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nontraditional occupations for women

mason

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construction manager

Consuelo Thornell

carpenters

Jeannine Giguere/Mary Grace Quinn

ywca insert:
spring mini programs

share it
trust it
smile

published by YWCA Northern Rhode Island • volume 4, number 1 • www.sheshines.org

she Shines calendar.....

share
it

april

may

june

● April, Minority Health Month:

YWCA Northern Rhode Island is a Minority Health Promotion Center. Contact health consultant Joyce Dolbec for events held throughout April, 401-769-7450.

● April 19, Singer-

Songwriter Mary Ann Rossoni, An 8pm performance with her band at Stone Stoup Coffee House, St. Paul's Church in Pawtucket. Rossoni recently released her third album, *Timber and Nails*. www.stonesoupcoffeehouse.com

● April 22, Equal Pay Day

● **April 25-27, Swan Lake:** Performance of the Festival Ballet Providence at VMA Arts & Cultural Center. Tickets at tickets.com or call 401-272-4VMA. For details visit www.festivalballet.com.

● **April 27-30, Poetry, Music, and Memoir:** Myra Shapiro hosts workshop on exploring one's life as a work of art. Contact Block Island Poetry Project, www.bipoetryproject.com. See pages 20-21 for an article about Lisa Starr, RI Poet Laureate/Block Island Poetry Project founder.

● April 28, YWCA National Day of Commitment to Eliminate Racism

minority
health
month

● May 1-11, The Secret Garden:

Academy Players present the Broadway hit musical based on this timeless children's novel at East Greenwich High School. Call for details, 401-885-6910.

● May 3, Addy: An

American Girl Story: Addy Walker is a hopeful 9-year-old girl growing up in slavery during the Civil War. Her and her Momma hold fast to their dream of having the whole family together again. Shows are at 2pm and 6pm at Providence Performing Arts Center. Tickets online at www.ppacri.org

● **May 4, Snug Harbor Volunteer Fire Company Annual May Breakfast:** Breakfast is served from 7-11am at Snug Harbor Fire Station in South Kingstown. Handicapped accessible. Tickets: \$6 for adults, \$3 for children 5 and older. Call for details, 401-789-0409.

● **May 8, Men Talk/Women Talk:** Susan Colantuono, Leading Women CEO and founder will share her humorous and insightful guide to talking more effectively with men at work. At Chelo's, 2225 Post Rd., Warwick from 8-9:30am. www.leadingwomen.biz/calendar.cfm.

● May 10, International Migratory Bird

Day Celebration: Bird walks, crafts, and learn about bird migration at Truston Pond National Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown. Call for details, 401-364-9124.

● **May 10, Family Fishing Derby:** At Ninigret Park in Charlestown. Rain date is May 17. Call for details, 401-789-9301.

● May 11, Mother's Day

● **May 11-17, National Women's Health Week**

● **May 14-15, Construction Career Days:** Scheduled events introduce high school students to careers in the transportation construction industry. At Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Mid State Facility, in East Greenwich from 8am-1pm. For details visit www.uritc.uri.edu/ccd/ or www.construction-careerdays.us.

● **May 25, Garden Market Fair:** Garden market in Wilcox Park, Westerly. For details call 401-596-2877.

● **May 24-25, Butterfly Encounter Weekend:** Providence's Roger Williams Park Zoo will open new summer long walk-through butterfly encounter. For details visit www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org.

● June 8, Race Unity Day

● **June 7, Sustainable Living Festival and Clean Energy Expo:** Extravaganza for a cleaner and greener future at Apeiron Institute, Coventry. www.livingfest.org

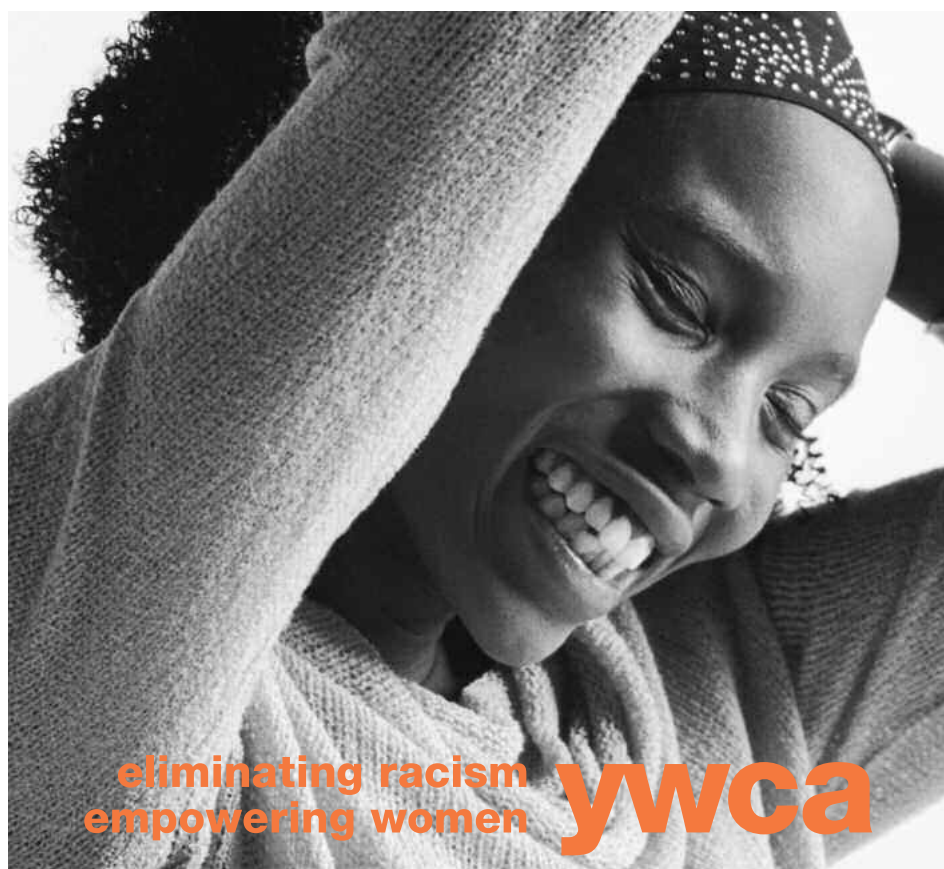
● June 11, Gender Communications:

A Women's Network RI event with presenter Agnes G. Doody. For details visit www.womensnetworkri.com.

