



**Reflections from the Sloan Foundation**

**Core Social Institutions**

**The Needs of Working Families**



**Kathleen Christensen, Ph.D.**

**By Kathleen Christensen, Ph.D.**

*Kathleen Christensen, Ph.D. is the Program Director for the Working Families Program at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Dr. Christensen has articulated funding strategies designed to have an impact on our understandings of work and family issues and to promote innovative approaches to research. Over the past four years, Dr. Christensen has continued to refine these strategies so that they continue to challenge research, practice, teaching, and policy.*

*In each issue of the Work-Family Research On-line Newsletter, Dr. Christensen will share her insights about research trends and emergent work and family challenges. In addition, her column will discuss the cutting-edge strategies developed by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to enhance the well-being of today's working families*

The Sloan Foundation established the programming area of Dual Career Middle Class to enhance the scholarly, business, and public understanding of the issues faced by dual-earner families. Today's working families typically confront a range of challenges that have resulted, in large part, from the changes in the roles and responsibilities assumed by family members. At the Sloan Foundation, we refer to these changes as changes in the "fundamental arithmetic of the middle-class family." In contrast to the middle class families of the 1950s, two-career families in the 1990s have two adults assuming the responsibilities of three jobs - one unpaid (the job of family and home care) and two paid jobs (part-time and/or full-time employment).

Currently, there is a disjuncture between the needs of working families and the structures, demands, and expectations of the core social institutions in our society. These institutions include the workplace, the home, the neighborhood, and our legal frameworks. We believe that the "new math" of work and family life makes it critical for our social institutions to change so that they are more responsive to the daily lives of working families.

see **Reflections from the Sloan Foundation**,  
next page

**Issue Highlights**

**Taking Paths Less Trodden**

**Welcome to all of you.**



**Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Ph.D.**

**By Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Ph.D.**

In the mid 1990s, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation convened a group of scholars from different disciplines to talk about current research topics such as work redesign from work-family perspectives. During their meetings, the researchers discussed their progress and critiqued one another's work, with the goal of strengthening the theoretical foundations of work-family studies and increasing our methodological rigor.

Although it's been just a few years since those meetings, the emerging work-family "field" has come a long way since then. Despite this

progress, it continues to be important that each of us accepts responsibility for challenging one another to expand, deepen, and contextualize the body of work-family knowledge. Some have contended that the field is a bit "stuck" because so much of our research continues to focus almost exclusively on the experiences of families and workplace organizations (which is, of course understandable). As a result, we may have unintentionally devoted an insufficient amount of attention to other stakeholders, other social institutions, and other agents that either impact or are affected by the work/life experiences of working families and the organizations where they work.

We have included in this issue of the On-Line Newsletter a couple of articles that discuss changes in the labor market and organized labor in an effort to broaden the dialogue about work-family issues. There is, of course, a rich literature in the industrial relations field that informs our understanding of union perspectives, union activities, and outcomes of union campaigns.

see **IssueHighlights**,  
next page

e-mail Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Ph.D. (Sloan Electronic Network Principal Investigator) at [pittcats@bc.edu](mailto:pittcats@bc.edu)



## Reflections from the Sloan Foundation, cont.

---

As a group, work and family researchers have focused a great deal of attention on the mismatch between most workplace structures and the contemporary needs of employees. It is clear that we still have much work to do in this arena. However, we have devoted less attention to the other social institutions that have contributed to the dilemmas faced by working families.

In the coming years, it will become increasingly important for researchers to investigate the impact of different social institutions on work-family experiences because changes in these institutions may make it possible to enhance family well-being.

This issue of the On-Line Newsletter of the Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network focuses on organized labor, one of the social institutions that has traditionally championed quality of life issues for its members. Given the historical importance of unions and the emerging changes in the relationships between management and organized labor, it is important for scholars to document

and investigate the recommendations, accomplishments, and problems facing unions.

Leaders in the academic, business, government, and community sectors should be encouraged to improve our social institutions so that they offer more choices to working families who seek strategies for meeting their work and family needs. For example, when there is adequate support from several institutions, some families will want to reduce their paid work and spend more time with the family; others will want to identify alternatives for meeting the needs of their family members so that they can devote more attention to their work.

The complexity of work and family experiences is apparent. However, if we are truly committed to improving the well-being of working families, it is incumbent on us to better understand how the decisions made by diverse social institutions have an impact on the options and supports available to working families. □

## Issue Highlights, cont.

---

To date, however, only a few researchers have addressed questions related to the role that unions have had on the work/life agenda in this county or have analyzed the impact that unions could make on corporate as well as public employment policies related to work/life issues. This Newsletter focuses on a few of those pioneers who are pushing the boundaries between labor management and work/family issues: Netsy Firestein, Jill Casner-Lotto, Tom Kochan, and Susan Eaton, among others. While the articles and interviews represent varying approaches, they all underscore the importance of building broad-based coalitions to address work/life issues. The articles draw attention to the critical role that Labor needs to play in the new millennium.

It has been widely noted that the proportion of employees who are unionized in the U.S. has declined over the past 50 years (from about 35% in the 1950s to approximately 14% today). However, there are indications that the structure and form of organized labor is in the process of being reinvented. With the growth in the service industries, membership in affiliated unions has increased. Hourly wage workers, many of whom are part-time employees or have temporary employment status, may not have ready access to some of the protections and work/life supports afforded permanent full-time employees. The composition of union membership has also changed, with an increase in the proportion of women and people of color.

Finally, unions are now viewed as viable structures for professional groups including doctors and legal professionals. Work and family issues have been on the agenda of many unions for years; the changes in union membership may increase unions focus on these priorities. As researchers, we need to continue to investigate how changes in the business world, such as globalization and the most recent iterations of employee involvement, impact the structure and character of labor groups and professional associations. Ultimately, changes in the business environment and the responses of organizations such as unions to these changes will affect the lives of working families. □

*"To strengthen the family is at the heart of the labor movement's long struggle to raise wages and living standards... In the conviction that work, and the rewards of work, are the foundations of the stable, hopeful family, unions have sought to advance the welfare of working people and their families through collective bargaining and through legislative and political activity." (Grundy, L.; Firestein, N. 1997. *Changing Work in America: Work, Family, and the Labor Movement*. Radcliffe Public Policy Institute. Cambridge MA. Page 10)*



## Boundary Pushing

# Action Research:

## An Interview with Jill Casner-Lotto.

By Dona Saucier with Teri Lilly

### Jill, please tell us about the Work in America Institute.

JCL: The Work in America Institute is a non-profit research and membership organization. It was founded in 1975 by Jerome Rosow, a former Assistant Secretary of Labor, who served in executive positions over a period of 24 years, first for Esso Europe in London and then for Exxon Corporation in New York City. Our goals have always been, and continue to be, in 3 major areas: improving productivity, advancing the quality of working life, and promoting partnership between management and labor. With regard to the first two — productivity and quality of working life, we see them as essentially two sides of the same coin. They are mutually beneficial, it's hard to have one without the other, which, I think, fits right into the central theme of work/life balance.

