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Reflections from The Sloan Foundation

WHO IS LISTENING?



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.

Media coverage of work and family issues has been a notable success "story." Virtually every week, there are articles published in newspapers, academic journals, practitioner publications, and magazines about some dimension of work and family issues. Radio stations and the television news frequently cover work-family news events. For example, CNN recently interviewed two notable work and family researchers, Francoise Carre of the Radcliffe Public Policy Center and Bob Drago of Penn State, after the June policy meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association meeting held in June, 2000

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has had a longstanding interest in promoting positive relationships between the media and researchers. We recognized how important it is for researchers to disseminate key findings to reporters who can package and re-tell the "stories" to diverse audiences. Unless we are able to facilitate appropriate media coverage of our work, we may be diminishing the potential impact that our investigations could have.

The Sloan Foundation has taken a number of steps to develop and strengthen relationships between researchers and the media. Early on, the Dual Career Families program area focused on creating a media climate where reporters took it for granted that work and family issues were relevant to audiences' public as well as their private lives. As a result, work-family perspectives could be woven into a range of new coverage. It was the hope of the Sloan Foundation that the new media climate would ultimately result in increased public discussion about work and family issues.

The Sloan Foundation has supported a number of media initiatives. A grant was awarded to NPR in 1995 and in 1998, support was provided to WNYC in New York to cover stories about work and family issues. This year, KCRW received a grant.

Since the inception of the Dual Career Families program, the Foundation has encouraged all of its principal investigators to explore a range of media options - including the creation of web sites, publication of working papers, submission of manuscripts to scholarly journals, as well as press releases to media outlets - that can expand public awareness of and understanding about work and family issues.

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Issue Highlights

MEDIA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCHERS

Welcome to all of you.



Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Ph.D.

Planning this issue of the On-Line Newsletter provoked a lot of thinking, both about content and about the Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network as a new form of media. To be sure, we are pleased that a number of media specialists contributed to articles and commentaries for this issue.

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

In his article "The Growth Of Work/Life From A Journalist's Perspective," Keith Hammonds of *Fast Company* reminds us - especially those of us who sometimes become very enthralled with work-family concepts and theory - that the human element is at the core of work and family experiences. After all, that is why work-family concerns are so engaging to so many different audiences. Maggie Jackson, with the Associated Press, offers us a thought-provoking piece about the relationship between academics and the press. Jackson shares the thoughts of three scholars that she interviewed for this article, and includes

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Issue Highlights, continued

some tips for working with the press. Amy Eddings, the executive producer for an NPR affiliate, reflects on her grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and her coverage of work and family issues. Eddings reminds us of the need to create connections between the "traditional" media, such as radio, and interactive electronic media that engage audiences and readers in the "news."

Our excitement about this newsletter extended beyond the content. Talking to media representatives provided the Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network team members with an opportunity to pause and consider how the Network might offer additional opportunities for researchers to communicate with different "publics."

What does this mean for you?

1. Send us updates about your project. We try to include these updates in our quarterly newsletters. Please send them to Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes at pittcats@bc.edu

2. If you are interested in having your working papers and final reports published on-line (covered by applicable copyright protections), forward to us a PDF file. We will be organizing a virtual collection of papers in fall 2000.

3. Notify us about recent publications. We attempt to include as many appropriate publications as possible in the literature database and we will select some for our monthly e-mail messages to the affiliates.

Please keep in touch.

Reflections from the Sloan Foundation, continued

In the early 1980s, some researchers were discouraged about the difficulty they experienced when trying to engage the interest of the media in their work. At that time, we were all well aware that our studies might only be of academic value unless the findings could be used to tell business leaders, elected officials, and the public-at-large about the prevalence and significance of the emerging work and family priorities. Over the past two decades, media interest in work and family issues has continued to grow. As a result, public awareness about work and family has expanded considerably.

Fifteen years ago, business leaders and elected officials would query, "Work and what?" Today, the work-family and work/life language has become familiar to a wide range of constituent groups.

Despite the increase in the public's understanding of work and family concerns, we still need to educate people in different walks of life about the complexities and nuances of work and family issues. There continue to be misunderstandings at the most fundamental levels. For instance, some people assume that most employees have access to and regularly use a comprehensive set of employer-supported work-family supports.

It is no longer sufficient for generalized messages about work and family to appear in the media. As researchers, we have a responsibility to be sure that communications about our research findings are precise and yet accessible to different target audiences.

Many academics find it difficult to work with the media, in large part because there are no easy ways to condense the conceptual and methodological ele-

ments of research into sound bites. However, the opportunities abound for public discourse that is informed by rigorous research. Nearly every day, the Centers for Working Families supported by the Sloan Foundation receive inquiries about the existence of "hard data" pertaining to one type of work-family experience or another.

The Sloan Foundation believes that the development of strong relationships with the media is more than a grant expectation; the management of media relations is a social responsibility of the academy.

