



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

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November 2006

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

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

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

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

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

Anita Sharma, Senior Analyst
Lake Research

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

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

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

Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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

Next Meeting: January 28, 2007

No meeting in December

PROGRAM SUMMARY – OCTOBER 24, 2006 MEETING

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROGRAM SUMMARY – OCTOBER 24, 2006 MEETING continued

Business and Professional Women's Organizations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 15: TRAILBLAZERS: WOMEN VETERANS SHARE THEIR STORIES

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

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

2168 Rayburn House Office Building (Gold Room)

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

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

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

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

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

WOMEN WORK! 2007 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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

GENDER INEQUITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

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

MARYLAND'S LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING, JANUARY 23

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

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

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

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

2006: November 28; (No December meeting)

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

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their e-mail requests to [**cwinwsltr@aol.com**](mailto:cwinwsltr@aol.com)

COMING EVENTS

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

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

Note: No CWI meeting in December.

2007

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

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

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

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

Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor

CWI

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