



The Wyoming Council for Women's Issues recognized Riverton resident Dessie Bebout, second from left, with its annual Woman of Distinction Award on Sept. 17 in Riverton. Pictured with Bebout, from left, are Council members Donna Thompson of Riverton, this year's Woman of Distinction luncheon coordinator; Sherrill Helzer of Torrington, Home and Community committee chair; and Carma Corra of Cheyenne, WCWI chair.

Dessie Bebout receives WCWI Woman of Distinction Award

Don't be fooled by the 91 candles on her last birthday cake or by the number - certainly lower - that pops up on her bathroom scale. Dessie Bebout is a force of nature.

Recognized by the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues with its annual Woman of Distinction Award on Sept. 17, the Riverton resident was described repeatedly by more than 70 family members and friends as "something else."

As recently as 2010, Bebout was "a significant part of our steering committee in a very challenging bond issue for a health and science center," said Central Wyoming Community College Board of Trustees President Roger L. Gose, M.D., who spoke during the WOD Luncheon. "Dessie was an inspirational force in what turned out to be

a winning vote for the center - other bond and tax issues on that ballot failed." Committee member Margaret Reynolds informally shared with a WCWI member her experience of serving with Bebout. "I've never had so much fun in my life. Bessie was a riot, a delight," she said. "It's a wonderful feeling to observe that women have great power to do things."

As master of ceremonies, Bebout's oldest child, State Senator Eli Bebout of Riverton, spoke of his mother's all-important relationships with "the Lord, her family and her country" and described her World War II service as a WAVE - one of the first Wyoming women to join - as well as her years as a bride and young mother in an unheated, converted boxcar in Bairoil.

From "the other side" of the political aisle,

State Representative Ann Robinson of Casper remembered meeting Bebout for the first time at the Wyoming State Championship Old-time Fiddle Contest, hosted annually in Shoshoni. "Dessie had a beautiful smile," she said. Through more than 20 years of fiddle contests, the women became close friends. A past WOD award recipient herself, Robinson, along with Riverton resident Patricia Anderson, nominated Bebout for the award. Letters of support were provided by Gose, CWC President Jo Anne Youtz McFarland and retired U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson. Collectively, the five created a long list of projects and achievements. Accepting appointments by former Governor Mike Sullivan, Bebout served on the Wyoming Private Industry Council and Job Training Partnership Board

WCWI MEMBERS

Carma Corra – District 1
Wendy Perkins – District 2
Jan Torres – District 3
Maureen Neavill – District 4
Susan Peck – District 5

Laurel Vicklund – District 6
Suzey Delger – District 7
Sherrill Helzer – District 8
Donna Thompso – District 9
Pamela Downing – At-Large

Suzan Campbell – At-Large
Mary Billiter – At-Large
Pam Walker – At-Large
Annie Wood – Wyoming Business
Council Ex-Officio Member

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and on the Wyoming Women's Commission. As a Shoshoni resident, she helped launch kindergarten and throat culture programs, was an officer in the Parent Teachers Association, helped obtain a charter for Cub Scouts, became a Scout leader and served as an advisory board member for the school district's Basket of Goods and Vocational Education/Future Farmers of America committees. Her activities also include serving as Shoshoni Chamber of Commerce treasurer, co-chairing the Old-time Fiddle Contest and service on numerous boards, including: One Shot Deer Hunt, Fishing Derby boards, District No. 24 Board of Recreation, Fremont County and Hot Springs County Foster Grandparents, Wyoming Centennial Committee, Riverton Memorial Hospital Board, CWC Foundation and several city and county zoning boards. She engaged in fund drives for Easter Seals, the Heart Association and the Cancer Society and, as mentioned above, was a member of the steering committee for CWC's Health and Science Center bond issue. Bebout was named Shoshoni "Citizen of the Year" in 1992 and is an honorary life member of the FFA Alumni Association.

In nominating Bebout, Robinson wrote that her friends and family use the words "tenacious, reliable, trustworthy, intelligent, optimistic, mobilizing, organizational and a person who never passes up the opportunity to make the world a better place." In his letter, Simpson described her as "a woman of patience, energy, intelligence, wisdom, thoughtfulness...always a caring and nurturing wife, mother, sister, niece, friend and just one very special person." Born in Hudson to Dan W. and Bessie Svilar, Bebout graduated from Lander's Fremont County

Vocational High School and worked to help her brothers complete college before enlisting in the WAVES and serving in Cheyenne and Seattle in naval communications and dispatch. She later married Herbert "Hugh" Bebout, raised three children (Eli, Nick and Ruby Calvert) and a niece and nephew, owned and operated family businesses with her husband, worked as secretary-treasurer for a Svilar family business and served as postmaster in Shoshoni for 13 years. She received the "Order of the Vest," the highest honor given to postmasters for meritorious service, in 1975 and was recognized three years later as "Outstanding Postmaster of Wyoming. Bebout remains corporate treasurer and director for three family businesses.