Since 1979 we have launched about 20 different policy studies and action research projects on a range of issues, such as new roles for managers; improving health care management in the workplace; job-linked literacy; training for new technology; job strategies for urban youth; new work schedules for a changing society; and strategic partners for high performance, which examined partnerships between the Human Resources (HR) field and operations management, and when unions were present, we advocated a three-way partnership (HR, operations, union) to bring about strategic change. The policy studies, which are based on case studies, have touched on a wide variety of areas.

In addition to the research, the other critical half of the Institute, is the membership part, because that is where we see research "come alive," so to speak. We bring case studies, "live shows," to our audience. We have two major Roundtables, which are held twice a year during which we showcase innovative case studies from 6 to 8 companies. Often times it is a joint story — a labor-management story. Another exciting program involves site visits: we bring member employees from various companies to a site where there is some innovative HR program or labor-management program going on. Our members have an opportunity to interact with the people involved with the particular change initiative being studied, and that includes folks from the top leadership to the front line level. This has been a very important tool for organizational learning.

### Perhaps you could describe some of your current action research projects.

One current action research project is the "Holding a Job and Having a Life Project: Making Them Both Possible." This is a work/life project which promotes dual agenda strategies through work rede-

### Biographical Sketch

Jill Casner-Lotto is Vice President for Policy Studies at Work In America Institute. Her responsibilities include directing the various activities of the Policy Division, which include researching and writing policy study reports, and partnering with the Institute's member employers and unions in the planning, design, and implementation of policy projects.

sign and organizational change. By providing business leaders with case study models and practical tools, we are examining work environments that support business success as well as employees personal and family priorities. When both of these dimensions are addressed simultaneously, as some of the companies in the case studies have done, a synergy is created that both strengthens employees lives and sustains and accelerates the change process — the work redesign process. We see many connections.

One of the unique aspects of the "Holding a Job and Having a Life Project" is the diversity of the group that we've assembled for our National Advisory Council. We have representatives from both business and labor, as well as academics and researchers in this field. I think the union presence has greatly added to the Council. It is very exciting to bring these folks with differing perspectives together to discuss the leading-edge case studies and issues.

Another current project is "Dream Teams: Moving to the Next Level," where we have created a national network of researchers and practitioners examining how to launch, manage and sustain team-based work systems. We've just begun that study and will have our first national advisory council meeting in April. Also related to the work/family agenda is the "Parent Connection Program, which trains parents in the workplace and in their communities to help children avoid risky behaviors.

### Your organization has focused on the case study method. How do you identify relevant "best practices" from companies for research?

JCL: We maintain various databases on many, many topics and state-of-the-art best practices as part of our information services. And our members themselves provide critical leads regarding new innovations and best practices in the workplace. I encourage researchers/writers of the case studies (particularly for the interviews) to question what factors really made this "practice" successful. What do you think is replicable here? What has been really unique to this company's situation?

see Interview with Jill Casner-Lotto,  
next page



## Interview with Jill Casner-Lotto, cont.

---

We try to make the case studies as applicable as possible. We always cite the names of the companies and the persons involved in the case study. That is really critical to us. That way a person who is really interested can contact them. We do a lot of informal, brokering and networking for our members.

### **How do you make sure that your researchers are collecting the right data? How do they qualify or verify their research?**

JCL: First, we work with very qualified writers, consultants, and academics. When we commission a case study, we ask the writer to get the perspective of folks from various levels of the organization. I would like them to talk to, a representative from senior leadership, a mid-level manager, a plant level manager, HR Director, supervisors, as well as front-line employees. For instance, a good way to gather data is to try to get a focus group of employees, — to the extent that the company will cooperate. Sometimes companies may feel that certain information is proprietary and they don't want to share it. But, for the most part, we have found companies to be very cooperative and eager to share their experiences or some of their own research they may have done. For example, they may have done some internal surveys on topic that's relevant to the case; so it is really important to collect that information.

I encourage our researchers and writers to go after a multi-level perspective that includes both employees and the leadership and to extract the key lessons learned in the case. Then in the final report, we draw out the common principles across the cases and suggest implications for action. I think that can help other companies in applying the findings. But one has to understand, the change process may be long-term and the results may not be immediate.

In addition to the case studies, we also commission discussion papers to examine critical issues. For example, one paper examined joint labor-management partnerships around work/life and work/family issues. Rather than do one case study in depth, I asked the writer, Netsy Firestein from the Labor Project for Working Families, to examine several joint labor-management initiatives and draw some conclusions from what she was finding. We found there was a great opportunity for collaboration and some of these partnerships are working very well. We are going to do other papers like that as issues emerge or as issues are suggested by the National Advisory Council. When we see that we cannot really examine the issue through the lens of a case study, the Discussion Paper allows for a broader overview of the topic and the particular challenges.

### **You have honed the case study method with great results. But do you also find that there are things missing, that you don't get to explain?**

JCL: We're actually looking at this closely right now. And what we're trying to concentrate on is different ways to help people apply the key learnings from a case study. Some people say, "Well that was a great case study but it doesn't apply specifically to my situation. How do I make this work for me or for my company?" What we're trying to do now is to incorporate application workshops at our Roundtables, where we present the case studies. After the case study presentation, we will have breakout sessions and ask the presenters to work with smaller groups of people who may have specific questions on how to get started or what to do about a specific problem. We hope to get some more hands-on application through this method.

### **How do you get from the research to getting people to take action?**

JCL: One way is to work with the naysayers, the skeptics. Let's take the example of labor and management: We tell our company members to bring their labor counterparts to our Roundtables. Sometimes it's hard, because the labor-management relationships are really poor, and they won't even do that. Also, as I've mentioned, the case studies and site visits present very practical models for change. The emphasis is always on the "how-to" rather than the theoretical. And the hands-on application sessions will further improve upon that.

### **Your organization has successfully incorporated the union perspective. In general, what do you see as the challenge of engaging union leaders to help with work-life policies?**

JCL: I think increasing awareness that work-life policies should be a top priority. Many unions have always bargained for work/family benefits to help their members. But there are a lot of issues on the union agenda. It's important, then, to keep it on the agenda and at the top of the agenda.

I think the union role is a big area for investigation, for further debate and discussion. Certainly the unions have been advocates for work/family issues. Where the union is a full partner with management in addressing these issues and in designing and running work/family programs — this cooperation enhances the initiatives and it adds a voice for employees. □



## An Invitation

**An Invitation to the 52nd Annual Meeting of the IRRA: Reconstructing the Social Contract at Work.**



Thomas A. Kochan, Ph.D.

**By Thomas A. Kochan, Ph.D.,  
Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology and IRRA President**

This year's program for the IRRA, is premised on a very basic assumption: Who works and how they work have dramatically changed in recent years; yet our policies governing work and employment remain mired in the world of the 1930's. As a result, we have a breakdown in the social contract, that is, what we expect and what we hold ourselves account-

able for at work has broken down. So our central challenge, or the central challenge of our generation of professionals, is to update our policies and institutions governing work and employment to create a new social contract capable of meeting the needs and expectations of the workforce and the economy of the 21st century. We believe that this requires a very basic redefinition of the role of work -- its relationship to families and communities. We hope to use this meeting to redefine these relationships. I invite people who share an interest in family and work issues to participate in this meeting and help us to think carefully and debate how to shape a social contract that works for all of us.