The Alfred P. Sloan Centers for Working Families

Center for Working Families at Berkeley
<http://workingfamilies.berkeley.edu/>

Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life
<http://www.ethno.isr.umich.edu/>

Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute
<http://www.blcc.cornell.edu/ci/ci.html>

Emory Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life
<http://www.emory.edu/college/MARIAL/>

Parents, Children and Work at University of Chicago and NORC
<http://www.spc.uchicago.edu/orgs/sloan/>



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THE GROWTH OF WORK/LIFE FROM A JOURNALIST'S PERSPECTIVE: A CONVERSATION WITH KEITH HAMMONDS

Keith H. Hammonds, Senior Research Editor of Fast Company, has written and edited many articles on work/life, health care, education, business and social policy as well as race and gender issues.

Keith shares his thoughts on the evolution of work/life issues in journalism.

"Demographic pushes in the corporate world and individual responses are steering the media coverage today. Ten years ago, the work/life field was pretty raw so journalistic coverage was spotty. Milton Moskowitz published a survey on working mothers in the 1980s. But not until Sue Shellenbarger began her column at the Wall Street Journal in 1991 did work/life begin to achieve national coverage. Sue introduced the human element into the picture. She took individual stories and through her column she told us why we should worry about work/life at all.

In the past two – three years, from a journalistic perspective, coverage of work/life has expanded to include not just big city newspapers, but medium city papers that have reporters writing weekly or more often on the subject. Clearly, newspaper editors are seeing something out there to justify that kind of commitment. I believe demographic changes at the workplace are the basis for this self-perpetuating appetite for work/life coverage. The more we write about work/life, the more people want to read about it, because they see themselves in that coverage.

I also think part of the change in coverage is due to the demographic changes and personal awareness within our own community. More and more journalists are trying to come to terms with work/life issues themselves. I guess you could say they now have the power to ask to write about the work/life issues they face in their own lives.

One recent criticism of work/life coverage argues that reporters tend to be of a certain age, gender and family status lending homogeneity to their focus. To some extent, I think this is true.

Most reporters in the field are in their 30s and 40s with children. But I also think this is going to change. Just as the first generation of work/life coverage focused on the corporate perspective and working moms, I believe younger, single workers are entering the field and they will add a new perspective to work/life based on their experiences and demographics.

The shift in focus on work/life issues is even occurring at my own workplace. At *Fast Company*, we focus on work/life because workers obsess about work, the increased pace, keeping up with competition, our careers and on and on. Our magazine believes that work is personal, and increasingly we are finding that many people are working less for money and more to achieve meaning, meet some challenge, or pursue personal growth. Committing yourself means that we invest ourselves more than ever in work, but also that we may feel guilty about that decision. So, *Fast Company* dedicates quite a

***Fast Company* was launched in 1995 by Alan Weber and Bill Taylor, two former Harvard Business Review editors. The magazine chronicles changing companies and new business practices and showcases the teams and individuals that are inventing the future and reinventing business. As a magazine and interactive web-site, *Fast Company* highlights workplace themes and work/life issues. Their website is www.fastcompany.com**

bit of coverage to encourage self-reflection and the development of work/life solutions. Our magazine provides the same anecdotal coverage as a lot of newspapers, but we try to propose models and solutions so our readers can work and maintain saner lives at the same time. A good example is a recent article on improving personal productivity. Expert David Allen discusses the ways to organize your life and combine work tasks such as emailing on your personal computer, or learning to triage telephone calls. These techniques actually can allow the reader to shave 2 hours off the workday.

Some of our articles also address corporate strategies in the work/life field. Although we saw some bursts of creativity and innovation in the last decade on issues of childcare, dependent care, resource and referral programs, currently there is some stagnation in the corporate arena. So, we look for companies that are pushing aggressively in work redesign, career design, and workplace flexibility. In fact, our July issue focuses on start-up companies and how they are dealing with demographic changes and work/life issues. Our focus is on solutions at the organizational and the individual level.

I think more and more magazines such as *Business Week*, *Fortune* and mainstream business publications such as the *New York Times* with its new section on the "The Workplace", are beginning to follow suit. Readers want to know what the best companies are to work for and employers also want to use the coverage of their benefits and programs to attract new employees.

The journalistic community is also using more and more academic research on work/life issues, particularly research that has some hands on application. Academics who make their way into daily newspapers and magazines tend to be those like Arlie Hochschild, who has a great sense of packaging and marketing. In journalism, it isn't just the idea itself that is powerful, but the wrapping around it that makes it palatable for mass audiences. I believe publishers want publicly digestible ideas that are translatable to their readers and appropriate for general distribution."



ACADEMIC-PRESS RELATIONS: ARE THEY WORTH THE TROUBLE?

by Maggie Jackson



Maggie Jackson

In this article, Jackson explores academic/press relationships using excerpts from her interviews with three well-known work-family researchers. The author concludes with suggestions to improve communications and get the work/life message out to readers.