● **June 12, Seeds for Success:** A conference for women about women. Emerging Women in Business at Rhode Island College from 3-9pm. Register at www.emerging-women.biz.

● **June 28-July 5, U.S. Scholar-Athlete Games 2008:** Young men and women ages 15-19 from across world compete in sports and perform in the arts at University of Rhode Island. www.internationalsport.com

Events are listed on the calendar as space allows. Submissions may be e-mailed to sheshines@mac.com, faxed to 401-769-7454, or mailed to *She Shines*, c/o YWCA Northern Rhode Island, 514 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895.



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empowering women **ywca**



corn planting moon

Celebrate the planting of corn, a staple in the Native American diet. View Three Sister's Garden. Participate in ceremony and social dances. Listen to stories about how corn came to the Narragansett people. There will also be traditional games and crafts for kids. The event will be held on Saturday, May 3, from 1-4pm, at Tomaquag Museum at 390 Summit Road in Exeter.

Admission is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children (free admission for children under five). For additional details call 401-491-9063 or visit www.tomaquagmuseum.com.

Corn husk doll from the Tomaquag collection, photo left. Making corn husk dolls, photo right, is six year old Darrylyn Fry, a Narragansett, from Charlestown, left, and board member volunteer Wanda Hopkins, a Narragansett/Mic Mac, from Ashaway.

photos courtesy of Tomaquag Museum

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how to

contribute. *She Shines* welcomes letters to the editor, articles, poetry, stories, graphics, photos and calendar events. Contact us if you have an inspiring story to tell or have a suggestion of someone to be featured. Only original contributions will be considered and may be edited due to space limitations. Include contact information including name, e-mail, address and phone number. Images provided electronically must be high-resolution.

submit cover art. The cover is reserved as a gallery of art in keeping with the theme of *She Shines*. For consideration, send in a photo by e-mail attachment or mail. This is a wonderful opportunity for local artists to show their work. A biography is published in conjunction with the "Artist Canvas" section of *She Shines*.

advertise. Visit sheshines.org to view the advertising media kit. *She Shines* reserves the right to refuse to sell space for any advertisement the staff deems inappropriate for the publication.

receive the magazine. *She Shines* is a free publication mailed to members and friends of YWCA Northern Rhode Island. To be added to the mailing list, a subscription form is available on this page and on the website sheshines.org. The magazine is also available at YWCA Northern Rhode Island and at various special events.

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special insert

YWCA Northern Rhode Island:
spring mini programs (85th anniversary)



How often are you interacting with other women?

"Usually I'm the only woman at a job," says Jeannine Giguere, though at "a big job" there may be more. Giguere thinks that there are fewer than 20 female carpenters in Rhode Island, but she believes her union is having an impact in this area. "There are more women and minorities than ever before entering the union."

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photo by Agapao Productions

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subscription form

She Shines is a free publication in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. To receive a subscription, fill in the form below. *Donations are appreciated and help to support this local magazine of women's issues.*

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Thank you!

employment options

women make inroads into nontraditional occupations

Why should nontraditional occupations be attractive to women? How about because they generally offer higher entry-level wages. And, the career ladder pays between \$20 and \$30 per hour.

Many jobs that were once considered nontraditional for women are no longer (i.e. physicians and lawyers).

Others are still under represented: construction managers 7.8%, carpenters 2.4%, and masons 1.6%. Inside meet local women in these trades. They will tell you what they like about their job and how they started.

Take care, *Lisa*

I welcome your comments on this edition, e-mail: sheshines@mac.com.

A free Girls Nontraditional Trades Forum was held on March 15th at Community College of Rhode Island's Flanagan Campus in Lincoln. For information on future events, contact Shanna Wells, director of the Rhode Island Commission on Women, at swells@ricw.ri.gov.

This event was sponsored and hosted by the Rhode Island Commission on Women. It was co-sponsored by Big Sisters of Rhode Island; Carpenters Local 94; Community College of Rhode Island; Dimeo Construction Company; National Association of Women in Construction; North; Rhode Island Trades Women's Association; Sperian; United States Department of Labor Women's Bureau; YWCA Northern Rhode Island; and the *She Shines* advertisers.

smile



www.betsystreeter.com

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artist canvas

COVER ART: This edition of *She Shines* displays "Sammie's Dream", a 24" x 18" drawing in charcoal and pastels by Sandra Moscato, a Providence artist by hobby. Sammie Spedalieri is Moscato's nine year old niece who lives in Venice, Florida. Moscato, a concrete finisher by trade, is depicted magging the edges of a floor poured at an art studio in New York, photo top right. The nautical star design completed by Moscato, photo bottom right, is at Rocky Hill School in East Greenwich. This design was drawn out on the concrete slab and then cut with a grinder. Sections were then stained with a water-base stain and epoxied. photo of Moscato by Karin Bremer, courtesy of Moscato

challenging girls' dreams

"Little girls like to be princesses," Sandra Moscato said. At least her niece Sammie does. Depicted here complete with tiara. The drawing's forefront has a realistic feel, her typical style. The backdrop is of fantasy.

Moscato has a graphic design certificate from Tri-County, a technical high school in Franklin, Massachusetts. Her first job out of school was designing ads at The Brown Daily Herald.

Later at the Rhode Island School of Design, she took a variety of classes - drawing, furniture design, oil painting, mosaics.

But Moscato decided she wanted to do construction. Her early job search results, "nobody calls females back." That all changed in 2004. Mike Tingley owner of Tingley Concrete Construction in Warwick gave Moscato an interview and then

the job of apprentice concrete finisher.

He knows the typical attitude. Other companies may have shied away from hiring a woman, but Tingley liked her art background. Also having an athletic daughter, he recognized that girls have less opportunities then boys.

Once Moscato got past the physical part, "she became best employee . . . more than pulls weight," Tingley said. He further described her work as meticulous.

Moscato likes the instant gratification of the job and seeing the satisfaction from customers. She finds that female homeowners are comfortable asking her questions.

From Moscato, age 31, "be prepared for scrutiny . . . keep applying for jobs . . . the end is rewarding"

- Lisa Piscatelli, *She Shines*



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..... *she shines* interview

Carol Gibbons and the power of encouragement

why young women should consider careers in nontraditional trades

by Natalie Myers

Carol Gibbons is no stranger to preparing young women for fields where they are underrepresented. As an assistant professor of mathematics at Salve Regina University for the past 19 years, she certainly knows her way around a classroom.

But lately she's expanded those skills beyond the classroom.

