

**St. Mary's County  
Commission for Women Meeting  
March 16, 2009**

Katie Werner called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. The following members were present: Darlene Johnson, Norma Pipkin, Juanita Nether, Pat Friend, Susan Gough, Katie Werner, and Marta Kelsey. Also present were Cynthia Brown, Commission Liaison, and Lynn Fitrell, Maryland Commission for Women member. Rose Ann Everett and Maureen Johnson were excused.

Minutes for January and February meetings could not be approved. Rose was not present and Cynthia thought someone else was taking minutes at the February meeting. These will be presented and approved at the April meeting.

**Delicados/Wellness Day:** Katie Werner set the display up and Norma Pipkin was able to stay at the booth until mid-day. Juanita Nether was around all day, but busy with other duties for the Delicados. The display board was not the board set up with CFW information and we did not have handouts on domestic violence, the commission, or pens. In years past, we have had a door prize but we did not have one this year. The general consensus was that our display was not up to par and we need to concentrate on getting our information together and up to date.

**Women's History Month Proclamation:** Katie Werner reported that Commissioner Raley asked all the men in the audience to stand and reminded them that they all have mothers and that this was an appropriate way to recognize women and their role in our lives. The proclamation will be on display at the Banquet Wednesday Evening.

**Women's History Month Banquet:** Katie Werner reported that she plans to arrive at 3:00 or 3:30 to oversee set up.

- The flowers have been arranged for: all nominees will receive a carnation with green and white ribbons and all judges will receive a pink carnation. The tables will have flowers on them in "bud vases" / plastic bottles in keeping with the environmental theme of reuse/recycle. In addition all nominees will be presented with a rose when their name is called.
- We will also place brochures on the tables outlining the county's recycling program.
- The awards are done and Katie Werner will pick them up on Tuesday. Linda Virt has been kind enough to include a sample (without names) that we can display so everyone can see what the award will look like.
- John Pommerville has agreed to play Irish and Celtic music both before dinner and during the program.
- Katie Werner reported that it is OK for us to bring in a wheelchair to help transport people to the meeting room. There is now a closer door that is wheelchair accessible. Norma Pipkin will bring a wheelchair.
- The head count for the dinner is now at 40.

- Cynthia Brown will check with Senator Dyson and Miller's offices as well as Rep. Hoyer's office to see if they plan on sending representatives. Senator Cardin's office is sending someone.
- Katie Werner plans to have a table set up with Domestic Violence handouts and membership applications.
- Norma Pipkin moved and Marta Kelsey seconded a motion that CFW Commission members not be required to pay the \$15 for dinner. The motion carried.

**New Business:** Since Andree Wells has resigned, we will need a new vice-chair and representative to the Family Violence Coordinating Council.

**Maryland Commission for Women Update:**

- Lynn Fitrell reported that she recently attended the Woman of the Year award in Annapolis and suggested that we consider attending next year. She said the ceremony was very impressive.
- On May 13<sup>th</sup>, there is a Woman of Tomorrow award ceremony for a young woman. Lynn will send details of where and when.
- Legislative Update:
  - There is a bill pending that would expunge the records of those individuals accused to domestic violence who have been issued restraining orders if they are not convicted. Most d/v advocates feel this bill should not pass.
  - Another bill which is pending has to do with judges confiscating firearms from accused abusers. Lynn Fitrell was very excited about Governor O'Malley's position on this bill; he is apparently very much in favor of it and has spoken to various legislators about it, strongly advocating its passage.
  - The budget for legal assistance for d/v victims was cut by 25% this year and will be cut by 50% next year.
  - Lynn warned us that we may get "panic" calls asking us to call and write legislators regarding these pending bills and urged us to support them.
  - One other possible development regards the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault programs currently administered through DHR. These programs may move to the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. The two remaining DHR staff would move with the programs.

**Announcements:**

- Next event is the Woman of the Year Banquet on March 18, 2009 at the James Forrest Career and Technology Center at 5:30 pm.
- Next Meeting is April 20, 2009 at 5:30 pm. Planning for our Annual Retreat will be on the agenda.