college women interested in feminism generally join NOW or other organizations. One great recruiting place is the community college because the women are generally older and working, but there are many other recruiting opportunities such as health clubs and child care centers.

Q regarding financial support for each group.

Ms. Lander indicated that financial support for the Feminist Majority comes from major donors, but noted that foundations do not want to pay for staff. There is a need for younger women to help out financially for causes they believe in. Ms. Stein indicated another source of financial support comes from older women.

In conclusion, both speakers stressed their work was advocacy and not strictly feminism. The point is to get together for action and meet people and their needs where they are.

Additional information about each organization can be found on the Internet:

Young Women's Task Force
www.ywtf.org

Feminist Campus Program
www.feministcampus.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The meeting on February 28 was a thrilling event. Alison Stein and Crystal Lander did a fabulous job in presenting the challenges facing young women leaders today. We were overwhelmed by the huge, enthusiastic turnout for this intergenerational program and the pleasure to learn about getting younger women into the network. Please let us know what topics and programs might interest you, suggest speakers, and give us names of others who might want to come.

The Nominating Committee would welcome your suggestions for Board Members. Send names to Nominating Chair: Alvin Golub, 604 Bennington Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel no. 301-565-3125. Email, maxinegolub@msn.com.

Ellen Overton

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

Jean Landweber has a Master's Degree in Special Education and taught learning disabled children for 18 years. Upon retirement she divides her time between Madison, Wisconsin and Washington, DC.

Jean focuses her energy on advocacy work while in Wisconsin. She has served on the Board of Wisconsin Women's Network (WWN), a coalition of women's organizations working to improve the lives of women. Jean founded a WWN task force on Women and Aging. She currently is the Wisconsin coordinator for the Equal Rights Amendment and participates in the NCWO task force on the ERA.

When in DC, her focus is on women's issues. She is a member of the Hadassah Washington Action Office task force working on issues of stem cell research, genetic non-discrimination and heart disease as a women's issue. Today's technology enables Jean to serve ably as CWI Vice President-Membership whether she is residing in Madison or in the District.

WINGS: WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS GATHERING SERVICE

As stated on its website: The Women's International News Gathering Service is an all-woman independent radio production company that produces and distributes news and current affairs programs by and about women around the world. WINGS programs are used by non-commercial radio stations, women's studies and individuals. Programs can be heard on local radio stations, on shortwave, on the internet, and on cassettes. To learn more about WINGS, go to www.wings.org

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) renews her efforts to have a Women's History Museum in Washington, DC and spotlights the Old Post Office Pavilion Annex as the ideal location. A March 3, 2006 article in the Washington Post by staff writer Jacqueline Trescott entitled "Women's Museum Supporters Renew Efforts in the House" highlights the recent actions by the Senator and other supporters of the museum. The full article can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/02/AR2006030202161.html>.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Many events and activities are scheduled to celebrate Women's History during March. The calendar of coming events normally located on the last page has been moved inside to list some of the many events:

- March 8 International Women's Day
- March 15 Women's Bureau; Dept. of Labor Special Event at the National Museum of Women in the Arts features a panel discussion at 6:00pm "*Women in 2020*" followed by a reception from 7-8:30pm "*Celebrating Great American Women of Today and Tomorrow.*" To register, call the Women's Bureau at (202) 693-6710 or visit www.dol.gov/wb
- March 23 Symposium: "The Foreign Service Spouse: Still in Transition" 10:30am-12 noon, Free. Held at the Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave., NW. For info, call 202 232-7363.
- March 23 **Ann Wright, "Breaking Through Diplomacy's Glass Ceiling."**
A luncheon program at the Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave., NW. Cost \$19 members \$25 non-members. For reservations, call Pat Fitzgerald at 202 232-7363 x 3003.
- March 23 Sewall-Belmont House and Museum Open House 11am-7pm
144 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC. 202 546-1210
- March 28 CWI Meeting. Topic: Women and Museums. See page 1.
- March 29 Women: Builders of Communities. A special reception honoring local and national women leaders at the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum. For information, call 202 546-1210 or visit www.sewallbelmont.org
- APRIL 1 Deadline to Submit articles and event announcements for the April 2006 CWI Newsletter. Email your submissions/questions to cwinwsltr@aol.com
- April 6 Public Transportation will be addressed by speakers at the next brown bag lunch meeting of the National Capital Chapter of OWL-The Voice of Midlife and Older Women. For time and location, call 202 408-1777 or email nccowl@aol.com.

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their requests by e-mail to cwinwsltr@aol.com. The newsletter will be sent in PDF format. The first issue after the request is received, the newsletter will be sent via e-mail and U.S. mail. The following month, the newsletter will be sent via email only, unless cancelled. Requests to discontinue the email version and re-establish the regular mail version can be sent to the above email address. If you have questions concerning these procedures, please call newsletter editor Sheila Willet at 202 408-1777.

COMING EVENTS

March is Women's History Month

See page 5 for information of coming events normally listed here.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.

Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

CWI

CLEARINGHOUSE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

P.O. Box 70603

Friendship Heights, MD 20813

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

APRIL 2006

WOMEN'S/GENDER STUDIES: HOW DOES THIS FIELD ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY?

Our speakers will discuss recent developments at the graduate and undergraduate levels, including the use of terms such as women's studies and gender studies, how students and faculty in these programs have maintained or shifted emphases over the past 20 years. How have these programs fared during the growth of the women's movement? We will hear about current challenges faced by women's studies students and faculty related to finding jobs, equal pay and backlash.

Allison Kimmich is the Executive Director, National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), headquartered in College Park, Md. She will provide a national perspective on women's studies, such as numbers and type of programs. She will also discuss trends and leadership interests of the NWSA.

Dan Moshenberg is the Director of the George Washington Women's Studies Program, which is the oldest graduate women's studies program in the nation. The curriculum at George Washington emphasizes public policy, national and global issues. He will discuss how their work in these areas has had a positive impact on gender equity, how local women's studies programs work with NGOs concerned with gender equity and whether there may be a role in this field for the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues.

**SPEAKERS: Allison Kimmich, Executive Director
National Women's Studies Association**

**Dan Moshenberg, Director
George Washington Women's Studies Program**

TOPIC: Women's Gender/Studies — Alive and Well in 2006

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, April 25, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room**
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.
Please come a little earlier than usual to go through the new sign-in system.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 23, 2006
at an alternate meeting place**

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women’s Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society

The speakers were Amy Conroy, Executive Director of the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, and Susan B. Jollie, President and CEO of the National Women’s History Museum.

Ms. Conroy began her talk by noting how crowded Women’s History Month has been. Both speakers wished that celebrating the accomplishments of women would continue throughout the year.

Why are women’s museums needed? Amy noted that women have learned only some of the facts about their history and not the whole story. Women’s museums strive to tell the complete story of the struggle for women’s equality.

The Sewall-Belmont House illustrates one aspect of this struggle: the fight over female suffrage. Ms. Conroy explained that the collection at Sewall-Belmont with its focus on suffrage, is one of the most significant collections in the U.S. and it is unlike any other museum. As the center of the National Woman’s Party, it contains over 10,000 items that include photos, 1000 boxes of organizational archives, posters, over 200 banners and sashes (many homemade), and political cartoons. The cartoons were influential in modernizing the image of suffragettes by showing women that suffrage leaders looked “just like you.”

The library at the Sewall-Belmont House contains material showing the tactics used by women to wage their political fights. A Congressional card catalog file detailed the friends and enemies of suffrage in Congress with information on how to persuade opponents. A scrap

book created by Mrs. Belmont collected news and magazine coverage of events and gave her interpretation of these events.

The items are fragile; many just kept in boxes. Only 30% have been catalogued. Because women’s history can seldom be found in the formal documents of the period, data must be collected from organizational records, personal accounts and other informal sources of information. Fortunately, IBM has partnered with the museum staff to digitize some items so that they will be more accessible for the public.

One of the challenges faced by all museums that focus on women is that the museums are under-funded and unappreciated. They are not considered “mainstream.” But Ms. Conroy noted that if educators want to tell the full story of women’s achievements, they must have access to historical resources. Museums play an important role in making these resources accessible.

In addition to its importance as a museum, the Sewall-Belmont House is an historic home: the oldest house on Capitol Hill, built in 1789. Outreach is important at the Sewall-Belmont Museum. There are programs for Girl Scouts, school groups, and family days.

Susan Jollie stated that the National Women’s History Museum has a wider focus than more specialized collections. She explained that at present the National Women’s History Museum is a vision based on the concept that women’s shared history is important for inspiration and for education. She explained that if we develop a full

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women's Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society (cont.)

understanding of what women did to build this country, we would better appreciate their achievements. Unfortunately, much of what women did is out of the public record and a national museum would make this information available to a wider audience.

The goal is to have a building for the National Women's History Museum near the national mall. Ms. Jollie emphasized that the museum will not carry a message of victimhood, but rather will celebrate how women overcame barriers.

