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WCWI, WWCC host 2nd Nontraditional Career Day

ROCK SPRINGS - Over 250 Wyoming female high school students participated in the second annual Nontraditional Career Day hosted by the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues (WCWI) and Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) on October 12 at WWCC in Rock Springs.

Nontraditional Career Day was free to all girls grades 9-12 in Wyoming. The purpose of the event was to show young Wyoming women well-paying, nontraditional careers that exist in this state. Traditionally, many of these jobs are not ones that are associated with women.

This year's program focused on a wide variety of interactive workshops, ranging from welding to pharmacy. Over 40 different workshops offered speakers sharing real-world experiences. Students also had the opportunity to visit with a number of exhibitors showcasing various industries and organizations. Vendors and presenters from across the state brought information and inspiration.

The keynote speaker was Kim de Groh, a NASA engineer. She shared her experiences working in a traditionally male-dominated field. "If you believe you can," she told the group, "you can!"

The WCWI initiated the first Nontraditional Job Fair in October 2006 in response to Wyoming having the largest wage disparity by gender in the U.S.



Top: More than 250 young women visit booths at 2nd Nontraditional Career Day in Rock Springs.

Bottom: Kim de Groh, Senior Materials Research Engineer for NASA and keynote speaker.



Chamberlain named 2007 Wyoming Woman of Distinction

CHEYENNE - Willadeen Chamberlain received the 2007 Wyoming Woman of Distinction Award during a luncheon on September 7 at Little America in Cheyenne.

The Wyoming Woman of Distinction Award is sponsored by the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues (WCWI), which was formed with the mission of improving the quality and equality of life for Wyoming Women. This "once in a lifetime" award celebrates those who have had a significant impact on women and families in Wyoming with regard to education, community, health and legal issues.

Assisting women in advancing themselves is a personal and professional passion for Chamberlain, who recently retired as the Vice President of Student Services at Laramie County Community College (LCCC) to start her own counseling service - The Willadeen Chamberlain Christian Counseling Service. Chamberlain has worked with the school since 1980 when she joined it as an instructor at the reading academy and has held the titles of instructor, counselor, Interim Dean of Student Services, Director of Counseling and her current title of VP of student services.

"My passion is certainly mentoring and being available to work with women and then just enjoying raising three daughters and being a part of their challenges and successes," said Chamberlain.

She has Bachelor's Degrees in social studies, English and elementary education from John Brown University in Arkansas and a Masters of Education in counseling from the University of Wyoming. In her position at LCCC, she administered grants targeted at the advancement of women including the Displaced Homemakers/

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Wyo Women's suffrage teacher workshop slated for July 2008

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded jointly to the Wyoming Humanities Council and the University of Wyoming College of Education will sponsor two sessions of a week-long workshop for teachers on women's suffrage in Wyoming.

"Landmarks of American History and Culture: Women's Suffrage on the Western Frontier" will be offered for up to 40 teachers at each of two different times during the summer of 2008: July 20-25 and July 27-August 1.

Stipends of \$500 plus travel expenses are available. Participants will examine why the West embraced political equality for women long before the East, whether the myths of the West contributed to early suffrage, and how the issue of equality has played out for Wyoming's women over time. The institute will be based at UW and includes travel to South Pass City State Historic Site in Fremont County. Look for application instructions in early 2008 on www.uwyo.edu/humanities.



Maori women are flourishing, says visiting New Zealand professor

By Jenny Ingram

Maori women are strong and are playing important roles in tribal government, in the preservation of Maori culture, in the workplace, and in the family, reports Aroha Yates-Smith, Dean of the School of Maori and Pacific Development at the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

Yates-Smith visited Wyoming in October as part of a contingent of nine Maori, the indig-

enous people of New Zealand. She spoke at the University of Wyoming and at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, outlining the changes in the roles of Maori women over time, from pre-colonization to today.

According to Yates-Smith, Maori women have been leaders in the creation of Maori language immersion preschools and Maori language instruction for school-aged children. They have rediscovered female roles

that were lost when colonization brought Christianity to the Maori, and they are once again taking their places as strategists and leaders within their "iwi" or tribes. The University of Wyoming American Indian Studies Program, Wind River Tribal College, and the Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center hosted the Maori in Wyoming, to foster cultural exchange and explore the similarities between Maori culture and Plains Indian culture.

