

What Women Need to Know: Reevaluating Your Financial Health

In this tough economy, it's hard to find anyone who hasn't begun to think about his or her financial health. In fact, many women find themselves in particularly precarious positions as we enter 2009. Some are looking to enter, or re-enter, the paid workforce. Others are seeking to hold on to their jobs or better prepare for retirement.

David B. Kauffman, J.D., CFP® is a senior client advisor for Pinnacle Advisory Group, Inc. who has conducted seminars throughout the District on a variety of financial planning topics.

Alyssa Best is the local programs and policy associate at Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) where she works on direct service, organizing and policy projects that increase economic opportunities for low-income women and girls in the DC metropolitan area.

Date/Time: **Tuesday, January 27 / noon — 1:30pm**

Open to the public, no reservation necessary

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

In case of bad weather and closing of government offices, the CWI meeting will be cancelled.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Examining Prospects for Progressive Social Change

The speakers at CWT's Nov. 25 meeting were **Lisalyn R. Jacobs**, vice president for government relations at Legal Momentum, formerly known as NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, and **Nan Aron**, president of the Alliance for Justice, a national association of public interest and civil rights organizations.

Nan Aron works to reform the civil justice system and spearheads the "Judicial Selection Project," a campaign to appoint qualified judges who will work to protect the rights of all Americans, including the vulnerable and disenfranchised.

Noting that while we are all hopeful that the new administration will support progressive issues, Aron reminded us that "We are not yet at the promised land" as there is much more to be done to ensure that the new administration sees through its campaign's promises. She quoted Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, when he became president, challenged Americans, "I hear what you say, I agree with you, now make me do it." She explained, "We (activists) are the outside social change agents, who need to push the new administration because they will be immediately consumed with Iraq, the economy and health care. Of course," she added, "we can all agree that these are priority issues."

But, Aron continued, attention to the judiciary is even more important this year than it has been in the past. "We look to the judiciary to represent and ease the pain of so many Americans — whether it is foreclosure of a house, losing unemployment or social security benefits, or an experience like Lilly Ledbetter's. These cases find their way to the courts." The courts are often the only place where many Americans can find recourse, Aron explained,

Aron reminisced of her recent experiences campaigning in three towns in conservative



Lisalyn R. Jacobs



Nan Aron

areas of Ohio, where GM plants had recently closed. "Many people there are on food stamps, and are now renting, when they had previously owned their homes. There were cars in the driveways with 'for sale' signs. They could not turn to their members of Congress, who voted against them and their needs."

"In the early 1970s," she added, "you could appear before Republican-appointed judges who had open minds, and valued a fair and independent application of the law. This does not hold as true today. Now many corporate lawyers are judges. Not that there's anything intrinsically wrong with corporate lawyers, Aron countered, but none of the recent judicial appointments have come from civil rights, public defender or consumer program backgrounds; they have done little or no *pro bono* or public service work."

Aron continued, "We now have a tremendous opportunity to come up with wonderful judges who can

quickly be put on courts of appeal and the Supreme Court. It would be nice if we could get a Supreme Court vacancy by June 2009, because a president's support is strongest early in their tenure. But we don't expect any of the Republican appointees to retire in the near future, so the most we can hope for is to tread water and stay on hold for the next four or eight years, unless one of the Republican justices steps down. On the federal district and appellate courts it is much the same: President-elect Obama's appointments will be countering the extreme choices of the Bush administration, working to bring us back to a more even divide."

Aron discussed the current scenario with President-elect Obama by maintaining that judge-ships are sometimes viewed by Democratic presidents as controversial. For example, she cited President Clinton's attitude towards judicial

Program Summary, continued

nominations, saying that, President Clinton did not often include the selection of justices among his highest priorities. She reminded the audience that the Senate confirms judges and that even with an increased number of Democratic members, there will likely still be obstacles to confirmation. Senator Jon Kyl, a powerful Republican from Arizona and a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has announced publicly that he intends to filibuster any nominees seen as “too liberal” for the federal bench. While discussing the possible setbacks to judicial confirmations, Aron did say that she was pleased that Senator Joe Lieberman is staying a Democrat, but mostly because she hopes he can influence some of the more moderate Democrats and Republicans in favor of President Obama’s likely judicial nominations. She concluded warmly that, “I must remind myself that (President) Obama’s worst nominee has to be head and shoulders above any of President Bush’s appointments.”

Aron was asked about President Carter’s judicial appointments and noted that most of them are now working limited hours on “senior status.” Of the 124 judges appointed to the bench during President Carter’s administration, only 17 are still working as active judges. Many of President Reagan’s appointees, however, are still serving — 71 remain on the bench. There are currently over 50 openings on the federal judiciary as a whole. On the courts of appeal, there are currently thirteen vacant seats, and an additional two judges who have announced their intent to depart within the year. The important District of Columbia Circuit, which decides most agency cases, has two openings on its Court of Appeals and three on its District courts.

Lisalyn R. Jacobs asserted that Legal Momentum has worked on many issues for the last eight years, and now, with a new administration, there is hope for progress.

She first discussed the Lilly Ledbetter case and Legal Momentum’s advocacy around equal work and equal pay issues. They seek restoration of the former standards. At issue is the question: when someone realizes they are a victim of pay discrimination, how does the court assess when the clock started running — that is when she can go to a federal court to seek recompense. The Supreme Court’s recent decision held that

Ledbetter had not come forward in a timely fashion; there is now a 120-day limitation on claims. (CWI held a meeting on the Ledbetter case in October 2007.)

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first enacted in 1992 and reauthorized twice since, is now referred to as Violence III. There has not been enough money to pay for some of the programs included in the past so part of the unfinished business remains on the agenda: programs such as campus grants for education on VAWA, rural grants that focus on women with disabilities, native Americans, and communities of women of color.

Jacobs said that Legal Momentum has dual foci — issues concerning immigrant women and the intersection of VAWA and economics. On immigration issues, the organization works with the Department of Homeland Security on trafficking, including protection and new visa regulations that deal with fee-waiver guidance.

In terms of economics, she reported that one unfunded piece of Violence II was the creation of a resource center dealing with employment-related issues as they intersect with sexual and domestic violence. For instance, an employee who has been abused may be struggling to maintain her job. The resource center would be able to work with unions, service providers, etc. to help with sexual and domestic violation policies. Employers could help by providing flexible work hours, and perhaps moving a worker to a new work location, to help put off angry partners (who sometimes appear at the workplace).

Legal Momentum is also working on legislation that would provide unemployment insurance for victims of sexual and domestic violence who have to leave a job, as well as provisions for unpaid leave. Jacobs said that unpaid leave was rejected by an “inhospitable” Congress.

Jacobs cautions against over-optimism for satisfactory resolution of some of these issues. She tells her colleagues that the members of the incoming Congress are not “my father’s Democrats ... today’s Democrats are more centrist and there are many chunks of resources already committed.” She noted that “In times of economic upheaval and uncertainty, incidents of sexual and particularly domestic violence increase, so it is vital to get protections on the books.”

In closing, Jacobs said that women’s organiza-

Program Summary, continued

tions will be working to reverse recent Bush administration regulations that “make it almost impossible for women-owned businesses to compete.” She also mentioned two other programs that Legal Momentum is advocating against. One is the abstinence-only program. Jacobs says reality calls also for well-funded comprehensive sex education as well. The second is the marriage promotion program that is particularly aimed at

women on welfare. It implies that these women are poor because they lack husbands. Unfortunately, money was taken from other welfare programs to support “marriage education” issues.

Jacobs claims she uses the “momma test:” she explains any federal program to her momma and if it makes her laugh, there’s a huge problem.

The Society for Women’s Health Research has a blog, which they update twice a week. Visit them at <http://www.womenshealthresearch.blogspot.com/>

CEDAW

From the San Francisco Chronicle

“President-elect Barack Obama pledged to restore United States’ international standing, including a promise to push for ratification of the long-ignored United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the women’s equal rights treaty known as CEDAW.”

From Women’s eNews

“Although 185 countries have ratified the 1979 treaty, the United States remains one of only eight that have not, alongside Sudan, Somalia, Qatar, Iran, Nauru, Palau and Tonga. The U.S. Senate must ratify the treaty and it could be difficult to persuade because the treaty says women should have access to ‘information, counseling and services in family planning,’ which anti-choice groups have interpreted as a guaranteed right to abortion.”

From Women’s eNews

“King Mohammed VI of Morocco formally banned discrimination against women during a speech to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Afrique en Ligne*, a North African Internet news site, reported last month.

Officially, the king lifted Morocco’s ‘reservations’ to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1979 treaty guaranteeing women’s equality known as CEDAW. Morocco signed the treaty in 1993, but like many other Arab nations, did so only with reservations to clauses that contradicted national or Islamic laws.

Moroccan women’s rights groups hailed the speech, *Maghreb Arab Press* reported Dec. 12. The king said the reservations were no longer necessary since Morocco passed an updated national family law in 2003 increasing women’s legal rights. The king also touted his reformist views in his speech. “Our country has become an international actor of which the progress and daring initiatives in this matter are readily recognized,” he said.”

Lilly Ledbetter will ride on Obama Inauguration Train

Lilly Ledbetter, who is the namesake of federal legislation regarding employment rights, is one of about 40 people who have been invited by President-elect Obama to join him and Vice President-elect Joe Biden as a special guest on the Obama Express carrying them from Philadelphia to Washington on Saturday, January 17th as part of the inauguration ceremonies.

From the National Women’s Law Center

On Friday, Jan. 9, the U.S. House of Representatives passed two key fair pay bills, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act — which provide women with critical tools to challenge pay discrimination “We’ve been fighting for (these). What a way to start off the new year!

“But the fight isn’t over yet. President-Elect Obama is ready to sign both bills into law during his first few days in office. But before that can happen, the Senate needs to pass pay equity legislation, too.”

From Barbara J. Ratner, president

We've finally made it to 2009! It was a long and exciting campaign that resulted in energizing women, empowering them with reasonable expectations for progress on the issues that matter to us. In addition to goals that seemed unreachable before, we can now contemplate new and higher goals. I'm sure you've noticed how the tone of our incoming emails has changed. Hope IS spelled in capital letters. Stay tuned, we have some exciting programs planned for CWI in the coming months.

Another first, the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) is hosting an inaugural ball to honor the role women played in electing Barack Obama and to honor the women leaders in the new administration and in Congress. History is being made again — a women's ball! Please see the details below. I think we need to resurrect Helen Reddy's *I am Woman, hear me roar...*

Women's Inaugural Ball

The National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO), a nonpartisan umbrella organization of over 230 groups representing more than 12 million American women, will roll out the red carpet for an inaugural ball at the historic President James Monroe Mansion in Washington, DC on Saturday, January 17, 2009 from 6:30 pm to midnight. The NCWO Inaugural Ball will celebrate the historic roles and contributions of women to the election of President-elect Barack H. Obama and Vice President-elect Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and will also serve to welcome an administration that supports the advancement of women's agendas.

NCWO will host the only 2009 inaugural ball to honor women leaders in business, politics and philanthropy as well as those who are taking leadership roles in the new administration. The honorees include future First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, Transition Team Co-Chair Valerie Jarrett, Secretary of State designate Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of Homeland Security designate Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Labor designate Hilda Solis, UN Ambassador designate Susan Rice, EPA Administrator designate Lisa Jackson, and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

Additional information is available on the event website, www.NCWOIB.com, from JJ Ghatt at jj@ghatt.com, from NCWO at www.womensorganizations.org, or Kimberly Otis at 202-293-4505. The NCWO Inaugural Ball will feature a VIP Reception from 6:30 to 8 pm and cocktails, buffet dinner, dancing and a live performance by 2009 Grammy nominee Wayna from 8pm to midnight.

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Statistics Methodology Changed

From Women's eNews

"The U.S. Department of Justice has revised its methodology for tracking violent crimes, resulting in data that more accurately reflects the rates of gender-based crimes against American women. New data released Dec. 18 as part of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' annual Crime Victimization Survey indicate much higher rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in 2007 compared to data from 2006, due to the change of methodology, including more personal interviews, increasing interviews in rural areas and new sampling methods. According to the new data, there was a 42 percent increase in domestic violence and a 25 percent increase in rape and sexual assault. A drop in the numbers of men killed by their intimate partners was also reported."

Mississippi: Highest National Rate of Teen Pregnancies

According to the Centers for Disease Control, Mississippi now has the nation's highest teen pregnancy rate (formerly held by Texas and New Mexico). "Mississippi focuses heavily on abstinence education and teachers are prohibited from demonstrating how to use contraceptives...the state's Human Services Department says abstinence is the only birth control that is 100 percent effective. And that's the only message teens need to hear...a review by the House Oversight Committee found that 80 percent of the abstinence-only curricula...contain false, misleading, or distorted information about reproductive health."



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 22

Roe Day for a DC Abortion Fund screening of *The Coat Hanger Project*

A discussion with Heather Booth, founder of Jane (a service that referred women to safe abortion providers when abortion was illegal), will follow the film. All proceeds from the event will go directly to assisting women living in DC, MD and VA who cannot afford an abortion. RSVPs required: dcaf_events@hotmail.com or for more information visit www.thecoathangerproject.com

Sunday, January 25

Women's Legislative Briefing

12:30-5pm. University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus
Keynote Speaker: Congresswoman Donna Edwards
For information call 240-777-8330 or register online:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/cfw/wlb/index.asp

Photos: D. Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2008 - June 2009

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Jean Landweber and D. Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Linda Fihelly; *Secretary*, Harriett M. Stonehill.

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ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: MOVING CEDAW FORWARD

Is this the year that we will see progress in the U.S. ratification of CEDAW (the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)? Described as an international bill of rights for women, CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. The treaty now has been ratified by 185 countries but not by the United States, Iran, Sudan, or Somalia.

Our speakers, **Sarah C. Albert** and **Penny Wakefield**, are activists, experienced in women's issues. Albert is the Social Policy and Advocacy Director for the YWCA USA and serves as co-chair for the Working Group on the Ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This group is comprised of 200 non-governmental organizations. Wakefield is a civil and human rights lawyer focusing particularly on policy and legislation involving women's rights. She also serves on the Steering Committee of the National Working Group on U. S. Ratification of CEDAW and the United Nations Association's Human Rights Task Force. She will focus on global advantages of CEDAW.