For example, it is important that the public learn how women improved the quality of life in the United States. They did so not by operating through the government which was closed them, but by finding innovative ways to deal with issues. Women created the idea of franchising because they were closed out of many enterprises. They were instrumental in obtaining child labor laws, sanitation and housing services, community-based craft services and local cooperatives. Women provided the impetus to create public holidays. They seldom received credit for their initiatives. In many cases men took credit for their work as did Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, praised by historians for progressive ideas that women developed.

Ms. Jollie stated that an important part of the museum will be collections of archives detailing women's service and professional organizations. But she made clear that in order to obtain a fair and comprehensive history, the scope of the museum has to go further than public policies. The museum will include family and community activities,

reflecting all the life choices that women have made. An example of this consensus approach developed by museum leaders is that all women elected officials from both parties in the House and Senate have agreed to serve on the museum's board.

However, even before the museum site is ready, the National Women's History Museum staff has been busy promoting women in history. Scenes honoring women during World War II have been included in the war memorial. The struggle to represent women's contributions is not easy. Ms. Jollie gave an example of how women who served in the USO were depicted in "Disney style" wearing frivolous costumes.

There has been a constant flow of women in the work force and in building this country, but the story has not been told. More than episodic examples are needed. The records will not be found in the legislatures, courts or academia, but in the oral histories and private accounts of women themselves.

Is there a site for the National Women's History Museum? In the discussion that followed, Ms. Jollie explained that a site has been chosen. The federal annex next to the Old Postal Building on Pennsylvania Avenue is ideal, one block from the American History Museum. The building has been vacant for 12 years. Although small, if administrative and research offices are located off the site there is enough room to display materials. She noted that the directors are not interested in a "signature building" to display architectural design, but are more concerned that the site be close to the national mall.

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women's Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society (cont.)

Twice the U.S. Senate has unanimously passed legislation giving the building to the National Women's History Museum. Unfortunately in the House, members of the Transportation Committee refuse to agree to the transfer because they want to develop a commercial hotel on the site. Ms. Jollie urged everyone to contact their Representative urging them to support the Senate legislation.

Asked about contacts among the various women's museums in the nation, Susan said that informally there is a women's collaborative that works together. Women's museums, both speakers concluded, are essential to conserve, preserve, and utilize the "stuff" of women's history.

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

Sue Klein serves as the Clearinghouse Vice President for Programs. Currently as Education Equity Director for the Feminist Majority Foundation, Sue focuses on saving and fully implementing Title IX. Previously she worked in the research offices at the U.S. Department of Education (and its predecessors) for 34 years.

Sue earned a Doctoral Degree in Educational Psychology from Temple University in 1970 and a Masters Degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Sue has earned a variety of awards including an Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Gender Equity from The Marymount Institute for the Education of Women and Girls in April 2006. She is married with one grown daughter.

STATUS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH COVERAGE IN THE U.S.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has issued new data to help understand the status of women's health coverage in the U.S. Highlights show that nearly one in five midlife and younger women were uninsured; that women are less likely than men to be insured through their own job; and that low-income women are more likely to rely on Medicaid or be uninsured. For more information or updated fact sheets, contact Rob Graham at (650) 854-9400 ext 237 or rgraham@kff.org.

NEW WEB SITE LAUNCHED

Imagining Ourselves: A Global Generation of Women was launched on March 8th (International Women's Day) by the International Museum of Women. The site is very interesting, multi-media, and provides an interactive approach for younger women around the world. See it at <http://www.imow.org>.

NEW APPROACH TO GAIN PAY EQUITY

The National Committee on Pay Equity is launching an effort to create 100 new WAGE clubs around the country before Equal Pay Day on April 25. According to the 2005 Census, fulltime working women earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. This innovative project aims to help women close the wage gap. NCPE has developed a guide and other materials about forming a WAGE club. For information, call 410-212-1776 or visit www.wageproject.org.

SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW APRIL 20-23

America's most prestigious juried exhibition of one hundred twenty talented artists and sale of fine crafts can be seen at the National Building Museum, 401 F Street NW (Judiciary Square Metro Red Line) on April 20 and 21 (Thu. & Fri.) from 10 am to 8 pm; April 22 (Sat.) from 10 am to 6 pm; and April 23 (Sun.) from 11 am to 5 pm.

The Smithsonian Craft Show is produced by The Smithsonian Women's Committee to benefit Smithsonian educational, outreach and research programs. Daily Admission Tickets \$15. Seniors, Students, Military & Smithsonian Associates \$12. Children 12 and under Free (no strollers). On Wednesday April 19, a Preview Night Gala will be held from 6:30 - 9:30 pm; \$150 (includes Preview & Cocktail Buffet, 3 Lane Valet Parking)

THE WOMAN'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB HONORS BETTY FRIEDAN

Tuesday, June 6 Panel Discussion "*Betty Friedan's Legacy and Feminism Today*"

Panelists: Sheila Tobias, former assistant provost at Wesleyan University; Eleanor Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, and Jacqui Ceballos, President of the Veterans Feminist of America. *Time: luncheon 12:30 p.m., Discussion and Q & A 1:00 p.m. Price: WNDC Members \$19, Nonmembers \$25.*

Wednesday, June 7 WNDC Woman of the Year Gala Dinner

Keynote speaker: Former Congresswoman Pat Schroeder
Time: Cocktails and Silent Auction 6:00 p.m., Dinner and tributes 7:30 p.m. Price: WNDC Members \$125, Nonmembers \$175. For information and reservations contact Patricia Fitzgerald at 202-232-7363 ext. 3003 or send email to pfitzgerald@democraticwoman.org

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COMING EVENTS

- APRIL 19** **"Women's Voices in the Public Sphere"** 3pm-5pm, Woodrow Wilson Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW. Visit <http://wiww.wilsoncenter.org> for additional information. Free, but RSVP required by email to usstudies@wilsoncenter.org.
- APRIL 20-23**
Smithsonian Craft Show at the National Building Museum (see p.3)
- APRIL 23** **Walk for Women's Lives 5K to fight ovarian and uterine cancer.** For information and to register, visit <http://www.iwalkforwomenslives.org>
- APRIL 25** **EQUAL PAY DAY**
- MAY 23** **CWI Meeting** Alliance For Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 2nd Floor. (This is an alternate location for the May meeting only.)
- JUNE 6** **Luncheon/panel discussion: "Betty Friedan's Legacy and Feminism Today"** at the Woman's National Democratic Club. (See p.5)
- JUNE 7** **WNDC Woman of the Year Gala Dinner.** (See p.5)

CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.
 Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

MAY 2006

*Note: the location for THIS meeting only is Alliance
for Justice
11 Dupont Circle, 2nd floor, entrance on New Hampshire*

Freeing Afghan Women and Girls--Unfinished Business

The Taliban took away the rights of girls and women in 1996. Today their rights and lives are still in jeopardy. (See article on page 4.)

Our speakers are eminently qualified to discuss the ups and downs of the current situation and what must be done. **Eleanor Smeal**, as **President of the Feminist Majority**, was the first to bring world attention to the Taliban's brutal treatment of women in Afghanistan. In her multiple leadership roles, Ellie is still working to ensure stability and progress in women's rights in Afghanistan. **Farida Azizi**, a self-styled Peace Activist and refugee from Afghanistan, worked from 2002 to 2005 for Vital Voices as a senior advisor for their Afghan Women's Project. She has been speaking at universities and conferences to bring attention to the needs of Afghan women.

**SPEAKERS: Eleanor Smeal, President
Feminist Majority and the Feminist Majority Foundation**

**Farida Azizi, Peace Activist, founder of
Cooperation for Peace and Unity**

TOPIC: Freeing Afghan Women and Girls — Unfinished Business

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, May 23, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE: Alliance For Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 2nd Floor
Entrance on New Hampshire Ave. (THIS MEETING ONLY)
Bring brown bag lunch**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Program Summary – April 2006 Meeting

Women's/Gender Studies: How does this field advance gender equality?

The speakers were Allison Kimmich, Executive Director of the National Women's Studies Association and Dan Moshenberg, Director of George Washington University Women's Studies Program.

Allison Kimmich described Women's Studies as the academic arm of the women's movement. Born in the activism of the sixties and seventies, the goal was to create college courses that were more meaningful and representative of the reality of women's lives, in her words, "to bring women into the curriculum."

The field has come a long way since its inception. Allison noted that it is impossible to focus on gender without an examination of identity categories such as race, sexuality, nationality and other key areas.

Emory University, along with ten other universities, introduced a doctoral degree in Women's Studies. Unfortunately, there is limited information about the new PhD degree at the present time. Unlike in other disciplines, the U.S. Department of Education does not collect information about the field. This means that there is little data about enrollment numbers, standards, and program content.

The National Women's Studies Association is trying to collect pertinent information and perform statistical analyses of enrollment data to set up a data base. Without this, Departments have no basis for supporting programs. According to Dr. Kimmich, too often administrators use this lack of information as a way to cut resources.

She is seeking funding to collect data as the first step in making Women's Studies a professional field.

Dan Moshenberg discussed the relationship of Women's Studies to equity. He quoted feminist writers who declared that "feminism is in a mess, and Women's Studies at best are faltering." They argue that there is little agreement on the meaning of terms and confusion between the goal of equality and equity and parity. Serious questions about the field of inquiry remain. For example, is it possible to quantify equality? Are feminism and women's studies the same? Is equity the same in wealthy nations as in poorer areas?