Kathleen Gerson's thinking about the press has evolved over the years. After a honeymoon period when the New York University sociology professor felt eager to talk to just about any journalist, she grew frustrated. But now, she's both well versed in the complexities of the academic-press relationship, and eager to be interviewed.

"I feel it's my moral responsibility to give the public as much accurate information as possible," Gerson said. "I try to be as accessible as possible at this point, and that's why."

Many academics want their hard-earned research to reach a wide audience, but perhaps none more so than work-life researchers, whose work is both groundbreaking and crucial to today's families. Yet the academic-press relationship isn't always easy and sometimes is fraught with misapprehension. I had some eye-opening chats on this matter recently with Gerson and two other researchers, Phyllis Moen of Cornell and Margaret Neal of Portland State University.

While most universities and colleges issue press releases about research, the interview is the more important stage for most academic-press contact. Getting together by phone or even e-mail isn't easy, especially after a reputation is made and press calls become a deluge. Moen, a professor of sociology and human development, does the best she can with her limited time, but usually misses journalists' deadlines by the time she responds. Like most academics, she realizes that when one source doesn't call back, another must be found.

A far worse sticking point than scheduling is interview content. Academics fear what they see as a relentless drive for a sound bite. "I've had very frustrating experiences, mostly things taken out of context for the good old sound bite," relates Neal, who will begin teaching at Portland State University's School of Community Health in July. Moen agreed. "The people are frequently misquoted, data is presented wrong," said Moen, who also directs the Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute. "That's sort of embarrassing for people who make their money by being careful and precise."

Yet Moen astutely observes that academics can't expect journalists to need or want to hear every detail of their research. "I can't be on NBC and talk about controlling for this and that," said Moen. From my experience as a journalist, I'd add that academics can better control the outcome of an interview by succinctly answering questions. I'd venture to say that nobody - academic or press - likes to dig himself out of an informational snowstorm on short notice.

Biographical Sketch

Maggie Jackson is the National Workplace Writer for *The Associated Press*. Her column, "On the Job," is published in newspapers around the globe, and she lectures widely on topics related to the workplace and work-life balance. A graduate of Yale University and the London School of Economics, she is currently working on a book on the changing nature of home life in 21st century America.

These pitfalls of the interview are what ultimately helped inspire Kathleen Gerson to become more, rather than less available to the press. "It's true that many academics are loathe to make themselves accessible to the media," said Gerson, whose latest book is *Children of the Gender Revolution: Growing Up in an Age of Work and Family Change*. "There's a certain skepticism about how their work will be presented. Will it be conveyed accurately and to the public in a wider way?" With this in mind, Gerson tries to keep getting the word out about her work.

Ultimately, academic-press relations boil down to a matter of translation, it seems to me. Academics want to relate the complexities and nuances of their research to a public who may not or cannot always fully understand them. The press is firmly in the middle. If the press cannot carve out that balance between depth and clarity, then the process of communication breaks down. After all, the American public is not going to read most academic journals and scour university bookshelves looking for solutions to their everyday problems. Like all of us, they're just trying to survive. In the long run, better relations with benefit not only academics and the media, but Americans' daily lives.

Other tips on bettering academic-media relations:

- If it's important to you to get a copy of the article in which you were quoted, tell this to the journalist. Journalists usually don't have secretaries, and it's tremendously hard for them to provide this service. But if they know that a copy will help you get your next grant, that shows them that it's more than curiosity or vanity that inspired you to ask.
- Ask your university press office to set up a workshop with the local press so both sides can meet, make contacts and air some of these frustrations. Ask the office to send out more press releases if they're not already doing as many as you'd like. That way, journalists at least will have the ABCs of your new study before them when they call.
- Make time for journalists. Work-life is a relatively new beat at many publications and reporters usually are trying their best to learn. By helping educate them - even on topics that seem simple to you - you're helping your field.



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WORK/LIFE PROGRAMMING "ON THE AIR": AN INTERVIEW WITH AMY EDDINGS

Biographical Sketch

Amy Eddings is Executive Producer of "The Juggling Act", a series featured on National Public Radio, which won a bronze metal at the 1998 International Radio Festival. Since 1998, Amy is a News Reporter for WNYC in New York City and formerly was a reporter for WBAI, and news director at WFUV. She is a frequent contributor to "On the Media" and "Living on Earth".

What are some of the key components of WNYC's innovative work/life programming?

Eddings: "WNYC created a series of projects designed to introduce and inform our listeners about work/life issues. Funded by the Sloan Foundation, each of these projects was conducted independently, although each series and its various components are inter-related. I suppose they represent our evolving process toward providing listeners with work/life research and access to on-line resources.

At the radio station, the biggest component of each series is preparing and bringing work/life programming on the air. We wanted to find stories that were relevant to our listeners -- that were compelling. We wanted to introduce our audience to some of the work/life issues affecting dual career families. This meant we had to identify people in work/family binds who were struggling with specific issues and get them to share their stories about problems at home, finding childcare, and their relationships with their kids, with their spouses, with childcare providers. I would say we basically used a two-pronged approach. We looked at academic research to guide us in selecting topics, and then we went back to the research to confirm or contradict the findings of our interviews.

