



# A FEW NOTES

## Federally Employed Women



EQUALITARIAN CHAPTER

July/August 2007



From L to R: Debra Hobbs, Equalitarian Member, Sue Webster, Executive VP, Arlena Fitch-Gordon, VP Training and Nolene Smith, Vice President, Equalitarian Chapter

### Fitch-Gordon honored as Allie Latimer award winner



### Members enjoy a beautiful night at the National Training Program in Washington, DC

The 2007 National Training Program (NTP) was held in Washington, D.C. July 16-20. FEW's NTP provided an outstanding opportunity for attendees to develop their skills and improve the quality of the public service they provide. In its 38th year, FEW's NTP offered something for everyone; it focused on providing quality training and educational opportunities.

Arlena Fitch-Gordon, Supervisory Personnel Security Specialist/Diversity Manager for the Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office was the recipient of the "Allie Latimer" award. Fitch-Gordon received the award at Federally Employed Women's 38<sup>th</sup> annual conference and National Training Program, held July 16-20 in Washington, DC.



Rhonda Trent, National President addresses attendees

"Since I have over 45 years of Federal service, I am extremely honored to have been able to assist other women at the grassroots level achieve their career goals. On behalf of FEW, we are fortunate that the founder of FEW, Ms. Allie Latimer, had the vision to see that we needed an organization whose mission is to advance women in the Federal government.

I am overwhelmed to receive this prestigious award named after the founder of FEW," Said Fitch-Gordon.



## THE FEW VIEW ON LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Provided by Yolanda Brown-Harris  
Legislative Chair

### ● **Affirmative Action:**

Federal agencies cut the average time it takes to process equal employment opportunity complaints to 186 days in fiscal year 2006, down from 237 days the year before, according to a new report from the agency responsible for enforcing laws against workplace discrimination. Despite the overall improvement, less than a third of the profiled agencies had average investigation completion times shorter than 180 days, according to the 2006 Annual Report on the Federal Workforce, released by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Federal law requires that all agency investigations be finished within 180 days.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) took an average of 105 days to conclude an EEO investigation in fiscal year 2006, well ahead of the government average of 186 days. OPM also reduced the total time it took to close complaints to 131 days from 346.

The numbers in the report indicate that the EEOC itself has had trouble processing complaints. Once an agency completes an investigation and makes its decision, the complainant can request a hearing before an EEOC judge. Statutes require that the EEOC conclude the hearing within 180 days, a requirement that often goes unmet. In fiscal year 2005 EEOC took an average of 249 days to finish hearings; in 2006 the number rose to 274 days.

On another front, according to data released by EEOC in this report, women are moving up the ranks of federal service. The Senior Executive Service, Executive Schedule, Senior Foreign Service and other federal positions that pay above GS-15 are being filled increasingly by women. The 5,256 (out of 20,070) women in senior pay-level positions represent 26% of the workforce, up from 21% in fiscal year 1997.

### ● **Effective/Efficient Government Reform:**

A coalition of labor unions filed a petition for a full appeals court review of a ruling that upheld the Defense Department's new personnel and labor relations rules.

The unions are seeking a rehearing of a decision issued in May by a panel of judges of the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia regarding the department's National Security Personnel System.

The appeals judges found that the law creating the system grants the Defense Department temporary authority to curtail the collective bargaining rights of employees, reversing a lower court's ruling.

The petition asks the full appeals court to review what the unions see as discrepancies between the May NSPS decision and an earlier decision involving personnel rules at the Homeland Security Department. In that case, decided last June, a separate three-judge appeals panel upheld a lower court ruling that struck down large parts of DHS's new labor relations system.

A provision in the version of the 2008 Defense authorization bill approved by the House in May would overhaul the Pentagon's implementation of the system, restoring employees' collective bargaining and appeal rights and requiring the department to bargain with unions before implementing pay for performance. The Senate Armed Services Committee approved similar language in late May. According to the appeals court ruling, Defense's authority to limit employees' collective bargaining rights runs out in November 2009, unless Congress votes to extend the changes.

### ● **Family Member Care:**

Rep. Carolyn Maloney introduced a bill (HR 1369, Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act) that would expand the scope of the FMLA to cover parental leave, among other things. Specifically the bill would establish a grant program that supports the efforts of states to provide partial or full wage replacement to new parents so that the new parents are able to spend time with a new infant or newly adopted child.

Of most importance to federal employees are the provisions dealing with federal employees paid parental leave. The bill provides six weeks of paid leave for employees separate from annual or sick leave resulting from the birth or adoption of a child and other family care-giving needs. Federal employees would also receive a total of 24 hours of leave to participate in an academic activity of a school of a child. The legislation would also provide leave for addressing domestic violence for federal employees.



FEW is proud to announce that its **2008 National Training Program (NTP)** will be held at the beautiful Anaheim Hilton Hotel in Anaheim, California, July 14-18, 2008.


FEW's 2008 National Training Program (NTP) is a training opportunity you just don't want to miss! We plan to live up to our long history of hosting great training programs, this year in the beautiful city of Anaheim, California. The NTP Committee is comprised of FEW members and leaders from across the country. FEW has contracted with Experient, a professional conference management company, to provide technical and logistical assistance. With this team effort, FEW often receives compliments like, "This is the best organized conference I have ever attended."