Gibbons recently came up with the idea to create a Girls Nontraditional Trades Forum that highlights skills and careers in trades like construction, electrical, roofing, masonry and carpentry.

A full day event held March 15, which the YWCA Northern Rhode Island and a number of other partners offered to middle school and high school girls throughout the state.

Gibbons said she got the idea for the forum after watching the movie "North Country." In the movie Charlize Theron's character becomes a coal miner to support her family and faces several obstacles, especially from male coworkers who don't want her there.

"I was just thinking about women who don't want or can't go to college," she said. "What opportunities exist for them? It's very hard in Rhode Island. A majority of women are poor . . . mainly because of the childcare situation and low paying jobs."

Gibbons identified skilled trades like construction as higher paying than traditional women-oriented professions and wondered why there wasn't more encouragement and recruitment of young women into those trades.

"I don't even think [young women] are aware of the opportunities that are there," she said, adding that representatives from several local unions provided information on apprenticeship programs at the forum.

In addition, attendees got to see women already in the trades, speak about their experiences, and they are not "big, burly muscular women," Gibbons said. "You don't need a lot of what you think of as super strength."

Trade jobs require skill – some technical skills, some math and measurement skills – and some

continued on page 8

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“some of the girls will see their interests and talents
could be put to use in some of these careers . . .”

- Carol Gibbons

level of physical fitness.

And contrary to the way the female coal miner was treated in “North Country” many of the women in today’s trades said they’ve had positive experiences with male coworkers and lots of job satisfaction, Gibbons said.

In her own life, Gibbons said she’s found a lot of job satisfaction as well. Though she is a teacher, a traditional profession for women, she teaches math, which is less dominated by women.

Gibbons has a bachelors in mathematics from Merrimack College and a masters and PhD in mathematics from the University of Rhode Island.

Part of what inspired her to pursue mathematics was the encouragement of her male teachers, she said, so Gibbons understands the power of encouragement from adult peers.

Big Sisters of Rhode Island participated in the forum, she said. Many brought their “little sisters” so they can see the kind of opportunities that exists.

Gibbons is also a mother of six children, five of which are girls. She said she’s always encour-

aged them to pursue careers in any field they wanted.

At the end of the forum, Gibbons said, her hope is that “some of the girls will see their interests and talents could be put to use in some of these careers . . . that they see how they can go about preparing themselves.”

Gibbons is also an appointee of the Rhode Island Commission on Women, which has the mission to advance women toward full equity and promote rights and opportunities for women across all arenas, including jobs, which Gibbons said is a huge inequitable area.

Appointed by Governor Donald L. Carcieri four years ago, Gibbons has been helping the commission work toward that goal.

The Rhode Island Commission on Women played a huge role in organizing the all-day forum for girls, she said.

The event’s goal, to inspire and encourage girls to pursue a career in nontraditional trades, which pay more than retail, food service, etc. jobs and with more job satisfaction.

Natalie Myers is a reporter for MarketingSherpa in Warren, where she writes best practice case studies and how to’s for marketers. She formerly worked at Providence Business News



for two years where she covered small business and the creative economy. She has won two awards, one for a Small Business Journalist of the Year award from the local Small Business Administration, and the other a Michael P. Metcalf Media award for a series on Latino entrepreneurs.

photo of Myers
by Reza Corinne Clifton

photo of Gibbons
by Agapao Productions

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pay equity

The U.S. Department of Labor defines a nontraditional trade as one in which 25% or less of the workforce is female.

While women are the majority of professional employees, their occupational distribution remains different from men. In 2006, 91% of registered nurses, 82% of all elementary and middle school teachers, and 98% of all preschool and kindergarten teachers were women. In comparison, only 12% of all civil engineers, 8% of electrical and electronics engineers, and 2% of all aircraft pilots and flight engineers were female.

Women's Earnings vs. Men's Earnings

In every category, males' earnings vastly exceed female earnings. The utilities, transportation, construction, and agriculture fields employ a significantly higher percentage of males than females, and in these categories, men earn over \$50,000 and women earn \$30,000 or below. This represents approximately a \$20,000 difference in employment categories dominated by males. Because women are paid less when they work, and because they tend to take time out of the work force to bear and raise children and/or to care for

an aging or ailing loved one, they receive smaller social security benefits when they retire.

Title IX and Career and Technical Education

Thirty-five years ago, Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This landmark civil rights legislation proclaims that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

In the last 35 years, women and girls have made very little progress in "blue-collar" technology and trades occupations. Male students continue to predominate in courses that lead to high-skill, high-wage jobs, while female students fill the low-wage, low-skill tracks. Before the 1970s, the career and technical education system in the United States intentionally segregated students by gender. Title IX made this unlawful and required that schools take steps to address the disproportionate enrollment of students of one gender in a course. Between 1984 and 1998, Congress spent about \$100 million annually for gender-equity coordinators and programs in each state to eliminate gender bias and

traditional job for women:
bookkeeper/secretary
\$26,000 - average earnings per year

nontraditional job for women:
carpenter
\$52,000 - average earnings per year

stereotyping and to meet the needs of single parents, displaced homemakers and other individuals facing significant barriers. Congress eliminated this funding in 1998, and the U.S. Office of Civil Rights has done little to investigate gender segregation in career and technical education, despite the patterns of persistent discrimination. Girls still make up almost 90% of the students enrolled in classes leading to traditionally female occupations and only 15% of those in classes in traditionally male fields. Biased career counseling, gender stereotypes, unequal treatment by teachers, sexual harassment and other discriminatory practices result in a career and technical education system that limits the educational opportunities of women and girls. This has significant negative consequences for women's economic security, and fails to develop women's skills in fields with a high demand for skilled labor at good wages.

- Rhode Island Commission on Women

Sources: Wage Comparison: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics, 9/2003; Employment and Earnings, Annual Averages, Table 11, 2006; 20 U.S.C. §1681; and Title IX at 35: Beyond the Headlines, National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, 2008.



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"You're working very hard. The parts are heavy, the shelving is heavy. You get tired at the end of the day."
- Jeannine Giguere

by Reza Corinne Clifton

Both Mary Grace Quinn and Jeannine Giguere are union carpenters. But what does that really mean do you ask? For one, it means that they are hard workers on construction sites who most afternoons "get tired at the end of the day." But perhaps more importantly, it means that they each enjoy their jobs.