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Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Feminist Concerns on Federal Support of Faith-based Activities

What Women Need to Know: Reevaluating Your Financial Health

The speakers at CWI's January meeting were **Alyssa Best** of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and **David B. Kauffman**, J.D., CFP, of Pinnacle Advisory Group, Inc. They spoke of problems facing women in the current financial situation and offered insight on a number of issues.



Alyssa Best & David B. Kauffman

Alyssa Best said, "It is important to emphasize your own worth in the workplace." You must, she added, identify your goals, both financially and professionally. Think about the salary goal/range you want to earn. Be able to document and communicate your professional accomplishments."

She mentioned the following important points for job seekers. You must understand the qualifications and the market salary rate in the field you seek to enter. You should allow the employer to begin discussion of the salary topic. When you are pressed to state your salary requirements, it's best to start with a realistic salary range, bracketed slightly higher than your desired salary. "Never accept a job offer on the spot. Allow a couple of days to reflect and better understand whether the job is a correct fit."

"You should consider some benefits in addition to salary. If money is tight, you might consider negotiating for a better job title, more vacation time, or a flexible schedule," Best said.

Advice: "Don't undersell yourself! Don't be humble, even if you feel shy. If you are looking for a new job, include specific examples of gains for the organizations or companies in which you've been involved. You should keep a running list of accomplishments in your current position, which is handy for performance evaluations."

Be realistic and timely with your requests. While you may not be able to ask for a raise at a certain time, do not be afraid to open dialogue and begin discussion of future plans and what you'd like to eventually achieve.

"Be mentally prepared for the worst case scenario. Always have a plan B. If possible, have an emergency reserve of savings, which is crucial in an economic downturn," she concluded.

The next speaker, **David Kauffman**, a financial planner, asserted that self-education is key. All

other aspects of life can be fluid, however, education is something that cannot be taken away from you. Don't trust others. Be sure you know what you are doing with your own finances.

To understand money investment we must understand where we are and where we're going. The U.S. currently has a positive savings rate. Greed, especially in the real estate market, prompted this downturn of insurance companies, finance companies, and investment banks. Wall Street, as we knew it, is gone because the strongholds are gone. President Barack Obama said in his inaugural speech, "We must brush ourselves off and rebuild America."

At the end of the day, you must stand on your own two feet by developing an understanding of basic market concepts. Educate yourself; set goals such as a house, job, or savings. Understand your goals, research them and decide who you can or cannot trust. Young people must learn to sacrifice now to protect for later. Do not be afraid to ask for assistance from qualified individuals, but be sure that you are aware enough to know what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Do not run the risk of getting caught unprepared.

Set positive goals and stick with them. Frame them positively and set a date for achieving them, but make sure the goal is attainable. Write it down. Until you see the goal in front of you, it is not real. Stay focused by reminding yourself everyday where you are headed.

Find out where your money goes by reviewing your checkbook and credit cards or, better

Program Summary, continued

yet, using an accounting program. Don't allow unnecessary expenses such as ATM fees or late fees on bills. Plan ahead whenever possible. Look for ways to save by cutting out bottled water, fancy coffee, or impulsive purchases. Examine accounts you have now and do not be afraid to call companies and negotiate lower fees, Kauffman declared.

Useful website information:
www.idealists.org for the non-profit sector
www.nonprofitstaffing.com/ for local salary information
www.mint.com for budgeting
www.federaljobs.gov for federal job listings

Here's to the Ladies! The Women of Tin Pan Alley from Theater Alliance

Some of the D.C. area's top cabaret performers take the stage in Theater Alliance's tribute to the music of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s — specifically, to the music of New York's Tin Pan Alley. The fun, cabaret atmosphere will be filled with enduring songs first made famous by women such as Billie Holiday, Kay Swift, and Dorothy Fields, including titles like “What a Difference a Day Makes.”

H Street Playhouse
1365 H Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002
X2 Bus, Free Shuttle from Union Station and street parking
Thursday, Feb. 5—Sunday Feb. 22
For information: www.theateralliance.com

From Barbara J. Ratner, president

Maybe by the time this newsletter reaches you we will know if we have an economic recovery plan or not. These times are difficult and not getting any easier. Let's hope we've seen the worst and are headed into recovery.

Our annual meeting in June is our election time. We invite new Board members as some members are retiring. Please consider joining the Board. We have a consensus group and love fresh input. If you would like to serve or just want more information, please call Kellye McIntosh, nominating chair, at 202-277-2298 or email kellye@afj.org.

Fair Pay/Progress

New York Times editorial

“Congress has given a significant boost to civil rights by approving legislation to overturn a notorious 2007 Supreme Court decision that made it much harder for employees to challenge unlawful pay discrimination based on gender, race, age and disability. ... Mr. Obama ought to press Congress to continue the fight for equal pay for equal work by passing a second bill — the Paycheck Fairness Act — that would further strengthen current laws against gender-based wage discrimination; ... This would make stronger remedies available under the existing Equal Pay Act; ensure that courts require employers to show that wage disparities are job-related, not sex-based, and consistent with business needs; and protect employees who discuss salary information from retaliation.” The legislation was speedily signed by President Obama.

Unfortunately, Lilly Ledbetter, who initiated all this, cannot benefit from the change — but as the whole world knows, she did get to dance with President Obama at an inaugural ball.

CWI Co-sponsors with Woman's National Democratic Club

A New Caring Economy with Dr. Riane Eisler

As our leaders address unparalleled economic challenges and to reestablish our leadership in world, now is the time for a new economic agenda. How do we emphasize caring for our children, respect for our elderly, stewardship for our environment into our economic life? For over 30 years, cultural historian, Dr. Riane Eisler has inspired individuals and world leaders. Eisler, most recently featured in *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* as one of 20 international leaders who have made major contributions to world peace, will discuss her ideas about partnership, peace, and a more caring economy at the Woman's National Democratic Club on Thursday, March 19. Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) (invited) will introduce Dr. Eisler. All CWI members are encouraged to attend. For more information see the calendar on page 4.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Friday, February 20

Ruth Nadel's 95th Birthday Celebration

Women's National Democratic Club
11:30a-1:30p, Buffet Lunch \$20. No gifts
Reservations necessary. Contact Pat Fitzgerald 202-232-7363
or reservations@democraticwoman.org

Thursday, March 19

Luncheon meeting with Dr. Riane Eisler

11:30a-2p / Members \$25. Non-members \$30.
Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave,
Washington, DC. Reservations: Patricia Fitzgerald (202) 232-7363
ext. 3003 or pfitzgerald@democraticwoman.org

*Photos: Sue Klein; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser;
Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.*

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Feminist Concerns About Federal Support of Faith-based Activities

On February 5, President Obama announced the creation of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which will work closely with faith-based offices in 11 federal departments. Two of the four priorities focus on women and children and fathers and families. Why are many feminists troubled with the new administration's continuation of the Bush administration's faith-based initiative?

Our expert speakers, **Maggie Garrett**, Assistant Legislative Director, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and **Frances Kissling**, former President of Catholics for Free Choice, will discuss the track record of faith-based organizations concerning discrimination against women; the constitutionality of federal promotion/support of faith-based organizations, and ways to ensure that the approach to women and family issues will be designed to empower and advance feminist goals and beliefs. What can feminists do to make sure that any federal support for faith-based education, health, or social service programs doesn't increase sex discrimination and sex stereotyping?

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This may be your last newsletter if you have not paid 2008-09 dues. See page 5.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Starting Feminist Philanthropy Programs: Two Local Projects

Advancing Women's Rights: Moving CEDAW Forward

CEDAW stands for the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The speakers at CWI's February meeting were **Sarah C. Albert**, social policy and advocacy director for YWCA USA and co-chair for the working group on CEDAW, and **Penny Wakefield**, a civil and human rights lawyer, who serves on the steering committee of the national working group on CEDAW and is chair of the American Bar Association's Human Rights Committee.

Sarah C. Albert provided some background: CEDAW was signed by Jimmy Carter in 1980, but it was not considered in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee until 1990. Since then it has been considered several times, but remains still in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The U.S. CEDAW working group has been in existence since late 1980s, addressing a variety of other unratified UN treaties including genocide, torture, race and civil and political rights. Currently the working group consists of more than 200 national non-governmental organizations that support CEDAW ratification; the groups include labor, civic, religious, professional, educational, women's and international organizations.

She said, CEDAW is the most important international mechanism for women's equality. It addresses physical, sexual, economic and political abuses against women; it promotes women's equality of rights and well-being, basic world rights for women worldwide. It was drafted in 1975 after the first world women's conference in Mexico City and adopted unanimously by UN General Assembly in 1979; it is the first treaty



Sarah C. Albert



Penny Wakefield

involving international women's rights as human rights. CEDAW has been ratified by 95 percent of UN member states or 185 countries; Only eight countries haven't ratified the treaty, and the US is the only industrialized nation which has not ratified the treaty.

Albert said, "It has served as an essential tool for creating a dialogue and awareness of women's human rights... it creates a platform for activists to advocate for change in their national institutions, to protect themselves from discrimination... it holds that human rights should be basic across universal cultures and religions."

She pointed out that, similar to other treaties, CEDAW sets basic standards for human rights, but does not impose laws. Participating countries are required to examine and report on conditions for women

and girls. Vice President Joe Biden noted (when he was Senator), that CEDAW empowers women in other nations by enabling them to bring national attention and point to an international standard of human rights for the treatment of women. Albert said that around the world, the status and rights of women are linked to a broad array of critical global issues including disease prevention, democratization, poverty reduction, environmental protection, economic development and growth.

According to Albert, lack of our ratification has hindered our country's role as a human rights leader, "because it shows that the country has no dedication to ending blatant human rights violations; it has damaged our diplomatic relations and reduced our international standing. US failure to ratify the treaty allows countries with

Program Summary, continued

weak human rights records to neglect and undermine human rights for women.” She added that the US has tremendous influence in signaling issue priorities and basic standards to the international community.

Penny Wakefield stated she has worked on CEDAW for more than 20 years and was part of the original working group. In addition to her work as an ABA member, she is a long-time active member of the American Association of University Women and currently helps lobby Congress weekly on equity for women and girls and she serves on its national policy committee.

She said, “We need to remember that CEDAW is a United Nations instrument, an international treaty. Many times discussions about CEDAW get off track in looking at what it’s about and what it could do. In the beginning, there was real hope that we’d get this through the Senate. As you know, we didn’t. There were various objections to certain items included in the treaty and disagreements on what should be emphasized.”

At that time, Sen. Claiborne Pell, a moderate Republican CEDAW supporter, said, “If you are committed to rights, if you want to get anything done at all, do not fight among yourselves on the specifics. Focus on your overarching goal — what rights mean to all of us.”

The lesson from those early years, Wakefield said, is that the only way to get CEDAW through the Senate is by focusing on overall principle. Another problem has been that CEDAW has always been brought up at the last minute, when people wanted to get home and were not interested in long debates.

Wakefield stated that more and more groups are getting interested in the CEDAW issues as time passes. She suggested some strategies in the efforts to work on its passage in the Senate. For instance, people should hold senators and legislators accountable for what they promise. This is a challenging time, she added, because there are now more senators for whom international issues are not the priority.

“In the past years,” she said, “we have moved into a more complicated Information age. Between the Internet and e-mail, there is so

much material out there about what may be implemented by CEDAW. It would be helpful to go back to the language in CEDAW itself, go back to original goals. We must remind those in power that the US was involved in the initial drafting of this international treaty. It should not be looked at as a piece of domestic legislation; it should be emphasized that human rights is not a partisan issue.”

Wakefield emphasized that even though President Obama supported CEDAW when he was an Illinois legislator and in his presidential campaign and UN Ambassador Susan Rice supports it, CEDAW may face even more difficulty than previously when President Clinton was supporting it.

Questions from the audience led to further statements from the speakers. Our ratification would send a message to the world community, showing that the US makes human rights and women’s rights a priority. People fighting for women’s rights in Iran are also fighting for Iran to ratify CEDAW and then to implement CEDAW by improving their own laws.

In countries that have adopted CEDAW, women are gaining leverage in many areas, particularly as it relates to economic empowerment. Some countries that have adopted CEDAW have taken CEDAW language and made it part of their constitutions.

Over the past 18 years, more than 90 local communities in the US. have passed legislation calling for the passage of CEDAW. In April 1998, San Francisco passed a city ordinance incorporating CEDAW into local law and services provided by the city and the city allocated money for this project. This made it more successful than similar programs in other communities. (See Jan 09 *Ms. Magazine* article). Los Angeles and Berkeley have passed similar initiatives/resolutions.

For further information,
see www.womenstreaty.org.
Contact salbert@ywca.org if you wish
to be included in the listserv for the
CEDAW working group.

From Barbara J. Ratner, president

The new administration has demonstrated that it is receptive to feminist concerns. President Barack Obama has already created a White House Council on Women and Girls; he also has signed bills involving health care issues into legislation; and, health reform looks encouraging. In addition, First Lady Michelle Obama's positive image is empowering to women. Attention to women's issues translates into benefits for our children and our families. The President has been in office barely two months and we have a minimum of four years to anticipate. We're just getting started!

The primary mission of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues is education. Our programs have been current and well-attended, and we've had extremely knowledgeable speakers. We need all of you to participate, by attending meetings, paying dues and volunteering on the board. The better our meetings, the better informed we are; the better informed we are, the better our ability to improve our status. This is what we've wanted; now let's take every opportunity to make gender equality a reality.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated March 8. According to an article in *Women's eNews*, the holiday "likely dates to 1908, when women marched through New York City, demanding better pay, better working conditions and voting rights... (it has now) morphed into a kind of high holiday for activists fighting for gender equality... to celebrate accomplishments of the past and lay out an agenda for the future. To acknowledge the holiday, the International Center for Research on Women, a Washington think tank that advocates for investment in girls and women as antidotes to world poverty, honored Lloyd Blankfein, chair and CEO of Goldman Sachs Group, "for its program to assist 10,000 female entrepreneurs around the world with formal entrepreneurial and management education." Blankfein said during his acceptance speech, "Investing in women makes smart economic sense because they tend to spend their money in ways that help their families, communities and nations."