WCWI's annual Woman of Distinction Award is a "once in a lifetime" award that recognizes the recipient's impact on women of families in any or all of several areas: the educational or employment sector, community outreach, legal issues and health and wellness. Previous recipients include, from Baggs: Linda Fleming, from Casper: Ann Robinson and Oralia Mercado, from Cheyenne: Willadeen Chamberlain and Mary K. Schwope, from Ethete: Francis Merle Haas, from Evanston: Denice Wheeler, from Jackson: Mickey Babcock and Cindy Knight, from Laramie: Connie Coca, and from Rock Springs: Kayne Pyatt.

Hosted by WCWI's Home and Community committee, chaired by Sherrill Helzer of Torrington, this year's event was primarily coordinated by Donna Thompson of Riverton, assisted by Annie Wood of Cheyenne. Nominations for the 2012 Woman of Distinction are now welcome. Please contact Wood at the Wyoming Business Council at 777-2844 for forms or additional information.

WCWI Upcoming Events **As of November 22, 2011**

January

7 WCWI Quarterly Meeting
Casper Petroleum Club
Features Wyoming Parent
Leadership Training Institute
Presentation

February

**7 Wyoming Women's Legislative
Caucus Leap Into Leadership
Workshop**
Cody

**9 Wyoming Women's Legislative
Caucus Leap Into Leadership
Workshop**
Laramie

March

**1-2 Wyoming Women's
Legislative Caucus Leap Into
Leadership**
Cheyenne, Wyoming State Capitol

**31 WCWI 2012 Woman of
Distinction Nomination Deadline**

WCWI visits Heart Mountain

Wyoming Council for Women's Issues Vice Chair Jan Torres of Rock Springs, left, visited the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp near Cody on Sept. 16. Pictured with her is Susan Bates, also of Rock Springs, a colleague in Western Wyoming Community College's Department of Psychology. The women, along with other WCWI members, toured the camp and its new Interpretive Center between its Young Women's Career Fair co-hosted by Northwest College in Powell on Sept. 15 and its Woman of Distinction Award Luncheon honoring Dessie Bebout in Riverton on Sept. 17. Following Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and President Franklin Roosevelt's 1942 executive order requiring the internment of all Japanese Americans in secured facilities, 13,997 internees passed through the Heart Mountain camp.



WCWI recognizes Peregrine Leadership Institute

The Wyoming Council for Women's Issues presented its second Summit Award of 2011 to Peregrine Leadership Institute of Gillette during Governor Matt Mead's Business Forum on Nov. 15 in Cheyenne. The forum was the 29th annual Wyoming Forum coordinated by the Wyoming Business Alliance and Wyoming Heritage Foundation.

Nominated by Melissa Noah and other employees for the company's family-friendly atmosphere and significant efforts to broaden, strengthen and support the workforce, Peregrine mentors, teaches and coaches leaders, including international clients in Tunisia and Canada. Olin Oedekoven, president and CEO, accepted the award on behalf of the institute, including Clifford Knesel Jr., vice president, and Deborah Robbins, chief operating officer. "Cliff, Deb and I are honored and deeply humbled to be recognized by our great team for creating and sustaining a family friendly workplace environment," he said. "One of the core operating principles we teach during our leadership development workshops and personally strive to practice is to 'take care of your people.' Quality employees are the lifeblood of our organization and we focus daily on ensuring that their personal and professional goals are realized. A wise mentor once said that the visual must match the audio. At Peregrine Leadership, we strive to ensure that our actions to support our employees are aligned with our stated core values."

In making the presentation, WCWI Employment Opportunities Committee Chair Pamela Downing mentioned Peregrine's flexible scheduling, allowing employees to set work hours that meet the demand of their families; the ability to work at home as long as work commitments are met; the adjustment of work schedules over time for different seasons or needs in life; and even welcoming the children of employees in the office. "It is not uncommon to see toys and children around the office...Room has been made for port cribs and toddler toys in the different office spaces. The board room is just as often used for snacks, movies and coloring as it is for meetings. This enables employees to reduce child care and give their children the parental attention they need," Downing said, quoting from Noah's nomination.

During maternity leaves, employees are paid their full salaries, even though the company is small, and employees facing severe illnesses are offered the same flexibility as parents. Downing also quoted from a letter by employee George F. Haines III, whose previously diagnosed cancer metastasized, requiring 300-miles round trips every two weeks for chemotherapy, and then the same round trip "for 25 straight days for radiation." He wrote, she said, "that without the assistance of Olin Oedekoven and Cliff Knesel, I could not have addressed my health needs, continued to work and kept things at home as stable as possible during this trying time."