The IRRA is the leading professional organization that brings academics, labor and management professionals, government officials and third party neutrals together to share diverse views and debate these issues. We've worked very hard this year to broaden our membership and reach out to new voices in the workforce that reflect the full diversity of our society and are anxious to bring this whole diversity into the debates at our meeting. The sessions are designed to be highly interactive. Bob Drago, Penn State University, will be our raconteur, looking for insights from the discussion and helping us think about the relationship between work and family. So I hope to see you in Boston!

*Editor's note: Tom Kochan has also kindly agreed to share with the Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network some excerpts from a recent proposal to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.*

We fully expect the discussion about work-family and labor policies to carry on beyond the annual meeting. A record will be kept, summarized, and published in our magazine called "Perspectives on Work." In addition, Lotte Bailyn, Bob Drago, and I are working with the Sloan Foundation to create a project on building a "Family-Centered Labor Market Policy," which will bring together researchers and policy officials to give real substance to the ideas about how we bring family and work developments and research findings into the national and state level policymaking process.

We hope to reframe the debate over how to update work and employment policies to fit the needs of the modern economy and workforce

### The 52nd Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association Reconstructing the Social Contract at Work

Boston Park Plaza  
64 Arlington Street, Boston MA  
January 6-9, 2000

Registration and hotel information available through the  
IRRA National Office at (608) 262.2762  
[Institute of Work and Employment Research](http://www.iwer.org)

#### **Biographical Sketch**

*Thomas A. Kochan is the George M. Bunker Professor of Management at MIT's Sloan School of Management. He has served as a third-party mediator, factfinder, and arbitrator and as a consultant to a variety of government and private sector organizations and labor-management groups. He was a consultant for one year to the Secretary of Labor in the department of Labor's Office of Policy Evaluation and Research. In 1996, Prof. Kochan received the Heneman Career Achievement Award.*

*From 1993 to 1995 he was appointed to the Clinton Administration's Commission on the Future of Work/Management Relations. The Commission investigated methods to improve the productivity and global competitiveness of the American workplace. He is the president of the International Industrial Relations Association. He has done research on a variety of topics related to industrial relations and human resource management in the public and private sector. He is the author of several books, reports and workingpapers (<http://mitsloan.mit.edu/iwer/KochanWP.html>).*

and rethink the way time is used in organizations and embedded in law. Besides the changing employment relations, the new demographics have also created one of the central problems affecting American employees: the severe time pressures flowing from the combination of paid and unpaid work.

Traditionally, we have separated family and work into separate public policy domains. Today's workforce no longer allows us to do so, but so far we have put work first and the family second by adopting essentially "corporate model of workplace, of work and family issues. That is we design family - friendly policies to make it easier for people to work more.

see **An Invitation**,  
next page



## An Invitation, cont.

Perhaps we have to rethink that approach and develop more of a family or community based model where we give family members more control over how to balance their family and work responsibilities as citizens as well as workers. This is an important part of what we hope to explore in this research and in this project.

It's clear that a tremendous amount of good research has been done – how family and work policies are evolving, firms today and communities. What hasn't been done is to translate this work into policy relevant ideas at the same time, politicians are offering lots of new ideas in legislation, but few of these are grounded in the research findings available. Our task is to bring these two constituencies

together and ground future policies more firmly in what we know is already working at the workplace. One of the ways we will try to do this is to build a network of researchers from different disciplines and translate their findings into readable or accessible policy proposals and then bring leaders from congress, state legislatures, and others together to discuss how these ideas can inform policy making in the future. □

## Work and Family from a Union Perspective

### An Interview with Netsy Firestein.

By Teri Ann Lilly

**When anyone mentions labor and work-family, your name and the Labor Project for Working Families immediately come to mind. Please tell us about the Labor Project. What makes it unique?**

NF: The Labor Project was founded in 1992 to work with unions around work and family issues in different arenas. Initially, we focused on collective bargaining and helping unions negotiate for more work-family policies and benefits. Why are we unique? We are the only organization that I know about in the country that's specifically working on work and family from a union perspective. There are certainly a lot of folks within unions that are working with work-family issue, but it's all we do. We work with unions in the areas of collective bargaining, organizing, and legislative action steps around work-family issues. In addition, we work with the larger work-family world, so we are drawing attention to specific labor issues and to the folks that labor is often organizing and concerned about, for example, low-wage workers, shift workers, factory workers, service workers.

**Please tell us about the unique action agenda that the Labor Project has established. In my opinion, the action agenda demonstrates how the Labor Project has pushed boundaries in the work-family field.**

NF: I think we have pushed boundaries by getting into the public policy realm and trying to forge alliances between unions and community groups around work-family issues and policies.

In work and family, the way the work has been done is company by company, and, in some way, we have worked union by union. However, the truth is that we're affecting very few workers that way, so we've really tried to think more about public policy issues.

#### Biographical Sketch

*Netsy Firestein is Director and founder of the Labor Project for Working Families, a non-profit organization that works with unions to develop better workplace policies for families. The Labor Project publishes a newsletter on labor and work/family issues and maintains the only national database of collective bargaining agreements on work and family. It provides technical assistance and resources to unions nationwide on issues such as child care, eldercare, family leave and flexible work schedules. Netsy is a social worker with a background in community organizing.*

*As the Director of the District 65-U.A.W. Members Assistance Program in New York City she developed a union based child care information service and produced videotapes on Stress At Work and Pre-Retirement Programs. In addition, she organized several committees of union rank and file members that led to negotiating work/family and child care benefits. Netsy has consulted with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 2 in San Francisco in the negotiation and development of a child and eldercare fund with San Francisco hotels. The fund now has over \$1 million and provides subsidies to union members for child care, youth programs and eldercare. She has also worked with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192 and AC Transit, SEIU Local 616, the AFL-CIO Working Women's Dept. as well as many unions nationwide. Netsy is on the Executive Board of the Coalition of Labor Union Women-East Bay Chapter. She is a member of the Service Employees International Union Local 535.*

We have established a "Work and Family Bill of Rights," which we originally wrote for the New York City Central Labor Council. We've expanded the Bill of Rights and are using it across the country. It is now part of the AFL-CIO's Union Cities Campaign. We're asking

see Interview with Netsy Firestein,  
next page



## Interview with Netsy Firestein, cont.

---

unions and organizations to endorse it. It states that working families have the right to paid family and medical leave and the right to quality and affordable child care and elder care, with livable wages for the providers, control over work hours and several other points.

There are 6 points to the Bill of Rights with a set of action steps, or options, for union bargaining and political action. What we are really saying is that if you believe in the position put forth in the Bill of Rights, then your organization should be taking these action steps. Unions, for example, should take these steps by putting the options in a collective bargaining agreement or introducing them in union negotiations.

