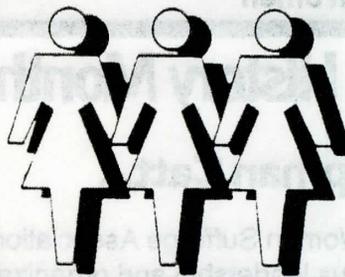


# Commission

505 Poli Street, Ventura, CA 93001  
(805) 652-7611 Fax: 652-7520

for



# Women

**Spring 1997**

## What is the Commission for Women?

The Ventura County Commission for Women was established in 1981 to assist the Board of Supervisors in addressing areas of education & job discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other injustices that women face. The Commission serves as advisors to the Board of Supervisors on issues impacting and relating to women, and coordinates efforts with Federal, State and local community groups to improve the quality of life for women. These community groups are offered the honor of electing a representative from their organization to the Commission, to serve on a chosen Commission committee and make recommendations for "Requests for Attention to..." from their organization to the Commission. The Commission will determine which events/projects/activities they will spearhead, organize and hand off each year. The Commission may choose to co-sponsor an event or two each year.

In addition, the Commission serves as a referral agency for persons experiencing unfair practices as a result of gender, health or family status and report such instances to the appropriate agency or the Board of Supervisors. At the request of the Board of Supervisors, the Commission will undertake studies or tasks, depending on resources being provided.

## The Eighth Annual Family Law Forum Set for May 10, 1997

**Location this year will be Santa Paula Boys and Girls Club.**

Plans are well underway for a day of information and education about the many issues surrounding divorce. Although emotionally charged, these issues are ultimately settled by laws which every woman should know something about. Those who have gone through a divorce or are seeking one will be helped by the lawyers and judges and district attorney who will share their expertise and give general, or in some cases, very specific advice to women, whether the problem involves child custody arrangements, support or non-support, community property or even domestic violence issues.

This all-day event will include child care arrangements at a very reasonable cost, and a substantial box lunch will be available for the very low fee of \$5. Food can be brought by those who wish to provide their own lunch, also. Of course, the event itself is absolutely free. Details of the agenda and specific speakers and topics are still being arranged. Call 654-1294 to find out more or to ask for an advance reservation.

## Who Are The Commissioners?

### District 1 (Susan Lacey)

Ruth A. Hibbard  
Monica McGrath  
Roberta Payan

### District 2 (Frank Schillo)

Mara Antos  
Karen Gorback  
Vacant

### District 3 (Kathy Long)

Judy Cunningham  
Lois Harrion  
Sharon Hillbrant

### District 4 (Judy Mikels)

Bonnie Warrington  
Lori Zafiropoulos  
Eileen Gordon

### District 5 (John Flynn)

Bea Gan  
Eliza Thomas  
Vacant

We hope to fill the remaining vacancies soon and be a full, active commission.

# In Honor of Women's History Month—

## Meet Carrie Chapman Catt...

Drafted by the National American Woman Suffrage Association in December of 1915 because of her obvious leadership and organizational skills, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt came to be called "the general" for her campaign strategy and air of authority in directing the campaign. The suffrage movement had been flat and failing, despite an incredible amount of work and effort by many women. The League of Self-Supporting Women—later called the Women's Political Union—led by Harriet



Stanton Blatch, and the parades they began in New York that soon grew to a national fashion and the National Women's Party directed by Alice Paul that originated pickets at the White House, with the "liberty urns" in which the ashes of Wilson's words on democracy in Europe were thrown were the only sparks of life in the suffrage fight. Three factors contributed to Mrs. Catt's decision to accept the presidency and lead the fight: she was allowed to choose her own Executive Board, a \$2,000,000 legacy was given to Mrs. Catt personally to carry on the fight by Mrs. Frank Leslie—a highly successful magazine editor and business executive, and the amendment that decreed the fight should be state by state was finally de-

feated. All of these allowed Mrs. Catt to lead the way to a dynamic, truly national and professional organization.

Mrs. Catt had learned her organizational skills partly by being active in the international suffrage movement, including some time spent in England. Both Blatch and Paul, as well as other young women leaders had observed the increasingly militant and even violent methods of the Prankhurst sisters and others in England. But Catt had also spent some time revitalizing the New York suffrage organization and working toward a state suffrage amendment there, as well as participating in other state efforts. She came to believe a national amendment with the state organization rallying their legislatures to ratify it was the "winning strategy".

Maud Wood Park, who was to be the first president of the League of Women Voters, proposed by Carrie Chapman Catt when she saw victory for women's suffrage, gave a description of the Executive Council meeting after the 1916 convention of the NAWSA: "the crowded stuffy room...the tired faces of most of the women there; the huge map of the United States, hung on one of the walls; and, most vividly of all, Mrs. Catt herself, when...she outlined the work of the coming year."