Happy Birthday Ruth Nadel

There were many celebrations recently to honor Ruth Nadel's 95th birthday. Ruth was the Clearinghouse president from 1993-1998, and it flourished under her leadership. It's never too late to have an additional acknowledgement of this special occasion — and we're told that Ruth has still not opened ALL the birthday cards.

Medicine: One Size Doesn't Fit All

The Society for Women's Health Research has "called on the new administration to consider sex differences as it implements its plan for a Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research." In an op-ed column in the *Boston Globe*, Phyllis Greenberger, president and CEO of SWHR, said, "Many prescription drugs, including antihistamines, antidepressants, and heart medications, work much differently on men and women. Women are also more vulnerable to certain diseases. Eighty percent of those with osteoporosis are women. Heart disease kills over 50,000 more women than men each year. And women are more than twice as likely to suffer from depression.

"Harnessing the extraordinary resources of the federal government could improve the delivery of care for both women and men," she continued. The creation of a Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research is part of the economic stimulus package that the President signed recently. Greenberger added, "The Council stands a good chance of improving the quality of healthcare delivery nationwide by codifying best practices and developing world-class clinical guidelines for medical treatment."

The FC2 Female Condom has been approved by FDA

You might be interested in reading the press statement about FC2 approval from a Reuters article on the subject. *New, cheaper female condom wins U.S. approval*, Susan Heavey, *Reuters*, 3/12/09.

We've been waiting for this!

President Obama established the White House Council on Women and Girls this month. According to the announcement, "The mission of the Council will be to provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls and to ensure that all cabinet and cabinet-level agencies consider how their policies and programs impact women and families. The Council is chaired by Valerie Jarrett, assistant to the President and senior advisor, and will include as members cabinet-level federal agencies. The executive director of the Council is Tina Tchen, deputy assistant to the President and director of the Office of Public Liaison at the White House."

Our thoughts and condolences to our board members, Linda Fihelly and D. Anne Martin, who recently lost their husbands.

Flora Crater

We acknowledge the death of CWI member, Flora Crater, in February at age 94. Long time feminist/activist, she wrote and published the newsletter, *The Woman Activist*, and wrote and edited the highly respected *Almanac of Virginia Politics* (from 1977-2003). With a serious commitment to women's rights, she wanted to make both women and men understand that women must be part of the Constitution, and must be party to any government that says it represents the people.

From the Richmond Times-Dispatch

"Flora Crater was the founder of Virginia's first chapter of the National Organization for Women and a leader in Virginia's campaign for equal rights. A native of Costa Rica, Mrs. Crater primarily grew up in Orange County, but also lived in Cuba, New York City and Washington, D.C."

2008-09 dues were due last September. If you wish to pay, there is a form on our website: www.womensclearinghouse.org or mail \$25 to Linda Fihelly, 5618 North Marwood Blvd., Upper Marlboro MD 20772. Newsletters will only be sent to paid members.

Excerpts From President Barack Obama's Proclamation for Women's History Month

"With passion and courage, women have taught us that when we band together to advocate for our highest ideals, we can advance our common well-being and strengthen the fabric of our Nation. Each year during Women's History Month, we remember and celebrate women from all walks of life who have shaped this great Nation. This year, in accordance with the theme, 'Women Taking the Lead to Save our Planet,' we pay particular tribute to the efforts of women in preserving and protecting the environment for present and future generations."

The proclamation continues with examples of women who "made a difference, who helped protect our environment and our people while challenging the status quo and breaking social barriers: Ellen Swallow Richards is known to have been the first woman in the United States to be accepted at a scientific school. An 1873 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she became a prominent chemist conducting a survey of water quality in Massachusetts, which led to the nation's first state water-quality standards.

"In 1900, Maria Sanford led the Minnesota Federation of Women's Groups in their efforts to protect forestland near the Mississippi River, which eventually became the Chippewa National Forest. Marjory Stoneman Douglas dedicated her life to protecting and restoring the Florida Everglades. Her book, *The Everglades: Rivers of Grass*, published in 1947, led to the preservation of the Everglades as a National Park.

"Rachel Carson exposed the dangers of certain pesticides to the environment and to human health in her 1962 book, *Silent Spring*.

"Grace Thorpe, another leading environmental advocate, also connected environmental protection with human well-being by emphasizing the vulnerability of certain populations to environmental hazards. In 1992, she launched a successful campaign to organize Native Americans to oppose the storage of nuclear waste on their reservations, which she said contradicted Native American principles of stewardship of the earth."



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, March 25

The Women's National Democratic Club will have a presentation by Sarah C. Albert on CEDAW.

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served at 6p with the program at 6:30p. \$28 for non-members. Reservations: Patricia Fitzgerald 202/232-7363 ext. 3003 or pfitzgerald@democraticwoman.org

Wednesday, April 1

Achieving Equity for Women, Policy Alternatives for the New Administration. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Women's

Policy Research and the Wellesley Centers for Women. To register call 202/786-5100 or online at www.wcwonline.org/dcregister

Friday-Saturday, April 3-4

National Education Association 2009 Summit, Achieving Gender Equity for Women and Girls in Education. NEA,

1201 16th Street NW, Washington. For information, contact Pamela Rios-Mobley, 202/822-7727 or prios@NEA.org.

Photos: Sue Klein; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; February meeting summary draft by Cathy Bonanno, FMF intern; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2008 - June 2009

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Jean Landweber and D. Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Linda Fihelly; *Secretary*, Harriett M. Stonehill.

DIRECTORS: Alvin Golub, Sarah Gotbaum, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar, Kellye McIntosh, Ruth G. Nadel, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*.

STARTING FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY PROGRAMS: Two Creative Projects to Help Girls in Africa

CWI members will hear the experiences of two women who have initiated philanthropic projects, **Patricia E. Ortman** and **Wendy Lesko**.

Patricia E. Ortman, a retired women's studies professor is Chair of the Board and Executive Director of the Girls Gotta Run Foundation, a volunteer organization that raises money to help poor Ethiopian girls train as runners.

Wendy Lesko is Executive Director of the Youth Activism Project, and a founder of School Girls Unite (SGU) which helps support collaborations among American and African young people to provide access to education for girls in developing countries. For more information visit www.youthactivism.com and www.girlsgottarun.org

Date/Time: **Tuesday, April 28 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.**

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

Place: **American Council on Education,
One Dupont Circle, CONFERENCE ROOM A FLOOR 1B**

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 26

Why Women Need Unions — and Free Choice in the Workplace

Feminist Concerns About Federal Support of Faith-Based Initiatives

The speakers at CWI's March meeting were **Maggie Garrett**, assistant legislative director, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and **Frances Kissling**, former president of Catholics for Free Choice.

President Obama established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in February.

Maggie Garrett said that federal support of faith-based organizations is not anything new; there is a long history of religious involvement in government. Previously, federal funds given to religious organizations had to be used for secular activities (soup kitchens, for instance), and there were important safeguards: organizations had to be separately incorporated from a house of worship; no religious activities were allowed; and there could be no discrimination in hiring or serving.

She explained that these safeguards for religious organizations receiving federal funding were compromised by the actions of then-Senator John Ashcroft in the 1990s, when he inserted the concept of *charitable choice* language in social service bills such as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families); SAMHSA, (anti substance abuse programs), and CSBG (Community Service Block Grants) to states for low income families.

However, even the Republican dominated Congress did not pass the charitable choice language in all social service programs. To get around the will of Congress, President Bush signed executive orders such as the creation of the faith-based council and offices in federal agencies. He used these offices and other activities to change federal regulations to allow religious organizations to



Maggie Garrett



Frances Kissling

receive federal funding exemptions from federal non-discrimination laws and to actively help them obtain federal funds.

Garrett noted that these charitable choice provisions also threaten the autonomy of houses of worship because they can now be held accountable to their government-funders who can even check their accounting books.

She asked, "How do you define a religious organization? This administration does not have a formal definition; there is some definition in Title VII, but it is often interpreted in different ways in each legal case."

Garrett said, "Many are concerned with initial efforts of the Obama administration to retain the Bush faith-based council even though during his campaign Obama had said he was against exemptions allowing discrimination in employment in religious organizations

receiving federal funds. They are also concerned about the selection of council members since many of them are known to be opponents of reproductive rights."

Regulations with weaker religious safeguards are far less clear when it comes to how religious activities occur and how they're funded.

Frances Kissling also spoke of her concerns about the appointments to the council. Of the first 15 appointments, there are five secular members; only one of the religious individuals is publicly pro-choice (Rabbi David Saperstein), several are strongly pro-life, and a few are unknown or do not take a strong stance on the issue. "The President has stacked the council with an agenda on reproduction that ignores the concept of women as moral agents capable of making their own decisions," she noted.

Program Summary, continued

She pointed out that two of the people on the Obama faith-based council are presidents of faith-based organizations that receive upwards of 79 percent of their funding from the government. Since the purpose of the faith-based council is to ensure appropriate allocation of government funds to religious organizations, Kissling emphasized that “This is an obvious conflict of interest.”

During the campaign, Obama made a number of favorable speeches about religion — but vowed he would uphold the Constitution above all. Still, the President issued an executive order to continue the Bush faith-based council and he even expanded its scope to reduce abortion, address teen pregnancy, and attend to men’s responsibilities in the family and reproduction — “In other words, to put a religious spin on women’s issues. And where is the family planning council in the White House to deal with these questions? Do we want religious groups dealing with reproduction?” Kissling asked.

Also, Obama has not followed through on his promise to fix some of the main problems with the faith-based office: he hasn’t ended the federally funded discrimination, or reinstated safeguards to protect beneficiaries against federally funded proselytizing.

Kissling said discrimination by religious organizations is most obvious in the hiring and service-providing to the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender community. But organizations also can refuse to hire single mothers, or women who are divorced.

She called on women’s organizations to help make sure that the remaining ten appointments are pro-women and pro-civil liberties. And she said, we should also be concerned about who gets appointed to other councils, such as bioethics-stem cells, research, etc.

Kissling stated that “Almost all of the world’s religions have had discriminatory policies at some point against women. When religion becomes involved with politics, it is especially dangerous for women. Many of the questions around religion and politics are important to women because of the way some institutions position issues around women: in the family, sexuality and reproduction.”

There has been an enormous rise in interest in religion since 2004. It has been said that Obama’s initial losses were to do with his lack of public religiosity and that as a result, he began a campaign to appear more religious and to court religious officials. Kissling added, “Carter, Clinton and Obama have all courted religious leaders, mostly males who wear religious wardrobes.”

There is an assumption, she said, that women are much better off under the Democrats than the Republicans. However, even with Democrats, when politics are involved religion gets a higher priority and more attention than women do. She noted the high level of visibility of faith-based offices in 11 federal agencies (and even though a White House Council on Women and Girls has been established), as yet, there are no promises to maintain or enhance the agency offices focusing on women issues or gender equality.

During the Q/A period after the presentations, Kissling said that a commission was being established, separate from the faith-based council, to examine government rules regarding separation of church and state.

There was a question and discussion about religion and school vouchers. It was noted that churches don’t need to pay taxes, and the District is the only federally funded school voucher program in the country, supposed to end in 2008. It is said that there is poor accountability and much of the federal money goes to support student attendance at religious schools. Furthermore, under the DC voucher program students can attend private schools that don’t have to follow federal non-discrimination laws.

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Relations Committee, chaired by Senator Lieberman, will be holding hearings on reauthorizing the voucher program in May. Contact your senator if you want to express your opinion on reauthorizing the DC voucher program.

ACTION

If you have concerns about women’s issues and the faith-based council, you might want to share them with Tina Tchen, Director, White House Office of Public Liaison and Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls. public@who.eop.gov

Equal Pay Day: Tuesday, April 28, 2009

From the Business and Professional Women/USA Website

“Equal Pay Day is held annually in April to signify the point into a year that a woman must work to earn what a man made the previous year. Census statistics released in 2008 show that the gap between men’s and women’s earnings changed by less than one percent from 2006 to 2007, narrowing only slightly from 76.9 to 77.8 percent. In 2007, the earnings for African American women was 68.7 percent of men’s earnings, a drop of more than 3 percent; Asian American women’s earnings was 89.5 percent of men’s earnings, a drop of 3.5 percent; and Latina earnings was 59 percent of men’s, a drop of .6 of a percent.”

Women Need to Know Their New Jobless Benefits

From Women’s eNews

“After years of facing discrimination by the nation’s unemployment insurance program, women stand to disproportionately benefit from three new rules in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by President Barack Obama on Feb. 17. Popularly known as the stimulus package, the law provides the states with substantial financial incentives to “modernize” their unemployment insurance systems by closing major gaps that have denied benefits to more than 500,000 people, including many women.

Here’s how women gain; in addition to a temporary hike in the amount of the jobless benefit for all workers and a new dependent’s allowance:

- Benefits will now be provided to workers who must leave their jobs for compelling family reasons, such as caring for ill or disabled family members, relocating with a spouse whose job has moved to another area, or escaping domestic violence in which the abuser follows the woman to her workplace;
- The earning test now looks at the worker’s

most recent employment, instead of excluding the last three to six months, making it much easier for low-wage workers and new entrants to the work force (read: large numbers of women) to qualify for benefits.

- Benefits are now available to workers seeking part-time work which also includes many women.

These three reforms — among others that are not of special value just to women — are long overdue given that the old rules were written for a work force that lawmakers imagined had very few women.

Today women make up about half of all paid workers and two-thirds of the part-time work force. Wives bring in more than one-third (35 percent) of their families’ total income — 40 percent in African American households — and many women support families on their own.

The National Employment Law Project has reported that under the old, outmoded rules, unemployed men were more likely to receive benefits than unemployed women in 41 states.