The other key action steps relate to public policy issues, for example, advocating for key legislation, getting involved with local childcare initiative, and raising key issues with political candidates.

What we're doing at the Labor Project and what other union groups are doing is building broad-based coalitions that would build a constituency for the kind of work-family policies we're talking about. In New York they really have a very successful union childcare committee (a coalition of unions) that has worked with childcare advocates. Last year, the committee advocated for and won an additional 177 million dollars for children in the state budget for low-income families.

In Northern California where we are based, we have built a broad-based labor community coalition around work and family issues. The coalition consists of about 60 organizations, unions, childcare advocates, senior groups and other community organizations. In California we have proposition 10 — money (tobacco money) which goes to early childhood programs. So we're trying to get people involved in what actually happens to that money and involved in the legislative process.

Last year we worked on a bill that allows workers to use sick leave to take care of sick family members and it actually passed! I think the Labor Project has pushed work-family boundaries by getting into the public policy realm and by forging alliances between unions and community groups around specific work-family issues and policies.

### **In the near future, which work-family issues do you think unions will focus on?**

NF: I think there's a lot of interest in childcare, paid sick leave and being able to use your sick leave for kids, paid time off for a parent teacher conference, or paid family leave. Some of that has already been in contracts. Other areas being negotiated include, flexible work issues, such as compressed work week. It kind of runs the gamut. But in terms of linking policy and collective bargaining with unions, childcare is what folks are talking about the most.

### **Netsy, most of the folks reading this Newsletter are work-family researchers. What kind of research studies would help further your agenda?**

NF: It's a good question, but the problem for me is that I'm not a researcher, so I don't think in terms of a research agenda. But, I'll throw out a few ideas. I really would like more research about the groups of workers that I mentioned earlier, for example, low-wage workers and shift workers. Sometimes I call them the "left-out workers." I remember a good piece of research that Kathleen Christensen wrote on contingent workers. More research studies like that would be very helpful.

I would like to see research documenting the work and family issues for the "left-out workers," the low-wage workers. For example, what about the custodial person that cleans office buildings from 5-11 at night? She is easy to replace; nobody really cares about her. Who is taking care of her kids? Nobody knows; they're probably being left alone with an older kid. Where are her teenagers? There are societal implications to all these questions.

Another group to study is shift workers. They may even get a good salary, for example, oil riggers, but they work unusual and long hours. I would like to know how they manage their work-life issues.

In general, research about populations that don't get work-family benefits would be extremely helpful. We find that people just need money to help them pay for childcare or they need childcare that opens at 5:00 in the morning. Information about such needs would be very helpful. And we're always interested in (and have never been able to find) information comparing union/nonunion workplaces. Are union workplaces more likely to have work-family benefits? Families and Work Institute did present some information about unionized workplaces and work-family policies, but there hasn't been much else published.

### **I recently read an excellent paper that you wrote for the Work in America Project, in which you pointed out that there was no comprehensive study or quantitative research on joint initiatives of labor and management.**

NF: Yes, a comprehensive study about joint initiatives would definitely be very helpful. We need basic information. At the Labor Project, we are frequently asked questions, such as, 'How many union contracts have flexibility?' Or we hear comments like 'unions really don't have stuff like flex-time.' Well, they do, there are many examples, but I can't list them. It would be great to know what percentage of union contracts negotiated paid sick leave for families or flexible work arrangements, etc.

see Interview with Netsy Firestein,  
next page



## Interview with Netsy Firestein, cont.

Also helpful, would be an in-depth look at some good models of labor management initiatives, with comparisons between unions and non-unionized settings.

### What research would help from a policy perspective, for example, family leave?

NF: I would like to know how many people don't take family medical leave because it is unpaid. We draw on the research that has been done, but we need more to say that employees can't afford to take leave. We hear this from workers all the time, but it needs to be documented by researchers.

Other larger questions include: 'What is the fiscal impact on the larger society of not having paid leave? What does it mean for the workforce? What does it mean for women leaving the workforce and then having to be retrained, etc. How many people have to go on welfare because they have to stay home with their kids? What's the impact of some of these policies we have? Research could help us make a case for paid family leave. What is the impact on the childcare system. There's not enough infant childcare, so if people could stay home for four months with their infants, how would that impact childcare. To make the case for our action agenda to legislators, we need research data.

### Netsy, is there anything that you'd like us to highlight about your project or anything you'd like to add, or a question you'd like to ask?

NF: I would underscore the importance of what we've been talking about: opening the discussion to include different population groups, gathering more data, and linking it to policy initiatives. It would help if researchers could pick a large unionized company to study and to look closely at who gets what work-family benefits and at what locations.

I just want to mention one of the best examples I've ever seen linking policy and research is the research that has been done on the childcare workforce. It's a great example, a lot of it came out of the Center for the Childcare Workforce, which is a nonprofit organization. They were trying to push this agenda of better wages and benefits for childcare workers. The way they did that was to research what the impact of low-wages was on the quality of childcare. They've really made the case that if you pay workers low wages it really affects the quality of care. That research really pushed an agenda forward of people now paying attention to the fact that childcare workers are underpaid and need to be paid more. It's a good example of action research, not that the wages have been raised so much, but at least now people get it: move an agenda forward. It is trying to figure out where you can do research and not keep it in the academic world, but to get the information out to folks that can use it. □

## Negotiating Flexible Schedules and Work-Family Benefits:

### Why They are "Win-Wins" for Labor Unions



Susan C. Eaton, Ph.D.

By Susan C. Eaton, Ph.D.c

Unions have been organizing and bargaining for family-related benefits for a long time, including child care (ACTWU and ILGWU, among others), shorter hours (including the weekend and the 8-hour day!), and a family wage so that parents don't have to choose between work and home. Today, though, the issues are even more complicated and the solutions can be even more creative. Here are some reasons why negotiating flexible scheduling is good for unions and their members:

Polls and surveys, and talking to working people, tell us that the ability to "balance" work and family is a number one issue; even above job security, or better wages and health insurance, for many employees at all levels of skills.

Most employers associate unions with rigidity, rather than flexibility — but unions can make sure that flexibility is organized fairly, from the perspective of the workforce. This means having it negotiated, with organized employee voice in the decisions, so that it is equitable rather than arbitrary. Both workers and employers have to see a gain from flexibility, for it to become accepted as an even better way to do things. People may need different arrangements at different times in their lives. The FMLA is a start, but it does not offer paid leave or even very definite flexibility, and it only covers half of the workforce.

Flexible hours (including starting and quitting times, compressed work weeks, part-time schedules -- even working at home for part of the scheduled work day in some jobs) have been shown in many research projects to contribute to both higher productivity and more satisfied workers. Workers are more satisfied because flexible work

see *Negotiating Flexible Schedules and Work-Family Benefits*,  
next page



## Negotiating Flexible Schedules and Work-Family Benefits, cont.

Researchers have a big job to do here, to continue documenting the effects of such 'experiments,' which are found much more often in theory than in practice! Union members, too, can provide valuable sources of data.