Compounding these serious intellectual tasks is the tendency of Women's Studies participants to become engaged in politics. Some believe that those involved in Women's Studies try to justify their place on campus by "going into the streets."

In the 1970s and 1980s, Professor Moshenberg noted the field was vibrant and participants contributed significantly to our understanding of women. But as Women's Studies programs became institutionalized and involved in political struggles, the thrust of the programs have become less clear.

At George Washington University, Professor Moshenberg explained there is a strong emphasis on international equity. Such topics as homelessness in Africa, the growing number of women in prison, rape, HIV and other world-wide phenomena are the focus of student investigations here and abroad

Program Summary – April 2006 Meeting

Women's/Gender Studies: How does this field advance gender equality? (cont.)

in his program. In his view, trans-national feminism forces those interested in the study of women to rethink traditional positions on equity in a global context. Noting that by 2050 the United Nations estimates that half of the world's population will be living in slums, issues of pay equity have to be addressed on regional, national and world-wide levels. Although he argues that feminism is large enough to encompass equity, it is essential to remain critical and questioning in examining issues.

Later, in response to questions, Dan Moshenberg explained that equity is an accounting system with flaws. What about women not in the wage economy, or how does one do a quantitative analysis of productive labor? How does wage labor support non-wage labor? Does equality mean that men and women are interchangeable? What about disagreements among women with regard to fair treatment?

Allison Kimmich was asked if the PhD in Women's Studies is accepted and recognized throughout academia. She responded that the question is still unsettled since the PhD is so new and untested. Moreover, there is still some uncertainty about Women's Studies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In most institutions, faculty members hold a joint appointment in a discipline as well as in Women's Studies.

Although there are still reported problems in tenure and promotion issues, her own experience suggests that graduates are marketable. Later some of the young women attending the session confirmed that they were advised at their institutions to major in a discipline, with Women's Studies as a secondary concentration.

Both speakers agreed that the most pressing research topics today are global issues. Other areas of research relate to human rights and sexual trafficking. Another concern is that conservatives view Women's Studies as too ideological. They are demanding that opposing views be taught in all classes, even if such views are literally opposed to equity and fairness.

There were serious problems with definitions throughout the discussion. For example, what is the difference between women's studies and gender studies? Are feminism and women's studies the same? The debate over terms, according to Dr. Kimmich, attests to the fact that the field of inquiry has grown and changed. New issues require new approaches. In general, however, the term women's studies remain more expansive than gender studies. Both speakers ended by repeating the importance of sustaining an international focus on women in the women/gender studies field.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Things are going well at the Clearinghouse. Our meetings are attracting larger numbers and in March we even had a visitor from San Diego, CA. Olivia Puentes-Reynolds, President of the San Diego Women's History Museum, flew all the way across the country to attend our meeting! Arvonne Fraser, co-author of "How Women Transformed International Development," sent an email congratulating us on the CWI Newsletter and made suggestions regarding possible activities. Thank you all for spreading the word and for your input. Keep it up!

Ellen

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

Alvin Golub retired as Executive Director of the Washington Psychiatric Society. He has served as a consultant on workplace and healthcare issues to the federal and local governments. He has organized several mental health and substance abuse coalitions. He helped organize the Coalition for Adequate Mental and Drug Abuse Services which spearheaded a drive to support legislative efforts on behalf of non-discriminatory benefits for substance abuse and mental illness treatment in the District of Columbia.

A lifelong tennis player, Al, unable to achieve glory in his younger days in the sport, is a ranked senior player in the Mid-Atlantic Tennis MD Association and is a medal recipient of a recent Senior Olympics Competition. A two-time Navy veteran, Mr. Golub and his wife Maxine have two daughters and four grandchildren.

NEW CABINET IN AFGHANISTAN INCLUDES NO WOMEN

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's new cabinet currently includes no women. President Karzai did not reappoint the three women who had previously served in his 25-member cabinet. The one woman he did choose to be minister of women's affairs was rejected by the Afghan parliament. Moreover, Karzai did not appoint any women to the Supreme Court. An aide to Karzai who spoke to the *New York Times* on condition of anonymity said that since women had won guaranteed representation in parliament, there was no longer any need to give them special appointments to the cabinet.

While establishing quotas to ensure women's inclusion is one necessary step, it isn't sufficient. The inclusion of women in government and persistent legislative and judicial reform will be imperative to ensuring that Afghanistan becomes a true representative democracy," wrote Isobel Coleman, director of the Women and US Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations, with Swanee Hunt director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, in a joint op ed published in the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Women's inclusion in Afghanistan's government, which the international community has been using as an indicator of democratic progress, is actually regressing." [Feminist Daily News Wire April 25, 2006]

SUE WHITMAN AWARDED 2006 METLIFE FOUNDATION AWARD

Congratulations to CWI member Sue Whitman who was one of 26 seniors chosen nationally by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging to receive the 2006 Metlife Foundation "Older Volunteers Enrich America" Award. Nominated by IONA Senior Services for her many years of volunteering, Sue was the subject of a front page feature article in the April 12th issue of the *Northwest Current*. A reception was held on April 27 in Washington, DC for the awardees followed by a luncheon on April 28 where she received the award.

URGE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT MUSEUM SITE

In 1987 Congress declared March "Women's History Month." Almost two decades later, little exists to permanently acknowledge women's contributions and achievements. It's time to honor women's extraordinary legacy with a prestigious site for the National Women's History Museum.

The National Women's History Museum (NWHM) has identified the ideal Museum site in our nation's Capital. The Pavilion Annex of the Old Post Office Building, located on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW -- America's Main Street, is in close proximity to national museums that now attract millions of visitors from around the world. This federally owned building has been vacant since 1992. Congress is being asked to put this building to good use by honoring women's remarkable contributions to our nation. For more information and to view a video prepared for Congress narrated by Academy Award Winning Actress Meryl Streep, visit the National Women's History Museum Web site at www.nwhm.org.

To secure a permanent site in Washington, D.C., the cooperation of several government entities is needed. The U.S. Senate has already given its support for the use of the building. But before final approval is granted, the House of Representatives is looking for public support for this site. You can contact your Congressional representative on line by going to the following URL <http://capwiz.com/nwhm/issues/alert/?alertid=8424146&type=CO> [NWHM newsletter]

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ARTIFACTS GO ONLINE

Sewall-Belmont House and Museum put 400 images of their 10,000 artifacts collection online in March 2006. These images can be seen by clicking on COLLECTIONS tab on their Web site <http://www.sewallbelmont.org>. The online collection was made possible by a donation of a state-of-the-art digital imaging system from IBM, the business technology firm based in Armonk, N.Y. [Women's ENews]

AAUW UPDATES CONGRESSIONAL VOTING RECORD

AAUW members have a long history of lobbying Congress and holding their legislators accountable for how they vote on AAUW priority issues. The annual AAUW *Congressional Voting Record* for the 109th Congress, First Session (2005) is now available on the AAUW website: <http://www.aauw.org>. The AAUW Congressional Voting Record provides information about elected federal legislators through the votes they cast on critical issues. Legislation was selected on the basis of the AAUW Public Policy Program adopted by convention delegates in June 2005. These priorities include education, judicial nominations, tax and budget, civil rights, and reproductive choice.

While the voting record is neither an endorsement nor a condemnation of any member of Congress, AAUW does encourage the use of it as a tool to hold your legislators responsible for their votes. AAUW urges us to thank our congressional representatives for their consistent support of equity for women and girls. [AAUW Action Network]

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL: Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their e-mail requests to cwinwsltr@aol.com

COMING EVENTS**MAY 14** **MOTHER'S DAY****MAY 23** **CWI MEETING** at the Alliance For Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 2nd Floor, entrance on New Hampshire Ave. (This is an alternate location for the May meeting only.)**MAY 22-
JUNE 1** **DC OFFICE OF PLANNING PREVIEWS DC's COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
to the citizens of the District of Columbia in a series of meetings throughout the city before its presentation to the City Council for approval. To view the meeting times and locations go to <http://www.inclusivecity.org>**JUNE 6-7** **WOMAN OF THE YEAR Salutes BETTY FRIEDAN**
Pat Schroeder will be the keynote speaker at the Woman's National Democratic Club's *Woman of the Year Award* Reception, Silent Auction and Dinner on June 7 at the Woman's National Democratic Club. A luncheon panel on June 6 will discuss Friedan's achievements and legacy. Go to www.democraticwoman.org or call Patricia Fitzgerald on 202 232-7363, xt.3003; or see CWI April Newsletter for further information.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.
Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

CWI**CLEARINGHOUSE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES**

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

JUNE 2006

Candidates and Women's Issues: Making our Case

At every level the coming November elections are the most crucial within memory. Women's rights are at risk, essential programs uncertain, and priorities are in disarray. Meanwhile, the field is open and getting crowded with candidates. We need to encourage them to pay attention and speak out on women's issues.