This male-female gap dates to the start of the unemployment insurance program, which Congress included in the 1935 Social Security Act, to assist workers who lost jobs during the Great Depression ... At the time, the mostly white male lawmakers assumed that wage-earners looked like them. The truth is that even in the 1930s many women worked to help make ends meet, especially those raising children on their own and women of color. Nonetheless, the joint federal-state unemployment insurance program excluded farm workers and domestic workers, the two main occupations open to women and men of color at the time. Unemployment insurance gradually included domestic and farm workers. Women lost out because these rules reflected and supported male work patterns that by definition penalized women.

This article is a commentary by Mimi Abramovitz, the Bertha Capen Reynolds professor at Hunter College, School of Social Work. The opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the views of Women’s eNews.

CLARA SCHIFFER

Clara Schiffer, longtime Clearinghouse member, died April 3 at 97.

She was an amazing woman. Speakers at her funeral referred to her as a woman ahead of the times, an activist, a “do-er and a go-er” deeply committed to social justice, with a strong interest in children, women and aging, and women in prison. Clara provided generous support to organizations or activities that she cared about, and was clearly determined to make the world a better place.

Clara attended Radcliffe College on scholarship, graduating *cum laude*, and then went to George Washington University to obtain a master’s degree in economics. She worked on Social Security and then at the Children’s Bureau, which became part of HHS. Last year Clara was part of a Washington Hospital Center video on women’s heart problems. The video may be seen at www.whcenter.org/body.cfm?id=556283

Clara was a faithful attendant at Clearinghouse meetings, served on the board of directors and was always a lively presence. (Her daughter, Lois Schiffer, spoke to CWI in January 2001 on environmental issues).

From Barbara J. Ratner, president

The Clearinghouse is looking for a new board member. We are a highly energized group and willing to hear new ideas; we welcome your input into our programs. CWI bylaws call for an election at the June meeting. If you would like to serve or just want more information, please call Kellye McIntosh, nominating chair, at 202-277-2298 or email kellye@afj.org.

National Women’s History Museum: Making Women Visible

The National Women’s History Museum was established in 1996 to bring “women’s history into the mainstream American culture.” NWHM says it’s the other half of the story: Girls and women... need to “learn of their own unique history and to see themselves reflected with respect to our culture.”

Recently, there has been an exciting development: a site near the Mall for the NWHM building has been identified, but not yet approved. So NWHM seeks financial support — if you can help, visit www.nwhm.org or call Becky Schergens at 703-525-7627.

NWHM says, “The true stories of women’s contributions to the arts and sciences, to politics and economics, and to the religious and social development of our modern world are more fascinating than any fiction. Yet neither the traditional female roles nor the women who pushed the boundaries of those roles have been systematically explored and acknowledged... visibility in the past equals empowerment in the present.”

Last month Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-New York) re-introduced the NWHM Act in the House. (H.R. 1700); Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) will do the same in the Senate in the near future.

In announcing this joint action, Maloney said, “This bill would provide women, comprising 53 percent of our population, a long overdue home to honor their many contributions to building our great country.” Collins stated, “Such a museum would demonstrate the gratitude and respect we owe to the many generations of American women who have helped build, sustain, and advance our society.”

NMWH urges people to contact their representatives and ask them to sign on as co-sponsors to the bills and help pass the Act.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, April 22

15th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act Symposium Honoring VP Joe Biden

9am-3pm Georgetown Law Center

Presented by Legal Momentum and Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law. For more information www.legalmomentum.org click on calendar at the top and go to April 22 on the calendar.

Sunday, May 3

Annual Gloria Johnson Awards Luncheon, sponsored by CLUW, (Coalition of Labor Union Women).

AFL-CIO Gompers Room. For information, contact Connie Cordovilla ccordovi@aft.org, 202- 879-4490.

Sunday, May 10

Mother's Day Kickoff, 10th Annual National Women's Health Week www.womenshealth.gov/whw/about/ for information on activities.

Photos: D. Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; March meeting summary draft by Cathy Bonanno, FMF intern; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2008 - June 2009

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DIRECTORS: Alvin Golub, Sarah Gotbaum, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar, Kellye McIntosh, Ruth G. Nadel, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*.

Why Women Need Unions — and Free Choice in the Workplace

Join us to hear about the dramatic difference that unions make for women's economic security, and why the Employee Free Choice Act is needed to get us there.

Deborah Chalfie is the Deputy Director for Policy at Change to Win, a partnership of seven labor unions and six million members founded to represent workers in the industries and occupations of the 21st century economy. Change to Win is committed to restoring the American Dream for a new generation of workers — wages that can support a family, affordable health care, a secure retirement, and the opportunity for the future.

Rachna Choudhry is the Policy and Advocacy Manager at National Partnership for Women & Families, a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family responsibilities.

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 26 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 23

Meet Our Member Organizations

Starting Feminist Philanthropy Programs: Two Creative Programs to Help Girls in Africa

Patricia Ortman founded the all-volunteer Girls Gotta Run Foundation, Inc. in 2006. She was inspired by a *Washington Post* article by Emily Wax titled, “Facing Servitude, Ethiopian Girls Run for a Better Life.” A link to the article may be found at www.girlsgottarun.org. The article described how running in Ethiopia helped girls stay in school and avoid early marriage. Ethiopian men and women are known for their success in running and winning international races.

Ortman didn’t know Ethiopians here when she started this project. But she did know some people who went to Africa frequently; they were on the staff of the Population Reference Bureau where her husband worked.

Ethiopia also has the highest rate of vaginal fistulas. These tears, between the vagina and the rectum, cause the girls to be unable to control either urination or defecation, resulting in permanent leakage of both. This ruins the girls’ lives as most are unable to obtain the medical attention necessary to repair the damage. Because the girls are then considered dirty and are no longer desirable, they are rejected by both their husbands and their families of origin, becoming permanent social outcasts. While 18 is the required age for marriage, many young girls are forced into child marriage especially in rural areas and are likely to develop fistulas after childbirth.

Ortman thought she should be able to help with these problems if others would join her. Using her local email list, she asked for volunteers and received many responses, including one from the Sewall-Belmont House. She ran the



Patricia Ortman



Wendy Lesko

first Girls Gotta Run event there in 2006, a show featuring shoe art. (Ortman also is an artist.) Voice of America broadcast an article about the event and it was aired in Ethiopia.

On mornings in Addis Ababa, the streets are filled with groups of girl runners; thirty percent of them are homeless. Training to be athletes helps them gain personal independence. Besides athletic shoes, the Girls Gotta Run Foundation provides money for training clothes, extra food (“calorie money”), coach subsidies, and other training-related expenses.

Dr. Ortman did connect with Dana Roskey who set up preschools in Ethiopia to honor his fiancée who was killed in a car accident. Roskey, a runner himself, had met homeless girls running in Addis Ababa. He started Team Tesfa, for Girls Gotta Run. Now there is also Team Naftech and Simien Girl Runners. Girls must stay in school to belong to the teams.

The foundation recently partnered with Running Across Borders which is studying Ethiopian runners to learn why they are the best in the world. One of the leaders of this group confessed that previously they were concerned with men and boys, but they now are starting to focus on girls as well; Girls Gotta Run is helping sponsor training for three of those women. An exhibit at Strathmore and an article on the girls’ running teams in Ethiopia in *The Washington Post*, *Kids Post*, promoted the venture.

Wendy Lesko was depressed by the Bush war in Iraq and decided the world needed more women leaders, because she believes women have different priorities than men. Although she

Program Summary, continued

has two sons and thinks boys in the U.S. have problems, such as high dropout rates, she is concentrating on the cause for educational equity of girls worldwide.

Youth Activism Project is the umbrella organization (www.YouthActivismProject.org) that supports the School Girls Unite Program (www.SchoolGirlsUnite.org) which focuses on U.S. school girls helping girls in Mali go to school. The girls here raise money to provide scholarships to 75 girls in Mali plus five older students who attend high school in Bamako.

She also encourages these young women to be involved in public policy; Lesko helps prepare them to testify and influence civic actions such as national and international laws. She works with two diverse groups of middle and high school girls in Maryland. Some of these girls are from Africa. She said, "One 13-year-old from Mali serves as a key liaison with our sister organization located in Mali, West Africa."

Young people need coaching to help them lobby and influence Congress, Lesko said, and added, "This will help to cultivate our next generation of women leaders." U.S. girls met with legislative assistants to Sen. Barbara Mikulski and with other congressional representatives and have impressed these legislators. These young constituents have extra credibility because of the first-hand evidence provided by their sister organization made up of 20 young women leaders who are among the lucky few to be attending high school or college in Mali.

School Girls Unite combines philanthropy and advocacy. Mali has the fourth highest child marriage rate in the world, and the group was successful in getting the Maryland congressional delegation to be champions of a

current bill to prevent child marriages. Their two-minute video petition can be viewed at www.schoolgirlsunite.org. Rep. Chris Van Hollen credited School Girls Unite's lobbying that helped to increase the foreign assistance appropriation for the Education For All Act by \$200 million for FY 2009.

In Mali the young women go to press conferences, meet with the Minister of Education, and campaign for equal access and abolition of school fees. Lesko said these young activists receive serious attention by Mali officials, and U.S. policy makers also are responsive because these advocates are genuine when they lobby. They focus on the U.N. Millennium Development Goals of universal education and gender equity and are pleased to have seen a steady increase in the number of girls going to school in developing countries since School Girls Unite started in 2004.

School Girls Unite chose Mali deliberately. They analyzed UNICEF countries that had a low percentage of girls in schools and where girls held low status. They avoided countries that also had other major problems that would drain energy such as conflict and high rates of HIV/AIDS. (Mali was low on each.) However, Lesko noted there is a language barrier in addition to the cultural barriers. Most of the U.S. girls don't speak French well enough to communicate in Mali but several African women mentors are very helpful.

Lesko said the girls are writing a bilingual (French/English) action guide, titled, *Girls Gone Activist! Education is a Human Right*, which will be published in June. Lesko would like to share this unique resource with Girl Scouts and other groups and is eager to explore opportunities to partner with other youth empowerment organizations.

2009-10 Board of Directors

The following slate will be voted upon by CWI members at our annual meeting in June.

President / Barbara Ratner
VP Membership / Kellye McIntosh, D. Anne Martin
Secretary / Harriett Stonehill
Directors / Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth Nadel

Joan Aron

We sadly acknowledge the death on April 12 of long-time Clearinghouse member Joan Aron; she served on the CWI board of directors for several years. A former senior policy analyst at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Aron also taught at NYU and Virginia Tech and was a Fulbright professor at the University of Haifa in Israel.

Equal Pay

On Equal Pay Day, April 28, the Institute for Women's Policy Research released an analysis that shows that for nearly every occupation for which data are available men out-earn women. The report states:

“Men earn more than women even in jobs that are most common among women, such as administrative assistants: women earn only 83.4 cents for a man's dollar; elementary and middle school teachers: women earn 87.6 cents for a man's dollar; and registered nurses: women earn 97.4 cents for a man's dollar.

“Men and women still tend to be concentrated in very different jobs, with the most common jobs among women paying less than the most common jobs held by men. For example, the highest paying of the ten most common occupations for women, ‘registered nurses,’ pays \$1,011 in median weekly earnings, whereas the highest paying of men's top most common jobs is ‘managers, all other,’ which pays \$1,359 per week. The lowest paying of the most common jobs for women is ‘cashier’ at \$349 per week, whereas the lowest paying most common job for men is ‘cook’ at \$404 per week.”

Ariane Hegewisch, Study Director at the Institute for Women's Policy Research, says, “Women tend to be in the minority of workers in the occupations with the highest earnings. We need to ensure that women are fully informed about the earnings potential of an occupation before they choose their careers.”

Data (for 2009) for the report comes from the Bureau Of Labor Statistics. To view a fact sheet, see: www.iwpr.org/pdf/C350a/pdf.

GlobalPOWER

The Center for Women Policy Studies will hold its third GlobalPOWER program in Washington from May 31-June 5 to confront international trafficking of women and girls as a global women's human rights crisis. According to CPW, GlobalPOWER “is a new model of women's global policy that creates sustainable long term partnerships — across borders and over time — among women members of parliament worldwide. Participants come from Bahrain, Namibia, Pakistan, Dominica, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda and Zambia, and women state legislators from Florida, Maryland and Utah. They join the network of women from 14 countries and five U.S. states who took part in previous GlobalPOWER meetings.

Martha Burk/ New Mexico Pay Equity Task Force

Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico has appointed Martha Burk to chair a recently-created task force on pay equity. Burk, former head of the National Council of Women's Organizations, has been serving as the governor's senior adviser on women's issues. The 14-member task force will examine the state's policies on gender, ethnic and racial pay equity within agencies and recommend solutions to eliminate gaps. (*Associated Press*).

Women Pay More For Some Insurance

From Women's Health Policy Report

As reported in the *New York Times*, “Health insurers would be willing to end the practice of charging women higher premiums than men for individual insurance policies if the government agrees not to establish a public insurance plan,” according to the president of America's Health Insurance Plans, who spoke at a Senate Finance Committee hearing ... “that focused on ways to cover uninsured U.S. residents as part of a comprehensive overhaul of the nation's health care system. President Obama and congressional Democrats support the creation of a government-run insurance program that would compete with private insurance plans.

“About 9 percent of U.S. residents, including about 5.7 million women, are insured through individual policies. Unlike employer-sponsored plans, premiums for individual insurance policies typically charge women higher premiums than men. Women in these plans can be charged 25 percent to 50 percent more than men for the same coverage. Insurers say the disparity results from women using more health care than men, especially during their childbearing years.

“Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) recently introduced legislation that would prohibit insurers from considering gender when setting premium rates. Kerry said the premium disparity is ‘just plain wrong, and it has to change.’ In November 2008, insurers said they would accept all applicants, regardless of illness or disability, if Congress mandates coverage for all U.S. residents. Last month, the industry proposed to end the practice of charging higher premiums to sick people.”

NATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY, 2009: A PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Harriet Beecher Stowe helped galvanize the abolitionist movement with her groundbreaking literature. Frances Perkins advised President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and led the Department of Labor during one of its most challenging periods in history. Barbara McClintock helped unlock the mysteries of genetics and earned a Nobel Prize. These and countless other women have broken barriers and changed the course of our history, allowing women and men who followed them the opportunity to reach greater heights.