Neither Giguere nor Quinn began their careers as carpenters; on the contrary, they both explored what might otherwise be classified as office work. How did they become interested in carpentry? Do they make decent salaries? And what difference does it make being in a union? These are some of the questions that *She Shines* posed during recent conversations

with Giguere and Quinn.

How or when did you become interested in carpentry, Mary Grace Quinn?

Quinn remembers always being "an outdoorsy adventure type," including as a Girl Scout since the age of 7. As a matter of fact, she credits the Girl Scouts with helping her develop the confidence she acquired that led her into the trade. The Providence native and Cranston West High School graduate later took a few clerical jobs including a post at Blue Cross/Blue Shield, but later found that working in an office "wasn't where [she] wanted to be."

Quinn ended up finding a program operated by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) that provided hands-on work experience in "forestry, fisheries, and wildlife" cleaning

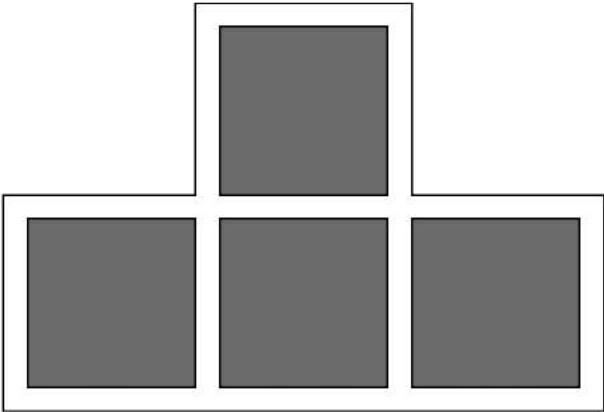
spilled dams and managing forest areas among other tasks. "That was when I first got experience with carpentry tools," she explains. "We had great leaders and instructors," she reminisces.

How or when did you become interested in carpentry, Jeannine Giguere?

"I never intended on becoming a carpenter," is the shorthanded reply that Giguere will tell you upfront. But she may not be the only one who was surprised at her career choice. "I'm really small, so people don't think of me as a carpenter." How small? "I'm four foot ten and 120 pounds."

Like Quinn, Giguere, who is a native of Woonsocket, has experience outside of construction. But the social work and office jobs did not keep her hooked for very long either. Taking stock of where she

continued on page 11



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"It's not easy! You have to get down and dirty. A lot of it can be scary."

- Mary Grace Quinn

photos by
Agapao Productions



was, explains Giguere, she realized "I had always liked working with my hands," and she wanted a well-paying job. In response, she decided to approach the various unions to put her name on their work and apprenticeship lists. "It was the carpenters who called me," explains Giguere.

Are carpenters well-paid? What, if any, are the union benefits, Jeannine Giguere? With ten years as a carpenter under her belt, Giguere enjoys her work and is clearly able to articulate why. "I love it because you get to see what you're building," she explains, referring to the physical, hands-on work. "It's there; you get to take pride in it." But in addition to the joys of seeing results, Giguere also touts membership within a union as a function of her employment that she likes.

Like Quinn, Giguere holds membership in Local 94.

"I do a lot of volunteering," she explains, and "from the beginning I went to meetings." "A few years ago during elections I put my name on the list," says Giguere, "so I am on the executive board now." She's even now a delegate for Rhode Island in the New England Regional Council.

And yes, answers Giguere, the pay is good. Assuming a person starts from the very beginning, as a first year apprentice in the four year program (who is completing all of his or her requirements), you will earn almost \$14.50 an hour – half of what the full hourly rate is. And after four years of full compliance with requirements and prerequisite hours, you begin to earn the full rate of pay in addition to

other benefits and coverage.

Are carpenters well-paid? What, if any, are the union benefits, Mary Grace Quinn? Like Giguere, Quinn offers membership in Local 94 as a job perk for her. "[T]hey're really proactive" with keeping up with advancements, says Quinn, "no more than half of a step behind training the workforce to be there and get there."

But both Giguere and Quinn recognize union benefits that can't be felt or spent. "I really feel that I've been considered as an equal in many respects by my peers at work," says Quinn upon reflecting on her membership. "Some people have better years and better hours than others. But the person who puts in 1800 hours helps balance out the person who was only able to work 800." ❖❖❖

Reza Corinne Clifton is a freelance journalist with six years of experience through multiple platforms including radio, print, and online. Her articles have been published in places like Blackenterprise.com, RIFuture.org, and The Providence American, and she is the creator and publisher of RezaRitesRi.com, an award-winning website examining and promoting diversity. She is also a radio producer at WRNI and WRIU.

photo courtesy of Clifton



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Hillary Clinton: a woman on the campaign trail

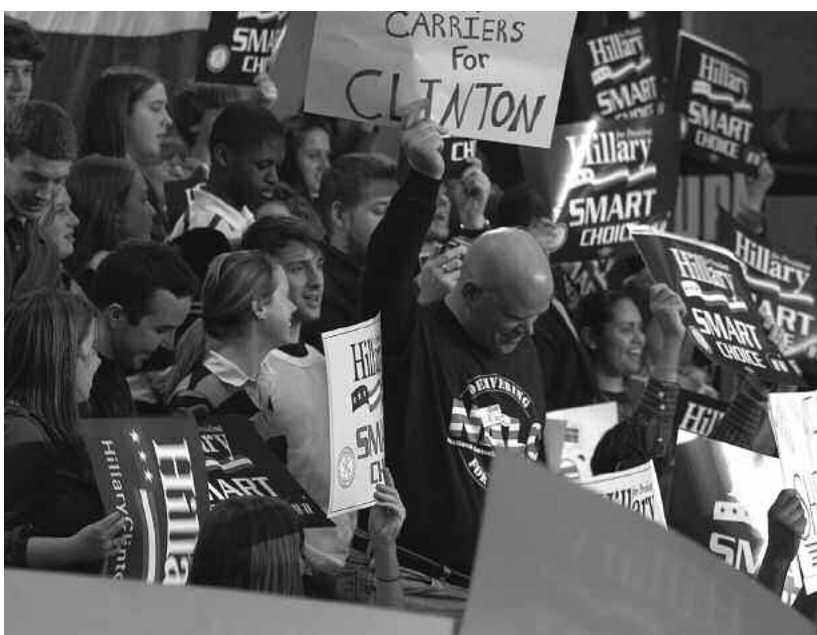


Volunteers, left, make phone calls to registered voters asking for support of Sen. Clinton's candidacy. Below, members of Brass Odyssey, a part of the Rhode Island Wind Ensemble, entertain the crowd at Sen. Clinton's "Solutions for Change" rally. Bottom, Mike Connelly, left, and fellow AFSCME union members, right, await the arrival of Sen. Clinton.

photos by Deborah L. Perry



Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., made a campaign stop in Rhode Island, Sunday, February 24, 2008. Sen. Clinton, top, speaks to a crowd of 2,500 people during a rally at Rhode Island College. At right, Rep. Jim Langevan, D-R.I., introduces Sen. Clinton while Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., stands next to her. Below supporters of Sen. Clinton hold signs during the campaign rally.