Our speakers, both community leaders and former college professors, are well qualified to direct us on how to confront the candidates with informed questions that will stimulate discussion and assure the candidate's position on our issues or concerns. NCWO's **Terry O'Neill** has specialized in feminist legal theory, organized NOW chapters in Louisiana and challenged anti-abortion state statutes. She will present the ABC's of women's issues. NWPC's **Clare Giesen** has focused on gender issues, organized campaigns in Texas, was a Clinton appointee and now recruits and trains women for public office.

**SPEAKERS: Terry O'Neill, Executive Director
National Council of Women's Organizations**

**Clare Giesen, Executive Director
National Women's Political Caucus**

TOPIC: 2006 Elections and Women's Issues

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, June 27, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room**
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.
Please come a little earlier than usual to go through the new sign-in system.

Next Meeting: September 26, 2006
There are no meetings in July and August

PROGRAM SUMMARY – MAY 23, 2006 MEETING

Freeing Afghan Women and Girls--Unfinished Business

The speakers were Eleanor (Ellie) Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority and the Feminist Majority Foundation, and Farida Azizi, peace activist and founder of Cooperation for Peace and Unity.

Ellie explained that the Feminist Majority has been actively involved in bringing national and international attention to the Taliban's brutal treatment of women for the past 10 years.

In 1996, Smeal and her colleagues began to notice comments in the Associated Press wire about Taliban laws that were restricting women's rights and activities in Afghanistan. Women were forbidden from wearing noisy shoes; they could not be in groups of two or three; and they were forbidden from the public bathhouses. And these were the less horrific of the regime's orders.

Smeal began to ask other women's organizations what, if anything, was being done about the Taliban and their increasingly disturbing restrictions. This was, she recalled, only one year after the declaration that "women's rights are human rights," and she expected there to be an international reaction to these abuses.

Eventually, Smeal went to the U.S. State Department, where it was confirmed that the reports she was reading from Afghanistan were true. She then went to the United Nations, who also confirmed that these reports were true - and that even worse atrocities were being committed against women.

The Feminist Majority appealed to other women's organizations and human rights groups, asking that they take on this issue. But when none would take action, Smeal decided that the Feminist Majority would.

In early 1997 through March of 1998, Smeal and her staff created a direct mail campaign with the purpose of keeping the Bush administration from recognizing the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan. And on March 11, 1998, both the United States

government and the United Nations agreed not to recognize the Taliban's regime.

Smeal said that the Feminist Majority took a great deal of criticism during this time, not only from opposing groups but from other women's organizations. But they moved forward with their campaign. They picketed and held demonstrations at the Afghan embassy and ended up closing it down. They also met with experts on the State Department, on the United Nations, on Afghanistan, and on foreign relations, all in an attempt to figure out why the Taliban was allowed to stay in power.

Eventually, Smeal and her colleagues found out that a California-based company called UNICAL had signed a deal with the Taliban to build an oil pipeline across seven countries in the Middle East. She said that their next step was to learn all they could about UNICAL. And since UNICAL was headquartered in Los Angeles, where there were a large number of active members of The Feminist Majority, they organized a picket of their offices. The demonstration was lead by Mavis Leno, wife of talk show host Jay Leno, who not only recruited other celebrities and brought media attention to this cause, but also broke up a meeting of the UNICAL board of directors. And in the end, the oil pipeline was never built.

In early 2001, the World Food Program said that the Feminist Majority was the only organization that was successfully getting food into Afghanistan. Smeal reached out to Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, then the head of the World Health Organization and the World Food Program, Senator Hillary Clinton and former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, and was able to put pressure on the United Nations to get aid and food into Afghanistan.

Smeal explained that all of this demonstrates that women's groups can do a great deal. She said that if these events had not taken place before 9/11, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan would not have helped to bring about the improved conditions for women today in that country. The pressure from

PROGRAM SUMMARY – MAY 23, 2006 MEETING

Freeing Afghan Women and Girls--Unfinished Business (cont.)

women's groups in the United States played a huge role in freeing women from the Taliban.

But despite all of these gains, there are many things that remain to be done in Afghanistan. Smeal said that the women's movement in America must get involved with international issues, and not just focus on domestic problems. There is a women's movement in Afghanistan, and women's groups in the U.S. should reach out to them, and provide them with funding. There are real women who are giving their all in Afghanistan, and they are the hope of the future.

Farida Azizi began her talk by saying she was born in Afghanistan. She described how her family fled to Pakistan after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

School was made available to refugees, and Azizi was able to attend university when she was old enough to do so. However, the university required women to wear veils and cover their hands. After three years, she left school, because she did not want to cover her face, and doing so was not part of her tradition. In 1996, Azizi began working for an international aid agency and was assigned to manage a program for women in Afghanistan. She said that, as a woman, it was very hard to work in Afghanistan at the time. She had to wear a burka everywhere, and needed to have her husband escort her on some of her assessment visits.

Azizi said that Afghan men were not happy with her visits, but she saw a window of opportunity with the development of health programs for both men and women. Inside these health programs, there were ways for women to help other women; they could be trained to become midwives and doctors. By not describing this program as specifically for women, but instead, as part of an overall health program for everyone, Azizi was very successful.

In rural parts of Afghanistan, it was easier for Azizi to implement the health programs. But in urban areas, the Taliban's restrictions on women made her work very difficult. For

example, it became nearly impossible for her to walk outside without an escort. Azizi recalled once, when she was walking alone, she encountered a group of men who threatened "We will beat you next time if we see you alone."

Back at her office in Pakistan, Azizi received death threats for the work that she was doing in Afghanistan. But when she saw how Afghan women were suffering, and how there was no health care available for them, she could not stop herself from reaching out and offering help.

In 2000, Azizi came to the United States as a visitor. In 2001, she was granted asylum. At that time, she began to hear news reports about what was going on in Afghanistan, and the abuses that women were experiencing under the Taliban.

In November of 2001, Azizi was invited to the United Nations to speak about her personal experiences in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban. Because she was one of a very few number of women who had left Afghanistan and were able to share their stories, Azizi was invited to speak on many occasions after that. She concluded her talk by saying that she hopes that the conditions for women in Afghanistan will improve soon.

In response to questions, Smeal said that the United States has "not done the job" in Afghanistan. Both Smeal and Azizi agreed that U.S. funding for Afghanistan is currently going towards the salaries of people in the military and is funding drug traffickers. Meanwhile, Smeal continued, school teachers are earning 30 to 40 dollars a month and police are not paid adequate salaries. As a result of the salaries that are being paid to Westerners who work in Kabul, prices have skyrocketed, and the indigenous middle class has been eradicated.

Smeal concluded the presentation by repeating that the influence of American women's organizations on the rest of the world cannot be emphasized enough.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CWI is going on summer vacation! As you know, we do not meet in July or August. It's been a good year with great programs and increasing attendance. Thanks to all who have worked hard to make it so. We'd still like to expand our membership, so please continue to spread the word and distribute our Newsletter. Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, September 26th. Ellen

ELECTION FOR CWI BOARD VACANCIES

Al Golub, chair of the CWI Nominating Committee, reports that the election to fill the two CWI board vacancies will be conducted prior to the monthly Program on June 27th

The nominees are:

- **Jessica Lazar** is currently employed at the National Center for Research on Women and Families. She received her B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Women's Studies at Mount Holyoke College and is working on a master's degree at Georgetown University concentrating on social and public policy. A Bethesda resident, Ms. Lazar has served as senior administrative assistant at the World Wildlife Fund, as a program assistant on the campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and as an intern with the United Nations' Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations as a consultant.
-
- **D. Anne Martin**, a long time member of CWI, brings a strong background in policy development, training and budgeting. She has been a trainer and speaker in national and international conferences, television and video. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in management from Central Michigan University. She is currently president of the D.C. branch of the American Association of University Women. Her employment history includes consultative and management roles in FEMA. She has also served on the local boards of the Business and Professional Women's Association, the American Institute of Parliamentarians and several other organizations.

CWI members who wish to submit additional nominations may do so via fax to Al Golub at fax number 301 565-5241.

IF YOU MISSED IT...WOMEN'S HEALTH

Sponsored by Senators Russ Feingold and Olympia Snowe late last month, the Senate approved a resolution supporting Women's Health Week, "which promotes awareness of diseases that disproportionately affect women and which encourages preventive steps to ensure good health."

The resolution also noted that "significant disparities exist in the prevalence of disease among women of different backgrounds, including women with disabilities...that it is important to raise awareness among women and girls of key female health issues...it expresses support for federally funded research and data collection on diseases in women and any racial disparities in the rates of those diseases." The resolution urged women to observe Women's Checkup Day (the day after Mother's Day) by obtaining preventive screenings, and it expressed support for federally funded research and data. (from The Source on Women's Issues in Congress, Women's Policy, Inc.)

PREP FOR THE JUNE 27th CWI MEETING – CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES

The June speakers' organization web sites - a beginning source for women issues.

- **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS (www.womensorganizations.org)**
Click on *Our Members tab* at top to retrieve member organizations and to locate their web sites.
- **NATIONAL WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS (www.nwpc.org)**

See the candidates who are running in state primaries and other election information.

