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DEALING WITH MASCULINE/FEMININE  
GENDER LABELS IN NATURAL RESOURCE PROFESSIONS

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ABSTRACT

To decipher the "secret" codes in professional communication, one must understand the masculine/feminine gender labels attached to certain thought and behavior. In natural resource professions and agencies (like the U.S. or New Zealand Forest Service), masculine labels are traditionally associated with high status, respect and power. Timber management (for example) is historically dominated by masculine images, and of higher status and power than landscape, outdoor recreation, or "dicky-bird" management. Timber management is generally perceived as founded on hard-science; it is justified by economic worth, creates jobs, and is the income "bread-winner" in the U.S. or N.Z. Forest Service. Recreation and landscape management is traditionally perceived as feminine: supported by little science (except some soft social science), largely personal and emotional based, and does not have easily associated economic worth. Although traditionally feminine-labeled attitudes and behavior are gaining more acceptance in natural resource professions, those masculine still dominate. Understanding this gender labeling process is essential to becoming an effective professional in one's own or in foreign natural resource professions.

INTRODUCTION

Natural resource management in North America and the western world has been a male profession dominated by traditional masculine gender attitudes, assumptions, and role models. Young initiates to the professions of forestry, wildlife or range management must be successful in educational rites of passage that select people for attributes identified as masculine in western society (viz., the hard, macho-sciences of math, chemistry, economics), more than for academic abilities in history, literature, or feelings toward the resources to be managed. Toughness in physical and intellectual matters is highly esteemed. Discussion of feelings about terminating plant and animal life in the line of duty or personal/professional uncertainties are rarely encouraged or tolerated. Feelings are not an above-board,

legitimate part of professional decision-making norms. Feelings, we are told, pervert objectivity and are suspect. A good professional focuses on techniques of manipulating the external environment while controlling self. The toughness and logical consistency of hard-science, economics, and professional tradition become the dominant management guide and behavioral norm.

In the last decade women and attitudes/values associated (in the western world) with feminine gender have become established in North America and European natural management. But males and traditional masculine gender values still dominate resource management professions and agencies (like the U.S. Forest Service) in much of the western world and other nations. Women and men who try to influence their own and foreign natural resource management cultures, should be sensitive to the gender biases of these societies and their natural resource management professions.

In this paper I would like to: 1) identify masculine/feminine gender labeling in natural resource management, 2) present some personal and general examples of how feminine gender labeling of professional attitudes and behavior are associated with low status, and 3) close with a plea for women professionals to guard against assuming it's their sexual personhood that's under attack when male peers reject some of their feminine-gender attitudes about the land or their clients. If one tends to take criticism of their professional ideas as rejection of the sexual, ethnic, religions, etc. aspects of their personhood, alienation is often the reward. Learning to accept criticism less personally is a difficult lesson for men or women, but must be learned if individuals and groups of professionals are to mature as healthy, productive people.

Let's turn now to examples of masculine/feminine gender labeling in natural resource management.

#### MASCULINE/FEMININE POLARITIES IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In western society both male/female sexuality and masculine/feminine gender poles are losing their rigid distinctiveness. A couple of generations ago sexual distinctions based on hair-length, dress, use of perfumes, or occupational roles made it easier to identify men and women than today. With glandular engineering, it's now possible to convert from male to female. But that's sexuality. This paper addresses gender differences.

Like once clear sexuality distinctions, gender polarities are also becoming less rigid. Recognizing the following masculine/feminine gender polarities as evolving generalities of western cultures (Sargent 1980), let's define them as:

<u>Feminine Gender Pole</u>	<u>Masculine Gender Pole</u>
1. Physical softness, gentleness.	1. Physical toughness.
2. Emotional sensitivity with reliance on intuition and feelings.	2. Mental and intellectual toughness, with objective



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|   | rationality highly esteemed;<br>feelings are suspect in<br>professional matters.                          |
| 3. Sensitive to and desire for<br>mutual supportive relationships;<br>socially sensitive and<br>responsive. | 3. Desire for power, domination;<br>more selfish and insensitive<br>to other's needs and<br>dependencies. |
| 4. Best suited for soft sciences and<br>liberal arts.   | 4. Best suited for hard science,<br>business management, law,<br>etc.                                     |

These gender attributes deal not only with human traits that label one feminine or masculine. They operate to label masculine/feminineness of direction, our physical/natural environment, colors, or professional management beliefs and styles.

Is there any question whether the masculine pole be placed to the right or left column in the above table? Our right hand is associated with rational control, order and status (viz., is masculine). Left hand is mysterious, mystical, suspect and often labelled feminine. Sun and moon, cat and wolf are genderized. Nature is mother--a source of goodness to be taken (and often whimsically withheld by "the forces of nature.") Nature (e.g., virgin forests) are often seen as raw material to manipulate, manage (control) and prove oneself (Dinnerstein 1976, Gray 1979, Griffin 1978). The traditional (masculine) forester role model was achieved by having our rational intellectual prowess (our will) dominate our emotions and other weaker aspects of our "human nature." By strength of will power over physical and emotional weakness, we were to master/ control ourselves, our logger and recreational clients, and the land around us. Dominance and control (not mutuality, support and relationship) are the traditionally respected thought and management styles.

The above observations are general illustrations and examples, based on personal experience; they are not well supported or rejected by research. We've just begun to think about these gender concepts and have yet to establish their empirical validity. Thus many of my observations here are personal and intuitive (i.e., feminine and thus suspect). This is especially true of the next section.

#### THE GENDER EDUCATION OF A JUNIOR FORESTER--ROGUE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST (1961-64)

Much confusion and pain in my early career resulted from naivete of the gender/status attributes of professional attitudes and roles in forestry and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Learning to identify and cope with gender/status labeling was a major part of my informal education during the first 5 years out in the "real world."