Despite these achievements, 46 years since the passage of the Equal Pay Act and 233 years since our Nation was established with the principle of equal justice under law, women across America continue to experience discrimination in the form of pay inequity every day. Women in the United States earn only 78 cents for every dollar a man earns, and today marks the inauspicious occasion when a woman's earnings finally catch up with a man's from the previous year. On National Equal Pay Day, we underscore the importance of this issue to all Americans.

If we wish to honor our Nation's highest ideals, we must end wage discrimination. The Founders established a timeless framework of rights for the American people. Generation after generation has worked and sacrificed so that this framework might be applied equally to all Americans. To honor these Americans and stay true to our founding ideals, we must carry forward this tradition and breathe life into these principles by supporting equal pay for men and women.

Wage discrimination has a tangible and negative impact on women and families. When women receive less than their deserved compensation, they take home less for themselves and their loved ones. Utilities and groceries are more difficult to afford. Mortgages and rent bills are harder to pay. Children's higher education is less financially feasible. In later years of life, the retirement that many women have

worked so hard for—and have earned—is not possible. This problem is particularly dire for women who are single and the sole supporters of their families. Women should not and need not endure these consequences.

My Administration is working to advance pay equity in the United States. The first bill I signed into law as President, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, allows more women to challenge pay discrimination by extending the timeline within which complaints can be filed. This law advances the struggle for equal pay, but it is only an initial step. To continue this progress, I issued an Executive Order establishing the White House Council on Women and Girls. This high-level body, composed of Cabinet members and heads of sub-Cabinet agencies, is charged with advancing the rights and needs of women, including equal pay.

Still, Government can only advance this issue so far. The collective action of businesses, community organizations, and individuals is necessary to ensure that every woman receives just treatment and compensation. We Americans must come together to ensure equal pay for both women and men by reminding ourselves of the basic principles that underlie our Nation's strength and unity, understanding the unnecessary sacrifices that pay inequity causes, and recalling the countless women leaders who have proven what women can achieve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 28, 2009, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon American men and women, and all employers, to acknowledge the injustice of wage discrimination and to commit themselves to equal pay for equal work.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

BARACK OBAMA



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Tuesday, June 2

Legacy of Light at Arena Stage.

“Legacy of Light” is a feminist play by Karen Zacarias at the Arena Stage; it is about women in science and work and family challenges. A 50 percent discount is available for tickets on Women’s Networking Night, June 2. A post-show discussion is included in the performance. The play will be presented at Arena’s temporary space in Crystal City. Tickets may be purchased by phone (202) 488-3300 or at the Arena Stage sales office in Crystal City. Check out the May 8, 2009, *Washington Post* Karen Zacarias story www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/07/AR2009050701702.html

Tuesday, June 23

Meet Our Member Organizations Join us for the CWI monthly meeting and learn more about our member organizations.

Photos: from the speakers; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; April meeting summary draft by Jennifer McGuire, AAUW; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2008 - June 2009

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Jean Landweber and D. Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Linda Fihelly; *Secretary*, Harriett M. Stonehill.

DIRECTORS: Alvin Golub, Sarah Gotbaum, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar, Kellye McIntosh, Ruth G. Nadel, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*.

Meet Our Member Organizations

CWI's June meeting will present speakers and materials from our 13 organizational members to highlight their good work for women and girls. By joining CWI they show appreciation for our work and our programs. This is a great opportunity for our members and guests to hear them discuss their important missions and goals. Also, members will vote on the Board of Directors slate for 2009-10.

Our organization members include the: American Council on Education Office of Women in Higher Education; Center for Inquiry; ERA Campaign Network; Fairfax County Commission for Women; Federally Employed Women; Feminist Majority Foundation; DC League of Women Voters; Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women; Montgomery County Commission for Women; National Women's Editorial Forum (American Forum); National Women's Law Center; OWL: Older Women's League Montgomery County Chapter; and Wider Opportunities for Women.

The Clearinghouse is a member of the National Council of Women's Organizations, and they also will be represented at our June meeting.

Date/Time: **Tuesday, June 23 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.**

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 22

Why Women Need Unions and Free Choice in the Workplace

The speakers at the Clearinghouse May meeting were **Deborah Chalfie**, deputy director for policy at Change to Win, and **Rachna Choudhry**, policy advocacy manager at the National Partnership for Women and Families.

Rachna Choudhry told why unions are important to women.

Union membership helps raise workers' pay. This is especially important to women workers in undervalued professions. As a result, this narrows the income gap between women and men.

In 2007, union women earned 22 percent more in weekly wages than non-union women. The median weekly earnings of African-American union women were 35 percent more than their non-union counterparts. Latinas in unions have median weekly earnings that were more than 51 percent higher than their non-union counterparts.

In many of the industries dominated by women, such as “pink collar” jobs in education and government, the union difference is quite apparent; Choudhry gave a few examples.

- Union preschool and kindergarten teachers earned a massive 130 percent more than other teachers.
- Union librarians earned 33 percent more than other librarians.
- Union social workers and counselors earned about 40 percent more than other social workers.
- Union registered nurses earned 16 percent more than other nurses.

Unions are important to women workers for reasons beyond wages. Choudhry explained that



Rachna Choudhry



Deborah Chalfie

the issues that unions are most successful in fighting for—including health insurance, retirement security and work/family policies—are the same issues that resonate most with working women.

Union women are more likely than non-union women to have health and pension benefits. According to the Center for Economic Policy and Research, women union workers are 19 percent more likely to have employer-provided insurance and are about 25 percent more likely to have an employer-provided pension.

Choudhry presented some startling statistics. For the average woman, joining a union has a much larger effect on her probability of having health insurance than finishing a four-year college degree. Similarly, unionization raises the probability of a woman having a pension by 25 percentage points

compared to only 13 percentage points for completing a four-year college degree.

The union difference is equally amazing when we look at work/family policies. She pointed out that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the only federal law that helps workers meet the dual demands of work and family. Yet, she added, the leave is unpaid which makes it challenging for most workers who need the leave.

Union workers are more likely to receive fully-paid and partially-paid leaves. Among hourly workers, 46 percent of union workers had fully-paid leave (including vacation and sick time) compared with 29 percent of non-union workers.

Union “back-up” at work can help protect workers who make complaints. Choudhry said that

Program Summary, continued

non-union employees are often asked to pack up if they complain of unfair treatment by managers. A study of 99 union arbitrations involved employees who were fired or disciplined for missing work due to family care needs; in 98 of the cases, the dismissals were overturned as a result of the grievance. Non-union hourly workers who took leave were twice as likely as union workers to worry about losing their jobs or their seniority.

“In addition to what unions can mean for the economic security of women and their families,” **Deborah Chalfie** said, “unions also matter to economic equity and a healthy economy; workers’ lack of bargaining power means no shared prosperity and great income inequality.”

Chalfie is the deputy director for policy at Change to Win (CTW), a partnership of seven labor unions and six million members founded to represent workers in the industries and occupations of the 21st century economy. She said that CTW aims to organize the jobs of the 21st century, the 50 million workers whose jobs can’t be off-shored.

Using charts, she showed that, from the late 1940s until the late 1970s, worker productivity and workers’ wages grew in tandem. But, beginning around 1980, productivity and wages began to diverge: worker productivity (and corporate profits) began to skyrocket, yet hourly wages flattened. A second chart showed that the number of union members began a steep decline around 1980. Chalfie stated “It is no coincidence that the stagnation in workers’ wages began at the same time that unions were losing density — workers were losing their bargaining power. The early 1980s was also when we witnessed President Reagan busting the air traffic controller strike and the birth of a new industry of union-busting consultants.”

She pointed out that benefits of union representation extend far beyond just members. Studies have demonstrated that high union density in a region or industry raises wages for non-union employees as well. Sixty million non-union workers say they would join a union if

they could, yet only 16 million workers belong to unions in the US.

The problem, Chalfie said, is that employers are allowed to demand that employees choose whether to have a union in an election, and there are long delays between the time a worker signs an authorization card saying they want a union and the time they eventually vote in the election. Employers can use this time and procedural delays to conduct an anti-union campaign and intimidate employees. Employers can fire workers; threaten workers in mandatory one-on-one meetings with their supervisors about support for the union; threaten to cut wages and benefits. Chalfie pointed out that much of this kind of intimidation is completely legal.

She stressed the importance of the proposed Employee Free Choice Act as key to better protecting workers’ rights. It would allow workers to have a union when a majority sign cards saying they want a union. Right now, the law allows workers to use the majority sign-up system but only as long as the employer agrees. Workers would have more privacy to organize by signing cards.

Right now, even if the workers vote to have a union, employers often continue fighting by refusing to agree to a contract. As a result, less than half of newly recognized unions have a first contract one year after a successful election. Two years after an election, 47 percent of newly formed unions still had no collective bargaining agreement.

Under Employee Free Choice, mediation and then arbitration are provided if the employer and union can’t agree on a contract in a reasonable amount of time.

Right now, if there is wrongdoing, all the company has to do is to reinstate a fired worker, provide backpay, and post a notice promising not to violate the law again. The Employee Free Choice Act would impose some real penalties for corporations that break the law and retaliate against union supporters.

American Rights at Work is the coordinating organization for the Employee Free Choice Act. To learn more visit www.americanrightsatwork.org.

Memorial Day

From *Womens eNews*

Do you know that women played an important role in the creation of Memorial Day? They did and it is one more example of how women's history has been overlooked. The following story appeared in *Women's eNews*; it was written by Joan Wages, president of the National Women's History Museum, founded in Washington DC in 1956.

"Much of women's history is missing from our public story. One more example; women were almost entirely responsible for the recognition of Memorial Day. Its origin was the Civil War and until recently, the day focused on the terrible War between the States that, at tremendous human cost, ended legalized racial slavery in the United States.

"Just weeks after the Civil War ended in April 1865, Ellen Call Long organized a women's memorial society to reconcile embittered enemies. Usually named some variant of women's relief society, groups sprang up in both the North and South that not only memorialized the dead, but also cared for the war's disabled and its widows and orphans.

"In June 22, 1865, women adopted these profound, forgiving and future-oriented resolutions. The document read in part:

"The object of this meeting is to initiate a Memorial Association . . . that shall perpetuate in an honorable manner the memory of the gallant dead . . .

"In no invidious spirit do we come; the political storm that shook our country to its foundation, we hope, is passed . . . We are done with the [Confederate] cause . . . and are willing to do all that women can do to stem the tide of bitterness . . . and angry feelings . . . We will practice and teach forbearance and patience, which must finally bring peace and justice . . .

"Our society has forgotten that women cleaned up the mess. They took the gruesome reality of approximately a half-million dead men, and by promoting cemeteries, led the way in turning blood and gore into something that encouraged serenity and reflection.

"In our nation's capital filled with museums, there is not one to remind us of the totality of the experience of American women. The National Women's History Museum is urging Congress to pass legislation that will provide a permanent physical home in our nation's capital."

From *Womens eNews Cheers and Jeers*

Cheers

Ursula Burns has been chosen as the new president of Xerox, the first African American woman to head a Fortune 500 company. She follows Anne Mulcahy, making this the first female-to-female transfer of a top position among large corporations. Burns joined Xerox as a summer intern in 1980 and by 2000 she led the company's manufacturing and supply chain. She came from a very poor single parent home, where her mother expected nothing but the best from her children.

Kuwaiti women won the right to vote and run for office in 2005. Recently, four women were elected to the Kuwait Parliament, despite strict Islamists urging people not to vote for them.

Jeers

By a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that women, who took maternity leaves before Congress outlawed pregnancy discrimination in 1979, would not be able to include the time towards their pension credits. The 1979 Pregnancy Discrimination Act called for companies to treat pregnancy leaves the same as other disability leaves.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the United Nations is facing a large number of sexual harassment complaints. In addition, women are complaining about the procedures and outcomes of investigations. "Some women who complained about sexual harassment said their contracts weren't renewed. In some cases accused men either retired or resigned before they faced any consequences."

Harriet's List In Missouri

From the *Feminist Majority Foundation Newsletter*

Harriet's List is a new political action committee established to support progressive women candidates in Missouri. The PAC is named in honor of Harriett Woods, who was the first woman to hold statewide office in that state. The organization will be modeled after the successful Emily's List which raises money and backs women candidates. Woods died in 2007; she was a leader in efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment movement. She came close to beating (then) Sen. John Danforth, and two years later became lieutenant governor, the highest position ever held by a woman in that state.

Judy Chu Elected

From the *Feminist Majority Foundation Newsletter*

Judy Chu has won a 13-candidate Special Election Primary in California to fill the seat vacated by Hilda Solis who became the secretary of labor. In an overwhelming Democratic district, this almost assures a win and she would become the third Asian Pacific Islander in Congress. A proven feminist leader during her time in the California State Assembly, Chu was also legislative leader against sexual assault on college campuses and in the community. She received support from the Feminist Majority PAC.

Domestic Abuse Rises

From *Women's eNews*

The economic crisis has brought a rise in domestic abuse. Three-quarters of the domestic violence shelters in the U.S. have experienced an increase in women seeking help since the economic crisis in September; 3 percent of the organizations attribute this to a rise in financial issues.

“There is great national pain reflected in the latest U.S. jobless numbers, according to Rita Smith, executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, based in Denver. “Domestic violence is not only a response to household financial stress; it’s also a major contributor to it. When abuse takes a financial form it can cause more long-term harm than physical or sexual abuse, says Smith...”

Economic abuse in a financial form can cause more long-term harm than physical or sexual abuse, says Smith ... Economic abuse is one of the more effective ways that abusers control their victims. They will either control all the money in the family, making her account for every dime she spends and giving her the allowance he believes she needs. Even if she works, she has to show him the pay stubs and he controls all the money,” she said.

“Another way that economic abuse can play out, is when the abuser puts everything they own in the victim’s name. At first that may seem great, she says, but if the woman leaves he will stop paying all the bills and ruin her financially. He can prevent her from getting credit, a new home and sometimes other work due to problems with all the defaults on her credit history.”