- Most paid work-family benefits are more likely to be found in unionized workplaces — such as paid family leave, education assistance, job-sharing, paid sick leave, continuing benefits on leave, and even part-time work with paid benefits and the right to return to a job. Why not make this also true of flexibility?
- Sometimes negotiating flexible hours must be done at the level of the employees themselves, or a work group or department, instead of company-wide. Union stewards and worksite leaders are in a position to make sure the hours are shared fairly and equitably, instead of at 'management's discretion.'

Unions can make a difference in the family-friendliness of any workplace, and the solutions may vary depending on what workers care about most. For instance, in Service Employees International Union (SEIU) nursing home negotiations that I worked on in Georgia, we successfully bargained an arrangement in which the workers themselves plan and negotiate their schedules. Immediately, attendance improved tremendously — because people could work out their own arrangements with each other, and were more able to keep to them (and more committed) since they had made the agreements. Some wanted more hours, some fewer and all were able to get every other weekend off. The staffing ratios improved, the workplace improved, and the patient care improved! This was also true with registered nurses, in the Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas, also organized by SEIU.

Another example of negotiating fairly involves rotating shifts and overtime — which can be negotiated so that no one person or group unfairly works the hardest schedules; the Fire Fighters' unions have arranged for long consecutive hour shifts, but also for long times off to be with their families and to recover from dangerous and difficult work.

- Organized labor has taken on the issues of working-families at all levels, and different resources are available to help local unions and members as well as national unions. See the AFL-CIO web site at "[www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)" and check the Working Women's department.
- Family-friendly workplaces are a great reason for workers to organize! After all, most people organize for dignity and respect as well as better wages, benefits, and working conditions. And respect

### Biographical Sketch

*Susan C. Eaton will become an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard in January 2000. She is completing her dissertation on work-family and gender issues for the Industrial Relations program at the Sloan School of Management. She also holds a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and an A.B. magna cum laude from Harvard-Radcliffe. She co-authored, with Professor Lotte Bailyn and several others, a report on the Ford Foundation action research project on work-family as a catalyst for organizational change. She worked for twelve years as a union organizer, negotiator, trainer, and manager for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), AFL-CIO, CLC. Her jobs included Assistant to the President for Program and Services, Field Services Coordinator, and International Representative. She specialized in health care and worked primarily in the South as well as from the national office. Since leaving SEIU in 1991, Susan has been writing and conducting research in the area of women and union leadership, women workers and industrial sectors in the US and Canada, labor law reform, alternative dispute resolution, nursing home and home health care work organization and productivity, work-family issues, and clerical work. She is an editor of the [Civic Participation Network's Work Section](#).*

*See also the excellent "[Labor Project for Working Families](#)" web site that gives examples of contract language and actual union processes, run by Netsy Firestein and colleagues. The Project goal is 'to work with unions to develop workplace policies for families, including child care, elder care, family leave, flexible work schedules, labor-management committees, and much more.' Send Netsy your contract language, too!*

*For further information on this topic, check the web sites above or sign up for the excellent moderated "work-family" list-serve by e-mailing Bob Drago at [drago@psu.edu](mailto:drago@psu.edu).*

*For recent/related publications authored by Susan Eaton, please visit the [Work-Family Research Literature Database](#), and search for entries under the author's last name.*

for the responsibility of raising a family, caring for elders, or helping in the community, is a fundamental union value, and has been since the beginning of the labor movement. But just as the "family wage" for working men is no longer a part of union assumptions, now that women are 40% of union members and also often support families, fair wages and more manageable, fair and flexible hours for working families are emphatically part of the current labor movement's agenda. □



## STA and Local 000

The role of organized labor in the work and family lives of transit workers.

By **Ellin Reisner, MSW, Ph.D.c**

### Introduction:

A number of trade unions have a history of interest and involvement in the social welfare of their members and families. Historically, many labor unions created social welfare programs for its membership which were paid for through union dues and collective bargaining agreements. For example, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in New York, has always represented low income workers and early in its existence represented many female workers. Unions with a history of activism around social welfare issues appear to have moved proactively into addressing work and family issues. But, this has not been the case among some other unions.

My study has focused on the experiences of public transit workers in balancing work and family life. The research approach was a qualitative study of male and female transit operators and was conducted at the "State Transportation Authority" (STA) between 1992 and 1995. There are significant commonalities to the structure of work and collective bargaining agreements in the public transportation industry in the United States which, I think, make the findings and conclusions drawn from my study at STA relevant across industry.

In most of the United States, employment in public transportation is a stable occupation that offers relatively high wages and benefits. Most public transit workers are represented by unions and their work is governed by collective bargaining agreements. The public transportation industry labor has had a long and fractious history of securing collective bargaining rights in many cities around the United States. Labor/management relations are characterized by shifting power relations between the union and management.

At "State Transportation Authority" (STA), the transit workers are represented by Local 000. Until the mid 1970's the occupation was dominated by men. The occupation and the work culture at the STA and other transit agencies has undergone significant transformation as a result of Affirmative Action legislation that resulted in the hiring of women and minorities during the mid-1970's.

Today, Local 000 is a fairly powerful union in the State political environment. Historically, collective bargaining focused on wages and traditional benefits. Unlike many other unions, this local has never taken active interest in work and family issues despite the changing demographics of its membership, which has resulted in a major increase in minority and female operators since the 1980's. The collective approach taken by both labor and management has not shifted in response to the changing workforce demographics.

### *Biographical Sketch*

*Ellin Reisner is a doctoral candidate at Boston University in Sociology and Social Work. Her dissertation research examines the way that public transit workers balance work and family life, a study of spillover among blue collar workers. Ellin worked for "State Transportation Authority" for eight years, two of which were during the period of data collection. Her work involved developing and managing training programs for operators, initiating the first child care programs at the Authority and involvement in developing organizational policies to improve employee job satisfaction and customer service. Her job provided a unique opportunity to work directly with the front line operators and with the organizational leadership in developing organizational policies. Ellin has twelve years of experience in human resources, organizational development and training in the transportation industry. Currently, Ellin is an organizational change, performance consultant for a major software company. Ellin welcomes comments and may be contacted at 617-776-4430 or by email at [reisner@netscape.net](mailto:reisner@netscape.net).*

In its approach to issues of work structure and scheduling, Local 000 continues to act as though it represents the traditional family — a unit with a single male breadwinner despite the fact that this model reflects a very small number of its membership. The limited efforts by management to offer work/family programs were initially resisted by the union leadership, and later accepted, but not supported. Unions in many other industries appear to be far more enlightened on these issues. The union's lack of interest in these issues appears to be reinforced by management willingness to maintain the model of single breadwinner (male model) as the basis of work structure and scheduling.

Having been involved in the creation of a child care program for STA employees while I worked for the STA, prior to conducting the study, I was quite aware of resistance by the union towards management efforts to initiate work and family benefits for its members. Although the Union backed off of complete resistance to the child care program (on the basis of providing unequal benefits to its members), it has not sought to participate in or expand the program or promote other "family friendly" initiatives.