I joined the USFS in southern Oregon in 1961 in the good ol' days: when men were men and multiple use was timber management with some bother-

some recreation and watershed constraints. High status/masculine roles were in timber sale layout/administration and in fire control. Hunting, drinking and poker were the high status/masculine extracurricular activities.

As a relatively intelligent, enthusiastic, hard-working professional and single-male, I was successful in both professional and off-job roles. The first two years in the USFS, I was triple-A rated and identified as a "comer" in the outfit (a label rich in symbolic masculine imagery). Successful and content, my education about feminine gender labeling in the USFS and forestry profession was yet to start. But then I became involved in outdoor recreation and my life became more complex and conflicting. I no longer comfortably "fit in" with my agency and my profession.

The shock of this career transition occurred the first morning I switched into recreation. Waiting to pull onto the Crater Lake highway on recreation patrol, a senior forester in my peer group opened the ranger station window and waved a secretary's white handkerchief bye-bye at me. In a sing-song, female voice he called, "Have a nice day in the forest, Jimmy. Take care of those California tourists and bird watchers." As I hit second gear, trying to escape this biting humor, the final words were, "...and don't forget to wash the potatoe salad off the picnic tables before you come home." Driving up the highway with a hot neck, a realization slammed me in the stomach that I had suddenly and unexpectedly entered another dimension of professional reality. Things were no longer to be the same at the ranger station.

Involved in recreation on a timber district in 1963, I found myself increasingly at cross-purposes with peers that I had formally little with which to disagree. I challenged their attitudes and behavior toward recreational resources, landscape values, and recreation visitors. They judged my dealings with logger and recreational clients as too soft or "theory Y" (McGregor 1960). Newly married, I discovered other relationships more rewarding than hunting and drinking with the boys. My peers wondered what had become of me. At times, I wondered also.

I fit into the USFS and my profession less and less. I was becoming alienated from an organization and a forester image in which I was once secure and successful. So I retreated back to a comfortable place to regroup; I took a year's leave of absence and returned to school to pursue a master's degree. To my surprise, I was successful in graduate school and never left.

If I were a woman, I would have attributed much alienation with the USFS and my forestry profession as sexual harassment. Much conflict I experienced internally (as my traditional forester images clashed within the evolving me) and much conflict I experienced externally (with professional peers) had masculine/feminine connotations. But the self and peer harassment was of the gender-type, not sexual.

## ON BEING A SENSITIVE ALIEN IN "FOREIGN" CULTURES

Since my early days in the forester and USFS culture, I've learned to approach new professional groups as an alien. Upon entering these groups, I remind myself of my naivete to their cultural and communication systems. I realize they are foreign to me, be they the U.S., New Zealand, or Zambian Forest Service. Thus, these agencies are approached softly, with all my antennae out--probing, searching, learning.

If one fails to realize one is an alien in entering natural resource agencies, it's easy to become alienated by them. If one doesn't approach these groups as a sensitive student, willing and able to learn their ways of viewing and responding to the world, it's easy to become alienated by their "strange ways." And it's easy to assume it is us as persons being rejected, rather than our ideas or ineptitude in deciphering their cultural codes and communication systems.

This is quite a revelation for a technically educated forester. I was trained to be aware of the variety and complexities of natural ecosystems, but allowed to remain naive and simplistic about human social systems. I once thought fact and logic ruled professional lives. I did not realize how potent was our cultural imagery--both general culture and professional subcultural imagery. Understanding/appreciating feminine imagery is an important part of being effective in the U.S., New Zealand, or Zambian Forest Service.

Regardless of one's sex, trying to promote outdoor recreation, landscape management, or concern for songbirds to American or New Zealand foresters will be met with judgements that your concerns are feminine gender associated. For recreation, landscape and songbird management are often perceived as:

- 1) heavily emotional-based;
- 2) lacking in hard science and economic value support;
- 3) likely to threaten manager control;
- 4) and deal with fringe, luxury, fun-and-game aspects of resource management.

Your "feminine" management concerns will consciously or subconsciously be compared with timber management or fire control. They are traditional and masculine:

- 1) they're based on hard science and data;
- 2) their outputs have explicit, measurable dollar value, generated by competitive market system;
- 3) tough management decisions, (like killing trees) are required--best done with masculine fiber and suppressed emotions.

Consider some other examples of feminine labeling in resource management tribes.

Why is it that staff positions traditionally have less prestige than line positions? Which is more feminine, line or staff? Staff positions are supportive and nurturitive of line (masculine) roles. Line officers, in the traditional John Wayne style, were active, assertive and control-power oriented. This stereotype is becoming less valid with changes in respected management styles (Sargent 1980) and as the post-NEPA planning era increased dependency on staff support in agencies like the U.S. Forest Service (Cermak 1979). Fire bosses, district rangers and forest supervisors are more and more dependent on sophisticated staff support. But line officers are still generally the high prestige positions in resources agencies worldwide. If one is a woman staff person, one's position alone generally has feminine gender and lower status.

Listen to many laments about public involvement in resource issues and identify the feminine labels. Professionals often lose control with public involvement. People at hearings get too emotional. In a public involvement world, managers must build trust and supportive relationships with the public. It's not like the good ol' (masculine) days when the District Ranger was captain of the ship.

If one fails to realize this uniqueness of professional groups in North America or the world, it's easy for misunderstanding and alienation to grow. So it is critical for aliens to locate "native guides" when trying to understand and become integrated into "foreign" cultures like the U.S. or N.Z. Forest Service. They help translate and guide one through new, strange professional groups in one's own or in foreign countries. And these "native guides" can become mentors.

