

WOMEN'S VU

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IX:10

More than just wages

Rhonda Gibson, Copy Editor
Ideals Magazine

The Chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Clarence Pendleton, has called it the "looniest idea since Looney Tunes," but to many women the concept of comparable worth is a symbol of their struggle for true employment equality — and the social status and power that accompany it.

The idea of pay equity has been around for a long time — much longer than pay equity legislation — but the idea of comparable worth is relatively new. Traditionally, pay equity has meant simply "equal pay for equal work." In other words, a male teacher should not be paid more than a female teacher who has the same educational training and is doing the same job.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963, in legislating pay equity, provides that employers may not pay employees of one sex wages at rates lower than they pay employees of the opposite sex, employed in the same establishment, for equal work on jobs requiring substantially equal skill, effort, and responsibility which are performed under similar working conditions.

But comparable worth takes this one step further.

The basic idea behind comparable worth is to change the way traditionally female occupations are paid. Proponents of comparable worth seek to increase the average pay for workers such as nurses, teachers and secretaries — traditionally female fields — to match that of male-dominated occupations that require the same level of skill and responsibility. It goes beyond the idea of equal pay for equal work and states that men and women whose occupations make comparable demands on them and require equivalent skills should be considered of comparable worth and have similar pay scales, regardless of whether the job is the same.

The problem lies in developing an accurate measure to determine the exact worth of an occupation. Opponents of comparable worth claim it is impossible to compare accurately the worth of unrelated occupations. But comparable worth advocates counter that existing pay scales were based on previous job ratings and skills comparisons, and that it would only require a re-evaluation of the system to put things in line.

At first glance it may seem proponents of comparable worth simply want to close the gap between the wages of men and women. Even today, although 54 percent of women 16 years of

age and older are in the workforce, women earn only 64 percent of men's income — in 1984, the median income of women working full-time was \$15,600, compared with \$24,000 for men.

Comparable worth legislation could help lessen this pay gap. But the issue goes deeper than that. The idea of comparable worth is a social issue as well as an economic one. The future of working women "is uncertain and remains a challenge to the American economic, political and social system and to women themselves," concludes the latest Census Bureau study, "Women in the American Economy," released earlier this year.

To understand pay inequity as a social issue, it is necessary to look back at the reasons women have traditionally been paid less than men. Early in this century, when women first began to move into the workforce in large numbers, men were still considered the family bread-winners. Women, if employed outside the home, were usually in unskilled positions and were considered to be employed only until they got married. A man's job was more important because he had the burden of supporting a family — a woman's main role was in the home, not the work force.

The fact that women tended to work part time and have traditionally been less educated has also contributed to their low wage-earning ability. As a result, women have been concentrated in low-paying jobs, thereby creating an abundant labor force, decreasing competition and further lowering salaries.

But the difference between women's and men's jobs was, and is, not limited to salary. Men's occupations have traditionally carried more status and power than those of women. Over the years, men have held the positions of authority — politicians, business executives, doctors — while women have served in supporting roles — volunteers, secretaries, nurses. Men have been and continue to be seen as more competent, skilled and important.

Therefore, the comparable worth movement is

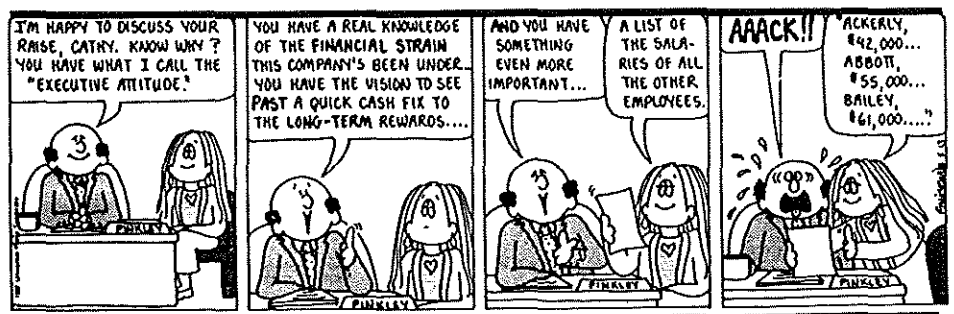
not only asking for more money; it is also demanding the status and power that accompany higher incomes.