WCWI Members

Michelle Aldrich - Judicial District 1
Jenny Ingram - Judicial District 2
Jan Torres - Judicial District 3
Maureen Neavill - Judicial District 4
Kim Capron - Judicial District 5

Vacant - Judicial District 6
Lori Clifford - Judicial District 7
Sherrill Helzer - Judicial District 8
Teresa de Groh - Judicial District 9
Donna Whitson - At-Large

Suzey Delger - At-Large
Scarlet Skorcz - At-Large
Pamela Downing - At-Large
Diane Moser - Wyoming Business Council
Ex-Officio Member

Calendar of Events

October 29

"Women of Mystery" book discussion group at 12 p.m. in Big Piney Branch Library. Free. Contact the library.

November 24

Daylight Savings time ends

November 16

The 2007 Summit Award winner will be announced at the Wyoming Business Alliance's Wyoming 2007 Forum.

November 22

Thanksgiving

November 26

"Women of Mystery" book discussion group at 12 p.m. in Big Piney Branch Library. Free. Contact the library.

December 5

Hanukkah

December 22

First Day of Winter

December 25

Christmas

January 1

New Year's Day

January 11

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 11

Wyoming 2008 Budget Session convenes. Visit <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/>.

February 18

President's Day

February 23

WCWI Meeting in Cheyenne

March

Women's History Month

March 31

Do you know a Wyoming Woman of Distinction? The 2008 Wyoming Woman of Distinction Award nominations are due March 31. Visit www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org for application forms and additional information on the award.

April 19

WCWI Meeting in Casper

Continued: Woman of Distinction '07

Single Parent/Woman in Technology Grant. The grant provides support services to over 80 students and helps students with tuition, fees and books as well as personal services like childcare, transportation and tutoring. She also facilitated two Carl Perkins Vocational Education Grants, which address training for women in the community.

She has been a member of the Colorado and Wyoming Association for Women in Education for 15 years and is currently the organization's president elect. She is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, as well as the National Association of Women in Education among other groups.

Outside the office, Chamberlain is the leader of a ministry in the religious community that focuses on women's spirituality and personal growth. She has also been a trustee for several boards including groups which have lent support to the causes of eradicating domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

WCH's Humanities Forum features programs about women's issues

As part of the 2008 Humanities Forum, the Wyoming Humanities Council is pleased to present several programs that explore women's issues.

Nonprofit groups and government agencies can host up to two Humanities Forum presentations, in which presenters both share their specialized knowledge and facilitate public discussion.

New this year are two presentations from Linda Ross. "Tragedy and Triumph: Women's Lives on the Great Plains" weaves together quotes from women's diaries, personal recollections, and the writings of Nebraska author Mari Sandoz to describe how women coped and even thrived in the harsh environment of the Great Plains.

In "Duty, Courage: A Woman's Perspective of Fort Phil Kearny," Ross draws on the journals of Margaret Carrington, whose husband established a fort in the heart of Powder River country in 1866, to capture both sides of the tragic clash between soldiers sent to protect gold-seeking prospectors and Plains tribes defending their sacred ground. Also new is Dorene Ludwig's "Across the Great Divide: How Women Made the West," in which



Current Woman of Distinction nominees and past honorees acknowledge Willadeen Chamberlain (seated center) at a luncheon.

In addition to Chamberlain, ten other Wyoming women were nominated for the 2007 Woman of Distinction Award. They include: Ruth Benson, U.S. Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-Wyo.), Dr. Ray Fleming Dinneen, Roxanne L. Friday, Judith A. Fuller, Maggi Maier Murdock, Marcia Patton, Deborah J. Nagle Smith, Christine Stocks and Diane Wolverton.

Ludwig offers first-person vignettes of women schoolteachers, physicians, artists, homemakers, missionaries, ranchers, and scouts.

Several continuing programs also focus on women's history. In "Ella Watson's Fence: The Story Behind the Lynching of 'Cattle Kate,'" Tom Rea examines the reasons for the infamous 1889 lynching of Ella Watson.