In the course of my research, based on in-depth interviews with nineteen transit operators and extensive participant observation, I have found that the operators were very interested in changing policies and practices that they believe negatively affect their ability to balance work and family life. Their experiences with the union

see **The role of organized labor,**  
*next page*



## The role of organized labor, cont.

---

regarding issues that were relevant to balancing their work and family responsibilities varied considerably; yet, whether positive or negative, all saw the union as a reactive rather than proactive organization regarding work and family life issues.

When I initiated this research project, I expected to learn more about how blue collar workers manage their work and family lives and sought to compare their experiences with the much more studied work and family lives of white collar and professional workers. As I analyzed the data, I found that the difficulties they experienced juggling their work and family lives were directly related to work schedules, reliance on the seniority system and lack of flexibility. These difficulties became more worrisome to the operators during a period when their job security was being threatened by privatization.

The union played a successful and significant role in resisting the privatization efforts, but has not made any efforts to address the work and family balance concerns of its membership. One observation of this pattern is that the union members have a very ambivalent attitude toward the union. On the one hand, they view it as vital to their survival. On the other hand, they view the union as generally unresponsive to work and family issues unless it is in a reactive mode of representing operators who have had disciplinary actions taken due to difficulties managing their work and family lives. Given my observations, my preference would be to see this union take a more proactive role in addressing the work/family concerns of its membership. □

---

## “Childspace”

### High quality child care for working families.

By Stephen Herzenberg

In Philadelphia, a new union of child care workers has formed with the goal of transforming the industry from one with low compensation, high turnover, and low quality to one with higher compensation, lower turnover and higher quality. The union originated in a collaboration between the founders and directors of two worker-owned child care centers and the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees.

For roughly a decade, the two worker-owned centers, which go by the evocative name Childspace, have delivered quality care, much of it to low-income children, based on a "quality jobs-quality care" approach. Childspace economizes on overhead and seeks outside support so that the worker owners receive individual health coverage (with only a 10 percent co-pay) and make a living wage (or close to it).

While Childspace established a separate not-for-profit to replicate the two worker-owned centers, some of its managers had by the mid-1990s become impatient with the pace at which their approach was spreading. In this context, Childspace and the union came together around a sectoral strategy designed to change the industry. The strategy calls for organizing one union of center-based workers and another of family providers who deliver child care in the home.

#### *Biographical Sketch*

*Stephen Herzenberg is the Executive Director of the Keystone Research Center, a Pennsylvania think tank, and the co-author of the 1998 Cornell Press book *New Rules for a New Economy: Employment and Opportunity in Postindustrial America*. *New Rules* explores in depth the potential role of "new unions" and new labor market intermediaries in alleviating economic anxiety (and hence work/family stress) and recreating broadly shared prosperity.*

It also calls for organizing area employers of child care workers into their own association. The employer association would then be able to work collaboratively with the union to create industry training, credentialing, and career ladder systems. Labor and management could also establish joint industrywide benefit funds and an employment center that recruits new workers and operates a substitute hiring hall for participating employers. To get the resources necessary to enable an industrywide collective bargaining agreement to raise wage and benefits, organized employers, unionized workers, parents, and child-care advocates would go hand-in-hand to the public and the political system arguing that as a matter of economics and morality we need to invest in high-quality early education for all our children. □



## Grant Updates

### Alfred P. Sloan

#### The dual-career working family programing area.

There is widespread recognition that dramatic changes in our social and economic institutions have had a significant impact on the ways that the middle-class organizes work and family lives. Amidst these changes, the dual earner family has emerged as a dominant family structure. The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has a commitment to support and encourage the scholarly study of these important issues. The Sloan Foundation announces the following new grants:

The Center for Work & Family plans to contact Sloan grantees every three to four months to get some "updates" on your projects. We will use the information that you share with us for this section of the newsletter. In addition, the information will help us keep the Sloan grantee web pages current. If you haven't already done so, please be sure to forward to us information about your grants so that your web page is correct.

Grantee	University	Grant	Grantee	University	Grant
Annette Lareau	Temple University	To write a book on the ethnography of every day lives of children in working families	Thomas J. Cooke	University of Connecticut	Conduct research on family relocation and effects on women's careers
Frank Dobbin	Princeton University	Support study on employment law and corporate work-family practices	David Almeida	University of Arizona	Support study of transmission of emotion from work to home by fathers
Phyllis Moen	Cornell University	To support the Employment and Family Careers Institute, a Sloan Center on Working Families	Eileen Appelbaum	Economic Policy Institute	Partial Support to conduct a one-day symposium on issues faced by working families
Nicholas Townsend	Brown University	Support a Book on the ethnography of middle class working fathers	Toni S. Zimmerman	Colorado State	University Support to study home and work strategies of resilient dual-earner couples
Lena Lundgren-Gaveras	Boston University	To support research on the impact of part-time careers in medicine from the perspective of full time physicians	Dean Cappello	WNYC Radio	To support radio coverage on issues faced by working families
Barrie Thorne	UC, Berkeley	To co-sponsor a Conference on Working Families, with the UC Berkeley Center on Working Families and the Business and Professional Women's Foundation	Jennifer Glass	University of Iowa	Support for research to examine effects of employment conditions on mothers' careers and family well-being
Bradd Shore	Emory University	Conduct preliminary research for a possible Center on Rituals and Myths in Working Families	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Editor's Note: The amount and variety of research conducted as a result of Sloan Foundation support for work-family studies is nothing short of impressive. This section of the newsletter is devoted to one or more grants which are either near completion or at some other critical junction.</i></p> </div>		



## Recent Events

# Sloan Working Families Conference

## Findings from the Alfred P. Sloan Working Family Centers.

by **Lisa Hoogstra, Research Analyst**  
**Center on Parents, Children, and Work,**  
**An Alfred P. Sloan Working Family Center**

*Editor's Note: This section of the newsletter will be used to provide some highlights of events, gatherings, and meetings which have recently taken place.*

*Please feel free to send us an e-mail with any "news" that would be of interest to fellow researchers and teaching faculty. We'll be happy to include it.*

*Also, if you have any working papers or conference presentation that you would like included in the Sloan Work-Family Literature Database, please contact us. [pittcats@bc.edu](mailto:pittcats@bc.edu)*

A conference showcasing the first empirical findings from the Alfred P. Sloan Working Family Centers was hosted in early May by the University of Chicago's Center on Parents, Children, and Work. The 2 1/2 day conference was attended by the directors and associated faculty, research fellows, and graduate students from the Working Family Centers at the University of Chicago, Cornell University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan, as well as by researchers from the University of Maryland and Emory University. Kathleen Christensen, program director for the Centers, participated by phone.

A primary goal of the Working Family Centers is to promote the multi-disciplinary study of work and family experiences. Conference presentations by researchers from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics reflected this goal. While presentations and discussions focused on common themes-issues confronting contemporary families, children in working families, and the quality of life in working families-each center brought a unique perspective to these issues.