..... on the rhode

Michelle Obama: a woman on the campaign trail

Michelle Obama, wife of Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., campaigned in Rhode Island for her husband on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, at the launch event of Rhode Island Women for Obama, held at the Providence Biltmore. Approximately 150 women attended the event. Below a supporter holds an Obama sign while Hillary Salmons, Providence After School Alliance executive director, looks on.



Above, former State Rep. Melvoid Benson, left, and Nuala Pell, wife of former Sen. Claiborne Pell, engage in conversation prior to Michelle Obama's arrival. Michelle Obama, top right, speaks to the gathering of women.



Local and national media outlets, above, record Michelle Obama's visit to the Ocean State. Michelle Obama, left, takes to the podium at the Providence Biltmore, while her brother, Craig Robinson, Brown University basketball coach, far right, looks on.

photos by Deborah L. Perry





brick by brick

Wendy Matthews has built a career in construction

Ten years ago Wendy Matthews knew she had to find a good job with decent wages. She had three children to support.

She saw her male friends making great money with benefits in the construction industry.

"I looked at the guys around me making good money and said, hey they're not rocket scientists, I can do this," Matthews says.

Matthews applied for a mason apprenticeship after seeing a job posting at the Smith Hill Center in Providence. She was accepted after passing a series of hand-eye coordination tests and completing twelve weeks of training in Springfield, Massachusetts.

For the next three years, Matthews was a mason apprentice. After completing 6,000 hours of training, she became a journeyman earning full union wages.

From that point forward the tools of her trade would be a trowel, hammer, level, jointers, measuring tape, ruler and a bag to

carry it all in.

Matthews has worked on many local projects including building exterior walls for Nordstrom's at the Providence Place Mall and at the Marriott Courtyard.

Matthews is unique. She is the only female member of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Local 1, Rhode Island. "There was a woman when I first started and I understand there may be a woman about to enter training," she says.

Masonry is one of the oldest professions in the history of construction. It involves the building of structures from individual units, most commonly brick, laid and bound together by mortar. And it is dangerous. Matthews says things can fall on you, people can be careless.

The job is also physically demanding on arms, backs and knees she says. "And then there's the cold weather..."

Matthews cautions that masonry is not for everyone. "It's a male dominated occupation," she says. "They're [men] used to working by themselves, and they interact with each other like guys do when women are not around. Some people find it shocking."

She says the key to her success is to not take herself too seriously, and if something is personally offensive she immediately points it out.

"I've gotten to know a lot of the guys over the years," she says. "We're like family, and we hang out together after work, maybe have a beer together."

Matthews, 41, says she loves her job, the money is good and she encourages young women to explore opportunities in construction. "I just wish I had gotten into it earlier," she says. "It's a great career."

- Deborah L. Perry, *She Shines*
photo courtesy of Matthews

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trading up

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Today, the line between "white-collar" and "blue-collar" is becoming blurred. Through the use of technology, skilled trades are not "dirty" as they once may have been; however, they are often still perceived this way. In fact, knowledge of computer software and mechanical systems is increasingly important. Demand is rising quickly for skilled trades-people who have an aptitude for technology.

A glimpse into the earning potential of an electrician's average salary range, \$45,000 - \$70,000.

Excerpt from *The NAWIC IMAGE, Trading Up*, compiled by Kara D. Roberson. *Trading Up* and *We Can Do It* reprinted with permission.

WE CAN DO IT: history of women in construction

1813: Shaker-Sister, Tabitha Babbitt (1784-1854) invented the first circular saw used in a saw mill.

1918: As the United States enters World War I, 100,000 women are called to railroad yards for the first time to fill manual labor and mechanics positions vacated by men leaving for war. Women do their jobs well, disproving the many skeptics doubting women's strength and durability.

1941: A massive government and industry media campaign persuades women to take jobs during World War II. Almost seven million women respond.

1991: The first women-built Habitat for Humanity house was completed.

1998: Lt. Col. Nancy Jane Currie leads a crew of astronauts on the first International Space Station assembly mission and becomes the first woman in construction in outer space. During the mission, Currie operates a 50-foot robotic arm to connect American and Russian segments of the space station.

today: Women are still very under-represented in many facets of the construction industry, though it is becoming more recognized as a viable career choice for young women entering the work world.

Excerpt from *The NAWIC IMAGE*, January/February 2005

she shines interviews

building a pathway to success

helping the next generation of women in construction



Pamela House



Linda Bouchard



Judi Baxter

interviews by Lisa Piscatelli
photos by Agapao Productions

Today, women in the trades have access to appropriately sized work clothes and tools. They also have a women-only locked portapotty on site. Construction trailers may also double as a private place for pumping breast milk. So yes, some changes are making this work easier for women in construction.

But due to city ordinances, most days start at 7a.m. and end at 3:30p.m. Obtaining childcare may be difficult for the early morning hours.

Also, did you ever listen to the jargon in construction? Just consider the terminology - manholes, nuts, screws, male/female receptacles, and nipples.

The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) offers support to enhance a women's construction industry career - networking, education, and more. With almost 5,500 members in 170 chapters across the United States, issues such as pay equity, safety, and women's concerns are addressed. For details visit their web site, www.nawic.org.



"Think outside the box." - **Pamela House**
House is a senior project accountant at Gilbane Building Company. She is also an immediate past president and current director at NAWIC.

With 27 years working in the construction industry, she enjoys paying it forward for the next generation. Although she sees mentoring as win win - some have experience, others fresh ideas. House wants girls to understand the value in math, engineering, and science. To sample working in the trades, she suggests getting involved in a Women Build Habitat Project or attending a local NAWIC event.



"We need more women in construction . . . the opportunity is there." - **Linda Bouchard**

Bouchard is the payroll/human resource administrator at DIMEO Construction Company. She is also on the board of directors at NAWIC. Bouchard was instrumental in organizing the Rhode Island Tradeswomen Network. To connect to this network contact her at lbouchar@dimeo.com.