How does WNYC's website support work/life programming?

Eddings: Creating a website and online resources was another key component. It was very important for us not only to have something that people could hear, but something that people could read and refer to again and again. That's where the web came in. We have been very vigorously promoting and developing the website at WNYC, not only as a place where you can listen to the radio through access to

audio, but also where people could go to either read or hear some of our past reports. At our website, <http://www.WNYC.org>, the user can click on the news and information link, go to the archives, or to special links to program series such as The Juggling Act, whose most recent reincarnation was a series that aired daily in January 2000.

The web component also allows us to develop links to other websites as well as listener access to additional resources. We did something called "Reading Room", where we provided the first chapters of many work-life related books. One of my favorites is *Working Fathers* by Scott Coltrane.

Another component is a resource center here at the station. We have started to archive stories on reel and digital audiotapes, and we now have a shelf with all the books and are making a small resource center for journalists. In addition, we have a research page and database that is connected with the website."

Do you have any future stories on work/life planned?

Eddings : "Our grants have funded a number of radio features, stories and commentaries. The 1998 series, our first of three, included having someone from the head of the Gay and Lesbian Family Center in New York City do a commentary about work-family issues facing gay and lesbian parents. We hope to follow up in our final series with a piece on gay and lesbian couples and how they experience gender based decisions regarding work, chores, housework, and who keeps the job and who doesn't. The only work I know that has been done so far has focused on the roles of women and men. I'm not aware and would welcome information from readers on any research on how work is divided among gay and lesbian couples. If they are already breaking the rules, so to speak, or reinventing and reconstructing gender as a lot of gay and lesbian theory, social theory, cultural theory have argued over the past ten years, then how is that affecting how they manage their work and family?

The second series aired in January of 2000 and involved 8 stories, 2 documentaries, and 17 commentaries. Part three hopefully will air sometime in late fall where we will do our third documentary on work and family issues and feature some of the challenges of gay/lesbian relationships."

See: "The Juggling Act" at the WNYC website
<http://www.nyc.org/new/workandfamily/JugglingHome.html>



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PUSHING BOUNDARIES: BRINGING THE MEDIA TO THE WORK/LIFE TABLE

The Radcliffe Public Policy Center creates new strategies for selected public policy problems, primarily those that focus on work and the economy. By bringing different constituencies together, the Center works at engaging individuals in shaping policy. For example, The "Work and Life 2000" project gathered information about work and life innovations and brought some key constituent groups together, including the media. This article highlights key strategies used in the "Work and Life 2000" project.

<http://www.radcliffe.edu/pubpol>

The Radcliffe Public Policy Center's (RPPC) ground-breaking project, "Work and Life 2000" was designed to "promote public and private efforts to more effectively integrate work, family, and community life." Project outreach initiatives focused on multiple stakeholders, including business leaders, labor leaders, educators, elected officials and members of civic groups. In particular, this project addressed the "gap between work and life experts... and members of the news media, with the hope that this would result in more accurate, thoughtful, creative, and nuanced coverage of work and life issues."

Key strategies:

In May 1999, The Radcliffe Center hosted the *Work and Life 2000 Media Roundtable*. Leading work/family researchers and advocates engaged in discussions with journalists to explore issues, such as (1) how work/family issues can best be explained to the media, and (2) how researchers can work most effectively with journalists. Among the journalists participating in the Roundtable were David Molpus (*National Public Radio*), Reed Abelson (*The New York Times*), Hana DeBare (*The San Francisco Chronicle*) and *A'Lelia Bundles* (ABC News).

A key outreach initiative of the project included a series of submissions of op-ed articles to daily newspapers around the country (e.g., Atlanta Journal Constitution, Boston Globe, Portland Oregonian). Written by work/life experts, the articles focused on the integration of work, family, and community life and discussed such topics as the importance of the Family and Medical Leave Act; the need for employers to treat part-time workers fairly; societal guilt and double-standards inflicted upon working mothers; and how work-life programs enhance business competitiveness.

Legacy:

The Center integrates outreach initiatives with and via the media to disseminate information, connect experts, and impact policy. By bringing more depth and clarity to media coverage of work and family policies and programs, the Center will continue to generate interest in innovative workplace programs.

MEDIA AND THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

The Center for Ethnography of Everyday Life (CEEL), an Alfred P. Sloan Center for the study of working families, is located at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. CEEL focuses on the cultural aspects of contemporary American life and its ethnographic approach to research. Tom Fricke, Ph.D., is the Director of the Center and Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of Graduate Studies in Anthropology.

Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life: <http://www.ethno.isr.umich.edu>

Among the topics studied by researchers at CEEL is the contemporary media culture and work/family. In the following working paper, Lara Descartes and Conrad P. Kottak explore how parents in a growing middle-class community draw on media images and information in evaluating and justifying their own family and work responsibilities.