#### MENTORS AND KINDRED SPIRITS

Studies of successful men (Levinson et al. 1978, Schein 1978, Vaillant 1977) and women (Henning and Jardim 1977) all identify a mentor relationship as critical to good, successful personal career development. Mentors can play several roles in the development of young professionals: teacher, host/guide, role model, counselor, booster, and/or supervisor. It's the exception to find men or women who have evolved into healthy, productive professionals without having experienced a mentor relationship (Dalton, Thompson and Price 1977, Levinson et al. 1978).

To be a good mentor, one must have wisdom to offer a younger person and the desire to be nurturing/supportive. Being a mentor is largely a feminine gender role, and not surprisingly men are rarely ready to fill that role until after successful mid-life transitions at age 40 or so (Levinson et al. 1978). Inexperienced, technically-oriented, success-focused, insecure, self-oriented young adults rarely are ready or willing to be mentors. Old, alienated, self-centered professionals don't make good mentors, either. Mentors must have something to give and want to share it with others.

If you are a young man or woman professional, search for, find and cultivate mentor relationships. Mentors are critical in being guides and interpreters for young professionals understanding and adapting to "foreign" organizational cultures. And young people must recognize that they are entering unknown "foreign cultures" when joining the USFS, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Weyerhaeuser Company, the New Zealand Forest Service, or the Irish Department of Forestry and Wildlife. It's difficult to make technical/ professional contributions in your own or foreign societies if you are naive or insensitive to the secret codes and symbols, the power hierarchy, or the heritage/traditions of groups like the U.S. or N.Z. Forest Service. Guides and interpreters are needed support in these "foreign" cultures; they help one "learn the ropes," feel less alien (and become less alienated).

It may be more difficult for women to find mentors in male dominated natural resource management professionals and agencies. But the personal/ professional payoff is too high to not make the effort. There are men in their 40's and 50's that are ready and able to help. Endure the disappointments, frustration and effort required to find them. You, them, your profession and agencies (as well as the resource) will probably benefit from this effort. This is true of your own and other nations.

Now I've focused on mentor support relationships and slighted peer support. Kindred-spirits in one's peer group are a critical source of idea and ideals support. But young peers are often naive to the pace of change and how to successfully instigate it in an organization. One needs both peer and mentor support to develop and be effective in organizational cultures--in your native and in foreign cultures.

#### SOME CLOSING COMMENTS

To be effective in any profession, organization, or nation, one must understand the culture (i.e., understand the language and symbols, the power structure, the technology, the right-behavior). Part of this cultural education is an appreciation of the status and gender labels attached professional ideas, roles and management styles--and to understand how these professional attitudes and behavior are changing (Kennedy 1981).

Guides/translators are essential in helping newcomers quickly understand, adapt to, and become effective in new cultures. Mentors and sympathetic peers can fill such roles in professional life. Building such support relationships in your own and foreign cultures is well worth the time and effort.

For better or worse, women resource managers will probably have to settle for male mentors in the near future. Recognize that most men aren't ready to mentor young men or women until their mid-career years. At this stage of their lives men tend to be more at peace with their and other's feminine attitudes or behavior; and more comfortable with the feminine-support role of being a mentor. At least western men studied seem to



evolve that way (Levinson et al. 1978, Vaillant 1977). Women may experience similar and different stages in their professional career development (Gilligan 1979, Henning and Jardim 1977).

Male sex and masculine gender are dominant in North American and world natural resource professions. So female sex has designated women minority in these professions as change agents. If women professionals are of a staff specialty labeled feminine, believe in resource values and interpersonal management styles similarly labeled feminine, their change agent role is further enlarged. To resist the invitations of alienation associated with such an oft-burdensome change-agent role, one should seek out professional kindred spirits. Many of these support people will be male and cannot share a women's female sexuality. But many male professionals have shared rejection of their ideas and actions associated with the feminine gender. Men and women can support one another as you collaborate to be change agents in your own and other professional societies (Sargent 1980). And I think you, your support group and the land will be the better for it.

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SUCCESSFUL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
A Plus For Everyone

How many of you have ever felt offended by the "numbers game" or affirmative action "targets"? Since it may take "forever" to reach parity in the workforce, why not look at other factors that affect the success of affirmative action? And while we're at it, why not look at ways of enhancing the careers of all employees, not just the "target" groups?

I hope many of you reading this have also seen the slide-tape program "The Story of 'O'" by Rosabeth Moss Kanter which emphasizes the importance of numbers of different types of people in reducing tokenism. Relative numbers are important between the time a few different people enter a group and the time when the group has become a good mix of many different people. However, at the end of the slide-tape, Kanter cautions the audience against relying on numbers to solve all the problems involved in integration of socially different people into a group or organization. After reading her book, Men and Women of the Corporation, I can understand why we need to look elsewhere for answers to the challenge of accomplishing affirmative action.

At a time of reduced budgets and people, and an increased emphasis on productivity, how are we going to manage affirmative action? We will continue to receive numbers as targets for hiring and recruiting. Some Districts may even hire trainees and lower level technicians this year, and they will want at least some of these positions to be filled by women and minorities.

I think our organization needs specific direction that will help us maintain or retain our "recruits". Research supports the idea of a clear relationship between a complex organization and the actions and attitudes of the people who work in it. Organizations impact the people in them, and the people, in turn, reflect their situations in their behavior. Three factors can explain a large number of discrete, individual responses to organizations: opportunity for success, power to get things done or to make decisions, and relative numbers (proportions and social composition).