Also supportive of military families, Peregrine has implemented a variety of programs, hired military spouses, provided technology to facilitate communication and allowed communication during work hours if necessary. Jessica M. Johnson, who was employed by Peregrine in 2006 while her husband was deployed, wrote that she was able to bring her daughter to work, set up a bed for her nap, put toys in an empty office, be with her husband the entire length of a two-week holiday return, take a leave of absence when that first deployment ended and take another two weeks off to be with



WCWI Award Winner

Olin O. Oedekoven, Ph. D., president and CEO of Peregrine Leadership Institute of Gillette, receives the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues Summit Award for family-friendly business practices during Governor Matt Mead's Business Forum in Cheyenne on Nov. 15. Pictured with Oedekoven are Carma Corra, WCWI chair, left, and Pamela Downing, WCWI Employment Practices Committee Chair, both of Cheyenne. The photo is provided by Rachel Girt, owner of Girt Communications, LLC.

him prior to a second deployment to Iraq. This time, she brought two children to work, and Peregrine even paid for her to fly to California to surprise him upon his return. "The Peregrine Leadership Institute is one of the most amazing businesses I've ever worked for. The company has the attributes of being ethical, commitment to being a team and devotion to employees and their families," Johnson said. "It's nice to know that I don't have to choose between my career and my family...I can have the best of both worlds while employed with the Peregrine Leadership Institute."

Other Peregrine policies include providing laptops for employees, server technology that allows employees to remotely access Peregrine information, creative meetings, fun activities, support of causes important to employees through in-kind or monetary donations, opportunities for spouses or other family members to travel along on business trips and more.

According to Oedekoven, business leadership is about recruiting and retaining talented people. "If our workplace culture retains talent, all the better to make our company more successful. Creating and sustaining a workplace environment such as ours is not hard, nor costly. It's really just a matter of truly caring about our employees and ensuring that their needs are met so that they can meet the needs of the organization."

WCWI's Summit Ward recognition of Peregrine Leadership Institute follows its April Summit Award presentation to Andi Clifford, manager of human resources for Wind River Casino in Riverton.

WCWI is supported by the Wyoming Business Council. For information about the Summit Ward, or for a 2012 application, contact Annie Wood at the Business Council at 307-777-2844 or annie.wood@wyo.gov.



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High School student Chelsey Malatare of Cowley receives a \$200 check as a Young Woman's Career Fair door prize from the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues on Sept. 15 in Powell. The event, co-hosted by the Council and Northwest College, showcased nontraditional careers for women. Pictured from left with Malatare are WCWI members Carma Corra of Cheyenne, chair; Suzey Delger, R.N., F.N.P., of Casper, Educational Opportunities Committee chair; and Jan Torres of Rock Springs, 2011 Career Fair coordinator.

Women's Council, Northwest College host Young Women's Career Fair

In partnership with Northwest College, the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues hosted its sixth annual Young Women's Career Fair on Sept. 15 on the college campus in Powell. More than 350 girls in grades nine and 10 from the college's service area were treated to nontraditional and traditional career information, inspiring messages and entertainment from keynote speaker and small business expert Melinda Emerson of Philadelphia, 23 workshop presenters, a Wall of Women and a trio of comedy a cappella singers, Plumbers of Rome. Presenters included Lisa Osvold, deputy director for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services; Patricia L. Hattie, rangeland management specialist; Liz Flom, athletic trainer; Rowene Weems, museum director and curator; M. Jalie Meinecke, attorney; Reanne Wolff, Certified Public Accountant; Keri Wilson, CPA; Bethany Sondeno, senior staff/partner; Brittany Kobbe, children and family therapist; Chris Addison, marriage and family therapist; Kristin Startin, addiction therapist; Astrid Northrup, college engineering and mathematics professor; Juliette Vibe, detective; Tessa Schweigert, newspaper managing editor; Carla Wensky, graphic designer/photographer; Jamie Smith, press operator; Dr. Diane Noton, physician; Leslie Nistico, owner and landscape design consultant; Dr. Kamme Jeffries, dentist; Dr. Tori Lewis, veterinarian; Karen Burk, pharmacist; Judith LaPlante, computer scientist; and Joneen Costigan, registered nurse.

During the opening remarks, WCWI Chair Carma Corra of Cheyenne told participants they had the opportunity to learn from women who had opened doors and blazed trails, many of them in careers where fewer than 25 percent of their gender work. "We want to encourage and inspire you to defy gender stereotypes - no one has a lock on any occupation," she said. "Consider today an exploration, pick up some new knowledge, allow yourself to really experience what is offered, put some energy into this event and soak it all in - this could be an important day of discovery."

Coordinators for the 2011 Young Women's Career Fair were West Hernandez, admissions manager for NWC, and Jan Torres, WCWI vice chair. The annual event is co-hosted by WCWI's Educational Opportunities Committee and one of Wyoming's seven community colleges on a rotating basis, with Riverton's Central Wyoming College planning the 2012 fair. WCWI is supported by the Wyoming Business Council; for additional information, contact Annie Wood at the Business Council at 307-777-2844 or annie.wood@wyo.gov.



WCWI News is a quarterly publication focused on news and information of value to women in Wyoming. To be added to the mailing list, call 307-777-2800.

Visit www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org for more information.