"A mentor is your key to success." - **Judi Baxter**

Baxter is the voice of Gilbane at Gilbane Building Company. She is also a national director at NAWIC. Baxter says fewer women are going into the construction industry. Her goal is to grow membership to sustain the organization and industry. For more information on NAWIC locally, visit www.nawicri.org.

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"I can't let the fact that I am a woman get in the way . . . I hold my head high no matter what."

— Consuelo Thornell

Consuelo Thornell relies on her gyroscope within she navigates career barriers with determination and the proper tools

As a Rhode Island lead hazard reduction contractor agent you need to take an initial 40 hour course, pass the exam, pass a state exam, take a blood test to establish your base line lead level, take annual refresher courses, and regularly have your blood tested to monitor your lead level for safety compliance. Consuelo Thornell takes these continuing education classes at Community College of Rhode Island.

When starting out in any trade, Thornell recommends finding the right company to teach you the skills. "The best are old sages . . . they learned the old fashioned way," she said. For Thornell, she has respect for her colleague Mariano Brown. "He is a champion for minority business development."

A Mexican American, Thornell was born and raised in Colorado. She now lives in Massachusetts.

She has had a varied career path. In the '70's, she was a social worker. Come the '80's, a recruiter plac-

ing minority men and women in professional positions in Boston. The ribbon throughout, "I enjoy helping people . . . everything I've done I've liked," she said.

Appointed by former Mayor Ray Flynn back in 1984, she serves on the board of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. To avoid any conflict of interest, her business is mostly done in Rhode Island. "Rhode Island is part of the lead belt . . . New England has the oldest housing stock in the country . . . lead lasts a long time," Thornell said.

She describes a dynamic tension between a homeowner and a contractor. Thornell tries to advocate for both. The homeowner wants the best product at a reasonable price. The contractor needs a fair price in order to provide service and secure jobs for his/her employees.

Presently, Thornell sees the housing market in the worst low in ten years. As an entrepreneur, Thornell is



Consuelo Thornell, right, is the president/owner/co-founder of BCT Construction, a full service remodeling and lead hazard reduction firm located at 220 Lexington Avenue in Providence. Mariano Brown, left, is the Vice President and has 30 years of experience in the construction industry.

strategizing to make her own business work.

Harnessing transferable skills, she is now focusing on property preservation.

Thornell has some advice for young women pursuing nontraditional occupations:

1. dress for success means work pants and a work jacket (clothing to protect you from the elements)
2. invest in the proper tools - "Treat your tools [right] and they will feed you."
3. learn hands-on by repetition
4. ask questions
5. follow the work ethic of older workers (be on time, be prepared, be willing to learn, be consistent)
6. understand that you will have to prove yourself
7. and don't lose your own identity.

- Lisa Piscatelli
She Shines

a quote from
herstory



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1906-1992

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Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper helped develop an early computer, invented the compiler making possible higher level computer languages, and helped define the design of the programming language COBOL.

Source: Jone Johnson Lewis. "Grace Hopper Quotes." About Women's History. URL: http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/grace_hopper.htm. 2/7/08

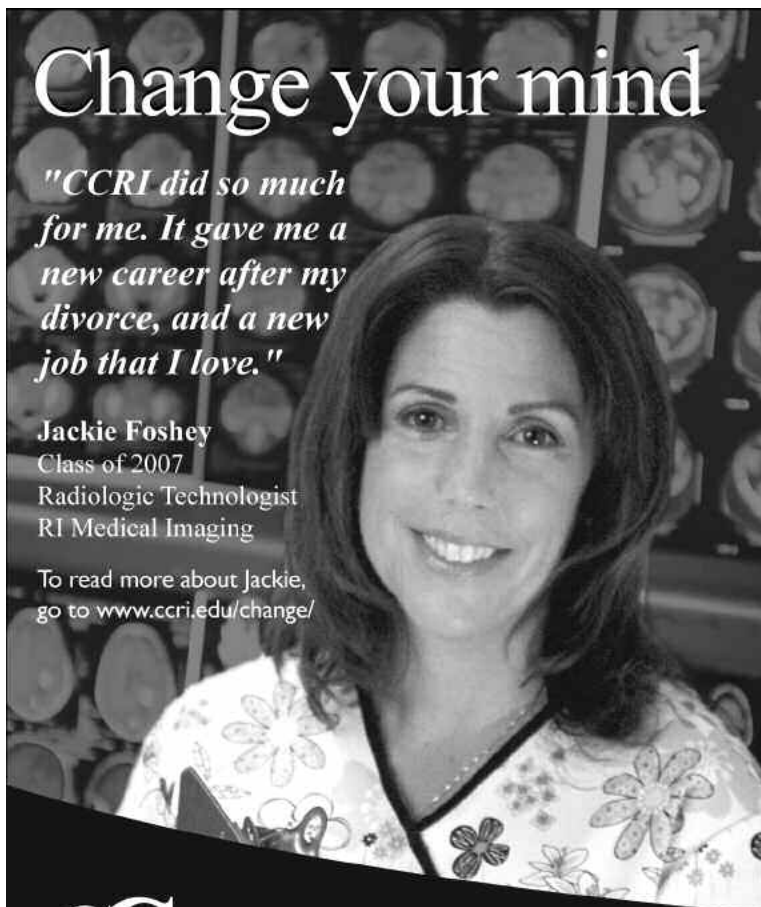
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talking points



jobs, gender, and poverty

what every girl should know

In Rhode Island, as in the United States, women earn less money than men do. And jobs that are traditionally known as “women’s work” – childcare, waitressing, cosmetology and nursing assistance – are lower paying than traditional men’s work like the construction and labor trades. As a result, even when women work, they are more likely to live in poverty than men. Almost one-third of Rhode Island female head of households live below the poverty level. Only 5% of male heads of households live below the poverty level.

so what’s a girl to do?

- graduate from high school/career and technical school
- go to college or technical school
- attend a union apprenticeship program
- consider working in a nontraditional trade
- think outside the box

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Active Bodies, Active Minds: Young Women Making Change is a free annual conference empowering young women (ages 16 to 24) to lead healthy lives and build strong communities. It was held on February 9th and hosted by Brown University's Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, Sarah Doyle Women's Center, and Swearer Center for Public Service.

Practical tips from the keynote addresses: 1. In the all-important first impression, be confident and take up physical space (Barbara Tannenbaum, senior lecturer in Theater, Speech, and Dance at Brown University). 2. Before communicating change in the world, begin by communicating who you are (Ghislaïne Jean-Mahone, artist, activist, educator, dancer, actress, and more).