"Opportunity" refers to expectations and future prospects for mobility and/or promotions. I think our organization provides opportunities for many people—including women and minorities. However, we also have people with low opportunity (poor promotability, dead-end career, few challenging job situations, no recognition for doing a good job regardless of the sameness of tasks, etc.). These low-opportunity employees can greatly affect our productivity and our success or failure with an affirmative action program. These people—

- limit their own aspirations;
- devalue increasing responsibility (in themselves and others);
- seek satisfaction outside of work;
- are critical of high power people and the organization;
- channel grievances into griping rather than positive direct action;
- orient peer group (of other dead-end employees) toward protection of the status quo; and
- become resigned to staying put.

Do you know people that fit somewhere in this low-opportunity category? I've even heard people say that "There's always going to be people like that around -- 'retired on the job'" and that "They aren't doing much harm -- they still produce some work." But what this attitude doesn't recognize is that people like this also express some of the most conservative views of change, including affirmative action-type changes.

How can a person, when they're "stuck" themselves, give support to another person or group of people to "get ahead"? Maybe it's time to manage our existing workforce better and make the recruits, along with the "old timers", productive employees. Bridges between dead-end careers and open-ended careers aren't new -- we call them "Upward Mobility" positions. Career counselling isn't new either; we just don't do enough of it.

"Power" is a factor that refers to the capacity to mobilize resources. This often means understanding the politics or norms for doing business -- more than an individual's competence or the formal authority that accompanies a specific position.

We all know that there is an "informal" system that shadows formal rules and regulations. But, not everyone knows this "automatically" upon coming to work for the outfit. It is especially difficult for women and minorities to learn this "other" system and is, therefore, difficult for them to function well within the organization. Men find it easier to pass along informal, informational tidbits to their peers than to women or minorities. This tendency may be quite subconscious, but it is important since the informal system is one source of power in an organization.

Other sources of organizational power include:

- Job visibility (e.g. newness, organizational location, etc.);
- Relevance of function for problem-solving in the organization;
- Approval by high-status people;
- Mobility/promotability prospects of subordinates;
- Alliances with peers, superiors, and subordinates;
- Outstanding performance; and
- Formal authority.

The power I am describing is not necessarily power "over" someone or something; it is power within a person--power to be effective in any given situation. If people don't have access to such forms of power then they become powerless. The following examples of powerlessness apply to affirmative action problems:

1. The Staff responsible for an Affirmative Action Program can be powerless if they (a) have no formal authority; (b) are dependent on managers to implement the program; and/or (c) have their program ignored because managers don't see it as relevant to "hard", primary targets.

2. Women are powerless if (a) they aren't allowed to take risks; (b) their authority is undercut; and/or (c) their sphere of influence and autonomous decision-making is limited.

Powerlessness is a downward cycle--it is not only the relative power of the individual, but also the behavior and feeling of powerlessness of those above and below the individual.



Mobile or promotable supervisors are likely to behave like "good" leaders because of their own opportunity to succeed. Promotable supervisors are more likely to adopt a participatory style in which they share information, delegate authority, train subordinates for more responsibility, and allow latitude and autonomy in the actions of their employees.

Unpromotable supervisors, in contrast, may try to retain control and restrict opportunities for their subordinates. The current (dead-end) job is their only arena of power, and they anticipate no growth or improvement. They tend to behave in rigid, authoritarian ways characteristic of the powerless.

Haven't you heard of some co-op student or other "new" employee who "just didn't work out"? Have you considered the idea that the employee might be with the agency now, as a valuable asset, if they had had a different supervisor? Shouldn't the Forest Service be looking at who our first line supervisors are? Who supervises the co-op students or professional trainees? If we want effective, competent employees (future and present), then we must provide the best supervisors possible!

When people feel more autonomous and act more participatory, they take more effective actions and more work is accomplished. Powerlessness breeds such things as:

- rules-mindedness;
- dominating and controlling behavior; and
- territoriality and jealousy.

This phenomenon of powerlessness helps explain some of the old cliches about women's "lack of potential" for organizational leadership ("no one wants to work for a woman"; "women are too rigid and controlling"; "women are too picky"; etc.). Anyone in a powerless management situation could have such things said about them, not just women. No one wants to work for . . . a powerless person!

The person's downward, powerless spiral could possibly be broken by increasing their opportunities and their autonomy, rather than continuing to punish them for their ineffectiveness, thus, reinforcing their powerless state of mind.

Just a short review of the third variable which impacts people in an organization. This factor of "relative numbers" takes into consideration how many people there are of what relevant social types in various parts of the organization. For example, how many women professionals there are on particular Ranger Districts. It may be necessary for us to consider different management practices when hiring women and minorities -- in order to counteract the negative effects of low proportions of these people in the organization. Perhaps we should not disperse co-op and trainee positions across a Forest. Maybe all these new employees could go on one or two Districts that exhibit the capability of integrating such employees; that employ good supervisors. Maybe there are other ways of "doing business".

I think that it is going to take some time to get a "proper" mix; but until that mix occurs, we can try other means of improving the effectiveness of employees and the success of our Affirmative Action Program.

Remember -- "Women's Issues" have been around a long time; so have other civil rights issues. These issues aren't going to be resolved in the business world as long as women and/or minorities are perceived as "different" by managers.

Given the same organizational factors of opportunity, power, and relative numbers, women and men are going to act and react very much the same. When one or more of the factors is different for a woman (or a minority), her response will be different from a man's. The same can be said if one man lacks the power or opportunity that most men have; he will have a different response to the organization. Women in non-traditional roles already experience one factor that is different from what most men experience -- numbers. Add to that low opportunity and/or power (and maybe a powerless, controlling supervisor) and a real disparity will exist!

Since "balancing" the numbers may take too long to begin retaining recruits and rejuvenating "dead-end careers", we should emphasize the other two factors -- opportunity and power. This emphasis can benefit everyone. As a result, managers, and the service as a whole, will benefit from a more effective workforce.