The future of comparable worth, while not assured success, looks promising. The first major legal victory for the movement occurred in 1981 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *County of Washington v. Gunther* that women employees could claim sex-based wage discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, even though the jobs to be compared did not meet the equal work standard of the Equal Pay Act.

Since then more than 100 states and cities have reviewed pay scales and considered comparable worth legislation. Most recently, the cities of Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, passed model ordinances calling for a pay equity study of their city employment pay scales to determine if discrimination exists and to report on the feasibility of implementing a comparable worth plan. In San Francisco, Mayor Dianne Feinstein announced a \$35.4 million settlement on discrimination that will affect about 12,000 employees.

And the future of women's salaries — with or without comparable worth — looks brighter. Although women on the whole earn only 64 cents for every one dollar earned by men, for people age 18 to 24, the ratio of female to male income was 88 percent in 1984, showing a significant reduction in the wage gap for younger workers. A Rand Corporation study predicts that by the year 2000, the average women's wage will have risen to 74 percent that of men.

Comparable worth is still in the infancy stage. Its supporters are just beginning to face the obstacles put forward by traditional employment patterns. But comparable worth is being thrust to the forefront of the pay equity movement and will be a viable issue even after the 1980s have become history. What Clarence Pendleton called "the looniest idea since Looney Tunes" could well change the nature of employment in this country. ■



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Gender in hiring and promotion

Nancy Ransom
Women's Center

Several myths were shattered by the Supreme Court's decision March 25 in the California case affecting a promotion in the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency.

1. The myth that sex was not taken into account in hiring and promotion of employees prior to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 11375 of 1969 (calling for "affirmative action").

2. The myth that there is always a perfect candidate for a job — a one-and-only, peerless, ideal person.

3. The myth that efforts to eradicate past practices that resulted in discrimination against women are unfair because they create a new form of discrimination, often called "reverse discrimination," against men.

The Santa Clara County Transportation Agency developed an affirmative action plan to eliminate sex segregation in their work force. The agency uses a variety of measures to create applicant pools for promotions. Everyone in the pool is considered qualified for the particular job.

In this case, the pool consisted of seven persons for the position of road dispatcher, including Diane Joyce and Paul Johnson. When the director of the agency chose Joyce, Johnson sued for reverse discrimination, claiming that his score on an oral test was two points higher than Joyce's and that sex was the determining factor in the director's decision to promote Joyce.

Joyce and the agency countered that the two were equally qualified: a two-point difference in their test scores was insignificant. Furthermore, they argued, since a woman had never held the position of road dispatcher, it was proper under the agency's affirmative action plan to take sex into consideration in making the promotion. Sex was not the only factor.

The Supreme Court agreed, stating that "the sex of Joyce was but one of numerous factors" that the director took into account, and that the purpose was to "attain a balanced work force." The Court majority allowed the action in order to overcome sex segregation in the work place.

Now let us return to the myths. First, sex always has been taken into account in employment decisions. That is why sex segregation pervades the work force. In the past, however, no one acknowledged that sex was a factor in hiring and promotion. Most employers were white men who gave preference to persons most like themselves — other white men. Affirmative action forces employers to be aware of their potential for bias and encourages them to give women a chance for employment in formerly all-male jobs.

The Santa Clara case does not require that employers give preference to women. It permits an employer to take sex into account when considering all factors touching a promotion. That no woman had ever held the job of road dispatcher was central to the court's support for promoting a woman in this case.

Myth number two, that there is a single perfect candidate for a job, was eliminated by the agency's concept of an applicant pool. Employers frequently settle for second, third, or lower choices when filling positions. Differences, such as gender and race, between equally qualified persons may be significant, but they have nothing to do with objective, measureable qualifications. Women often are not promoted into top management jobs because they are women; the perception is that they would not "fit" in an all-male environment.

Finally, there is the myth that affirmative action creates a new class of persons who are discriminated against, namely white men. This issue reflects a complex connection between individual and group rights as well as between the rights of competing groups.

For a promotion system to be based entirely on individual merit it must treat individuals without regard to their group membership. The Supreme Court earlier had approved affirmative action plans that take race into account in order to overcome racial segregation in the work place and create a new system that protects individuals from discrimination based on group characteristics such as race.