Eleanor Flexnor continues: "As she talked to the jaded women, each filled to brimming with the vexations of work back in her own baili-

wick, Mrs. Catt spared them nothing—one of the ways in which she challenged and won the loyalty of those whom she worked the hardest: she talked about the disintegration that had gone on, unchecked, for years in the National; she demanded a whole new approach to the work ahead, the election of national officers who would stick to their jobs until the end, and, above all, the adoption of a program which would enable lobbyists in Washington and campaigners in the field to feel a united organization behind them."

When the fight was over, Carrie Chapman Catt said: "It is doubtful if any man, even among suffrage men, ever realized what the suffrage struggle came to mean to women before the end was allowed in America. How much of time, patience, how much work, energy and aspiration, how much faith, how much hope, how much despair went into it. It leaves its mark on one, such a struggle. It fills the days and rides the nights. Working, eating, drinking, sleeping, it is there. Not all women in all the States of the Union were in the struggle. There were some women in every State who knew nothing about it. But most women in all the States were at least on the periphery of its effort and interest when they were not in the heart of it. To them all its success became a monumental thing."

*Carrie Chapman Catt suggested a League of Women Voters to continue the "mighty experiment" when women won the vote. She knew the struggle for equality was just beginning. Information and quotes are from **A Century of Struggle** by Eleanor Flexnor, written 1959 and revised 1975.*

# What Does the Commission for Women Do?

**“Our goals are to help women develop skills for jobs with advancement potential and to encourage business to provide these employment opportunities; to help women develop leadership qualities they need to assume leadership positions in both private enterprise and public service; to reinforce the concept of fair and respectful treatment of women; and to work toward greater emphasis in the medical community on women’s health issues. In general, work to improve the quality of life for women, and by doing so, improve the quality of our society.”** from Commission newsletter, Spring 1994, by Celeste Weingardt.

This is the best summary of the goals of the Commission I have found in the few months I have been a member. For this very new and evolving Commission, which has very little money and no more county staff support, the specifics are still being decided. We are determined to continue the Family Law Forum, and we are working to keep our presence known, possibly by being on the web, either with a page of our own or as a hyperlink on the Ventura County webpage. With the passage of Proposition 209 dismantling Affirmative Action, and the Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996, as well as the general trend toward less government, and greater emphasis on individual responsibility, it becomes even more necessary for women to find good-paying jobs. For that to happen, employers must realize the contributions women can make and not only give them a chance, but help by providing child care, either directly or indirectly through subsidies or allowances. For many women, job skills training, technical and academic education are the answer to self-sufficiency. For others, better enforcement and understanding of domestic violence laws is vital.

Whatever areas we choose to work in and emphasize—or perhaps the issues will choose us—we all are determined to make this Commission as vital and outstanding as the women who have served before us.

## Women’s Resources on the Internet (WWW)

### What YOU Can Do!

**Get Involved--somewhere on one of the issues that matter to YOU!**

**If you see an opportunity for women, let us know about it, or talk to other women you know. If you see an inequity or injustice to women, call it to the attention of the organization most likely to be able to work toward a solution. Call, or write letters to legislators; write letters to the editor; join organizations that work in an area you care about--there really is power in numbers.**

**Call the Commission for Women for more information about organizations and services for women: 805-652-7611.**

California Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL)

<http://www.matisse.net/politics/caral>

California State Legislature

<http://www.sen.ca.gov/>

Feminist Activist Resources on the Net

<http://www.igc.apc.org/women/feminist.html>

Feminist Majority

<http://www.feminist.org>

The Glass Ceiling Commission

[http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/e\\_archive/GlassCeiling](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/e_archive/GlassCeiling)

Hadassah - The Women’s Zionist Organization

<http://www.hadassays.org.il>

Internet Resources for Women’s Legal & Public Policy Information

<http://asa.ugl.lib.umich.edu/shdocs/womenpolicy>

League of Women Voters

[http://www.yahoo.com/Economy/Organizations/Public\\_Interest\\_Groups/Women/League\\_of\\_Women\\_Voters](http://www.yahoo.com/Economy/Organizations/Public_Interest_Groups/Women/League_of_Women_Voters)

National Organization for Women

<http://now.org/now>

On The Issues (Progressive Women’s Quarterly)

<http://www.echonyc.com/~onissues>

Progressive Directory

<http://www.igc.apc.org>

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

<http://www.ingenia.com/unifem>

Women’s Net

<http://www.igc.apc.org/womensnet>