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(Adapted from a presentation given to the Ranger-Staff Team on the Sierra N.F. by Susan L. Odell, District Ranger, Mariposa R.D., fall 1981.)

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## Wildland Fire Fighting

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Fire Suppression Crew

I have worked four years within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service as a wildland fire fighter. Three of those years were spent on what is known in the Forest Service as a Category 1 crew -- an Inter-Regional Fire Suppression Crew (IR crew). Our duty station is in the Cascade Mountains of Washington state, but our role as a shared federal resource requires us to fly all over the country to suppress wildland fires.

The IR crew consists of 20 people who live and work together during the forest fire season, five or six



months out of the year. Crew members must be trained and knowledgeable in diverse types of vegetation, terrain, climate, weather, fire suppression methods and fire behavior tactics. The demands of being away from our duty station most of the time, the intensity of interpersonal interaction and the varied job duties add to the dynamics of a team striving to work together efficiently, safely and harmoniously.

Though structural fire fighting and wildland fire fighting are very different, the issues of women in nontraditional jobs are common ones. So many of my experiences are transferable directly to women in structural fire fighting roles.

What makes a good fire fighter? The primary concern expressed by most people seems to be physical — standards and abilities. It is certain that good physical condition and a certain degree of muscular strength are essential for a fire fighter, but the real questions are:

- How much physical strength?
- What kind of physical strength?
- What is "job related"? and
- How can the strength that is deemed necessary be evaluated?

The physical admission requirements of the Forest Service for employment as a fire fighter are minimal, but the on-the-job physical requirements are substantial and varied. At fires, crews work an average shift of 16 hours, often 20 to 30 hours, and sometimes as long as 45 hours. Work is done in terrain that is too rough for machinery, frequently at elevations of 8,000 to 10,000 feet. We have worked for as many as 32 days without returning to home

base. We have hiked 19 miles in the rain with 60-pound packs. In short, the physical, emotional and mental demands are heavy.

I believe the issue of pure physical strength is overemphasized. Physical condition is important, but there are other factors that play dominant roles. *Motivation* is a key issue, one that most people overlook and do not know how to assess. The reality is that motivation often will get you through when nothing else will.

Most women in nontraditional occupations are highly motivated — more motivated, in fact, than their male counterparts because they have to work harder to achieve the same positions and acceptance. Women have to prove themselves twice: once as a woman (for all womankind) and again as an individual performing a job. Stamina and self-pacing also play important roles for a good worker. All the muscle in the world will do no good if there is not enough motivation and understanding to support it. Contrary to popular belief, it is not necessary to be a "Superwoman" to be a good female fire fighter.


Not every woman can or wants to do this job; nor can or does every man. But there are women who are competent and who want to be fire fighters. Good and thorough recruitment will facilitate better production and efficiency for all employees, male and female alike. Good recruitment can save time, money and training resources in the long run. It is necessary for the fire service to look harder to find qualified women. Many women have not been aware that these jobs are available to them, although recent increased exposure has diminished the impact of this problem. It is advantageous to have women fire fighters recruit other women, because a man cannot describe what it is like to be a female fire fighter, however detailed a job description he provides. Each potential employee should be informed about all aspects of the job, not just hours, benefits and salary. Conscientious recruitment can enhance the overall operation of any agency.

There are many sources for hesitation in accepting women in the fire service. Such questions as, "Is she qualified?" "Can she do the job?" "Does she belong here?" "Do we want her here?" exist, and it is better

that they be asked honestly than to bury them beneath the surface. These issues are far too complicated individually to be addressed in detail here. Every man and woman in this society has perceptions of what is Right, Good and Proper. Some of these perceptions must be re-evaluated in order to break from the confines of limited permissible words, actions and thoughts which might be considered appropriate for either sex.

One important question is, "Are we asking women to be good *male* fire fighters?" A person does not need to be masculine to be a good fire fighter. The humorous image of the macho, obscene, crass, belching fire fighter is not a necessary image, either for men or women. The image of strength and courage is important to male fire fighters, and the entrance of women fire fighters is perceived by men in the job as a threat to their masculine image and role. Accepting a woman who is doing a "man's job," and doing it well, is difficult. But it must be done. Individuals must be seen as workers, not as men or women.

The same characteristics and traits, that always have made a good fire fighter, continue to be important and should be recognized openly — intelligence, motivation, ability to get along with others, an understanding of the job, willingness to learn (at any age), competence (physical, mental and emotional) and caring. Individually, everyone has assets that are unique and that provide for a healthy, well rounded, productive individual. A varied mixture of such individuals provides a healthy, well rounded, productive organization.

In short, one need not be masculine to be a good fire fighter. Standards need not be lowered, they simply must be fair and relevant. But we must look more carefully at current standards and expectations — entrance examinations, physical requirements, the types of people sought, the methods for recruiting them, the positions women are "permitted" to hold and the kinds of advancement that are available. All these and other factors must be examined and analyzed. It is not a question of "putting women where they will do no harm." Women must be afforded the genuine opportunity to prove themselves to their fullest potential. 

