

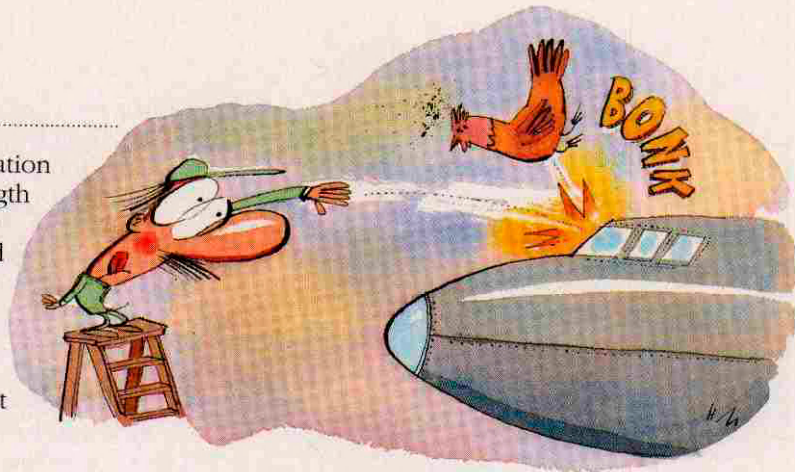
## ■ Working Life

by Haidee Allerton

### TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

From the Internet... The Federal Aviation Administration tests windshield strength on airplanes by shooting dead chickens at the shields at the normal speed of aircraft. If a windshield doesn't break, the FAA figures it's likely to survive a collision with a flying bird, a common hazard. After reviewing the criteria, the FAA decided to repeat tests using thawed chickens.

Blap!



The assailant led a class that the victim was ordered to attend for assaulting his girlfriend.

From the Washington Post.

### TRUE TALES FROM THE WORKPLACE

Perhaps it's time for a review of company policies and procedures at Taco Bell.

First, a would-be robber is rebuffed by an employee, who tells the thief he can't give him any money because he's "on a break."

Then, a Taco Bell manager is fired for leaving her post to rush to an accident scene in front of the restaurant to check on an injured teen and call 911. After a public protest, Taco Bell said that the good samaritan could have her job back. So far, she's considering several job offers.

### TOP TEN

Here are the 10 most common excuses given by workers, according to a survey conducted by consultant James Bleech of the Leadership Development Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

- ▶ 10. No one showed me how to do it.
- ▶ 9. I'll get to it later.
- ▶ 8. If only my supervisor understood.
- ▶ 7. I had too many interruptions.
- ▶ 6. No one told me to do it.
- ▶ 5. We've never done it that way before.
- ▶ 4. I didn't have time.
- ▶ 3. Something else came up.
- ▶ 2. It was someone else's job.
- ▶ and number 1. It's not my fault.

From the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

### CONSULTANT, CONSULT THYSELF

Recently in Honolulu, a man was beaten to death by his anger-management consultant.

### WORKAHOLISTICS

People who are in a constant state of activity aren't necessarily the most productive, according to management psychologist Harry Levinson.

"Frenetic movement by managers often disguises problems, such as hasty decisions," says Levinson, who publishes the *Levinson Letter*. He also says that employees on the go find it hard to be part of a team. Levinson suggests that supervisors force frenetic workers to sit still in meetings. He says that will also make it easier to "keep an eye on them."

### FACTURES AND FIGURETTES

Oscar Mayer receives 800 applications every year from people wanting to drive the Weiner-mobile, a hot-dog-shaped vehicle that travels the country promoting the company's products at fairs and other events. Of the 800 applicants, only 12 cut the muster.

On Mondays, blue-collar workers have a 41 percent increased risk of heart attack; white-collar workers have an 18 percent increased risk.

From Speedbumps.

### LINGO

Pretty soon, you're going to say that you've got "too much on your plate" and people in the office are going to think you're really "out of the loop," which you probably should also stop



saying if you want to sound with-it.

Instead, throw around these *Wired* terms and sound hot:

- ▶ Alpha geek. The most technically knowledgeable and proficient person in the office.
- ▶ G.O.O.D. job. A "get-out-of-debt" or well-paying position.
- ▶ NIMQ. (nihm-kyoo) An acronym for "not in my queue." Or, another way of saying, "It's not my job" when someone wants you to take on additional tasks or projects.

### WELL-SUITED

A dry cleaner in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C., displays a wall of snapshots of single customers, hoping to make a few matches. People bring in photos. Or, the proprietor asks if he can take customers' pictures with a Polaroid camera he keeps behind the counter. So far, some short-term romances have developed but no marriages.

*From the Washingtonian.*

### BRAIN DRAIN

In the 1970s, women began breaking through the glass ceiling of corporate upper management. Since the 1980s, they've been leaving in increasing numbers to start their own businesses or spend more time at home, reports the *New York Times*.

Some experts say that the exodus is a sign of "survival of the fittest." Many of the women themselves say that they've been driven away by an inhospitable environment. A recent Gallup poll reports that 71 percent of women think they don't have the same chance for promotions to top-level executive positions as men with equal abilities. In fact, though the percent of women in management has doubled since the seventies, only 2 to 5 percent (depending on which study) of executive positions in top American companies are held by women.

One problem, suggests analysts, is that the predominant management model in the American workplace is still that of a competitive, impersonal, and strategic male leader. Evidence—such as the recent paper, "Women, Leadership, and the 1980s," by Lynn Rosener and Peter Schwartz of the Stanford Research Institute—has shown that women tend to prefer a more coop-

erative and participative management style, similar to highly recognized Japanese approaches.

One woman said she wasn't "burning out but bailing out" to make more money, spend more time with her family, and to escape the criticism of being a woman on Wall Street.

### WOMEN AND WORK

Apropos of the previous item, women's experiences in the work world are explored by Cathy Feldman in a series of books: *The Men at the Office*, *Two Years Without Sleep*, and *I Work Too*.

The books combine anecdotes, tips, quotes, and statistics—such as, 53.9 percent of women with children under two years old work, according to 1993 figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *The Men at the Office* offers insights on how men and women often approach work differently—such as when a woman's boss asked her why she couldn't check her voice mail while she was on her honeymoon. Lest you think the books bash males, there are plenty of stories about men being supportive of women in the workplace.

*Two Years Without Sleep* chronicles the CRS syndrome (Can't Remember Stuff) that afflicts new mothers who work outside the home, along with their coping strategies. One real-life tale tells how a woman radio commentator had to pump breast milk while on the air. The book also offers some sobering stats: 65 percent of working mothers have trouble finding child care, it's cheaper to provide an employee parental leave than to replace her or him, and only 1 percent of 6 million private U.S. companies provide on-site child care.

To order the books, call 800/858-1058.

### TIPS FOR TRIPS

Do you travel a lot on business? MyLine from Call America Business Communications will forward your calls from destination to destination. You can also program the service to screen calls, take messages, route faxes, and deliver wake-up calls.

*"Working Life" is compiled and written by Haidee Allerton. Send items of interest to "Working Life," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.*