Frances Perkins

From *Women's eNews*

“The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR’s Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience: The Woman Behind the New Deal,” by Kirstin Downey brings increased recognition to Frances Perkins, whose work made significant progress for women (and men). Perkins had worked closely with FDR in Albany and wanted to be secretary of labor. She gave him a list of projects that she insisted he would support. “It included: a 40-hour work week, a minimum wage, worker’s compensation, unemployment compensation, a federal law banning child labor, direct federal aid for unemployment relief, Social Security, a revitalized public employment service and she had worked with FDR on health insurance.” FDR knew that making her the first female secretary of labor would expose him to strong criticism. But he gave her the job. “Kirstin Downey says we can thank Frances Perkins — the unsung architect of unemployment insurance — for helping us get through these tough times.” We’ve all come a long way.

President’s Message

We are fortunate to have 13 women’s organizations who participate as members of the Clearinghouse. Our June meeting will feature these groups. Speakers will provide insight into what they do and why. We will better understand the purpose of their missions, and we can benefit from each other’s expertise. Women’s groups work hard to achieve their agendas and hopefully this program will help them. One of CWI’s missions is to cooperate and exchange information with organizations working to improve the status of women.

We are already planning some interesting programs for the Fall. At our May meeting we asked those attending to give us topics of interest and we received many suggestions. If you would like to add to this list, please email us at cwi-info@womensclearinghouse.org.

See you at our June meeting.

— Barbara J. Ratner

We are looking for someone to maintain our website. If you have experience with websites and are willing to help us, please email Barbara Ratner at cwi-info@womensclearinghouse.org.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Sunday, June 14

Flag Day

Monday, June 15

National Partnership for Women and Families 2009 Annual Luncheon at Washington Hilton; keynote speaker, Valerie Jarrett; For further information, call 202- 986-2600 or www.nationalpartnership.org

Tuesday, September 22

CWI meeting

Photos: D. Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; May meeting summary draft by Sue Klein, FMF; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2008 - June 2009

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Jean Landweber and D. Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Linda Fihelly; *Secretary*, Harriett M. Stonehill.

DIRECTORS: Alvin Golub, Sarah Gotbaum, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar, Kellye McIntosh, Ruth G. Nadel, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*.

Health Care Reform: Impact on Women

Health care reform has dominated the news for several months, with strong feelings on all the issues. The speakers at CWI's September meeting, both experienced in the health care field, will discuss the pros and cons of the reform plans that have been presented and the ways these proposed reforms can affect women.

The speakers are **Judy Waxman**, Health Policy Coordinator, National Women's Law Center, and **Deanna Okrent**, Senior Health Policy Associate, Alliance for Health Care Reform.

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 22, 2009 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

Place: American Council on Education,
One Dupont Circle, CONFERENCE ROOM C FLOOR 1B

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Dues are payable in September for the 2009-10 year. If you have not received a renewal letter or you would like to join, please see our website to download a membership form at www.womensclearinghouse.org or call 301-493-0002.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Meet Our Member Organizations

At CWI's June meeting we show-cased our member organizations. They are listed below; the name of the representative who spoke with us is at the end along with ways to contact the organization for more information. It was a wonderful program with the opportunity for serious networking. We urge CWI members to support the good work of these organizations.



Debra Louallen-Cole

American Council on Education (ACE) Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) has been committed to the advancement of women leaders in higher education since 1973. For more than 35 years, OWHE has provided information and counsel to constituencies within the higher education community regard-

ing policies, issues, education, and research that influence women's equity, diversity and advancement.

The Office's mission is to advance women's leadership by: Identifying national women leaders in higher education; Developing women's leadership abilities through state and national programming; Encouraging women to use those abilities; Advancing women into senior-level leadership positions by working on placement; Linking women leaders to one another; and Supporting the tenure of mid- and senior-level women administrators and presidents throughout their careers.

Debra Louallen-Cole / debra_louallen-cole@ace.nche.edu



Heather Booth

Americans for Financial Reform is a coalition of nearly 200 national, state and local consumer, employee, investor, community and civil rights organizations that have come together to spearhead a campaign for real reform in our banking and financial systems.

The goal of the coalition is to make sure that the depth and breadth of popular anger and frustration are heard, to hold our elected leaders accountable, and to insist on a strong role for the public in making crucial decisions about our economic future. Accountability, fairness, and security must be linchpins of financial reform; but these principles will win out only if the voices of the public prevail.

Heather Booth / hboothgo@aol.com

The goal of the **Center for Inquiry** is to promote and defend reason, science, and freedom of inquiry in all areas of human endeavor. We are a transnational nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that encourages



Melody Hensley



Toni Van Pelt

evidence-based inquiry into science, pseudo-science, medicine and health, religion, ethics, secularism, and society. We are not affiliated with any

political party or political ideology. Through education, research, publishing and social services, we seek to present affirmative alternatives based on scientific naturalism. We are also interested in providing rational ethical alternatives to the reigning paranormal and religious systems of belief, and in developing communities where like-minded individuals can meet and share experiences.

Toni Van Pelt / twanpelt@centerforinquiry.net



Carolyn Cook

ERA Campaign Network — a national ERA advocacy, communications, and mentoring network — formed in July 2000 for organizations, groups and individuals supporting or campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment. The organization has 39 contributing members representing 21 states

and the District of Columbia. Our free e-mail newsletter, *The ERA Campaigner*, reaches ERA activists and supporters around the country or visit our website, www.ERACampaign.net. Donations of any size are always welcome to help ERA Campaign Network volunteers expand our work for the ERA.

Carolyn Cook, DC contact or Jennifer Macleod / eracampaign@aol.com

The **Fairfax County Commission for Women** promotes the full equality of women and girls in Fairfax County; advises the Board of Supervisors on the concerns of Fairfax County's women and girls; seeks possible solutions to problems that affect women and girls; effects long-term change through public education, policy reform and building community partnerships.

Ina Fernandez / ina.fernandez@fairfieldcounty.gov

June Program Summary, continued



Bernice Waller

Federally Employed Women (FEW) is a private membership organization working as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the federal and District of Columbia governments. The Federal Women's Program (FWP) was established in 1967 when President Lyndon B. Johnson added

sex as a prohibited form of discrimination. The FWP has a primary responsibility to identify barriers to the hiring and advancement of women and to enhance employment opportunities for women in every area of federal service. FWP is an integral part of the overall Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity Program. Each federal agency has at least one FWP manager. All federal employees are served by the FWP, and there is no formal membership.

Bernice Waller / b.f.waller@att.net



Wendy Matheny

Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). The Choices Campus Leadership Program works with students on college campuses to effect change at the grassroots, national, and global levels. The Campus Program is built upon FMF's philosophy that the most effective activism is informed activism—

through study and action. Our program provides students with opportunities to learn about timely feminist issues, develop their leadership and organizing skills, and connect with the larger pro-choice and feminist movements.

Wendy Matheny / wmatheny@feminist.org www.feministcampus.org



Dara Baldwin



Goody Braun

The League of Women Voters DC, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government,

works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Its goal is to empower citizens and encourage civic participation in order to strengthen the democratic process.

The League of Women Voters DC is a member of the National League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization devoted to good government, which encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV plays two separate and

distinct roles. One is voters service/citizen education, which presents unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process and issues. The second is action/advocacy, which is based on positions reached by consensus after detailed study and discussion at neighborhood meetings.

Dara Baldwin, Goody Braun / www.lwvdc.org or call Goody Braun at 202-723-2477



Linda Mahoney

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a state-wide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. The coalition advocates for progressive legislation and policies that promote and protect the well-being of

Maryland women and their families and provides them opportunities to develop their full potential.

Linda Mahoney / admin@mdlegagenda4women.org www.mdlegagenda4women.org



Reggie Oldak

The Montgomery County Commission for Women is a department of Montgomery County government with two primary mandates: advocacy and service. The 15-member commission was created by county law in 1972 and is charged with the responsibility of advising the public, the county executive, and

agencies of the county, state and federal governments on the issues of concern to women. The organization's Agenda for Action emphasizes mothers in poverty, to draw attention to their plight and work toward policy changes that would benefit them and their children.

Reggie Oldak / 240-777-8330; www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw



Rachel Larris

National Women's Editorial Forum/American Forum (NWEF) empowers women to engage in, transform and democratize the media landscape. The organization is dedicated to increasing the supply of commentary by women and their participation in the media. Our mission is to ensure that women's

voices, their stories and their perspectives, on all key policy issues of the day, get read, get heard and get seen. Using a gender lens, NWEF works with both state and national media outlets to support a full continuum of commentary from newspaper op-eds to radio/TV talk shows to internet blogs.

Rachel Larris / forum@mediaforum.org

June Program Summary, continued



Candace Webb

The **National Women's Law Center (NWLC)** has expanded the possibilities for women and girls in this country since 1972. NWLC uses the law in all its forms: getting new laws on the books and enforced; litigating ground-breaking cases in state and federal courts all the way to the Supreme Court; and educating the public about

ways to make the law and public policies work for women and their families. An experienced staff of more than 50 takes on the issues that cut to the core of women's and girls' lives in education, employment family economic security and health — with special attention given to the needs of low-income women and their families.

Candace Webb / cwebb@nwlc.org



Holly Joseph

NOW, Montgomery County Chapter (MCNOW). The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States, with 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NOW works to eliminate gender discrimination and

sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system and all other sectors of society; secure reproductive rights for all women, including birth control and abortion; end all forms of violence against women; eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia; and promote equality and justice in our society.

MCNOW is dedicated to education and activism for women's rights with special attention to our community. It offers monthly programs on subjects of interest to women, organizes actions to further feminist causes, and monitors local legislation and legal decisions for their impact on women. This chapter is particularly proud of a new task force to address the sexualization of girls.

Holly Joseph / joseph.holly@gmail.com



Sarah Gotbaum

OWL: Older Women's League, Montgomery County Chapter. OWL, the voice of midlife and older women, founded in 1980, is the only national grassroots organization with chapters across the country dedicated entirely to addressing the concerns of midlife and older women on issues related to aging

including Medicare, Social Security, pension and retirement systems.

Sarah Gotbaum / sargot@earthlink.net



Jaclyn Lichter

Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 500, is dedicated to raising the standard of living for working families in our area. SEIU represents 18,000 women and men working in child care and education and in service to communities and the public interest. Through collective bargaining we win gains that

help SEIU ensure a stable, professional workforce: raises, good health care, pensions and other benefits, safe workplaces, time off when you need it, respect and adequate staff and resources. Our members also engage in meaningful political activity on issues of importance to working families, such as funding and quality improvements for public services, health care reform, and issues of social justice.

Jaclyn Lichter / lichterj@SEIU500.org



Alyssa Best

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) works nationally and in Washington to build pathways to economic independence for America's families, women, and girls. For more than 40 years, WOW has helped women learn to earn, with programs emphasizing literacy, technical and nontraditional skills, the

welfare-to-work transition, career development, and retirement security. Since 1964, WOW has trained more than 10,000 women for well-paid work in the DC area. WOW leads the National Women's Workforce Network, which is comprised of organizations committed to increasing women and girls' access to well-paid work: the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project (FESS), and the Elderly Economic Security Initiative (EES).

Alyssa Best / abest@wowonline.org



Elizabeth Anderson

The **National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO)** is the leading coalition that makes fighting for women's rights more effective by working together. NCWO highlights and promotes the diverse work of our more than 200 member organizations representing eleven million women through our list serve, briefings, conferences and policy work.

NCWO conducts two major programs each year: The Women's Equality Summit and the New Faces, More Voices Leadership Institute.

Elizabeth Anderson / eanderson@ncwo-online.org

OWL / Age Discrimination

“For years, insurers have charged older customers far more than younger ones, in part because of older residents’ higher use of medical services. Now, as Congress wrestles with a health care overhaul aimed at covering the majority of the 46 million uninsured, that discrepancy is one area targeted for change,” according to a recent USA Today article on age discrimination in health care. “...Insurers want Congress to let them charge older Americans five times more than young ones....We’re all going to get older, so charging someone an increased premium for something they can’t do anything about is simply ridiculous,” says Natale Zimmer, health policy director for OWL: The Voice of Midlife and Older Women. OWL and 27 other groups, including the National Senior Citizens Law Center and the Service Employees International Union, have asked Congress to require insurers to treat everyone equally when setting premiums. The outcome could affect tens of millions of people — young and old — who don’t get insurance through their jobs and buy it on their own.”

Biden to be Honored by Sheila Wellstone Institute

This year the Sheila Wellstone Institute will celebrate 15 years of the Violence Against Women Act. Vice President Joe Biden and Lupe Serrano will receive 2009 Sheila Wellstone awards. The event will take place Thursday, October 1, from 6-8 pm, in the Russell Senate Office Building, room 325. The Sheila Wellstone Award recognizes individual activists, advocates and elected officials who share Sheila Wellstone’s dedication to safe and healthy homes and communities. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar will host the occasion. Further information: www.Wellstone.org/Sheila.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Sunday & Monday, October 4-5. Feminist Majority: Women, Money, Power Summit, at the Washington Court Hotel, followed by **Congressional Visit Day, Tuesday, Oct. 6**. Speakers include Gloria Steinem and Dolores Huerta. For more information, visit www.feministmajority.com.

Sunday, January 31, 2010. The annual **Women’s Legislative Briefing** will be held at the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus, 9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville MD. Keynote speaker will be pay equity heroine Lilly Ledbetter. For more information about co-sponsorship, volunteering, and general questions, call 240-777-8331 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw.

Interesting Notes

The White House Council on Women and Girls has a new web site, announced on August 26, Women’s Equality Day, which Bella Abzug established in 1971. www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg.

Diane Sawyer has been chosen to anchor ABC’s World News Tonight in January 2010 when Charles Gibson retires. That makes two women (the other is Katie Couric, CBS) out of three network evening news anchors.

At a recent reception, hosted by women leaders, the new president of NOW, Terry O’Neill, and other officers received a warm welcome.

President’s Message

CWI begins its 36th year informing and educating women, and men, on subjects impacting the lives of women and their families, beginning our programs with health care reform. We cannot mention health care without thanking Senator Edward M. Kennedy who spent his career in the Senate championing causes for women and their families. He was a major supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment; a strong advocate for Title IX; and a leader in passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act just to name a few. Health care for *all* was his passion. Unfortunately for us he is no longer a senator with a vote, but his voice resounds. Our September meeting is your opportunity to hear health care professionals who will explain what is important to health care reform and where we can compromise. Bring your questions and your friends.