## SURVIVING AS A WOMAN ON THE JOB

Even if you read only one book this year, be sure it's Betty Harragan's Games Mother Never Taught You.<sup>\*</sup> In a straightforward and often humorous way, this book deals specifically with information and skills women need to succeed at a job. The book is much more generally relevant than its subtitle (Corporate Gamesmanship for Women) indicates. Harragan's central argument is that there are a lot of things that boys learn as they grow up that girls don't learn, and many of these things apply to the male-dominated business world. As a result, most working women have some serious misconceptions and handicaps on the job. Boys' games involve rules, strategies, teams, coordination, competition, and hierarchies. All this is later augmented for many, if not most, men by team sports involvement and, for some, military training. Girls' games -- jumping rope, serving "tea", etc. -- may sometimes involve complicated behavior patterns but lack other essential elements that prepare them for the real working world. For example, when I was small, my brothers, their friends and I frequently played a "cowboy" game that principally involved a bad guy in the jail (our tool shed), a sheriff and posse, and the other bad guys who came to rescue their comrade. While the boys' roles often changed, I was always the jailer -- a job that simply consisted of standing by the door during all the action. I once argued vociferously to be the sheriff and was reluctantly permitted to play that part. In the crunch, however, I had no idea what to do -- the bad guy got away and my posse was pretty angry with me. For a while I went back to being the jailer but then stopped playing entirely because the game seemed so stupid and unfair. This is similar to Harragan's analogy of women being let onto the playing field (the job) but not having been told the rules. They might be in great shape (technically competent) and work very hard, but if they don't understand the rules (or, more commonly, don't realize that there are rules), they won't win or even come close. Her point is that you don't have to like the rules or agree with them, but you must know what they are in order to work effectively at the job, or to work toward ultimately changing the rules. You must play by the rules. You can't just walk into the middle of a game (the work situation) and make up a new set of rules. The working world is a highly structured system developed, over many years, from the unique set of experiences that only men are subject to. If women become aware of these rules, they can compete effectively. If not, they will be beaten down; they'll lose and blame the system, not understanding that all their technical competence, hard work, and earnestness are only a part of the necessary skills for job success. Although, as Harragan points out, it is certainly to the advantage of men, who are competing for the same jobs, not to inform women of the rules, these rules are such second-nature to most men that they are not consciously aware of them. It never really occurs to them that most women don't know them. Men, assuming that women know these things, conclude, from women's behavior, that women are not intellectually or temperamentally suited to the workplace.\*\*

<sup>\*</sup> 1977, Warner Books, paperback, 399 pages, \$2.50

<sup>\*\*</sup> A man who read an earlier draft of this paper commented that men don't even discuss these things with each other. Though men foul up on the job less often, when they do, other men watch them "go down in flames" without providing helpful advice. While fundamental changes (i.e., growing sisterhood) in women's relationships have been fostered by the women's movement, men's relationships with each other remain competitive. So there's much to be said for the efforts of Harragan and others like her who are trying to establish a more communicative, helpful, and humane model of interpersonal relationships in the workplace.



In determining how to tell you about this book, I found it hard to decide which of the points would best illustrate the value of this book. I finally decided to go at it from a personal perspective and tell you about some things that had particular relevance to my own experience (I should say, lack of experience) and which I found particularly illuminating.

According to Games, "Human nature or no, absolute deference to the authority invested in your immediate boss is the undeviating number one rule of the game." This means that regardless of the competence of your immediate superior, he is your boss and must be deferred to. You must first recognize that each working person has one boss and that this is a fixed element of a job. The next thing that you must recognize is that the boss's job exists independently of him and that you are, in fact, deferring to his position, not his personality, experience, competence, or whatever. He has "unquestioned authority." As Harragan puts it, "Your immediate boss's power over you derives from the rank of the position, not the person." I found this information most thought-provoking. In my experience, what women (including myself) have done is find out who the boss is, evaluate his competence, and then decide whether or not to pay any attention to him. They do not recognize the innate nature of the hierarchy or the one-person, one-boss rule. Regardless of the competence of your boss, you must develop a good working relationship, keeping him informed, for example, of your work and activities, never going around him to higher levels of authority in a way that puts him in an embarrassing state of ignorance.

A second important thing to know is that you don't define your job. Like the position of the boss, your position or job exists as a separate entity from yourself and has specific requirements and duties that must be carried out. You are hired to handle specific responsibilities and that's all. You are expected to do whatever job is assigned and do it as well as possible. You must first "cover your base." If certain parts of your job are tedious or beneath your talents, you must still do them if you want to have that particular job (and do them well if you want to succeed and move on to the next level). If you'd like to use your talents in some other way, either do it in addition to doing the basic job well, work to change your job description, seek a promotion or transfer, or find another job.

There is a close link between the deference to the boss and the job definition situation. I know several women, totally ignorant of these rules, who have made a near (or actual) disaster of their job situations. Two women I know took jobs that they found to be exceedingly boring and were, they felt (quite justifiably), a waste of their talents and energies. They both felt that they could do something more useful for their agencies as a whole. Without consulting their supervisors, and assuming that they would approve of the change in direction, the women initiated a project (a newsletter) that did, in the end, turn out to be very successful and was continued for many years. That venture did not, however, bode well for the future advancement of either woman. As Harragan says, what an agency or institution wants, for most positions, is disciplined followers, not self-endowed leaders. Not only did these women not recognize and consult their supervisors, they redefined their jobs, erroneously thinking that the job is tailored to the person, not the other way around. To survive and succeed, Harragan advises, find out what the basics of your job are and do them well. If you have energy for other activities, fine, do them too. For example, extensive and thorough committee work might be valuable for your agency or institution as a whole, but if it's not a significant part of your job description and detracts from your basic duties, as

perceived by your supervisor, it's icing on what might be a very unstable cake.

It seems to me that feminist activities should perhaps be viewed in this perspective. If you do your job well and are not sidetracked from it, feminist activities and involvement will not be viewed as a threat or a conflict of interest and will probably have a more favorable impact.