- **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ELECTION DIRECTORS (www.nased.org/membership.htm)**
Provides Board of Election contact information and web sites alphabetical by state including the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories.

PLANNING COMMUNITY-BASED CAMPAIGNS TO MOBILIZE WOMEN TO VOTE

In a May 25, 2006 press release, the American Association of University Women announced the release of the publication *Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout: A Manual for Community-Based Campaigns to Mobilize Women to Vote* — a valuable new tool to assist its members and other grassroots groups making plans to turn out women voters in the midterm elections this fall. For more information about the manual, contact VoterEd@aauw.org or visit the web site at www.aauw.org/issue_advocacy/voter_ed/index.cfm.

WOMEN'S ENEWS IS OFFERING A 25 PERCENT DISCOUNT ON THREE FEMINIST TOP-SELLERS

Touba and the Meaning of Night: A Novel of Modern Iran by Sharhnrush Parsipur, who is in exile; the novel is banned in Iran. The book explores the "changing fortunes of Iranian women throughout eight turbulent decades of the 20th century." (Women's eNews Member price, \$19.50)

Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq by Riverbend, a young Iraqi woman who lost her job when the U.S. invaded. She now observes the impact of war on Iraqi civilians through her blog from Baghdad. She won the International Lettres Ulysses Prize for the Art of Literary Reportage and was nominated for the Johnson Prize for Nonfiction in the U.K. (Women's eNews Member price, \$11.25)

In the Name of Friendship by Marilyn French. Set in the Berkshires, this novel is the story of four women's friendship and a chronicle of the ways that the women's movement changed the lives of men and women alike. (Women's eNews Member price, \$19.50)

Add \$4 shipping and handling charge. To order, visit http://womensenews.org/Feminist_press.html

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL: Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their e-mail requests to cwinwsltr@aol.com

COMING EVENTS

- JUNE 13** **Virginia State Primary** - Democratic and Republican Parties
- JUNE 27** **CWI Meeting**, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: Candidates and Women's Issues: Making our Case. See page 1.
- SEPT 12** **Maryland State Primary** - Democratic and Republican Parties
District of Columbia Primary - Democratic, Republican, and Statehood-Green Parties

NO CWI MEETINGS ARE HELD IN JULY AND AUGUST

- SEPT 26** **CWI Meeting**, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: To Be Announced.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.
Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

CWI

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Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

September 2006

Commissions for Women: Useful Today?

Commissions for women — established in the 1970's during the burgeoning women's movement — were inspired by the National Commission on Women, which was headed initially by Eleanor Roosevelt. Their purpose was to function as a bridge between women and governments. These commissions for women are now found at state, county and local levels in many parts of the country; however, support for these efforts is waning.

Our speakers will talk about the current status and priorities of these commissions and they will assess the future relevance and usefulness of such commissions for today's women. **Judith Vaughan-Prather** is executive director of the Montgomery County Government Commission for Women and she also serves as local staff for the National Association of Commissions for Women. She will discuss the national issues as well as the local situation in a county office. **Louise Armitage** serves in a similar directorship for the City of Fairfax Commission for Women. With nineteen years of experience conducting a local program for women, she can provide insight into the viability and survivability of such commissions.

SPEAKERS: **Judith Vaughan-Prather**, Executive Director
Montgomery County Commission for Women

Louise Armitage, Executive Director
City of Fairfax Commission for Women

TOPIC: **Commissions for Women**

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, September 26, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

PLACE: **American Council on Education**
One Dupont Circle, Conference Room B, lower level
(Note change of room location this meeting only.)

Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Arrive a little early to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: October 24, 2006

PROGRAM SUMMARY – JUNE 27, 2006 MEETING

Candidates and Women's Issues: Making Our Case

The speakers were **Terry O'Neill**, executive director of the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) and **Clare Geisen**, executive director of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). A special guest at the meeting was Lois Herr, candidate for the 16th Congressional district in Pennsylvania, who is an excellent example of women in politics.

Terry O'Neill began by stating that general issues for women should be at the top of the political agenda this Fall but actually is not even on the national list. Women are deeply concerned about Social Security and income equality but these concerns are not being talked about in the current militaristic atmosphere of the government. She added that affirmative action, child care and reproductive rights are not on the front burner of most politicians, and are not viewed in the same light as terrorism and military concerns.

O'Neill explained that NCWO brings more than 200 women's groups and organizations together, representing close to ten million women across the United States, to build a consensus on a legislative agenda for the new Congress every two years. NCWO publishes *The ABC's of Women's Issues*, a pamphlet on the key concerns of women and now is preparing the 2006 version. The Council will distribute more than 50,000 copies before the election.

She pointed out that one of the most important issues for women is worry over health care costs: more than 20 percent of women with children have no health insurance. Birth control is a high expense for most young women but health insurance often does not cover these costs, although Viagra for men is usually covered. Older women are concerned about Medicare costs and the war. More than 72 percent of women oppose the war. Lois Herr added that in her discussions with women, the environment and renewable energy resources were also important. The topic of abortion is still a pressure point or volatile issue that

ignites constituent comments on either side of the issue, Geisen commented.

Continuing, Geisen observed that the numbers of women elected to public office are far too low, but are increasing slowly. This November there are nine female challengers for Senate seats, and six incumbents. In the House there are 146 female challengers and for state governors there are 18 women candidates.

In addition, O'Neill declared, research on women's health problems is woefully underfunded. Another problem relates to training and education for women, which leads to good pay and benefits. Better enforcement of the Equal Pay Act is also needed.

Peace is also a major concern of women; resources are diverted from human needs to pay for the war. Roe vs. Wade protections will probably be reduced, as it is already more difficult to obtain a safe abortion today than it was in 1972, a year before the court decision, O'Neill said.

Clare Geisen stated that Lois Herr was one of the first woman candidates endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus this year. Then she seconded O'Neill's comments that women's issues seem to have disappeared from the political arena, noting that the Republican National Committee's top five items are safety and security; immigration; jobs and education; tax reform; and faith and values. The Democratic Party website had only one link that reflected feminist concerns as well as women's leadership issues.

Geisen declared that current polls show that women are deeply troubled by the uncertainty in the economy. That is their number one issue, followed by health care and care giving, and education.

Both speakers referred to the past week's events when the House tried (and failed) to repeal the estate tax benefit for the wealthy, and voted against increasing the minimum

PROGRAM SUMMARY – JUNE 27, 2006 MEETING continued

Candidates and Women's Issues: Making Our Case

wage which has 51 percent less buying power than when it was introduced. In the same session, members voted themselves a \$30,000 raise. Other items in the question and answer period concerned: the negative effect of outsourcing on women government employees; successful fundraising by Emily's List for female politicians; education, and women's voting — 48 percent of women ages 35-48 voted while only 22 percent of those younger than 35 used their vote in the last presidential election.

In concluding, O'Neill and Geisen reminded all that women have power if they use it and highlighted three concerns for this election period:

- It is urgent to increase the number of women who vote and participate in politics.
- Women can be particularly influential in local elections; they have to ask tough questions and get out the vote.
- It is essential that women use their power to bring about changes that they deem important.

Editor's note:

On the Internet, the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) can be found at <http://www.womensorganizations.org> and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) can be found at <http://www.nwpc.org>.

TALIBAN ATTACKS ON GIRLS' SCHOOLS INCREASE

[Update since CWI May 2006 program from the Feminist Majority Democracy-In-Action E-mail dated July 12, 2006.] "Taliban militia bombings, burnings of girls' schools, and the killing of teachers are increasing at an alarming rate as the Taliban resurgence continues to gain strength. Ahmed Rashid, a well known author and expert on the Taliban recently wrote in the *Washington Post* that "...every single day somewhere in Afghanistan a girls' school is burned down or a female teacher is killed by the Taliban." Under the Taliban regime, education for Afghan women and girls was banned.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), has called for the international community and the Afghan government to create a concrete strategy for addressing the security problems. The United Nations (UN) has also repeatedly condemned the attacks. The World Food Program, which provides programs to school children, recently issued a report raising concerns about the increases in threats and attacks on girls' schools.

Eleanor Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation/Feminist Majority, which has waged a campaign urging the U.S. to increase peacekeeping troops throughout Afghanistan said, "As the bombings and burning of girls' schools continue unabated and the situation for women and girls continues to deteriorate, the Bush Administration remains silent."

Contact your Senators and Representatives today and urge them to support the efforts of Afghan women by co-sponsoring the Afghan Women's Empowerment Act of 2006 S.2392 (introduced by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and H.R.5185 (introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)). The Afghan Women's Empowerment Act of 2006 authorizes funding for Afghan institutions that promote and protect women's rights and human rights and for Afghan women-led nonprofits providing direct services to Afghan women and girls."

SENATE APPROVES NATIONAL MAMMOGRAPHY DAY

On July 12, the Senate approved a resolution (S. Res. 508) designating October 20, 2006 as "National Mammography Day."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to another "season" of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues, our thirty-second year! Welcome, also, to our newly elected Board members D. Anne Martin and Jessica Lazar; and warm thanks to outgoing members Jacqueline Scherer and Clara Schiffer for their many contributions. We have exciting programs coming up and always welcome your input and suggestions.