Researchers from Cornell's Employment and Family Careers Institute presented several papers that were informed by a life-course perspective, among them "Assessing the Life Course Related Implications of Work-Life Policies and Practices: The Case of Employee Loyalty" by Patricia Roehling and Phyllis Moen. The paper's pri-

mary finding was that men and women display different patterns of loyalty to their employers as they get older and begin to establish families. As they take on greater family responsibilities, men are less willing to leave their current employers. In contrast, women are more likely to seek employment opportunities that allow them to balance the demands of work and family. Ross Stolzenberg, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago and discussant for the paper, noted that the paper "asks what family structure does to employee loyalty." "This is an important question," he argued, "in part because it links two major social institutions, and in part because it goes right to the heart of some of the more obnoxious beliefs that have come to characterize attitudes toward women workers in large corporations."

Researchers from the University of Chicago and the University of Maryland focused on time use in families and addressed issues of family structure and the household division of labor.

In "The Rise of Dual-Career, Middle Class Family," Linda Waite and Mark Nielsen of the University of Chicago noted that "If we had to pick the most dramatic, far-reaching change affecting women, men and families over the last 35 years, the rise of the dual-career family is the prime candidate. In the early 1960s, two-thirds of married couples with children had only one wage earner; in 1997 two-thirds had two wage earners. In the early 1960s, less than a quarter of married women with children were working full time. By 1997, 42 percent were." Suzanne Bianchi, John Robinson, Lianna Sayer, and Melissa Milkie of the University of Maryland presented findings from a recent study of time allocated to household tasks in "Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends and Gender Differentials in America's Least Favorite Activity."

Researchers from The Working Family Center at Berkeley and the recently established Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life at the University of Michigan focused on the changing culture of working families.

Papers from the Berkeley Center included "Hegemonic Motherhood: Deviancy Discourses and Employed Mothers' Accounts of Out-of-School Time Issues" by Teresa Arendell. Tom Fricke, director of the Michigan Center, presented a paper entitled "Cultural Issues in the Transformation of Everyday Life among Dual Career Couples." In discussing Arendell's paper, Rachel Gordon, a research associate at the University of Chicago Center, observed that it "beautifully documents some of the social comparisons that . . . go on within communities. For example, she finds a working mother who confronts stay-at-home moms at her child's school whose schedules allow them to be ever present at school functions; this mother feels belittled in those situations-as though she's being judged as less than a mother." Citing her own recent work on the neighborhood and community contexts in which families live, Gordon speculated that "the kinds of normative assessments Arendell studies may vary across local communities, and where a working mother lives may affect how she compares herself to others and whether she feels deviant." □

### Alfred P. Sloan Centers for the Study of Working Families

*The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has articulated a funding strategy that supports and encourages the scholarly study of the ways that the middle-class organize work and family lives. Key to that strategy is the funding of four academic centers:*

- [Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life at the University of Michigan](#)
- [Center for Working Families at the University of California, Berkeley](#)
- [Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute](#)
- [Parents, Children and Work at University of Chicago and NORC](#)



## Publication Highlights

---

# Work-Family Research

**Working papers, dissertations, and conference presentations on the work-family situation.**

The March 1999 issue of *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science* was devoted to different work/life experiences. A number of leading scholars contributed to this volume, which was edited by Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes and Bradley Googins of Boston College.

The following articles are included:

### • Diverse Families

"Working to Place Family at the Center of Life: Dual-Earner and Single-Parent Strategies" by Rosanna Hertz

Based on findings from interviews, Hertz describes the strategies that working parents in single-parent and two-parent families use to ensure that they can actively keep their family roles and relationships "at the center of their lives." The strategies adopted by two-parent families include adjustments to work schedules and employment options. The importance of the informal social support systems developed by working single parents is explored.

"Work-Family Backlash: Begging the Question, What's Fair?" by Mary Young

Young draws from her own qualitative and quantitative research as she explores some of the uncharted territory of "fairness." She dispels the myth that most employees are both married and raising children. In light of these facts, Young challenges work/life researchers and practitioners to consider questions of equity related to work/life initiatives.

"Restructured Families: Issues of Equality and Need" by Maureen Scully and W.E. Douglas Creed

Scully and Creed interpret the discourse about family diversity, equality and need in the context of advocacy for the rights of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered employees. Reflecting on their experiences working with grassroots groups and managers at different companies, the authors suggest that values and meanings attached to the concept of family has a powerful influence on employees' interpretation of different work/life initiatives.

### • Families in Transition

"The Impact of Family on Job Displacement and Recovery" by Paul Attewell

Attewell explores the relationship between family structure and experiences with involuntary job loss. Analyses were conducted using data from the Current Population Surveys (U.S. Census Bureau) and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. The analyses identify

specific groups, such as younger workers and employees who have been divorced or never married, who are more likely to be displaced from their jobs than other sub-populations.

"Young Europeans' Orientations to Families and Work" by Suzan Lewis, Janet Smithson, and Julia Brannen

The researchers convened over 70 focus groups and 100 interviews to gather qualitative data from young people (aged 18-30) in five European countries. The authors discuss how these adults view their current work/life experiences and their expectations for the future. The article discusses the work/life realities of these young people who indicated that they have adapted to economic uncertainties by living in "the extended present."

"Work and Family Over Time: A Life Course Approach" by Shin-Kap Han and Phyllis Moen

Han and Moen discuss the importance of re-conceptualizing work/life issues in two ways: first, as they unfold over time and secondly, as they are experienced (and shared) between and among family members. Information collected from couples (n = 212 women and 246 men) who participated in the Cornell Retirement and Well-Being Study is presented. The authors focus on some of the differences in work-life interactions as experienced by husbands and wives

### • Diverse Organizations

"Organizational Size and Work-Family Issues" by Shelley M. MacDermid, Leon C. Litchfield and Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes

Much of the organizational research about workplace responsiveness to work/life issues has focused on the experiences of large family-friendly corporations despite the fact that a minority of today's laborforce works at these firms. This article offers insight about some of the characteristic responses of small businesses to employees' work/life priorities. For example, smaller companies participating in one recent study were more likely to report that it was a priority for them to help employees with work-family balance issues.

see **Work-Family Research**,  
next page



## Work-Family Research, cont.

---

"The Non-Profit Sector's Responsiveness to Work-Family Issues"  
by Judith G. Gonyea

Gonyea establishes the importance of gaining a better understanding about the responsiveness of not-for-profit organizations to their employees work/life experiences. Several factors that might motivate non-profit organizations to develop work/life initiatives (e.g., potential to address human resource problems experienced by many non-profits such as recruitment and unwanted turnover; connection to mission) are explored. Gonyea comments on the importance of developing a research agenda that studies the policies and practices of non-profit workplaces.