As long as more than one person seeks a job, someone will lose. Until recently, individual women were passed over for promotion because of unfair competition — that is, because white men were given preference regardless of the individual's qualifications. With affirmative action, some individual men may be passed over. The ultimate goal, however, is to distribute men and women so that sex is not a factor in hiring or promotion.

When sex segregation has been eliminated from the work place we can claim to judge persons entirely on merit as individuals. Until then, however, our goal must be to end labor force segregation. The Supreme Court has taken a major step toward this goal.

(This article was published originally in the *Nashville Tennessean* "Nashville Eye" column.) ■

News briefs

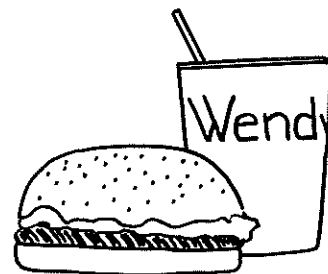
Power food: There are certain foods that increase your alertness and mental energy and certain foods that make you feel drowsy and less acute. In general, high-protein food such as chicken, veal, and fish make you more alert while carbohydrates tend to make you drowsy. High-fat foods such as steak, pork, lunch meats, organ meats,

and hard cheese are difficult to digest and lead to slowed responses and lessened verbal facility. They are not good workday lunch foods. If you're under a lot of stress and want to calm down, a carbohydrate snack such as a bagel or some dry cereal will help.

—Success

May 1987

as reported in *The Moneypaper*



Equity on hold: Dorothy Kuenzi, former manager of a Wendy's hamburger restaurant in Wisconsin, has filed a class action suit against Wendy's International, Inc. charging sex discrimination stemming from a change in management in 1981. In the first six months after the change, the number of female managers dropped from 50 to 22 percent. Reasons for the decline — and the firing of Kuenzi — include sexual harassment, blatant favoritism toward males in grading systems and inspections, withholding business advice from female managers, excessive surveillance of female managers' job performance and personal lives. — *WEAL Washington Report* February/March 1987

The League of Women Voters in February unveiled two sites for the 1988 primary election presidential debates for the general elections. The major political parties want to take over debate sponsorship jointly. At the time this copy goes to press, the League continues to develop plans for Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire as the site of two mid-February '88 pre-primary debates. One will be among Democratic presidential candidates, one among the Republicans. Just before the March 8 Southern Regional Primary ("Super Tuesday"), two more League-sponsored presidential debates are planned for Nashville.

—*Women's Times*
February 24, 1987

Infertility is increasing steadily among both men and women today. Authorities estimate that more than ten million people — 15-20 percent of those of childbearing age, cannot conceive, and that the rate of infertility has doubled or even tripled in the past 20 years.

For many poor women, surrogacy sounds like easy money. And, as long as infertility rates continue to rise unchecked, there will be a potential market. As feminists, however, our obligation is to address these conditions, and then go

into a full, informed discussion of the ramifications of surrogate motherhood.

—*New Directions for Women*
March/April 1987

Letter to the editor from Martha B. Talley, Ph.D., President, A.U. Software, Wichita, Kansas: "I would like to ask Pat Sloan (Losing Interest, March) exactly when the 'post-feminist' era began. Was it the day women began earning 68 cents for every 68 cents earned by men? Or was it the day women became equally represented in the boardrooms and upper-management offices of the Fortune 1000 companies? Perhaps it was the day female heads-of-households ceased to be the dominant names on poverty rolls?"

"Surely so momentous an event as passing into an era when all of these problems were solved was documented somewhere. I must have missed it. Never mind, I'll write to each of the 50 female senators; I'm sure one of them can recall the exact day."

—*Savvy*
May 1987

The Peace with Jobs Campaign has released four posters comparing levels of 1987 military spending and other government programs:

For every \$1 of federal income tax, 55 cents is spent on the military, 2 cents is spent for education, 2 cents for food and nutrition programs, 7 cents on health, 2 cents on unemployment compensation, 1 cent on employment and training, 11 cents on non-military interest, 3 cents for transportation, 3 cents on income assistance, 3 cents on agriculture, 2 cents on natural resources and the environment, 1 cent on social services, 1 cent on community and regional development, and 5 cents on all other programs.