—Barbara J. Ratner

**OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS MONTH**



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

- Sept. 24, 25** **Annual Conference on Women in the Military** sponsored by WREI and Alliance for National Defense. Cartoonist Gary Trudeau will be a special guest. For further information, www.wrei.org or www.4militarywomen.org.
- Sept. 26** **Walk to Stop Child Trafficking**, Meridian Hill Park, 15th & W Streets, NW. 9 am registration, 10:30 walk. This is part of a national effort coordinated by Stop Child Trafficking Now. You can walk as an individual or sign up with team walker Mary Bailey bravenewworld@starpower.net.

*Photos: Sue Klein; Sarah Gotbaum by Julienne Schaer; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser;
Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.*

CWI Board of Directors, July 2009 - June 2010

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Kellye McIntosh and D. Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Linda Fihelly; *Secretary*, Harriett M. Stonehill.

DIRECTORS: Alvin Golub, Sarah Gotbaum, Roslyn Kaiser, Jessica Lazar,
Ruth G. Nadel, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*.

Women in Prison: A Challenge for Equity and Justice

Women comprise more than ten percent of the nation's prison population. A recent Justice Department report highlights serious problems of rape, extortion and other egregious issues of misconduct in U.S. prisons. Are women prisoners entitled to protections against sex and race discrimination at the federal and state level? To what extent do they receive these rights while in prison? What about before and after prison? What should feminists be doing to help incarcerated women receive just and equitable treatment that will help them and society? Our speakers will discuss the range of problems faced by women in prison and suggest necessary reforms.

The speakers are **Deborah Golden**, Staff Attorney, DC Prisoner's Project, Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs; **Dr. Fran Buntman**, Assistant Professor of Sociology at George Washington University, who teaches and researches criminal justice, especially imprisonment, including from the perspective of gender; and **Dr. Nancy G. La Vigne**, Director of the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, who has researched crime and justice issues and worked on prisoner reentry, crime prevention and the evaluation of criminal justice technologies.

This meeting topic was selected in honor of our long-time member, the late Clara Schiffer, who recommended that women become more knowledgeable about this issue.

Date/Time: Tuesday, October 27, 2009 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

Place: American Council on Education,
One Dupont Circle, CONFERENCE ROOM A, FLOOR 1B

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 24, 2009

How the White House Council on Women and Girls is Empowering Women

Why Women Need Unions and Free Choice in the Workplace

CI's September meeting was on the topic of health care reform. The two speakers were **Judy Waxman**, Vice President for Health and Reproductive Rights at the National Women's Law Center and **Deanna Okrent**, Senior Health Policy Associate at The Alliance for Health Reform.

Judy Waxman began her presentation by detailing some of the inequalities that women face in the current health care system: Women are less likely to have health insurance than men; health insurance companies in most states are allowed to consider gender when setting the premium rate, a practice known as "gender rating." As a result, individual women, as well as with businesses with a mostly female staff, are often charged more for health coverage.

With this information in mind, it is not surprising that most American women want health care reform. Waxman briefly explained that there are several versions of the health care reform bill before the House and Senate. But first, she talked about a few of the issues that are under debate and some questions that policymakers are addressing.

In each version of the health care reform bill every insurance plan will have to offer four tiers of insurance at different costs in order to make sure that every American is covered. Waxman said that this has caused debate about how much of a subsidy should be allowed for individuals of low socioeconomic status. Each version of the bill also includes a benefit package which covers doctor visits and maternity leave, but the details will be worked out later.

All of the bills will have a limit on how much the insured will have to pay out of pocket, and



Judy Waxman



Deanna Okrent

all of them will eliminate the current rules about pre-existing conditions.

At the same time, she explained, there are many issues that are still unresolved. For example, it is not clear if there will be a public option, or employers will be required to provide coverage. Other concerns include whether or not these changes will save money (to which Waxman said "yes, in the long term") and how it will all be paid for.

Deanna Okrent began with some background information about the state of health insurance coverage in the United States. According to the last Census, 15% of Americans are uninsured, which is 36 million adults and 9 million children. Of those who do have insurance, 27% are covered by Medicare and Medicaid. She pointed out that Medicare is a key element of financial security for women after retirement.

The number of people who do not have health insurance varies by state, and the state's economic status. Those Americans who work in small businesses or in the manufacturing industry, for example, have lost their insurance in greater numbers than others due to loss of jobs or unaffordability of coverage. Okrent explained that these differences result in political challenges for health care reform; they affect the elements that representatives include in a health care bill, as well as the ultimate passage of a final reform bill.

Okrent recommended the Kaiser Family Foundation website (www.kff.org) as resource for information about the different versions of the health care bills. She said the site provides a good side-by-side comparison of the different

Program Summary, continued

versions of the proposed House and Senate bills.

To illustrate how the three versions of the proposed health care bills are different, Okrent explained that the version of the bill from the Senate Finance Committee, for example, includes the use of a flexible spending account, or FSA for long-term care insurance premiums.

Okrent said the issues being debated in both the House and Senate versions of the bills are about having a public plan, and what it would look like; whether or not to include a mandate for employers to participate; and whether insurance exchanges should be state-based, regional or national.

As these debates continue, Okrent said that women should be aware of those provisions regarding Medicaid expansion, Medicare, individuals, small business employers, and long-term care. For women, expressly, long-term care is a major part of health care expenditures.

Discussion

Will health care reform address the current shortage of nurses and doctors? Waxman said yes, that several of the bills include sections on the delivery and quality of care, as well as keeping electronic records.

Do any of the bills address Medicare? Okrent said that there were tweaks made to Medicare, especially with regard to payments to Medicare Advantage plans, but that none of the bills had changes to or reductions in benefits. One bill reforms doctor payments and encourages the training of primary care physicians.

Will abortions be included in any of the bills? Waxman said that the version of the bill by the Energy, Commerce and Finance Committee allows for insurance companies to decide if abortion will be covered and allows for exchanges

to provide two different plans, one of which includes abortion coverage.

Waxman voiced concern over “Perfect being enemy of the good.” She mentioned that in DC, in particular, we are trained to criticize legislation from specific perspectives. But in the end, non-profit and consumer advocate groups will need to come together to consider the final bill in terms of how it will help society as a whole.

Okrent said that, in the past, insurance companies have made high profits on Medicare Advantage plans. There had been aggressive marketing for enrollment in this plan because it was profitable for insurance companies. Proposed payment formulas would even the playing field between traditional fee-for-service Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans.

Will gender rating end? Waxman said that the National Women’s Law Center report, *Nowhere To Turn*, looks at the disparity in health care costs for men and women. Their report found that women at the age of 25 are charged more than men for health care, even if they don’t have maternity benefits. Starting at age 55, there was less of a disparity between the genders, and starting at 65 — when Medicare is available — the premiums are the same for men and women. She said that gender rating will likely end with health care reform, but that none of the versions of the bill eliminate age rating.

Waxman also pointed out that right now it is legal in eight states and the District of Columbia for an insurance company to reject a woman’s application for coverage if she has been a victim of domestic violence. Waxman said that the other factors that are in the bills are family size, geographic area, possibly an individual’s use of tobacco and some restriction on age variations. But these could all be eliminated with health care reform.

Sunday, January 31, 2010: Women’s Legislative Briefing

University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus, 9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Keynote speaker will be pay equity heroine Lilly Ledbetter. General admission \$10; students \$5.

Online registration required. Registration opens November 2009. The Women’s Legislative Briefing will conclude with a reception providing guests the opportunity to meet with County and State elected officials, and to network with advocates and representatives of other women’s organizations. For more information, call 240-777-8330 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Violence Against Women in the United States: Statistics

From NOW's website

Despite the fact that advocacy groups like NOW have worked for two decades to halt the epidemic of gender-based violence and sexual assault, the numbers are still shocking. It is time to renew our national pledge, from the President and Congress on down to City Councils all across the nation to END violence against women and men, girls and boys. This effort must also be carried on in workplaces, schools, churches, locker rooms, the military, and in courtrooms, law enforcement, entertainment and the media. NOW pledges to continue our work to end this violence and we hope you will join us in our work. For violence against women statistics visit: www.now.org/issues/violence/stats.html

Gender Gap in Schooling Measures Pendulum's Motion

By Bijoyeta Das, a freelance writer based in Boston
From Womens eNews Sunday, October 4, 2009

Young U.S. women are finishing high school, attending college and earning degrees at higher rates than men. A boys' educational crisis (of arguable extent), two-income families and rising divorce rates help explain the widening gaps, onlookers say.

She is excited to leave the nest.

"College is a must. No questions," said Taylyse Wornum, 18. She entered the University of Massachusetts at Amherst this fall as a freshman to study communications.

Young women like Wornum are increasingly outpacing men in the successful completion of high school and college enrollment. Among Boston public high school 2007 graduates, 153 young women attended college for every 100 men, according to a July study by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, which prepared the report for the Boston Private Industry Council. Among those attending four-year colleges, the gap was even wider: 166 women for every 100 men. Across the country, in every race-gender group, more women get degrees than men, said Andrew Sum, lead author of the study and director of the Center for Labor Market Studies. "That's true for every degree level: associate,

bachelor's and master's." When it comes to Ph.D.s, there is almost parity.

Jennifer Millien, 21, a public relations student at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, said she is proud of the inroads women are making in education and is happy to be entering a work force that seems to be in favor of women. "But, despite all the statistics showing so many women pursuing careers, women continue to earn less than men. It is kind of weird..."

(We are experiencing) "a structural change we have never experienced before," said economist Mark Perry with the University of Michigan-Flint. When women earn higher degrees, they have better professional opportunities, which has a direct impact on work force numbers, he said.

"Along with higher pay and more job market stability, women are less likely to be unemployed during a recession or a slowdown," said Perry. "This ties in with what has been called a 'mancession'."

Since the recession began in December 2007, men have lost 4.75 million jobs overall, whereas women have lost 1.66 million jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate continues to be much higher for men than women and women are on the verge of outnumbering men in the work force. The recession took a greater toll on male-dominated job sectors, such as construction and manufacturing. Female-dominated professions, including health care, education and government, continue to expand, Perry said.

Cheryl Rivers, a professor of journalism at Boston University, a frequent commentator for Women's eNews and author of *Selling Anxiety: How the News Media Scare Women*, said that while single male professionals earn more than single female professionals, the wage gap between the two groups was not "too huge." But when women in the paid work force start having children they often wind up as primary caregivers, and that's when they start to earn less than men.

Men's wages have been stagnant or declining for 20 years, Rivers said. "In today's economy, the dual earning couple is becoming the normative couple. This will continue."

Rivers also said that divorce fuels women's interest in education and the paid work force. "With a fairly high divorce rate, women are more and more not seeing that their economic future will be provided by men," she said.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month Sister Study Exceeds Recruitment Goal: Now the Real Work Begins

From NIH's website

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), part of the National Institutes of Health, has many reasons to celebrate this October as it recognizes Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The NIEHS Sister Study began recruiting women for this landmark study during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October 2004 and this October has reached a milestone. It has recruited nearly 51,000 women from all walks of life, whose sisters had breast cancer, to participate in this long-term study that is focusing on uncovering environmental and genetic factors that influence breast cancer risk. These sisters and researchers have joined together in a long-term commitment to help prevent breast cancer. To read the entire article go to: www.niehs.nih.gov/news/releases/2009/sister-recruitment.cfm

Health Reform: Implications for Women's Access to Coverage and Care

From the Kaiser Family Foundation website

This issue brief highlights key issues for women that arise in the context of health reform, including access to health insurance coverage, health care affordability, scope of benefits, reproductive health and long-term care. The brief examines the current situation for women as well as relevant provisions in the major reform legislation now under consideration in the House and Senate...

The current health reform debate offers many opportunities to improve women's access to care and coverage, ranging from insurance system reforms, to lowering out-of-pocket costs, to securing comprehensive benefits packages that address women's health needs across the course of their lives. These issues are essential in women's ability to obtain timely, appropriate care. Balancing these priorities with many other issues will be challenging, and as the process moves forward, it will be critical to keep an eye on the impact of the reform debates on women's access and coverage. Read the entire brief at: www.kff.org/womenshealth/7987.cfm

Employee Free Choice: Let's Do It for 'Norma Rae'

By Linda Meric, a nationally-known speaker on family-friendly workplace policy, is executive director of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, a diverse, grassroots, membership-based nonprofit that helps strengthen women's ability to win economic justice.

Women's eNews Monday, September 28, 2009

Crystal Lee Sutton, the real Norma Rae, just died after struggling with her insurer to pay for medical coverage. Linda Meric says health care reform responds to Sutton's death and passing the Employee Free Choice Act will honor her life's work.

Crystal Lee Sutton, the woman whose life inspired the 1979 film *Norma Rae*, about a brave union organizer, died of cancer on Sept. 11 after struggling in 2008 with her health insurance company. Her insurer delayed her treatment by two months, initially by denying coverage of her medications, according to an article published last year in North Carolina's *Burlington Times News*. Her untimely passing at age 68 speaks powerfully to the continuing debate over health care reform.

But it is the union movement that claims Sutton as a sheroe.

To honor her legacy, and to pay tribute to other courageous union organizers—famous and less so—we must push for the Employee Free Choice Act, which is pending in Congress. Introduced in March by California Democratic Rep. George Miller, the act has been referred to the Committee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions. It has 227 co-sponsors, but the act must still move from committee discussion to general debate. This makes it critical that members of Congress hear their constituents' support for the Employee Free Choice Act now.

To read the entire article go to: www.womensenews.org/story/health/090928/employee-free-choice-lets-do-it-norma-rae

Dues are payable in September for the 2009-10 year. If you have not received a renewal letter or you would like to join, please see our website to download a membership form at www.womensclearinghouse.org or call 301-493-0002.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, Oct. 24

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland's 20th Anniversary Evening of Chocolate Gala, 8 pm, VisArts at Rockville Town Center, 155 Gibbs Street, Rockville, MD. Keynote Speaker: Linda Greenhouse, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and lecturer in law, Yale Law School. Also honoring the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force. Black Tie optional. Tickets \$90 mbr/\$70 nonmbr/\$105 with membership. RSVP via www.prochoicemd.org or email Erin Schurmann erin@prochoicemd.org, or call 301-565-4154.