Whether NTP 2008 in Anaheim will be your first or your tenth, we guarantee that the 39th NTP will be one you won't forget. We are planning a wide variety of courses that will feature trainers who are the best in the business. FEW plans to host Federal Agency Forums and the third annual Education/Career Fair. FEW's Exposition Hall in Anaheim will afford attendees a unique opportunity to visit with government, business and industry leaders who represent products and services on the cutting edge of tomorrow's workplace.

Managers and supervisors looking to identify training opportunities for themselves and their staff will find a wealth of courses that address the current issues and trends in the Federal workplace. Whether your career goals include transforming your career path, ascending the career ladder, renovating your knowledge base, or expanding your marketability as a government professional, you'll find several workshops to fit your needs.

FEW will also celebrate its 40th Anniversary during NTP week in Anaheim, and this is sure to make the 2008 NTP memorable with special guests and events, including many of our past National FEW Presidents. Perhaps more importantly, FEW will celebrate its long history of providing training and development opportunities to women as they advance in their government careers. Indeed, this year's theme, "Moving On, Moving Up!" is reflective of both the FEW organization and its annual training program.

Plan now to join us in beautiful Anaheim, California, July 14-18, 2008. You will be glad you did!

  
Patricia M. Wolfe  
Co-Chair

  
Jeanette S. Miller  
Co-Chair

## A History of the American Suffragist Movement



"It was a tiny ad placed in an obscure newspaper. The *Seneca County Courier*, a weekly paper delivered to farms in the cold country where New York State meets Canada, ran just three sentences in its edition for July 14, 1848. The simple announcement invited women to a discussion of "the social, civil, and religious rights of women."

More than 200 years before Seneca Falls, a woman named Anne Hutchinson defied the dominant leadership and exercised her right to free speech. In 1637 the theocrats who ran the newly founded colony of Massachusetts tried and convicted Hutchinson of sedition because her religious ideas did not agree with theirs. Her brand of feminine spirituality was proving more popular than their harsh theology, and when prominent young men exhibited their respect for this female leadership, Hutchinson was banished. At age 46, heavily pregnant for the twelfth time, she accepted exile rather than surrender her independent ideas. It literally cost her life; ...[she] and most of her children were killed by Algonquins in the Long Island Sound area where she settled after banishment from the safety of Boston. Although shamefully few Americans know it, an even more powerful case for female participation in the exchange of ideas was made by Hutchinson's friend Mary Dyer. The only person courageous enough to protest when Hutchinson was excommunicated from their Boston church, Dyer returned to England in 1652; there she converted to the newly founded Society of Friends, more commonly called Quakers. While she was abroad, Massachusetts and Connecticut passed laws banning Quakers, and Dyer was exiled from both colonies upon her 1657 return. Although she could have remained safely in more liberal Long Island, she defied convention--and the pleading of her husband and sons--to repeatedly return to Boston to preach her vision of a loving, egalitarian God. On 1 June 1660 the theocracy of Massachusetts, which was both church and state, hanged Mary Dyer.

# Healthy FEW News



## 7 Steps to Heart Health

With medical advances, mortality from heart disease is falling. But it is still the most common health threat in this country. Consequently, the American Heart Association (AHA) and many other health organizations continue to emphasize prevention of heart disease.

The AHA's challenge: Know your risk factors and how to change them. These 7 safeguards can help fight heart disease:

**Blood sugar** — Keep it within a normal range if you are diagnosed as diabetic or prediabetic. By age 45 discuss blood glucose testing with your health care provider.

**Blood pressure** — Keep it below 120/80. Elevated blood pressure is controllable, even preventable, with weight control and regular exercise, as well as quitting tobacco if you use it.

**Blood cholesterol** — If you are unable to control it with lifestyle — weight loss, diet and exercise habits — consult your provider about medication.

**Weight** — The 3 factors above will probably improve when you lose just a few pounds. Watch what you eat and stay active!

**Waistline** — Fat around the middle of your body can raise your risk more than excess weight in general. Routine aerobic exercise can help reduce body fat.

**Activity** — Just 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity can add years to your heart and your life. It can also help control the 5 factors listed above.

**Smoking** — It doubles your risk of heart attack — that risk doubles again if you combine smoking with high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol. Snuff it out. Ask your provider for help.

## Top Reasons to Exercise

Based on extensive research, health organizations and the medical community believe that exercise can fight many age-related ailments. Specifically, the American Council on Exercise (ACE) has reported that routine exercise can:

**Increase metabolism.** Exercise raises metabolism, which helps control weight and reduce overall body fat. And it builds muscle — the more muscle, the higher your rate of metabolism.

**Help prevent and control type 2 diabetes.** Moderate daily walks help regulate blood sugar levels and fight weight gain, a major factor in developing diabetes.

**Improve cardiovascular strength.** Aerobic exercise several times a week can help maintain heart and vascular functions. The key is to improve oxygen flow by exercising at a moderate, nonstop pace for 20-30 minutes per workout.

**Maintain bone health.** Officials estimate that by 2020 half of Americans age 50+ could experience bone loss (osteoporosis) severe enough to cause fractures. Exercise throughout life can help maintain bone mass.

**Maintain mobility.** A major concern with aging is loss of physical strength that creates dependency on others for care. Exercise helps preserve muscle mass to perform the daily activities of living.

**Aid flexibility.** Daily stretching keeps the joints healthy and reduces injuries.

**Reduce fatigue.** Feeling tired can result from several factors, but the more you exercise, the more physical strength and energy you gain.