In "She's Been Workin' on the Railroad," Lynne Swanson offers a first-person presentation of Nellie Nielsen, a 'Rosie the Riveter' from Cheyenne. Dorene Ludwig portrays working women from colonial times to the industrial sweatshops and corporate America in "Hemmed In: Work-Life Patterns of American Women," and her "History of Women in the Service of America" presents several remarkable women who served America with courage and valor. Finally, in "Wet and Dry Wyoming: How Prohibition Split the Equality State," Melanie Francis explores the political and social upheaval that rocked Wyoming during the Prohibition years.

If you would like to host a Humanities Forum program, please visit www.uwyo.edu/humanities, or contact Jenn Koiter at (307) 721-9243 or jkoiter@uwyo.edu.

Employment Practices Update: Summit Award winner to be announced

Nominations closed July 31 for the 2007 Wyoming Summit Award and the winner will be announced November 16 at the Outlook 2007 Forum in Casper.

This award will recognize a business that, in the last year, broadened its workforce by implementing programs and policies that enabled progress toward an equitable and diverse workforce from under-represented populations.

The Outlook Forum is scheduled for November 15 and 16 at the Parkway Plaza Hotel and Convention Center. For more information about

the Forum, please visit the web site at www.wba.vcn.com.

The WCWI, the Wyoming Business Alliance, the Wyoming Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, and the Wyoming Business Council sponsor this award.

Please visit www.wyomingwomen.org for more information on the award and the WCWI.



Help Wanted: Become a family friendly employer & reduce employee absences

By Wyoming Department of Family Services

The following are examples of the many types of practices and effects of implementing family friendly practices across the United States.

- Parental leave
- Paternity leave
- Time off for emergencies
- Job sharing
- Term-time working
- Working at or from home during normal working hours
- Workplace or other nursery provision
- Help with child-care costs
- Flexi-time

The variety of performance measures that

employers who implemented any of the above included:

- Increased financial performance
- Increased employee productivity
- Increased quality of product or service
- Increased value of sales
- Decreased days of absence
- Decreased labor turnover

"It seems that there is a connection between having family-friendly practices and a higher than average performance. A study (Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS)) 1998 showed definitive increases in performance that were associated with having one or other family-friendly policy in the case of 5 out of 6 performance indicators."

What this means in terms of change is hard to say: it could be the case that high-performing workplaces are more likely to introduce what they see as progressive working practices.

However, the family-friendly/work-life balance business case is only part of the reason for introducing flexible working. The bottom-line issues are always more likely to be persuasive for an employer. If family-friendliness is a by-product of new working practices, a win-win situation is achieved.

For more information or if you have any questions on the above material, please contact the Child Care Finder office at 1-800-578-4017 Ext. 307.

Chair's Column: Women Focus - Wyoming Benefits

The Council has had two of its major events since our last newsletter—our nontraditional career day and our Woman of Distinction award. This newsletter contains articles more specifically describing these events and their success.

Our Woman of Distinction award continues to receive good attention and recognition, due to the significant accomplishments of nominees, as well as our efforts to bring attention to exceptional, contemporary role models for women in Wyoming. Congratulations to Willadeen Chamberlain as our 2007 Woman of Distinction award winner!

The nontraditional "career day" held at, and in collaboration with, Western Wyoming Community College, was also a great success. The Council intends to make this a yearly event and move it around the state. The size of Wyoming often makes it difficult for students to attend events on the

other side of the state and the Council wants to ensure that this successful event is accessible to students throughout the state. This event has so far garnered from 250 to over 500 student attendees. Potential collaborators and hosts, please contact the Council if you would like this event to come to your area!

In November, the Wyoming Business Alliance has its annual fall convention. The Council and its partners in the Summit Award program will present this award to a business that has exceptional workforce-friendly employment practices. This newsletter also contains a more specific article about this award program. Please read!

Another Council effort that is nearing completion is a second edition of our Legal Rights of Women in Wyoming handbook. This publication is a "plain English" explanation of Wyoming laws that are typically

of interest to women. The first edition is five years old and this new edition is updated to laws in effect prior to the 2007 legislative session. This new edition should be available on our web site before the end of this year, but print documents will take a bit longer, and we also hope to offer it in Spanish. The Council is also arranging to provide yearly supplements that will be available on our web site. The supplement for laws enacted by the 2007 legislative session is being developed and will be put on the web site as soon as possible.

The next newsletter will be coming out in early 2008, so this is my opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

-Teresa de Groh