For details on the third conference planned for 2009, e-mail Alison Cohen, Alison_Cohen@brown.edu.

Marisa Chock, top photo, leads participants in a hula dancing workshop. Barbara Tannenbaum, middle, presents on persuasive communication. Michelle Nuey, bottom, leads participants in a self-defense workshop. photos below by Kam Sripada, courtesy of Active Bodies, Active Minds



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- Lisa Piscatelli,
She Shines

Patricia Ianieri, left, at Eagle Quest Golf Dome in West Warwick, giving a lesson to Janelle Clarke, assistant principal at Feinstein High School located in Providence.

photo by Agapao Production

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prayer in April

by Lisa Silverberg Starr
for Millie and Orrin

And can there still be any doubt when just this morning, right as we clamored off to school, in the driveway, the bird—that startled baby bird... He was so frightened he'd lost his voice; his little, feathered head became more yellow with his quivering.

We three took turns holding him.

The complicity of our awe is what strikes me now and I hope I'll always remember it: how we dropped to our knees, how we took turns cradling him; how, for a moment, when he flew, we lost our voices, too. ❖❖❖

see Poetry, Music, and Memoir
April 27-30 event in calendar, page 2

see Lisa Silverberg Starr
she shines interview, page 21

Helen M. D'Ordine received her Bachelor and Master degrees in Education from Rhode Island College where she is now an adjunct professor. She is a Rhode Island Writing Project Fellow. She is a member of The Writers' Circle. D'Ordine's poetry



and expository pieces have been published locally, nationally, and internationally. photo left, courtesy of D'Ordine photo above, courtesy of Starr

PHOTO BY JOHN PRESTON



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EXPLORE YOUR WORLD.

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by Helen M. D'Ordine

Governor Carcieri called her “an advocate for poetry” when he named Lisa Silverberg Starr Rhode Island’s Poet Laureate in April, 2007. She’s a mover and a shaker in poetry circles, having founded the Block Island Poetry Project in 2004. Her idea was to bring national poets and musicians to Block Island every April for national poetry month.

Born in Connecticut, Starr first came to Block Island for a summer job as a college sophomore in 1986. Falling in love with the island she stayed on, fell in love again, marrying Champlain Starr, became a mother to Orrin and Camille, and an innkeeper at The Hygeia House, which they own. It is there that she’s written her books of poetry, *Days of Dogs and Driftwood* (1993) and *This Place Here* (2001). Starr has also received two Rhode Island Council for the Arts fellowships in poetry (2002, 2004) and other literary awards. She graduated from the University of Connecticut and has taught at the University of Rhode Island.

Starr is the fourth Rhode Island Poet Laureate, following Michael Harper, C. D. Wright and Tom Chandler. Chandler says that it’s a job with no job description. Each poet laureate has made it his or her own, bring-

ing poetry to fellow Rhode Islanders. In Starr’s case, she has formulated six very ambitious goals, which she hopes to accomplish during her five year term. They are, in her own words:

“Public Outreach Through Poetry: We are intimidated by it [poetry] . . . it has come to be associated with the elite. I am interested in voices that have been marginalized . . . and will work on using poetry as a means to explore the state’s cultural diversity; . . . to create and participate in events that promote multiculturalism and bilingualism.

Statewide Poetry Pen-Pal System: This program will endeavor to bridge the language and social gaps between our state’s elderly and student communities. I will begin [to organize] writing circles in elderly facilities and do the same thing in schools statewide with students of all ages.

Gathering of State and International Poets Laureate in September, 2008: I would like to bring poets around the state to showcase them to Rhode Islanders and showcase Rhode Island’s finest sights and scenes to the visiting poets. I see this happening as a four to five day event, during which we would look for partnering support from the state’s hospitality and cultural resources; and [would] host events and readings in different parts of the state.

Poetry in Motion: Using models from other states, I would like to work to get poetry in public places -- that is busses, airports, etc. This would be an opportunity to showcase poems written by Rhode Islanders of all ages.

Participation in State/National Poetry Out Loud Program: I want to work with students and teachers around the state to ensure that Rhode Island is represented at the national Poetry Out Loud Competition in Washington, D. C. I am working with six high schools to get involved in their selection and training processes. We hope there will be more schools before we are done.

Active Participation in National Activities with Other State Poets: We are all determined to work together to support each other as individuals and as a national coalition. Our belief [is] that poetry can and will continue to make a difference and an improvement in our lives and communities and states.”

The above reflect Starr’s philosophy that “poetry provides us with the chance to take the language we have been given as a gift and to shape it so beautifully, accurately and compassionately that the world gets made just a little bit gentler through the effort”. Can Starr achieve these lofty and profound goals? The answer is a resounding “Absolutely, yes!” She’s already begun to develop

writing circles with the elderly in South Kingstown and in middle and high schools in Providence, Portsmouth and West Warwick. Starr is also working with the Rhode Island coordinator of the Poetry Out Loud project and has served on a four person Laureate Panel at the Split This Rock Poetry Festival in Washington, D. C. in March, 2008.

A master juggler of time, Starr may even be a bit of a magician. She can keep many projects in process and even pull a few surprises out of the air. She writes in sudden bursts of poetic energy whenever she can gather a few stolen minutes from her very busy life. “I mostly write on the fly,” Starr says. She might write a poem about her late mother, Dorothy, on scrap paper while riding the Block Island Ferry to a poetry workshop. Warm and heartfelt thoughts are penned, to which anyone can relate. She has a way of simplifying universal concepts and experiences, allowing the reader to glimpse the word-picture, then pause, ponder and proclaim, “Ah-ha!”

Starr has a way of making strangers feel like old friends and, indeed, you count her as one after being with her a short time. She has many gifts to offer Rhode Islanders during her tenure and will be an articulate spokesperson for the state. Starr’s an overachiever. If she thinks it, it will happen. ✨

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shining

with Marion Mandeville

Marion Mandeville is the owner and manager of Melody Hill Country Club in Gloucester, an 18-hole public course. She is approaching 50 years in the business. Mandeville lives in an apartment above the club house with her cats - Kelley, Spike, and Clyde.

interview by Lisa Piscatelli
photo by Agapao Productions



living the good life

What are you most proud of?

"Probably that I lived this long . . . professionally that I was able to keep the course after my husband died . . . I'm too stubborn to quit." Her husband of 20 years, Gene Charles, passed away in 1976 shortly after they "opened up the back 9".