Media and the Work-Family Interface
by Lara Descartes and Conrad P. Kottak



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OPINION/EDITORIAL:

THE BEST, THE MOST: PERSPECTIVES ABOUT MAKING THE LISTS

by Judi Casey



Judi Casey

Judi Casey is the director of the New England Work & Family Association (NEWFA) at the Boston College Center for Work & Family

Every year, it seems more and more magazines and newspapers sponsor contests to identify businesses that are family-friendly. Some of these competitions are national in scope, and tend to attract large corporations with long-standing commitments to work/life issues. Others are more local in nature and are designed to encourage small and medium-sized companies to adopt innovative policies and benefits.

Many work/life practitioners will tell you that their CEO's covet a space on the lists. In part, this reflects the fact that making the lists usually produces positive publicity and exposure for the companies that are recognized.

But, when you go to any gathering of work/life professionals and the conversation turns to the lists, you often hear the question, "Is it worth the effort?"

A major concern is that the application process is very time intensive. Some companies estimate that it takes a full-time person between two and three months to gather the required information. Often, it is necessary for work/life managers to collect data from several different business units, so the process can feel like a drain on company resources.

Of course, there is no guarantee that a company will be successful in their efforts, so there is the potential for enormous effort (and possible public scrutiny) with no apparent payback. Some firms have found that the workplace politics can be especially uncomfortable if a company makes the list one year and then gets dropped the next, despite the firm's continued efforts to be responsive to the needs of their employees.

Among work/life professionals, concern has also been expressed about the lack of clear standards used by the list creators to distinguish family-friendly companies from those that are not-family friendly. For example, how much different would the company ranked as being number 10 be from the company that was ranked as number 11 (and may not have made a particular list)?

The New England Work & Family Association (NEWFA) at the Boston College Center for Work & Family was established in 1992. NEWFA is an employer-only membership organization. Its mission is to foster collaboration among work/life practitioners to create and sustain employer work/life programs that effectively meet both employee and business needs, and to build more productive, healthier workplaces for employers, employees, families and the community. Visit NEWFA's web site at <http://www.bc.edu/newfa>

Furthermore, practitioners are uncomfortable that the media could begin to set the standards for the work/life field. In some cases, the standards set by the lists are not really standards of excellence, but rather they are standards for "innovation." This approach to measuring excellence might reward companies that adopt all of the "new, improved" policies and programs to ensure that they stay on the list, rather than because specific initiatives are the right business strategy or meet employee needs.

Some companies are beginning to adopt a cost-benefit perspective about the lists (whether or not they 'make it'). These companies ask questions such as:

- What are the business outcomes of being on a particular list? Is there any measurable effect on productivity, morale, recruitment, or retention?
- How does being on the list make a positive contribution to the daily work/life balance issues of their employees?
- Does being on the list better position the company as an employer of choice, neighbor of choice, or company of choice?
- Would organizations be better served if they redirected their efforts to more tangible employees concerns (i.e., build a fitness center or increase available day care slots)?

Given the fact that some companies are taking a more critical stance relative to their participation in lists, it remains unclear whether future employees are influenced by the lists and might decide, "That's the kind of company I want to work for."



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Opinion/Editorial, continued

CREATING A RESEARCH PIPELINE

by Sue Seitel

Susan Seitel is president of *Work & Family Connection*, the national work-life news and information clearinghouse. She edits *Work & Family Newsbrief*, the *Trend Report* and the *Manager's Quarterly*, the company's publications, and writes special reports on work-life topics for the company's website, www.workfamily.com.

One cold Minnesota winter day in 1990, one of our clients made an off the wall request. "Would you read my mail for me?" he asked. We had been work-family consultants for six years, helping employers assess employees' needs and design a more employee-friendly work environment. We thought he was kidding. But he pointed to a shelf that was bowed in the middle from the pounds of magazines and papers sitting on it. "I'm serious," he said. "This stuff is all about the workplace and I don't have time to read it. You read it and tell me which articles are important, and why." What an idea! If he needed that service, we said to ourselves, maybe others did too.

So we began in earnest to read the nation's workplace news, and in April, 1990, we published our first issues of *Work & Family Newsbrief* and *Work & Family Trend Report*, mailed them to 20 intrepid subscribers, and our news and information clearinghouse was born. Today, we read the work-life mail each month for executives from 1,200 companies around the world, digest it, report what we feel is important, interpret it and help answer their questions about the news, either personally or on our website, where we now have ten years of archives and special reports stored.

So we read a lot of news. Most of our readers are mid-level decision-makers who want two things from the news we choose for them. One is a path for action. What should they be doing to earn the label everyone wants – "employer of choice?" What changes should they be making in their programs or policies? What do employees really need and want, what will attract and keep them? And of course who else is doing it (no one wants to be first,

everyone wants to be third). The other is "Why should we?" What is the business case for change? With limited budgets, these readers need to make a strong business case for adding programs, changing policies, and training managers. The business case needs to be specific! And that's where researchers come in.