In the period of 1982-1986, Jobs with Peace Fact Sheet No. 3 shows, military spending increased 38% while spending for housing decreased 82%, employment and training decreased 52%, mass transit decreased 28%, community development decreased 20%, education decreased 14%, Aid to Families of Dependent Children decreased 11%, and health-related spending decreased 8%.

In 1987, according to Jobs with Peace's Fact Sheet No. 4, the federal government will spend \$58 billion on research and development. Of this amount, 71% will go to military R&D. The remaining 29% will be split between health, space, energy, general science, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, transportation, international affairs, veteran's, education and training, labor, justice, housing and urban development, and other social services.

—*Eleanor Smeal Report*
April 20, 1987

In Texas, both Dallas and Corpus Christi elected their first women mayors over the Easter week-

end. Annette Strauss of Dallas and Betty Turner of Corpus Christi join seven other women mayors of cities with populations over 100,000, including Kathy Whitmire of Houston, Dianne Feinstein of San Francisco, and Sandy Freedman of Tampa. —*Eleanor Smeal Report*
April 20, 1987

MaxSaver air fare: Cheaper by 40% than Super-saver fares, and 80% less than full airline fares, MaxSaver tickets are non-refundable and non-cancelable. They are available for purchase two days in advance of flight and require a Saturday night stayover (to rule out business travel).

—*Investors Intelligence Financial Planning & Tax Traport*
April 15, 1987

as reported in *The Moneypaper*

"Despite spectacular professional strides by women during the past several decades, the academic community continues to prove highly resistant to the professional advancement of women at the highest levels," Henry Luce III, President of the Henry Luce Foundation, said in announcing a visiting professorship program for women. It is "designed to encourage the advancement of women to the highest levels of academia" and will begin at Brown, Columbia, New York, and Yale universities, and eventually could expand to as many as 12 major research universities. The program will support two-year visiting professorships for one established woman scholar at each of the selected universities.

A background paper provided by the Foundation notes that the "glass ceiling" to women's career advancement described by the Wall Street Journal last March "is not unique to any specific field . . . , but it is both surprising and lamentable that the academic community, taken as whole, appears to be resistant to change and to the professional advancement of women."

—*Women's Times*
February 24, 1987 ■

Tenure appointments

The Women's Center wishes to extend congratulations to the following women who obtained tenure since July 1, 1986:

Alice C. Harris, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Linguistics

Margo Todd, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History

Elisabeth Perry, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History

Jeanette Norden, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Cell Biology

Kathryn Edwards, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics ■

Freebies

"The Getcha Gang Survival Guide" from *Ranger Rick* (of all places!) lists pests such as bees and other stingers, mosquitoes, fire ants, chiggers, ticks, poisonous snakes, poison ivy, etc. Included are facts about them such as where they are found and how they harm you; how to avoid injury; and what to do "if they getcha . . ." Call 322-4843 for a free copy.

"25 Arguments Against Pay Equity and How To Answer Them," a brochure put out by the 9 to 5 National Association of Working Women. Call 322-4843 for a free copy. ■

Women's Center Programs

Call 322-4843 for information on the programs listed below.

The Single Mothers Group will meet June 2 and 16, 6:45-8:15 p.m., at the Vanderbilt Child Care Center. At each meeting, time for sharing among group members is given priority. Anyone on or off campus who defines herself as a single mother is welcome. Group meetings are free; child care is provided on site for \$1.50 for one child, \$2.50 for two or more children.

The Book Group will meet on Monday, June 15, 5:15 p.m., at the Women's Center. The book to be discussed is *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Tyler. Gaynelle Doll will lead the discussion. If you have not read the book but would like to listen to the discussion, feel free to attend. Light refreshments.

A New Employees Brown Bag Lunch will be Friday, June 26, noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Women's Center. These lunches provide an opportunity for new employees to learn about the services available to women on the Vanderbilt campus and to meet other new employees. ■



The June issue of *Women's VU* is our last one for this academic year. I want to thank the friends of the Women's Center and *Women's VU* readers for contributing your valuable ideas, articles, and comments to this year's newsletter series.

I also want to thank Nancy Ransom, Kathy Thornton, Suzanne Ewing, and Susan Seay, the Women's Center staff, for their guidance and assistance throughout the year.