### • Organizations in Transition

"A New Work-Life Model for the Twenty-First Century"  
by Rosalind C. Barnett

Work/life initiatives are often considered to be innovative employer supports; however, Barnett contends that several out-dated assumptions continue to guide the development of policies and programs that may not reflect the realities of the life experiences of today's employees. For example, she suggests that many policies and practices have their roots in the scarcity hypothesis. This article introduces a new conceptual framework, based on workers' social systems, that could be used to consider alternative employer responses.

"Work and Life Strategies of Professionals in Biotechnology Firms"  
by Susan Eaton and Lotte Bailyn

The findings of case studies are used to consider how the experiences of today's bio-technology companies may help us to understand some of the dimensions of work/life issues in tomorrow's companies. Particular consideration is given to the structure of work, itself. The authors consider important implications for careers.

### • Policy Perspectives

"Lower-Wage Workers and the New Realities of Work and Family"  
by Susan J. Lambert

Lambert suggests that changes in public and private sector policies elevate the importance of developing new work/life models that respond to the priorities of lower-wage families. For example, community-based child care services may be preferred by many lower-wage families to child care centers located at the workplace. The relevance of fundamental concerns such as wages, benefits, and work hours is stressed.

"Creating a Research and Public Policy Agenda for Work, Family and Community" by Paula M. Rayman and Ann Bookman

Rayman and Bookman recommend that an integrated research-policy approach be used to explore the complex interactions among family, work and community experiences. Lessons learned from three different efforts to link research and policy in these areas are discussed: the White House Conference on Families; the Bush Center Project on Infant Care Leave; and the Carnegie Foundation's Task Force. Factors such as the importance of leadership are explored. □

## Upcoming Events

---

### Work-Family Conference

**"Work and Family: Expanding the Horizons".**

Call for Papers for an Academic Conference,  
"Work and Family: Expanding the Horizons"  
March 3-4, 2000

Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, California

Sponsored by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation,  
The Center for Working Families, University of California, Berkeley,  
and the Sloan Foundation

### • Description of the Conference:

Over the last two decades, research on paid work and family life in the U.S. has flourished, resulting in an enormous body of new in-

formation. However, we still lack an over-all conceptual approach that links the daily struggles of working parents with broad structural changes, such as shifts in the organization of paid work brought about by rapid economic change and advanced technologies; the growing polarization of social classes; and the decline of state provisioning for families and children. More attention to links between changing institutions and the daily lives of working families will strengthen this field of research and policy-making. We welcome papers from a wide range of perspectives on work and family. The plenary sessions will highlight fresh angles of vision and seek to articulate a more comprehensive approach to this area of research.

see **Work-Family Conference,**  
*next page*



## Work-Family Conference, cont.

---

- Among the topics to be considered are:

Economic and social trends (such as globalization, the move to a service economy, widening income gaps, new waves of immigration) and the changing contours of U.S. work and family life.

New technologies and the reconfiguring of relationships between work and family.

The effects of changes in state policies (e.g., welfare reform and diminished funding for schools, parks, and libraries; family leave legislation; or movements to fund more after-school programs) on the daily lives of working families.

The development and impact of family-friendly workplace policies in various sectors of the economy, and in relation to the activities of labor unions and the policies of local, state, and national government.

Relationships between families, markets, the state, and civil society, including comparative research in different national contexts.

Families negotiating jobs, schools, childcare, and other institutions.

The challenges and options for small businesses who want to implement family-friendly policies.

The development of children growing up in working families, at all stages of life.

Bringing the experiences of children, grandparents, the disabled, and dependent elderly family members into research on work and family.

Exploring other areas of research for insight into changing relations of work and family (for example, the dynamics of Social Security and Medicare; school choice and movements for school reform;

the organization of urban and suburban neighborhoods; the declining spatial autonomy of contemporary children; labor organizing strategies; trends in urban planning; housing policies and the design of domestic spaces).

Trade-offs between time binds and money binds

Gender relations at work, in families, in child-care arrangements.

Diverse kinship and family arrangements and the dynamics of paid and unpaid work.

The rituals and myths of working families.

The organization and the gender and racial-ethnic dynamics of caring work, and of cultures of care.

Consumerism and the varied experiences of working families.

The emotional dimensions of work and family

- Submission Requirements:

Submitted proposals should represent original work and should not be previously published. Authors are encouraged to submit proposals that address the topics in this call, but other topics related to the Conference theme will also be considered. Papers will be selected by academic peer review panels.

Call for a copy of the full for papers, which included submission requirements (submissions must be postmarked by SEPTEMBER 30, 1999)

Registration forms, and hotel information:

Check the conference website: <http://www.bpwusa.org/foundation/horizons.html> □

## Final thoughts

---

## Comments

### From the Boston College Center for Work & Family.

The Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network has been up and running for a full academic year. We've passed some important milestones, encountered some challenges, and have kept our sights on the horizons of possibilities.

- Affiliations:

We have 416 individuals who have affiliated with the Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network. Please feel free to give our web address to your colleagues and students.

- Literature Database:

The number of entries into the database which contains the annotations of work-family articles, books, and reports has been burgeoning. There are currently over 2,000 entries and we are adding to our collection every day.

- Virtual Library:

As was noted in an e-mail message sent to all Network Affiliates, we are creating a database of syllabi that address work-family issues

see *Comments*,  
next page



## Comments, cont.

---

in one or more sessions. We are hoping that these will encourage faculty from different disciplines to incorporate work/life issues into the curriculum.

- **On-Line Forums:**

So far, the "standing" forums have not been used by many of the Network affiliates. Forums such as these seem to work best if they are designed for particular groups that either want to share experiences with one another, post insights and opinions, gain access to experts, or "chat." It appears that our affiliates are finding other vehicles for these needs (e.g., conferences, the workfam listserv, etc.). As a consequence, we are thinking about removing the standing on-line forums, replacing them with the real time forums discussed below.

- **Real-Time Forums:**

Shelley MacDermid at Purdue University has once again become a trail blazer! She has organized a virtual task force that has accepted the challenge of conducting a scholarly assessment of existing measures of work/life tensions. They will be recommending alternatives that reflect innovative concepts. Shelley "et al." anticipate posting their working paper on the Sloan Work-Family Network this summer and will subsequently host a real time forum.

There have been some interesting developments concerning the protection of intellectual property and on-line publications. Recently, two members of the Sloan Electronic Network Team, Senior Research Associate Teri Ann Lilly and Webmaster Sophia Sasaki, attended the Fourth Annual Ethics and Technology Conference on June 4-5, 1999. The conference, hosted at Boston College, was sponsored by the Boston College Law School and Carroll School of Management, Loyola University Chicago, and Santa Clara University. It featured presentations on such intriguing topics as the one developed by Professor William S. Brown of Babson College, entitled: "The Impact Upon Self of Technologically-Mediated Organizational Control," as well as "Is Copyright Ethical? An Examination of the Theories, Laws and Practices Regarding the Private Ownership of Intellectual Work in the United States," by Professor Shelley Warwick of Queens College.

Our thanks to all of you for contributing to this project. Please e-mail me with any suggestions for improvement.

Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes  
[pittcats@bc.edu](mailto:pittcats@bc.edu) ☐