One thing that has bothered us for years is the fact that researchers and academics don't seem to have a pipeline to and from the people who are hungry for their research. For the most part, work and family research seems to be published in academic journals, written for and read by each other. A welcome new forum for research brought much of it out of the closet this spring. The conference, sponsored by the Business & Professional Women's Foundation, U.C. Berkeley Center for Working Families and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, produced 53 sessions, with three or four papers each.

Most of the papers offered insight about the impact on families when the caregiver works outside the home – important and valuable information for people who care about healthy families.

And of course companies care. But here's the truth. For most, that kind of information is seen as sociology. "Healthy families?" they say. "That's what our foundation is for." To a mid-level manager with a limited operating budget, the health of America's families will not sell manager training, a resource and referral program, work redesign or paid family leave. When it comes to spending operating dollars, the reality is that our companies are too pressed for time, too focused on shareholder value and too desperate for their share of the global economy to make the connection between their own work practices and healthy families.

So researchers need to decide on their target. If you want your research to really make a difference in the workplace, apply for a grant, call a Fortune 500 company (we'd be happy to make some suggestions) and offer to demonstrate whether manager training can make a difference in their culture, whether an employee-friendly culture can increase productivity (we already know it makes employees healthier), whether rewarding managers and supervisors for being flexible has an impact on retention.



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GRANT UPDATES

The Wharton Work/Life Integration Project

Debbie Hofnagle of the Wharton Project has sent us the following update.

"In 1999, the Wharton Work/Life Integration Project sponsored a Roundtable to address the issues of Work/Life Integration. Funding was received from the Sloan Foundation to develop intellectual products and disseminate the new knowledge that was generated by case studies of what senior business leaders must do to make their organizations more responsive to employees' personal life and, in turn, more productive. (The basic research for the case studies was done in the first part of 1999, funded by the participating organization.)"

"Sloan Foundation support will be used for the development of final products and for their dissemination to a broader audience of interested parties in the public and private sectors. The project seeks to put these innovative materials in the hands of people who can affect practical applications of the lessons learned from these cases, which are rich with useful knowledge that goes beyond the typical Human Resources domain of work/life concerns to touch at the core of what will make business more productive in a new century. The project is convinced that the lessons of these cases can help businesses affect genuine change, avoid problems, and realize substantial benefits that will improve not only their own picture but the economy as a whole."

Daniel McDonald, Ph.D.c University of Arizona

Editor's note: Dan works with David Almeida on a Sloan funded project, which focuses on the transmission of emotion from work to home by fathers.

Daniel McDonald, doctoral candidate in Family Studies and Human Development at The University of Arizona, delivered a review paper at the XVIth Biennial Meetings of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development this summer in Beijing, China. The review paper, introduced by Reed Larson, was entitled "Examining the Daily Interweave of Fathers' Work and Home Experiences" and was based on research supported, in part, by the Sloan Foundation. The paper reviewed the literature concerning work-family linkages of fathers including new developments in examining how day-to-day work conditions transform fathering experiences in the home. McDonald's own research uses a daily-experiences paradigm that combines stable and dynamic characteristics of fathers' work and home settings to study how work and family are interwoven. Specifically he examines how daily variation in work experiences within-fathers is associated with their daily interactions with their children.

"Balancing Acts: Easing the Burdens and Improving the Options for Working Families" Economic Policy Institute

<http://epinet.org> email: publications@epinet.org
Eileen Appelbaum, editor

If you haven't already read Eileen's edited volume, please do so. The book contains a collection of papers presented at the symposium on working families "Balancing Acts: Easing the Burdens and Improving the Options for Working Families. It includes cutting-edge research from: Suzanne M. Bianchi; Marin Clarkberg; Tom Fricke; Marlene Kim; Phyllis Moen with Dborah Harris-Abbott, Shinok Lee, and Patricia Roehling; Katherine S. Newman; Ellen Galinsky and James T. Bond; Eileen Appelbaum, Peter Berg, and Arnie L. Kalleberg; Netsy Firestein and the Labor Project for Working Families; and Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes. To view the full bibliographic citation/annotation go to the Sloan Literature Database www.bc.edu/wfnetwork and type in the author's last name.

The Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life at the University of Michigan

Editor's note: The folks at the Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life kindly wrote to tell us about some recent attention from the press – including feature stories from the Associated Press (July 9, 2000) and in Discover Magazine (September 2000). www.ethno.isr.umich.edu

Here are some updates from researchers on their on-going ethnographic projects:

Tom Fricke has spent the last several months in a rural community in North Dakota for his study of intergenerational connections between community residents and those former residents who have left for career reasons. Emergent themes include those having to do with the cultural construction of work and family ethic, the persistence of cultural models, and the tensions that emerge when those models conflict with new realities.