Ellen Overton

HEIDI HARTMANN HONORED

Heidi Hartmann, president of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, has been named a 2006 Purpose Prize Fellow. She received this honor as a semifinalist for the Purpose Prize, which is a new grant initiative aimed at investing in Americans who are over 60 and leading a new age of social innovation. Hartmann was named one of 55 Fellows from a pool of over 1200 applicants. Visit www.leadwithexperience.com to learn more about the Purpose Prize, the Fellows, and Finalists.

Sherry Lansing, chair of The Purpose Prize jury, CEO of the Sherry Lansing Foundation and former chair of Paramount Pictures' Motion Picture Group, said, "Unlike a lifetime achievement award, the Purpose Prize is a critical investment in what these creative individuals will do next to solve important problems. As Bill Gates said, "It's not about retiring, it's about reordering your priorities." Two foundations, the Atlantic Philanthropies and The John Templeton Foundation, provided funding to Civic Ventures for the Prize.

AAUW URGES ACTION TO OPPOSE BILLS IN CONGRESS

[From AAUW Action Network E-newsletter August 2006] With back- to- school season upon us again, AAUW asks us to take a moment to write to our members of Congress to urge them to oppose the America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids Act (S3682/HR5822) which may threaten the vitality of public schools in your area.

If passed, the Act would divert already scarce financial resources away from public schools through private school vouchers, misleadingly named "opportunity scholarships." Voucher schemes like those proposed in S3682/HR5822 subsidize tuition at private or religious schools with federal dollars, draining millions of taxpayer dollars from the public schools that educate 90 percent of the nation's students.

The E-newsletter states, "While AAUW supports innovative techniques to improve America's schools, we believe this new proposal flies in the face of our nation's commitment to public education in addition to the flexibility and accountability mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). AAUW believes the appropriate strategy for improving our nation's schools is to direct resources toward improving public schools, rather than diverting public funds into private institutions.

AAUW urges Congress to oppose this and any new attempt to divert public dollars into a private school voucher scheme. Vouchers are taxpayers' dollars spent according to the policies of a private school board—not the decisions of a democratically elected and publicly accessible school board. Because private schools are not accountable to the public at large, taxpayers lose public oversight for the expenditure of their tax dollars. Better funding for public schools is a priority now more than ever, as schools struggle to meet mandated accountability standards and address achievement gaps among students according to a NCLB program that is under funded by more than \$40 billion."

CELEBRATE PBS' "TO THE CONTRARY"
Bonnie Erbé's 15th Season on Public Television

The Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues invites you to a FREE reception on **Wednesday, September 20, 2006 from 6:00 p.m. – 8 p.m., Cannon House Office Bldg., Cannon Caucus Room.** The event marks 15 years of progress for women in media and politics. (Bonnie Erbé spoke to CWI on this subject earlier this year.) Awards, sponsored by Toyota and FedEx, will be presented to Women's Policy Inc. and to Dr. Bernadine Healey, US News and World Report, and former director, National Institutes of Health. Women's Caucus Co-Chairs are Representatives Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL.) and Hilda Soilis (D-CA.) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC). **RSVP to jfowlin@tothecontrary.org.**

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER OCT. 19

This dinner event will take place starting 6 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Towers. Charlie Rose, host of the Charlie Rose Show, is the special guest, and author Judy Blume will be honored for her writings "that speak to the issues children, young adults and parents grapple with every day and for her work as founder and trustee of The Kids Fund, an educational foundation. Individual ticket price \$250. Reservations can be made on line at <http://www.nwlc.org>. For more information call 202 588-5180.

PLANNING AHEAD 2007: MARCH 26-27

The National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) and the Younger Women's Task Force (YWTF) are proud to announce the Women's Equality Summit and Congressional Action Day, March 26th and 27th, 2007. NCWO says it has never been more urgent for women to shape the policies that affect their lives.

NCWO & YWTF are jointly hosting this exciting 2-day gathering in Washington, DC. They expect hundreds of women leaders of all ages from across the nation to come together to deliver a unified message to policy makers on Capitol Hill.

BEST BARGAIN IN TOWN: RENEW NOW

Individual dues: \$25.00 or \$35.00 for organizations. We have made renewal easier by having one date for everyone. Regardless of when you renewed in the past, dues are now payable in September to maintain your membership from September 06 to August 07.

The Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) presents expert speakers nine times during the year on current topics which impact the lives of women.

Send Renewal to: CWI
Linda Fihelly, Treasurer
5618 N. Marwood Blvd.
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL: Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their e-mail requests to cwinwsltr@aol.com

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER CWI MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH for individuals and organizations. See page 5.

SEPT. 20 RECEPTION CELEBRATING PBS' "TO THE CONTRARY." See page 5.

SEPT. 26 CWI Meeting, One Dupont Circle, NW, Conf. Rm. B, lower level. 12 n - 1:30pm
Topic: Commissions for Women: Useful Today? See page 1.

OCTOBER Domestic Violence Awareness Month

OCT. 19 National Women's Law Center Annual Awards Dinner. See page 5.

OCT. 24 CWI Meeting, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm

Future CWI Program Year 2006-7 Meetings - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2006: September 26; October 24; November 28; (No December meeting)

2007: January 23; February 27; March 27; April 24; May 22; June 26

CWI Board of Directors, July 2006 – June 2007. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar, D. Anne Martin, Ruth G. Nadel, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio.

Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

CWI

CLEARINGHOUSE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

P.O. Box 70603

Friendship Heights, MD 20813

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

October 2006

Business and Professional Women's Organizations - Their Views and Actions on Feminist Issues

The two speakers at the CWI October lunch meeting have each had significant experience with issues of business, leadership, politics, procurement and the importance of women moving into networks of influence in the careers of business and professional women.

Deborah Frett joined Business and Professional Women (BPW) as CEO in May 2005. She has had more than 27 years of experience providing and implementing strategic direction and executive management for associations, (for-profit and non-profit). Margot Dorfman is CEO of the US Women's Chamber of Commerce; she has dedicated herself to promoting economic and leadership interests of women. She founded Arizona Women's News, Hispana News and the Greater Phoenix Business Connection. Additionally, her experience includes over ten years in executive positions with General Mills and other Fortune 500 firms.

In addition to discussing the goals and programs of the organizations they represent, Frett and Dorfman will speak on positions that various organizations take on issues that concern women, including flex-time, family and work balance, equity pay, etc.

SPEAKERS: Deborah Frett, CEO
Business and Professional Women
Margot Dorfman, CEO
US Women's Chamber of Commerce

TOPIC: Business and Professional Women's Organizations
Views and Actions

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.
Please come a little earlier than usual to go through the new sign-in system.

Next Meeting: November 28, 2006

PROGRAM SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER 26, 2006 MEETING

Commissions for Women

At CWI's September meeting, Judith Vaughan-Prather and Louise Huff Armitage discussed "Commissions for Women: Useful Today?"

Vaughan-Prather, executive director of the Montgomery County Government Commission for Women and the interim staff for the National Association for Commissions for Women, who has worked there for more than 27 years, said that she believes the commissions for women are strong and well. She explained that commissions for women differ from other women's rights advocacy groups in that each is, by definition, established by the government for the jurisdiction it serves. While they are advocates for women's rights, commissions have a different role to play, which is advisory in nature.

She noted that there are approximately 225 commissions for women in the country, and they vary in size and in budget. There are also differences in how they were initially created; some were established by city governments, others by state governments and still others by county governments. While most commissions do not have much of a budget, some have a full staffing and a few, like the Montgomery County Commission, offer women's counseling services as well. Vaughan-Prather added that the most effective commissions for women are the ones where the government has made a commitment to support the work of the commission. Those commissions are given budgets and are able to appoint real staff, rather than simply relying on volunteers.

Because no federal money or support is given to these commissions, so about 18 years ago they decided to start a union. The National Association of Commissions for Women is a non-partisan group that gives a voice to women's commissions on Capitol Hill and it helps the member commissions learn from each other, and as appropriate, work together on common areas of interest. The association charges a small membership fee, and in exchange, the commissions are provided with technical and staff support, newsletters and action alerts, networking opportunities and a national

convention offering training specific to Commissioners and staff.



Judith Vaughan-Prather and Louise Huff Armitage speak at CWI September meeting. (Photo: D. Anne Martin)

The Montgomery County Commission for Women was established in 1972, and consists of a fifteen-member advisory board. The Commission was created by law, which Vaughan-Prather said is important because it adds permanence to the agency and makes it more difficult to abolish under conservative administrations. It means that public hearings must be held if someone wants to disband the commission or change it in any way. The law also specifies that there must be an executive director for the commission, which means that there must be a budget in order to pay the salary for the position. In the case of Montgomery County's commission, the executive director is not a political appointee. The law also stipulates that, of the fifteen-member advisory board, nine members must represent other women's advocacy groups in Montgomery County.

Vaughan-Prather described of the work of the Montgomery County Commission. The Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee chooses bills that could potentially have an affect on women in Montgomery County, and decides what kind of a response is needed.

The Status of Women in Montgomery County (SWIM) Committee conducts research on the demographics of women in the county. She explained it is using databases that have already been compiled by other county groups in order to find data specifically about women.