Another point that I found particularly illuminating is that on-the-job training is expected when you take a new job or promotion. While there are probably some prerequisites for a given job, such as specific skills or academic credentials, a certain period of time is allotted for development into the position. You are not expected, and in fact should not, "hit the ground running" on the first day, in terms of work as you knew it before. Harragan reiterates this point regularly in her "Strategies" column in Savvy magazine. Take time to assess the situation. Learn who is who and what is what before burying yourself in the newly appropriate duties.

Women frequently don't take advantage of this "training period" because they erroneously believe that they are expected to know how to do a job well when they take it. This inhibits them from applying for a job where they could continue their professional development. Most women hold the misconception that management, or science, or research, is a definable craft which one must be skilled in before getting a job, just as typing is a prerequisite for a secretary. Such skills are not "things." They are a developmental process, the components of which must be learned on the job. Women have similar misconceptions about promotions. According to Harragan, some women erroneously believe that a prerequisite for promotion is prior demonstration that they know how to do the work. Say Harragan, "Mobility and promotions in the male hierarchy are on-the-job training experiences. To judge your own qualifications for promotion and transfer, look at the job you have. If your performance has been consistently rated excellent or superior, you have mastered the work and are fully qualified for the next promotional opportunity."

There are countless bits of wisdom in this book that shed light on job aspects that most women have never considered. Many may seem trivial, stupid, or irrelevant from our perspective of simply wanting to do a job well, but this information pretty accurately reflects the system as it is, rather than the way we often think it ought to be. If you are like me and the many other women I know who've read this book, you will finish it much less naive and perhaps considerably more angry than when you started it.

Molly Stock  
Associate Professor  
Department of Forest Resources  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, Idaho 83843

REACTIONS FROM A NETWORK MEMBER

(Published in the Nov.-Dec. 1981 issue)

"I really enjoy the newsletter, but in reading some of the letters, etc., I feel like 'us' against 'them'. I must admit that if I hadn't gotten a lot of support from many of my male co-workers, things would have been rough. Right now I'm having some hassles with my supervisor -- he's rather patronizing and inconsiderate of me and my co-workers. Believe me, we all stick together.

"I may be out in left field, but I think I've been accepted by 98% of my co-workers -- the other 2% are either too macho or too conservative to matter, if that makes sense. I guess what I'm saying is that I feel most women should be careful not to be overbearing because they may alienate friends in the ranks. I find many of my guy friends give me respect, support, and advice if I sit down and talk things out with them.

"I grew up in Region 4 and worked temporarily as a forestry tech. until I got my permanent position in Region 6 as a forester at the PNW Experiment Station. Region 4 is a conservative area -- at least in this part of the country. Region 6 is a bit more progressive, but I still had my ups and downs. Now I'm back in Region 4 as a forester....it's still 'conservative'.

"I'd appreciate...comments...from other network members."

## RESPONSE TO REACTIONS FROM A NETWORK MEMBER

I am not sure exactly what this network member is getting at so my response may not be on target.

I think all of us get support from our male peers, friends, and supervisors from time to time. None of the women I work with or come into contact with are "anti-male" so to speak or unsupportive of men or women in general. When we are outspoken about the sexism in the organization or the sexist attitudes and/or behaviors that some of us constantly face from certain men I still don't see it as us against them. However, that is the way that many interpret our actions, and in a lot of cases this type of phraseology gets laid on us any time we speak out critically regarding sexism issues.

I'm not sure what the word overbearing means in this context, but I get an uneasy feeling when I see these types of adjectives. We have to be careful we aren't falling into the double standard trap of accepting the label of overbearing, pushy, or aggressive when those attributes for men are considered positive. When aggressive is used to describe men, it is positive in that use. Overbearing or pushy for women would be replaced with powerful, self-confident, highly motivated, fast tracker, etc. for men. If coworkers, and friends are alienated by self-confidence, motivation, power, etc. then my feeling is so be it. However, if they have been alienated because they have been verbally attacked, especially in front of others, because their values don't coincide with ours or their sexist behavior has finally gotten to us or whatever, then that is a different story.

I think we should always be taking the approach of sitting down and talking things out when conflicts or differences of opinions arise. Unfortunately when the disagreement revolves around civil rights or sexism issues resolution can be difficult to come by. Throughout my Forest Service career I have had tremendous support and understanding from many men regarding many issues, even those involving sexism in the organization. But there is just nothing as supportive as a woman support friend. She can feel, really feel what my frustration, disappointment, anger or whatever is; a man can't really do that, he can only understand. In some cases that is adequate; in others it's not.

One of our purposes in starting up this newsletter was for it to serve as a support vehicle for women, as well as a forum for venting frustrations of working in a white male semi-militaristic organization. Therefore, at times it is natural that readers may interpret the us against them syndrome.

My goal of seeing women represented at all levels in the F.S. organization is only going to be realized if we can all survive the rough spots and hang tough while we progress in the organization. Since women are still a novelty in many positions most of us are always going to be having those rough spots. We all have our ups and downs regardless of what Region we are in. Progressive Regions have just as many sexists as conservative Regions, even though their Civil Rights Program may be more progressive. Combating sexism in the organization will never be "easy", but it has to part of the job for those of us who are willing to stick it out so that we can eventually affect some change in the organization. In doing this we will always be vulnerable for the we versus they phraseology.



AND ANOTHER RESPONSE...

I am currently working for the USFS. . .on the Colville National Forest. I too have had pretty good cooperation from male and female peers and superiors all through my career, both in my university career and with the USFS. I may have had to fight a little harder because I'm a woman, but that bit of extra determination usually served to let people, male and female alike, know that I was serious, and then all sorts of doors opened up!

This is not to say that unnecessary obstacles don't exist. They do! But in my experience, a militant or overbearing attitude does not break them down, rather, it forces people to be defensive and throw more obstacles in our way.