Wednesday, Nov. 18

HIV/AIDS and the DC Community

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington's Brown Bag Lunch series. Bring your lunch: from 12-1 pm. 1110 Vermont Avenue, NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20005. To RSVP call 202-347-8500 x6300 or e-mail events@ppmw.org

*Photos: Sue Klein; Editors: Roslyn Kaiser and Jessica Lazar;
Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.*

CWI Board of Directors, July 2009 - June 2010

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The White House Council on Women and Girls: Empowering Women

Our speakers in November will be **Christina (Tina) Tchen**, Executive Director of The White House Council on Women and Girls, created by President Obama in March, and **Terry O'Neill** President of NOW. If you want to know what the Council is doing and what they plan to do, be sure to attend our November meeting. Tchen will discuss the focus of the White House Council on Women and Girls, which is to renew and expand the federal government's attention to gender equality. To learn about the Council's membership and activities, visit its website: whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg.

Tchen is not only the Council's Executive Director, she also serves as the Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement. A well-known Chicago lawyer, Tchen was a NOW ERA Campaign leader in Illinois and a supporter of women's rights. O'Neill is also President of the NOW Foundation and Chair of the NOW Political Action Committees. In addition, she is a professor, feminist attorney and activist for social justice. She will share information on previous administration efforts to maximize attention to women's issues in federal agencies. Attendees at this meeting will be welcome to ask questions and provide comments. Questions may be submitted in advance to Sue Klein, VP for Programs, at sklein@feminist.org.

Date/Time: **Tuesday, November 24, 2009 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.**

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

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 allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Women in Prison: A Challenge for Equity and Justice

CI's October meeting presented the topic of women in prisons chosen in honor of our long-time member, the late Clara Schiffer. Clara's daughter, Lois, was present as we fulfilled Clara's request that women learn more about this issue. Our panel **Dr. Fran Buntman**, Assistant Professor of [Sociology at George Washington University](#); **Deborah Golden**, Staff Attorney at DC Prisoner's Project, [Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs](#); and **Dr. Nancy La Vigne**, Director of the [Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute](#), enlightened us on the status of women in prison.

Dr. Fran Buntman described key criminal justice issues, the type of population entering, their treatment in prison and reentry results.

She debunked the myth of one-size-fits all policies. She stated, "When feminists come to the table, we are often looking for the same deal as men. This should not be the way we look at women in the criminal justice system. There are fundamental problems in the criminal justice system that hurt everyone," disproportionately women. For example, especially in drug cases, women are less likely than men to know the big drug dealers so they can't provide their names to get a lighter sentence.

Even though women only make up approximately ten percent of our country's inmates, America still holds the largest number of incarcerated women than any other country. Recently there has been a disproportionate increase in women inmates, with skyrocketing populations of poorer African American and Hispanic women. Sex, gender, race and class bias are common in our criminal justice system.



Fran Buntman



Deborah Golden



Nancy La Vigne

Buntman said that while some women who are found guilty are actually innocent, most are guilty of the crime for which they are charged. She feels we might be much better off as a society if we consider some of the behaviors we call crime as issues or problems of public health, mental health, or poverty. She believes incarceration can be reduced if we have less criminalization overall and more constructive handling of some of the criminal situations (e.g. more prevention, more rehabilitation during and after sentences).

Contrary to most international standards, U.S. male correctional officers can and do guard females due to nondiscrimination provisions of Title VII. A resulting problem of this U.S. approach has been abusive (as well as occasional consensual) sexual relationships, including correctional officer rape of female inmates. Courts tend to accept unequal and lesser provision of services in prison for women as "reasonable" given the disparities in numbers and related issues like budget constraints.

There are also equity issues involving support and funding. Due to a smaller population of female inmates and limited female prisons, women are often further away from their families and/or support systems

and they are also offered fewer inmate services including educational opportunities.

Deborah Golden, working as an attorney, has seen little consistency in the legal rights of female prisoners. While current laws make it possible for inmates to obtain some voting rights and reproductive health services, the access a prisoner has to these rights is dependent on the leniency, or lack thereof, of individual judges and prison

Program Summary, continued

employees and to their ability to comply with the numerous legal procedural requirements.

Even in cases of sexual assault or rape, women have to cut through much red tape before filing claims. Illiteracy, lack of knowledge of their rights and deadlines on filing (often no more than twenty days) can play a large role in limiting justice. Poor policies, like those found in [the 1996 Prison Litigation Reform Act](#), prevent retribution by requiring evidence of physical harm, etc.

Golden also noted that our census counts prisoners in rural areas where prisons are also a major source of employment. This means that resources needed for prevention and re-entry do not go to the prisoner's home community.

Studying female inmates in Texas, **Dr. Nancy La Vigne** found similar findings. Female inmates are often unsuccessful with rehabilitation due to a lack of funding. Her studies showed the need to treat the whole person (i.e. mental health issues, drug addiction, past criminal history, economic status, etc.) to ensure successful reentry into their home communities. She also found family support was incredibly beneficial and also more common for women than men.

While her studies were about our policy failures, she pointed out that George W. Bush's "[Second Chance Act](#)" has good provisions. The Act establishes a [National Reentry Resource Center](#) to provide information on the most effective programs and policies for reentry, as well as to create a national database. La Vigne's Justice Center at

the Urban Institute will be working on some parts of this contract.

Questions and answers focused on the role of children, the details of the National Reentry Resource Center and the necessity for public education on the importance of rehabilitation.

The "Equity and Justice" focus of the meeting was emphasized in a question about whether national civil rights laws such as Title IX and Civil Rights Act Title VII were helpful in protecting inmates from sex discrimination. The answer among the panelists was a resounding "kinda." There are many hurdles that the prisoners must overcome before they can file complaints. Even prison reform advocates tended to focus on other rights such as humane treatment and reproductive care rather than performing gender analyses to insure that the smaller populations of women inmates received needed (if not identical) benefits as men.

All agreed that there is a lot of work left to do in order to address prisoners' rights, but we were also reminded of the hope for progress that will go along with the Second Chance Act and the National Reentry Resource Center. But even then feminist advocates need to insist on more gender analysis than is currently planned to learn which re-entry programs are more effective for some women than they are for men.

An additional article written on this meeting is on the [AAUW blog Women in Prison: What Rights?](#) by zkhorakiwala.

Moving Along: National Women's History Museum

The National Women's History Museum Act of 2009 was passed by the House of Representatives last month and will now go to the Senate. Congressional approval is necessary because the chosen site (land surrounded by 12th Street, Independence and Maryland Avenues) involves the sale of federal property. In a press release, Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), who sponsored the bill, said, "From Louisa May Alcott to Kristi Yamaguchi, the story of what women have contributed to the American way of life is a story long overdue for the telling... House passage today is a recognition of that story. Thanks to the

leadership of Speaker Pelosi — a trailblazer herself — and Chairman Oberstar and subcommittee Chair Norton, American women are one step closer to a long-overdue 'museum of our own.'"

Dues are payable in September for the 2009-10 year. If you have not received a renewal letter or you would like to join, please see our website to download a membership form at www.womensclearinghouse.org or call 301-493-0002.

Power Talk with Power Women

From the Department of Labor Newsletter

“What happens when women run things?” That was the question posed to U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda S. Solis at the 23rd Annual California Governor and First Lady’s Conference on Women. The gathering of more than 15,000 women of all generations and backgrounds (was) designed to empower women to be a catalyst for change in their family, communities and internationally.

“Solis participated in a riveting panel discussion with Dr. Ruth Simmons, President of Brown University; Arianna Huffington, Editor-in-Chief of *The Huffington Post*; and Cindie Leive, Editor-in-Chief of *Glamour* magazine. Claire Shipman, Senior National Correspondent of ABC News’ *Good Morning America*, served as moderator.”

Are You A Ms.? The Origin of the Title Explained

From the New York Times by Ben Zimmer

“In the Nov. 10, 1891 edition of the Sunday Republican of Springfield, Mass., an unnamed writer put forth a modest proposal. ‘There is a void in the English language, which, with some diffidence, we undertake to fill,’ the writer began. ‘Every one has been put in an embarrassing position by ignorance of the status of some woman. To call a maiden Mrs. is only a shade worse than to insult a matron with the inferior title of Miss.’ Yet it is not always easy to know the facts.

“How to avoid this potential faux pas?” He suggested ‘a more comprehensive term which does homage to the sex without expressing any views as to their domestic situation, namely Ms.’ With this ‘simple and easy to write’ title a tactfully ambiguous compromise between Miss and Mrs., ‘the person concerned can translate it properly according to circumstances. ...’ This was largely ignored most of the subsequent time, until 1961, when Sheila Michaels, a 22-year-old civil rights worker in New York City, ... became a one-woman lobbying force for the title. ... her advocacy finally paid off the following August, when women’s rights supporters commemorated the 50th anniversary of suffrage with the Women’s Strike for Equality, and Ms. became recognized as a calling card of the feminist movement.” To read the full story go to [Ms.](#)

From the National Women’s History Project

If you want to brush up your women’s history, the NWHP monthly calendar offers interesting details concerning our foremothers.

Highlights:

Nov 1, 1848 – First medical school for women, the New England Female Medical School, opens; in 1874 it merges with Boston University to become one of the world’s first coed medical schools.

Nov 14, 1946 – Emily Greene Balch, co-founder of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Birthdays:

Nov 5, 1857 (1944) – Ida Tarbell, investigative reporter, wrote expose on Standard Oil that led to federal investigation and break-up of the company.

Nov 18, 1857 (1950) – Rose Knox, one of America’s foremost businesswomen, cofounder of Knox Gelatin Co. Following her husband’s death, she revolutionized the company, initiating a five-day work week and two-week vacations.

For more information and to sign up for calendars, visit www.nwhp.org

Women’s Issues in Congress

From the Source of Women’s Issues in Congress, prepared by Women’s Policy, Inc.

Girl Scout Coin Bill Heads to President:

On October 19, the Senate passed a bill to mint \$1 coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts USA.

Second Congressional Committee Targets International Violence Against Women:

On October 21, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight held a hearing, International Violence Against Women: Stories and Solutions.

Girls and Juvenile Justice Subject of House Hearing:

On October 20, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing, Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: Strategies to Help Girls Achieve Their Full Potential.

From the White House

Press Release

The President recently nominated two women who, if confirmed, will serve in positions that will directly impact the health, safety and lives of women and girls.

“Sara Manzano-Diaz was nominated to lead the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor. ... Sara is uniquely qualified to lead the Women's Bureau. She has spent her career in public service advocating on behalf of working class families, women, and girls. She has more than 25 years of federal, state, and judicial experience including 16 years in senior management. Most recently, she was appointed by Governor Edward G. Rendell as Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs at the Pennsylvania Department of State. As Deputy Secretary, (she is) the highest-ranking Latina in Pennsylvania state government. Previously, she served as Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Litigation at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where she enforced fair housing, civil rights, and anti-discrimination laws. She has served as Co-Chair of The Forum of Executive Women's Mentoring Committee, which mentors young professional women as they begin their careers. The nominee also participated in Madrinas, a program that provides mentors for at-risk Latina girls to encourage them to finish high school and attend college.

“The President also nominated Susan Carbon as the head of the Office on Violence Against Women. The announcement was made on the first day of October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Susan Carbon, first appointed to the bench in 1991, has been a Supervisory Judge of the New Hampshire Judicial Branch Family Division since 1996. She is a member of the Governor's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence and, until recently, chaired New Hampshire's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee. Judge Carbon was also a President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) from 2007 to 2008 where she still frequently serves as a faculty member. She also serves as faculty for the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence — a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, the Family Violence

Prevention Fund, and the NCJFCJ. ... (Both of these women) are dedicated to the issues confronting women and girls across America.”

The Shriver Report

Last month the Center for American Progress, in partnership with California First Lady Maria Shriver, released [The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything](#), a groundbreaking examination of how “women's changing roles are affecting our major societal institutions, from government and businesses to our faith communities.” For the first time in American history, women are half of all U.S. workers and mothers are the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families. Considering that in 1967, women made up only one-third of all workers, this is a dramatic transformation that fundamentally changes how all Americans work and live, “not just women but also their families, their co-workers, their bosses, their faith institutions, and their communities.” Shriver said, “Institutions need to adapt to who the American family is today ... they need to get smarter. They need to get more progressive.”

To help understand the actual conditions in American homes and workplaces, a nationwide poll was commissioned to take a deep look at what men and women think of their changing roles in society and their attitudes toward each other as spouses, parents, bosses, and co-workers. The authors said “the battle of the sexes is over ... The profound shift in women's role in the U.S. economy has not led to massive conflict between men and women. In fact, the opposite happened — men and women view this change in quite favorable terms. Virtually all married couples see negotiating about the rules of relationships, work, and family as key to making things work at home and at work.” ... It's a clear message in recent years, yet the parameters of women's jobs have yet to change to meet new demands. Political and business leaders who fail to take steps to address the needs of modern families risk losing good workers and the support of men and women who are riding the crest of major social change in America with little or no support.

Visit [A Woman's Nation](#) for the full report.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

**Saturday,
December 5**

Empowering Women in this Economy. Maryland Commission for Women Symposium 2009. 8:30a - 4p. Prince George's Community College / Largo Student Center, 301 Largo Rd Largo, MD 20774 www.marylandwomen.org. Phone: 410-767-3049 Email: mcw@dhr.state.md.us

**Sunday,
Jan. 31, 2010**

Women's Legislative Briefing. University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus, 9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville, MD 20850. 12:30 - 5:30p. Keynote speaker will be pay equity heroine Lilly Ledbetter. General admission \$10; students \$5. Online registration required. Registration is now open. The Women's Legislative Briefing will conclude with a reception providing guests the opportunity to meet with County and State elected officials, and to network with advocates and representatives of other women's organizations. For more information, call 240-777-8330 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

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