Shalom to all of you this summer. *Women's VU* will return in September.

Joan Anderson
Editor ■

Announcements et cetera

The "Nashville Women Sing for Choice" concert to benefit TKALS (Tennesseans Keeping Abortion Legal and Safe) will be Saturday, June 6, 8:00 p.m., at Music Row Showcase, 16th Avenue South. Tickets are \$10 in advance at TicketMaster locations, and \$12 at the door. Nashville women artists will be performing their music — ballads, R&B, jazz, you name it! Last year's concert included laughter, tears, humor, politics, cornbread, champagne, and ENERGY.

A special, pre-concert reception for the artists will be at 7:00 p.m., \$25 per person, or \$40 per couple (includes concert tickets). Call 297-8540 for reception tickets.

The Vanderbilt Dance Group will perform at the Blair School of Music on July 7 and 8 at 8:00 p.m. Modern dance works by Claudia Edwards, Marci Murphree, and Becky Hinshaw will feature the faculty of the Vanderbilt Dance Group and advanced students. Tickets are \$3, available at Sarratt Center and TicketMaster outlets. Call 322-4234 for more information.

The Ninth National Conference of Women Miners will be June 26-28 in Birmingham, Alabama. The conference is sponsored by Coal Employment Project and Coal Mining Women's Support Team. Workshop topics are Sexual Harassment/Discrimination, UMWA Issues, Future Directions: CEP, Support Groups, Health and Safety, Family Leave Issue, Black Lung, Stress Management, and International Visits. For more information, call 322-4843.

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center offers a group counseling opportunity called Adult Survivors of Incest for small groups of about four women each who deal with the leftovers of past

incest experiences. There is a sliding scale fee. The Center accepts insurance awards as payment in full. The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center is the only agency in Nashville which has groups for adult survivors of incest on a continuing basis. Call 367-0660 for information.

Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Department of Nutrition will offer a "Personalized Course in Nutrition" sometime in August. Participants will study nutrition as it relates to their own diets, biological needs, and lifestyles. Classes will meet for one hour weekly for eight weeks. The cost is \$100 for the lecture series plus additional fees for optional blood work. Call 322-2184 for more information.

The series "Women on Spiritual Quest" offered by Womenflight continues two Saturdays in June. "Rituals for Women's Lives" will be June 6, and "Politics and Feminist Theology" will be June 27. Fee \$20 for each workshop. Scholarships available. Write P.O. Box 60131, Nashville, TN 37206, or call 255-1225 for more information.

"What Women Theologians Are Saying" is a conference at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City October 26-30, 1987. The program fee is \$175 per person. Housing and meals will be additional, but every effort is being made to keep costs low. C.E.U.'s are available. The five days will include lectures, conversations, panel presentations, dialogue groups, small seminars, and worship. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Delores S. Williams, and many other theologians will present to and interact with participants. For information, write Auburn Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway, New York, NY 10027. ■

The YWCA has a summer full of activities for women. For times and fees on the following classes, call 269-9922. Suzanne Ezell at the YW has given the Women's Center 10% off coupons for summer activities. Call 322-4843 for a free coupon:

Art: Purchasing, Collecting, and Displaying Art; and Photography As An Art Form.

Travel: Take a Trip Back in Time to Bell Buckle, Tennessee; and All Aboard for Nashville, historic and contemporary downtown buildings.

Skill Enrichment: Bridge; Machine Embroidery; Shopping the Estate Sale; Yoga.

Community: Living in Nashville and Loving It (for newcomers).

Singles: The Competing Edge; The Legal Rights of Divorced Women; Money Management for Single Incomes.

Family: Communicating With Children.

Self Development: Financial Planning; Women, The Emerging Investor; Looking Your Best—The Woman with Something Extra; Image Update for New Mothers, After-the-baby Blues; Women In Transition Support Group, Relationships Coming and Going — The Art of Letting Go. ■

Never say never

"No woman in my time will be Prime Minister or Chancellor or Foreign Secretary — not the top jobs. Anyway, I wouldn't want to be Prime Minister. You have to give yourself 100 percent."—Margaret Thatcher, on her appointment as Shadow Education Spokesman in 1969. [Spokesman?—Eds.]

—Iris: A journal about women
Fall/Winter 1986 ■

Edited by Joan Anderson

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