

# Working Life

by Haidee Allerton

## RING AT REGISTER THREE

They met at Wal-Mart. She worked in the shoe section; he managed the furniture department.

So, when they decided to get married, they wed—with bridesmaids, music, a minister, and all the usual trimmings—in the store. Guess where? In the layaway department.

No comment.

## TRUE TALES FROM THE WORKPLACE

A FOWL (friend of Working Life) once worked for the Harris Poll. Basically, his job was to call strangers (around dinnertime) and ask their opinions on some topic. Naturally, he got hung up on a lot.

No matter. Anytime someone hung up on him, he just redialed the number. When the person answered, our pollster hung up.

Hah!

## HOT PROSPECTS

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Economic Research Institute, here are the top 10 careers of the future, based on pay and growth in employment opportunity.

- ▶ 10. speech-language pathologist and audiologist
- ▶ 9. correction officer
- ▶ 8. amusement and recreation attendant
- ▶ 7. special-education teacher
- ▶ 6. paralegal
- ▶ 5. occupational therapist
- ▶ 4. residential counselor
- ▶ 3. physical therapist
- ▶ 2. computer engineer
- ▶ and number 1. systems analyst.

## SHOT PROSPECTS

Here are the jobs you may want to avoid now and in the future. They have the highest rate of homicide, ac-



ording to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Yearly homicides per 100,000 workers

- ▶ cab driver and chauffeur.....22.7
- ▶ sheriff and bailiff.....10.7
- ▶ police.....6.1
- ▶ gas station and garage worker .....5.9
- ▶ security guard .....5.5
- ▶ baggage and stock handler.....3.5
- ▶ store owner.....3.3
- ▶ sales clerk.....3.1
- ▶ bartender.....2.3
- ▶ logger .....2.3

Homicide is now the second leading cause of death on the job.

Logger? Maybe it's the flannel shirts.

## AN EXPLANATION

So, why is workplace violence on the rise? Judi McLean Parks, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Washington University, says that an incident may be a reaction to the perpetrator's feeling that an unwritten but important psychological contract has been broken by management or co-workers.

Says Parks, "Workplace violence is on the increase because of the changing nature of employee and employer

relationships. Recent trends—such as downsizing, benefit cuts, and outsourcing—are chipping away at traditional bonds of loyalty and commitment between companies and employees.

"Retaliation is one way workers have of coping with what they see as an unfair situation."

## LASHING OUT

In Singapore, where officials lash adolescents for spray-painting cars, the suggested punishment for sexual harassers at work is job dismissal.

## ESCHEW THIS JOB

No wonder postal workers go berserk. Last year, U.S. letter carriers were on the receiving end of 2,850 dog bites. That's an average of nine bitten carriers a day.

In fact, a few months ago the Postal Service and Humane Society sponsored National Dog Bite Prevention Week. Twenty-four mailpersons displayed their scars.

"For every letter carrier who's bitten by dogs, there are 900 children [being bitten]," says Postal Service spokesperson Carol Larson.

## ■ Working Life

Eighty percent of the postal dog-bite victims were chomped on in Atlanta.

We don't know why.

### TICKLE AND SLAP

In the United States, here's how some companies are dealing with complaints of sexual harassment, according to a survey conducted by the American Management Association.

- ▶ offender reprimanded 35.1%
- ▶ mediation for parties 35%
- ▶ accuser dismissed 16%
- ▶ allegation dismissed 15%
- ▶ accuser transferred 3.9%
- ▶ offender transferred 3%
- ▶ lashing 0%

### FACTIMES AND FIGURETTES

- ▶ Office workers average about 36 minutes for lunch; 14 percent don't take any lunch break. Fifty-five percent use lunchtime to catch up on work.
- ▶ People who feel that they have little control over their work and lack social support tend to take more sick days. And they're more likely to die of heart disease.
- ▶ Women with the most powerful career positions have higher testosterone levels than other women on average. And few of the high-level women are involved in long-term relationships.

### THE SECRET SOCIETY OF LUDDITES

More than 30 million American households have a computer; 18 million of those computers are equipped with modems for going online.

But only half of the modem-outfitted computers are used for that purpose. Only three percent of the population is signed on to the World Wide Web; only eight percent have heard of it.

Meanwhile, daily newspaper read-

### INTERVIEW NO-NOS

Here are some areas in which not to ask—or answer—questions during a job interview, according to *The Complete Employee Handbook*, written by Detroit-based management consultant Michael A. Holzschu.

- ▶ age, except to find out whether the applicant is a minor
- ▶ lifestyle outside of work
- ▶ transportation to and from work
- ▶ spouse, children, or family
- ▶ disabilities unrelated to job performance
- ▶ clubs, societies, or lodges.

Holzschu says that it's also taboo to request a photograph of an applicant before he or she is hired.

ership has held steady for the past 10 years at about two-thirds of the adult population; 95 million adults read the Sunday paper.

### EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Musta Habib received a white Lotus sports car as his prize for making 17 pizzas in less than three-and-a-half minutes, in a company-sponsored contest.

Habib's other car is a Mercedes. He earns \$80,000 a year as manager of a Domino's Pizza in Washington, D.C.

### MCPROGRAMMERS

Many teens seeking their first jobs head for McDonald's. Others head for the World Wide Web.

Increasingly, young computer whizzes are working on a contract basis as programmers and electronic-game designers, earning \$15 to \$25 an hour.

Take Will Harvey, who sold his first software program when he was 16.

Now 29, he recently earned a Ph.D. in computer science from Stanford; owns a small Internet software start-up, Sandcastle; and drives a Mercedes.

### NO MORE MR/MS NICE GUY

Forget the seven habits of highly effective people. It takes more than that to climb to the top, says writer Tom McNichol. He interviewed hundreds of top-level managers, corporate executives, and government leaders to compile a list of seven behavioral habits, or sins, common to successful people.

Here they are:

- ▶ **1. Pride.** It cometh, not before a fall, but before a promotion.
- ▶ **2. Covetousness.** You have to want to advance with a passion. Visualize to identify your personal Center of Desire.
- ▶ **3. Lust.** It's the motor oil that lubricates the modern corporate engine. Openly display lust at holiday office parties, during weekend retreats, and on Casual Fridays.
- ▶ **4. Anger.** Don't just say no; say, "Hell, no!"
- ▶ **5. Gluttony.** Take a personal inventory of your finances. Want more, get more.

▶ **6. Envy.** Turn passive jealousy of a successful co-worker into pro-active envy. Don't sulk silently; try shaking your head in the presence of others about the co-worker's recent behavior. Drop dark hints.

▶ **7. Sloth.** In the seventies, we worked hard; the eighties were about working smart. As we approach 2000, the leadership roles will be filled by people who don't do any work at all. A busy boss is a manager who isn't getting all the productivity he or she can from workers.

The wages of sin are...well, better wages.

Have a nice day.

Sources include the Washington Post, the New York Times, and Self.