The Immigrant Women in Montgomery County (IWIM) Committee is focused on women living in the County who have emigrated from other

PROGRAM SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER 26, 2006 MEETING continued

Commissions for Women

countries. The committee has focused specifically on those women who work in low-wage positions and may be more vulnerable to discrimination, abuse and harassment. The IWIM Committee has produced pamphlets in five languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese) to educate these members of the community about their rights. The committee is currently working on a guide focused on the needs of immigrant women who are domestic workers and for their employers. These guides provide information about legal requirements, best practices, a sample employment agreement, and provide lists of resources.

The commission provides scholarships for girls in middle school so they can attend computer camps at Montgomery College. The Commission also runs a Counseling and Career Center, which offers personal, couples, and career counseling; support groups and classes and other services for several thousand women every year.

Louise Armitage, the human services coordinator for the City of Fairfax, explained that the Commission for Women is only a small part of her job. Commissions for Women have not fared as well in Virginia as they have in other states, like Maryland, but she strongly believes that they have an important role to play and work to do.

The Commission for Women in Fairfax was founded as an advisory board in February 1994. There were originally seven members on the board, and it has now grown to nine. These individuals are volunteers from diverse backgrounds, who have other, full-time jobs. The commission has a budget of \$1,750 (not including her salary) which goes toward community seminars and the advocacy function of the commission.

The first of these seminars were about topics such as women and alcoholism and women caring for the elderly, Armitage explained. Now, these seminars are focused on women starting businesses and on helping women plan for retirement. The commission supports Suited for Success — a program that provides professional clothing to low-income women who are actively seeking employment; and they support and

encourage high school students who have excelled in volunteering in their communities.

One of the commission's campaigns was in opposition to the opening of a Hooters restaurant. While they were not successful in keeping the establishment from opening, they were able to open up a dialogue about discrimination of women and freedom of speech.

To acknowledge the diverse population in Fairfax City, the commission hosts an International Heritage Festival and a Hispanic Festival each year. They also host an event for women in legislature, for which they partner with Women + 1 and EMILY's List. In addition, the Commission has also created a talent pool and career bank for women in Fairfax City. They also have collaboration with the Girl Scouts, as well as with George Mason University.

Armitage explained that leading the commission "gives her political cover", meaning that she can promote, advocate and get community support for programs and issues that she feels strongly about. She gave as an example the commission being vocal – and ultimately, successful – to obtain retirement benefits for part-time employees of the City of Fairfax. This has also been the case for other members of the Commission; for example, a Committee-member's concern about the issue of human trafficking resulted in the commission bringing the matter to the attention of the state legislature.

The amount of activity in the commission ebbs and flows. But Armitage describes it as an important catalyst for activities, networking, and providing information to women. And their collaboration with the Girl Scouts, in particular, is a way for them to appeal to the next generation of women. She concluded by saying that there is great diversity in the Fairfax City Commission on Women and that their discussions are varied and lively as a result. And she believes that as every woman is pushed forward, it helps the rest of us.

Commission members from several area Women's Commissions attended the meeting, including the D.C. Commission and its chair, Dr. Christine Warnke, who mentioned some of its activities.

NWHM LAUNCHES NEW CYBER EXHIBIT

In September, the National Women's History Museum proudly announced the launch of a new cyber exhibit The History of Women in Education to correspond with students returning to school. The exhibit traces women's education options in the 1700's, 1800's, and 1900's and includes several biographies of important women to the education movement. To visit the exhibit, go to <http://www.nmwh.org/exhibits/Education/Introduction.htm>]

LABOR DAY SURVEY FOUND GLASS CEILING HAS BEEN SHATTERED

"A Women Presidents' Organization (WPO) Labor Day survey found that the glass ceiling has been shattered, at least for members of this prestigious organization. The Women Presidents' Organization is a nonprofit membership organization of entrepreneurial women presidents who have guided their businesses to generate at least \$2 million in gross annual sales or \$1 million for a service-based business. More than half of respondents (56%) believe their salary is the same as their male counterparts, and over half (51%) plan to increase their salary and/or their bonus, benefits, commissions, partnerships distributions, or compensation." [Reported 10/8/06 on Women's Entrepreneurs Inc. website <http://www.we-inc.org>]

WOMEN'S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN SENATE

"Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and John Kerry (D-MA) introduced bipartisan legislation in July that would help increase the number of women-owned small businesses and strengthen the Women's Business Center program. In addition to providing sustaining grants for existing women's business centers, the Women's Small Business Ownership Act of 2006 (S. 3659) would provide the National Women's Business Council with the authority to form co-sponsorship agreements with outside organizations. The legislation also would establish an Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise made up of representatives from the National Women's Business Council, the Small Business Administration, and the Departments of Commerce, Labor, Defense, and Treasury." [September issue of *ENGAGE*, a newsletter published by the National Women's Business Council, www.nwbc.gov]

EXHIBIT AT SEWELL-BELMONT HOUSE & MUSEUM

"Changing the Face of Power: Women in the U.S. Senate" will be on display through February 17, 2007 at the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, 144 Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002-5608. Phone (202) 546-1210 Website <http://www.sewallbelmont.org>

LOCAL BWP HOSTS BUSINESS WOMEN'S WEEK LUNCHEON

In recognition of Business Women's Week, the D. C. State Federation of Business and Professional Women's Inc. Presents: Women in the Military - A Military Member Outreach Initiative Luncheon and Ceremony - Saturday, October 21, 2006. 11:30 a.m. – Networking; Luncheon begins at Noon at Pier 7 Restaurant-Channel Inn Hotel, 650 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC. Cost: \$30.00 Reservations: (301) 279-5894. For more information, go to <http://www.bpwdc.org/BWW.html>.

DEPT. OF LABOR ANNOUNCES OCTOBER 16-22 AS DRUG FREE WORK WEEK

"October 16-22, 2006 is the first-ever *Drug-Free Work Week*, and employers and workers across the country are encouraged to participate. The purpose of *Drug-Free Work Week* is to educate employers, employees and the general public about the importance of being drug-free as a component of improving workplace safety and health and to encourage workers with alcohol and drug problems to seek help. The U.S. Department of Labor is promoting *Drug-Free Work Week* through a collaborative effort with the 13 members of its Drug-Free Workplace Alliance, a cooperative program focused on improving worker safety and health in the construction industry through drug-free workplace programs." [DOL website <http://www.dol.gov/index.htm>]

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

National Association of Commissions for Women	www.nacw.org
Montgomery County Commission for Women	www.montgomerycountymd.gov
Fairfax County Commission for Women	www.fairfaxva.gov
Business and Professional Women	www.bpw.org
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	www.uschamber.com
National Women's Business Council	www.nwbc.gov
Women's Research and Education Institute	www.wrei.org

WORKING WOMEN IN TRANSITION

"The Women's Bureau is piloting a new multi-regional (regions III, IV, V, VI) demonstration project serving women who are making a transition in their work lives. Building on the best practices of *Better Jobs!* projects, WWIT will use the Bureau's unique high-touch and high-tech strategy that combines online and face-to-face resources. Participants will have access to online mentors (e-mentoring), online employment tools, and distance learning opportunities while working with local service providers. Each region is focusing on a different target population representing a spectrum of issues and concerns: spouses of military reservists (West Virginia), women recovering from substance abuse (Kentucky), baby boomers changing careers (Ohio), and TANF recipients (Arkansas). The Bureau is undertaking this ambitious project with the support of the national contractor, the University of Kentucky in Lexington. See WWIT website at: <http://www.workingwomenintransition.org/> Contact: Beverly Lyle, Region VI (Dallas, TX), 214-767-6985 and/or Suzanne Burnette, National Office (Washington, DC), 202-693-6750." [U.S. DOL website www.dol.gov/wb]

FUTURE CWI PROGRAM YEAR 2006-7 MEETINGS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2006: October 24; November 28; (No December meeting)

2007: January 23; February 27; March 27; April 24; May 22; June 26

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

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COMING EVENTS

-
- OCT. 21 Business Women's Week Luncheon. See p. 5.
- OCT. 24 CWI Meeting, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: Business and Professional Women's Organizations. See p. 1.
- OCT. 31 LUNCHEON: Frances Meade: "Women in Saudi Arabia: Then and Now" at the Woman's National Democratic Club. Price: Members \$19. Nonmembers \$25. Reserve with Pat Fitzgerald at 202 232-7363 Ext. 3003. Frances Meade. Middle East consultant and author, lived in Saudi Arabia for 33 years and presents us with a rare opportunity to broaden our perception of women in Saudi Arabia.
- NOV. 8 National Capital Chapter of Older Women's League will hold a education program on Caregiving, a Women's Issue at Sumner School, 17th & M Sts. NW 1pm-2:30pm. Admission: Free.
- Nov. 28 CWI Meeting, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: TBA

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Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820
Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

November 2006

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES IN THE NEW 110TH CONGRESS

After the excitement of the recent election, we must consider seriously the impact on women's issues of the upcoming changes in Congress and its committee makeup.