Conrad Kottak, aided by graduate student **Lara Descartes**, is studying how today's middle class parents balance work and family responsibilities and how these parents use the media to help them make or think through their choices. To date, 36 parents of elementary school children have been interviewed and ethnographic observation with a sub-sample of those families has just begun.



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GRANT UPDATES, continued

Rebecca Upton, who is studying how having a second child affects work and family life, has been working intensively with 5 suburban families, following their day-to-day activities, and has conducted in-depth interviews with 39 couples. In addition, she is teaching a course on Contemporary American Culture, which focuses on the rituals and meanings of work and family.

Elizabeth C. Rudd's research investigates what happens when an employee takes time off work for a family reason. She has completed more than 25 interviews with leave-takers, managers and human resource specialists in the Detroit area.

Graduate student **Brian Hoey** is continuing fieldwork in Michigan's Grand Traverse region, where he is studying what he calls "lifestyle migration." He is working closely with a few families as well as conducting interviews with a wide range of migrants to the area. For more information on the project, please see the project Website at <http://www.umich.edu/~bhoey>.

Janet Dunn is working on a project with **Sandra Hofferth** and **David Kinney** that investigates how families manage their children's schedules. She has been interviewing parents and children in a southeastern Michigan suburb, attending community events and doing volunteer work at the children's school in preparation for in-depth ethnographic work with selected families.

Hiromi Ono and **Frank Stafford** are publishing the results of their study, "Till Death Do Us Part or I Get My Pension?: Wives' Pension Holding and Marital Dissolution in the U.S.," on the marital stability and finances of couples. Ono also is studying the effect that a woman's economic position has on her chances of marriage, using cases in the U.S., Japan and Sweden and investigating how marital history affects marriage – specifically, whether or not never married men and women have strong preferences to marry another never married person.

Amy Corning reports that for her research on how the memories of former Soviet immigrants are influenced by the experience of emigration and the work and family changes accompanying that experience, she has completed a pretest and is in the process of carrying out the main stage of data collection via a mail survey.

Jennifer Robertson is working on a project on "Family Work': Art and the Display of Class and Genealogy in Everyday Life." Her research involves collecting material and data from the internet, mail order catalogues, television shows, magazines, artwork outlets and local art auctions and fairs as well as conducting home visits and interviews with householders in Michigan (Ann Arbor and neighboring towns and cities). She writes: "Most generally, this project aims to show that practices, such as art-making and collecting, and genealogical research, hitherto regarded as peripheral to the 'real work' of working families, are actually quite central to the (shifting) ways in which such families perceive of and position themselves in relation to their immediate communities and the larger society. In short, working families also work on 'family,' and the nature of that 'family work' is aesthetic."

This fall, the Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life also welcomes two new members: **Amanda Lewis**, a faculty affiliate, is researching the role of major social and cultural transformations – specifically, the movements of women and people of color and the anti-war protests of the 1960s – in everyday "family values." She is conducting an ethnographic study of the 1960s graduates of a Michigan high school. **Allison Smith**, a graduate student affiliate, is studying the experiences of Latvian-Americans who immigrated to Michigan during the 1950s as part of an on-going project led by **Abigail Stewart** on the transmission of family, work and social values.

RECENT EVENTS

IRRA National Policy Forum was held in Washington, DC on June 22-23 to discuss work/family balance, "one of the most crucial challenges that our nation, employers and all working Americans and their families face." Workshops and plenary sessions focused on "how best to update employ-

ment, labor and social policies to serve the needs of the workforce, families and the economy." Visit their site to learn more:

<http://www.irra.uiuc.edu/meetings/>



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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2000

The International Telework Association and Council will be holding its 2000 International Conference. "The World is Our Workplace" in New Orleans, LA on September 17-20. Contact ITA @ their website: <http://www.telecommute.org>

The 4th Annual Work Family Congress, honoring this year's 100 Best Companies for Working Women, will be held in New York City on September 26-28. For further information, contact <http://www.workingwoman.com/WFCongress2000>.

"The War for Talent- Winning Strategies" sponsored by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) will be held in Washington, DC on September 27-29. Contact SHRM at their website: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/>

October 2000

SHRM Workplace Diversity Conference and Exposition, Washington, DC, October 2-4. Contact SHRM at their website: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/>

April 2001

24th Annual Conference & Exposition of the SHRM Global Forum, April 2001. Contact SHRM at their website: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/>

Employment Management Association Conference and Exposition, in Chicago, IL on April 25-27, 2001. Contact SHRM at their website: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/>

May 2001

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Working Family Centers Conference, "Dutiful Occasions: Working Families, Everyday Lives", will be held at the University of Michigan on May 3-5, 2001. Contact the Center for Ethnography of Everyday Life: <http://www.ethno.isr.umich.edu>

June 2001

53rd Annual Society for Human Resource Management Conference and Exposition, San Francisco, CA, June 24-27, 2001. Contact SHRM at their website: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/>

COMMENTS

The Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network has been online for over two years. We've passed some important milestones, encountered some challenges, and have kept our sights on the horizons of possibilities.