Would you like to share your age?

"I'm 83 years old . . . I still work almost seven days a week . . . it keeps you going." She plans on continuing working too. "I enjoy what I do . . . to me you've got to like the life and what you do."

What defines a person?

"Knowing who you are and being happy with that person . . . as long as you like yourself, don't worry about anybody else."

How would someone close to you describe you?

"A complete nut . . . I'm probably an odd ball."

What do you enjoy doing?

"I like to read . . . escape novels . . . I read a lot of trade journals." "I've done a lot of things. I took horse back riding lessons, took fencing lessons . . . swimming." "I tried about anything I could . . . it's been a good life . . . I've never been afraid to do anything alone."

Fencing?

"I enjoyed it immensely. It was good exercise. It was quick motion. I've done quite a few matches."

on a golf course

What did you want in a golf course?

"He wanted a golf course that was friendly to the golfers and also not so expensive. In those days golf was a rich man's game." "My idea of a public course is people come, play a reasonable game, have fun, go home, and come back to see me again." "Most of the people, they're more like friends than customers. Some have nicknames . . . a lot of them call me auntie."

Do you have a favorite memory?

"When he first brought me over here it was all woods. He said this hole goes here."

Describe the course?

"It is a very friendly course laid out for the average golfer. Very picturesque, it is really beautiful out there . . . a lot of trees. Trees between each fairway . . . a few hills but not that bad. It can be walked." Over the past ten years Mandeville says that everybody is riding golf carts. You sometimes see people walking, but it is the older people not the younger. The course basically runs north to south. "I see lots of sunrises and lots of sunsets . . . this morning the wild turkeys [were] around, the deer come . . . I feed the birds."

What sets your course apart?

"I'm very firm with the rules, but I am very fair." "I have no starting times . . . people are going to get on." This way she does not have to charge someone for not showing up or if they are late. "It is usually the same people anyway." The leagues have guaranteed times. "We take good care of our customers . . . in the summer I watch them . . . if it is cold I watch them . . . you have to keep track of where everybody is."

What jobs do you do?

"I've done about everything on the golf course - I've mowed, sprayed, cut brush, picked rock?" She has always done the business end, though Mandeville does not have a computer. "I do it all by hand. It comes out just as well . . . I don't even have an answering machine . . . my time is my time."

How has golf changed?

"People demand more of a golf course." "There are a lot more women now playing golf." She has some ladies still playing from the early days and has very active ladies leagues.

"I've found through experience - men aren't as good as they think but women aren't as bad as they think." - Marion Mandeville

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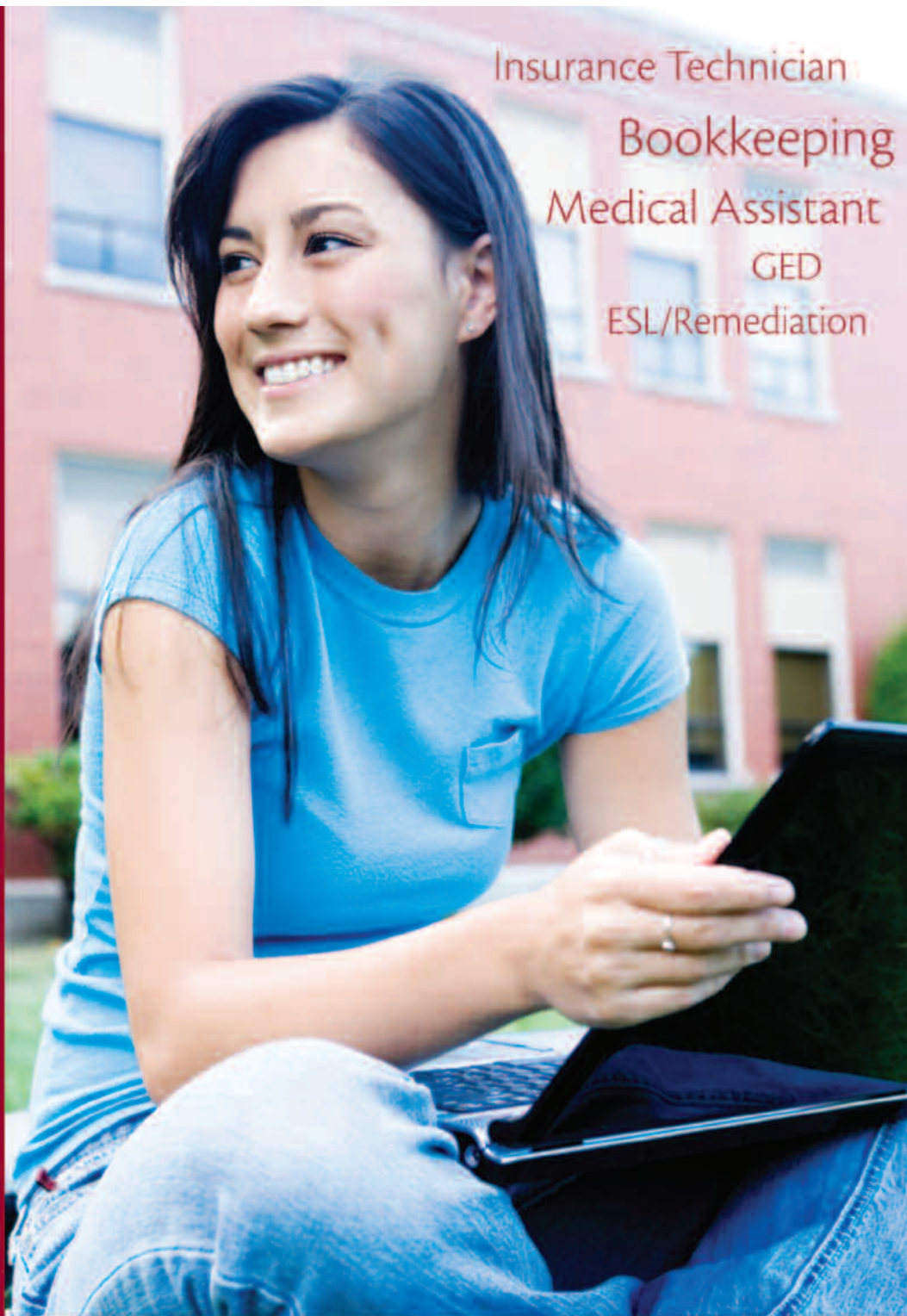
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