Our speakers will bring us expertise from two vantage points. **Sharon Grosfeld** is executive director of the Women's Leadership Forum of the Democratic National Committee and served in the Maryland General Assembly. **Anita Sharma** is a senior analyst at Lake Research Partners, which is headed by the noted pollster, Celinda Lake.

Bring your questions and hopes for action on the many issues ahead of us.

SPEAKERS: **Sharon Grosfeld**, Executive Director
Women's Leadership Forum of the Democratic National
Committee

Anita Sharma, Senior Analyst
Lake Research

TOPIC: **What's Ahead for Women's Issues In The 110th
Congress**

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, November 28, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

PLACE: **American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room**

Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Please come a little earlier than usual to go through the new sign-in system. In case of a snowstorm and/or closing of government offices, the meeting will be cancelled. Please listen to radio reports.

Next Meeting: January 28, 2007

No meeting in December

PROGRAM SUMMARY – OCTOBER 24, 2006 MEETING

Business and Professional Women’s Organizations – Their Views and Actions on Feminist Issues

Our speakers at the October CWI meeting discussed business and professional women’s organizations. **Margot Dorfman**, CEO of the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce, and **Deborah Frett**, CEO of Business and Professional Women/USA and the Business and Professional Women’s Foundation spoke of the work of their organizations and their view and actions on the feminist issues.



Margot Dorfman and Deborah Frett were featured speakers. Photo by D. Anne Martin

Deborah Frett described BPW/USA as a multi-generational, nonpartisan membership organization, with a mission to achieve equity for all women in the workplace. The groups focus areas include the Equal Rights Amendment, pay equity, social security, work-life flexibility and workplace equality.

BPW was founded in 1919 and was the first organization to focus on the concerns of working women. It was also one of the first women’s organizations to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment in 1937, which is an issue that is still at the top of their national agenda today.

“BPW members set their eyes on legal equality in the Constitution,” Frett said. She explained that discussions of modern problems of the workplace – such as pay inequality, discrimination, and gender bias – cannot be separated from the ERA debate. She emphasized that for these reasons, women today must continue to fight for the ERA.

To address the issue of pay equity, BPW takes a three-pronged approach: legislation must be passed; businesses need to be held accountable for unfair pay practices; and women should have the knowledge and the tools to empower themselves in the workplace.

BPW is also interested in Social Security reform and retirement security, both of which come from the organization’s concern about the wage gap and how it will affect women’s retirement. While working to make legislative changes, BPW is also educating its members on why women, in particular, depend on Social Security.

The issue of workplace flexibility is another key issue, Frett noted. The Business and Professional Women’s Foundation has been working with employers to make workplaces better for women and their families.

BPW Foundation research has shown that creating a workplace in which both men and women can succeed will result in a significant increase in the bottom line for employers. While there is currently no federal legislation that addresses workplace flexibility, both BPW/USA and the

PROGRAM SUMMARY – OCTOBER 24, 2006 MEETING continued

Business and Professional Women's Organizations

BPW Foundation is hoping to change that in the not-so-distant future.

Women veterans are a significant population of women that is often overlooked in considering these issues, Frett stated. Last year, BPW/USA began a program called Women Joining Forces: Closing Ranks, Opening Doors, or WJF. This program is for women who have left the military and are making the transition to civilian life. BPW/USA is the first and only national non-governmental organization that offers this kind of support to women veterans, and they are currently developing a survey to try to understand the unique difficulties that these women face.

Margot Dorfman began her presentation by sharing some statistics about the challenges that women face in the workplace. For example, she quoted data that said it could take up to 40 years for women to achieve parity with men in executive positions in the United States.

She explained that the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce was founded in 2001, the result of an effort that was launched by a newspaper in Arizona. The main focus of the organization is on the economic growth of women-owned businesses, along with community development and leadership for women. Dorfman explained that because the organization has a business background, it advances issues differently from other groups.

There are 10 million female business owners in the US, Dorfman said, and women-owned firms are the fastest

growing in the country. Women leave to start their own businesses, she added, because most business environments are not family friendly, and there is no pay equity. The US Women's Chamber of Commerce advocates for these women, and also provides them with education and tools for economic development and advancement.

If all of the female business owners in the country were connected, major legislative changes could be implemented. Dorfman said, "A reporting mechanism is needed to take stock and to see what kind of progress is being made, as well as what is still needed, by these owners."

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce will soon begin publishing the Women's Business Journal, which Dorfman described as a tool to help bring women business-owners together. This publication will share statistics and information, and will help women to take the right steps to move themselves and their businesses forward.

"Women are in survivor mode," said Dorfman and they need to move beyond having the separate lives of work and home."

Dorfman extended an invitation to join USWCC concluding, "We work on behalf of the economic advancement for all women. We also support other women's organizations to advance them as well."

For more information about either organization, visit their web sites:

U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.uswcc.org>

Business and Professional Women/USA
<http://www.bpwusa.org>

NOVEMBER 15: TRAILBLAZERS: WOMEN VETERANS SHARE THEIR STORIES

A cordial invitation from Women's Policy, Inc., the Women's Research and Education Institute, Disabled American Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America in cooperation with Reps. Ginny Brown-Waite and Hilda L. Solis (Co-Chairs, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lois Capps, Vice-Chairs, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

Wednesday, November 15, 2006 8:00 – 9:00am

2168 Rayburn House Office Building (Gold Room)

Breakfast will be served from 8:00 – 8:15am

Currently, there are approximately 1.7 million women veterans in the U.S., and by year 2010 it is estimated that women veterans will comprise 8 percent of the veteran population. Three women will share their personal experiences, highlight the contributions of women veterans, and discuss the needs of women veterans today.

NEW BOOK ABOUT "SECOND WAVE" WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ORGANIZERS

Feminists Who Changed America 1963-1975 was recently published by University of Illinois Press, Written by Barbara J. Love, it is the first comprehensive directory to document many of the founders and leaders (including both well-known and grassroots organizers) of the second wave women's movement. It tells the stories of more than two thousand individual women and a few notable men who together re-ignited the women's movement and made permanent changes to entrenched customs and laws. Nancy F. Cott writes in the foreword, "[the book] discusses the movement in relation to the earlier first wave and presents a brief of overview of the second wave in the context of other contemporaneous social movements."

Love, an editor, writer and journalist is currently a member of the Veteran Feminists of America, as well as author of *Foremost Women in Communications* and coauthor of *Sappho Was a Right on Women*. Cott is the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History at Harvard and the Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advance Study. (Hardcover, \$80)

WOMEN WORK! 2007 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A Women's Work is STILL Never Done is the title of the 2007 conference to be held in Arlington, Va. **Mark your calendar now for April 22-25, 2007.** Go to <http://www.womenwork.org/> for more information.

GENDER INEQUITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

[Feminist Daily News Wire November 3, 2006] The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) released a report last week that draws attention to disparities among female and male faculty in higher education. According to the report, women are obtaining doctoral degrees at record rates, but represent only a small portion of tenured faculty. The report notes nine doctoral institutions where women account for less than 10 percent of full professors, with women accounting for a mere 6.4 percent of tenured faculty at Polytechnic University. The report also illustrates the salary gap among women and men professors; at the University of Houston, the average salary for a woman assistant professor is only 79.4 percent the salary of a man.

Martha S. West, a professor of law at the University of California at Davis and co-author of the report, said, "I think the significant thing is that we are releasing the data for individuals schools around the country, so people at their own schools can evaluate how their school is doing compared to others... Hopefully we'll generate some significant attention all over the country." The report in PDF format can be downloaded from AAUP website at <http://www.aaup.org>.

MARYLAND'S LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING, JANUARY 23

Sponsored by the United Seniors of Maryland (USM), this rally will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland. Mark your calendar and take action now to join activist Maryland seniors in shaping their futures. The focus will be on the priority issues established at the August 14, 2006 meeting of the presidents of the member organizations of the United Seniors of Maryland.

Invited Speakers include the: Governor of Maryland, President of the Maryland Senate; Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, Members of the House of Delegates,, Members of the Senate, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging, Mayor of Annapolis, County Executive of Anne Arundel County.

The cost of the event is \$11 per person in advance, \$13 at the door. Prepays must have tickets. For further information and a registration form, phone David Waugh, NCAURC Representative to USM, and USM Vice President for Rallies, at 301-493-5883, email, dwaugh@retiredamericans.org, or USM President Charlie Culbertson at 410-823-6432, email, ceculbert@aol.com.

FUTURE CWI PROGRAM YEAR 2006-7 MEETINGS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2006: November 28; (No December meeting)

2007: January 23; February 27; March 27; April 24; May 22; June 26

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COMING EVENTS

Nov. 15 **Breakfast Briefing Trailblazers: Women Veterans Tell Their Stories.**
(see pg. 4)

Nov. 28 **CWI Meeting**, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: **Women in the New Congress.** (see pg 1)

Note: No CWI meeting in December.

2007

Jan. 23 **CWI Meeting**, One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, 12 noon - 1:30pm
Topic: TBA

Jan. 23 **2007 Annual State Legislative Rally** (see pg. 5)

Apr. 22-25 **Women Work! 2007 National Conference**

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