Affiliations

As of July 2000, we have over 650 individuals who have affiliated with the Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network. Please feel free to give our web address <http://www.bc.edu/wfnetwork> to your colleagues and students.

Literature Database

We continue to add bibliographic citations with selected annotations of work-family articles, books and reports. Currently, we have over 2,600 entries. We are in the process of adding a number of articles addressing work/life issues from a global perspective as well as a number of articles exploring the telecommuting phenomenon.

Virtual Library of Syllabi

We have created a database of syllabi that address work-family issues in one or more class sessions. We are hoping that these will encourage faculty from

different disciplines to incorporate work/life issues into the curriculum. If you would like to include your work-family syllabus, please forward to Teri Lilly lillyt@bc.edu

Virtual Think Tank

"Teaching Work and Family Across the Disciplines: A Virtual Think Tank"

In September, 2000 the Sloan Work-Family Researchers Electronic Network will be sponsoring a new Virtual Think Tank. "Teaching Work and Family Across the Disciplines: A Virtual Think Tank. Currently, the Think Tank includes: Ellen Kossek (Michigan State); Sharon Lobel (Seattle University); Terry Rothhausen (U. of Minnesota); Julie Schorr (Harvard); Cindy Thompson (CUNY); and Pat Raskin (Columbia). In addition to lists of recommended readings that pertain to different work/family topics, we will gather samples of assignments and exercises that could be incorporated into different courses.

Please forward any recommendations and questions to Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes at pittcats@bc.edu



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RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

A Sample of Contributions by Journalists

Holcomb, Betty (1998). "Not Guilty: The Good News About Working Mothers." New York: Simon and Schuster.

Betty Holcomb, a consulting editor for Working Mother Magazine, provides a well-researched report about mother's guilt about working outside the home. The book begins with Holcomb's personal experience and angst when leaving her infant at child care. The media's role in contributing to women's guilt is explored.

Shellenbarger, Sue. (1999). Work and Family: Essays from the "Work and Family" Column of the *Wall Street Journal*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Every Wednesday in the *Wall Street Journal*, Sue Shellenbarger's Work and Family column focus on balancing career and personal life. Sue's storytelling style illuminates the personal experience of work-family issues, such as flex-time, child care, etc. This book contains some of her best columns and are organized by themes.

Wasserman, Miriam. (1999). "Beating the clock: So much to do, so little time." Federal Reserve Board, Boston MA: *Regional Review* Volume Q3: 8-15.

A well-written article that integrates the human experience with sound research.

A Sampling of Media Related Websites: Work/Life Issues

The Work/Family Newsgroup: How to Join and History: <http://www.la.psu.edu/lair/workfam/> Bob Drago's provocative and informative listserv provides cutting-edge work-family information and discussions.

Amy Gage writes a twice-weekly column, "On Balance," for the St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*. If you would like to receive the columns via email, send a request to amygage@mr.net.

Visit the *Chicago Tribune* to read news articles on work/life balance at <http://www.chicagotribune.com>

"Workplace Trends" and "In the News" at the Society for Human Resource Management. Their website is: <http://www.shrm.org/trends/> Also visit their work/life link: <http://www.shrm.org/hrlinks/>

Work & Family Connection Resources provides excellent links to services and information including newsletters, publications, policy alerts on a wide range of work/life issues, including elder and child care resources, gender work and family, human resources, federal efforts, etc.. Their website is <http://www.workfamily.com/resource>

Facts about Working Women at Catalyst, a nonprofit organization working with business to advance women. See Catalyst: <http://www.catalystwomen.org>

Global Business Responsibility Resource Center has a section devoted to news and information about corporate actions. Contact <http://www.bsr.org/resourcecenter>

Media Moments highlights media events of the Institute of Women's Policy Research at their website: <http://www.iwpr.org/media%20Page/Media>

Another website with news articles on work and family as well as online resources is the National Partnership for Women and Families. Their website is <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/workandfamily>

The Wall Street Journal interactive website has articles on work/life issues, career development and advice. Visit them at, <http://interactive.wsj.com>

Read about work/family topics and news articles about women and work from the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* at <http://www.bizjournals.com>

Visit the *Daily News* online site for community newspapers that look at career issues at their website: <http://www.vault.com>

Women working 2000 and Beyond, a website for working women with a publication listing as well as news about its video produced by Helene Lerner to be aired this year on public television broadcasts. Contact their website: <http://www.womenworking2000.com>.

Dad's Corner and Life Balance are among the many topics at Womans Work. See their website: <http://www.womans-work.com>

Balancing work and Family Articles at Women Connect. Check their website <http://www.womenconnect.com>

The Juggling Act, an online resource of books, interactive conversations and media broadcast material at <http://www.wync.org>.

Visit the *New York Times* for career and job market news at <http://www.nytimes.com>