Most "movements" to get a heretofore segment of society recognized go through a militant stage. It's often necessary. I think the women's movement is past that stage. Let's just go to work now on getting where we deserve to be in job and pay status through the same avenues available to our male co-workers! After all, we work with them, for them, and they for us. We need their help as much as much as they need ours!

JAO

QUESTION: If one does not have a BS in forestry and wants to get into that field, is the best strategy a second BS or a masters degree?

In my opinion pursuing another BS degree is not the best way to get into forestry. Most second BS degrees take two years and do not have the status of a graduate diploma.

Utah State University and other schools have forestry masters programs designed for people with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines. If a person has basic chemistry, biology, ecology, calculus, and statistics prerequisites, USU's program takes two years; this includes a 3 credit masters-paper (much less hassle than a standard thesis). The first year of this program is mostly senior-level forestry courses, that qualify one as a forester in federal employment. The second year is 45 credits of graduate coursework in a program developed by students and their advisors. We've had students with BA's in oriental philosophy, education, photography, and BS's in agronomy or engineering do well and grow in this program. In masters programs like this, one qualifies as a forester, takes no longer than to acquire another BS degree, has the status of a masters degree, and participates in a much more exciting and flexible coursework program. Check around, you'll find accredited forestry schools with such programs.

For those interested in US Forest Service employment, one can just become a non-degree undergraduate student for two or three quarters. That's often all it takes to accumulate the right type and credits to meet the forester classification: 30 semester hours in three areas of 1) renewable resource management, 2) forest biology, and 3) forest resource measurements (with at least 8 credits in each area). One can usually do this much sooner

all the requirements of a BS in forestry.

This is my opinion after a decade of advising forestry students.

Prof. Jim Kennedy  
Forest Resources Dept.  
Utah State University  
Logan, UT 84322

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QUESTION: Do you know of "Women in Natural Resources" groups on campus or have any suggestions for organizing such a group?

In response to the question about organizing a "Women in Natural Resources" group on campus, Humboldt State University had such a group. They were informal sessions, sometimes with films or guest speakers, but it was mainly a support group for the women in all natural resource sections. We used each other as sounding boards when there were problems with school or work.

The group did have problems in that a session could end up being a bitch session and those get boring. This was my major concern for the group, but on the average, I gained from it.

The Career Development Center and/or the Counseling Center at Humboldt State would be able to answer questions such as whether the group still exists and if it does, who to contact. Humboldt State University is located in Arcata, California 95521. Career Development Center phone number is (707) 826-4175.

My name is Debby Shepherd and I can be contacted if more information might be helpful. (I graduated from Humboldt in March 1981 in forestry.)  
My address: Clackamas Ranger District (503) 834-2275 (office)  
61431 E. Hwy 224 (503) 834-2328 (home)  
Estacada, Oregon 97023

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MaryAnne Steimle suggests contacting Dean Danial Trainer at the University of Wisconsin. His address is: University of Wisconsin - S.P.  
College of Natural Resources  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Trainer should be helpful in directing interested persons to the people who wanted to organize a "Women in Natural Resources" group at Stevens Point.

♂ MALE (all)  
 ♀ ANGLO FEMALE  
 M♀ MINORITY FEMALE

COMPARISONS OF MALES/FEMALES IN SPECIFIC SERIES (F.Y. 1981) \*  
 IN THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

	FORESTERS 460			FOR. TECHS. 462			W. BIOLOGISTS 486			ENGINEERS 810			ENGR. TECHS. 802			LANDS. ARCHS. 807			SOIL SCIENTISTS 470			RANGE CONS. 454			HYDROLOGY 1315		
	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀	♂	♀	M♀
REGION 1	518	47	1	781	54	3	38	6	0	146	9	0	333	32	1	11	3	0	22	1	0	40	7	0	19	1	0
REGION 5	807	61	2	2054	180	25	63	26	1	230	16	8	374	46	10	49	6	1	39	7	1	38	11	0	49	5	0
REGION 6	1013	101	6	1653	232	13	50	20	2	274	6	6	703	74	9	34	7	0	40	8	0	63	7	2	45	4	1
REGION 10	150	4	0	38	4	1	21	3	0	62	2	0	49	0	2	11	4	0	21	2	0	0	0	0	11	1	0

PERCENTAGES

	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
REGION 1	92%	8%	93%	7%	86%	14%	94%	6%	90%	10%	79%	21%	96%	4%	85%	15%	95%	5%		
REGION 5	93%	7%	91%	9%	70%	30%	91%	9%	87%	13%	87%	13%	83%	17%	72%	22%	91%	9%		
REGION 6	90%	10%	87%	13%	64%	31%	96%	4%	87%	13%	83%	17%	83%	17%	88%	12%	90%	10%		
REGION 10	98%	2%	89%	11%	88%	12%	97%	3%	96%	4%	74%	26%	92%	8%	-	-	92%	8%		

\* These statistics update and amend those published in the Nov.-Dec. 1981 newsletter.



Reply to: 1720 Publication Notification

Date: January 28, 1982

Subject: Civil Rights Update Activities

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Directors,  
and WO Staff

\* Comparative Statistics on Employment  
of Women, Service-wide  
1977-1981

\*\* All Permanent Employees

1977			1981		
On Board			On Board		
<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>
31,665	7,504	23.6	37,942	11,006	29
Professional			Professional		
<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>
9,052	249	3	11,539	1,044	9
Administrative/Technical			Administrative/Technical		
<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>%</u>
13,803	1,644	12	17,486	3,883	22

Percentage Increase of Women  
1981 Over 1977

On Board	5.4%
Professional	6.0%
Administrative/Technical	10.0%

\* Data taken from Semi-Annual Report.

\*\* Includes permanent full-time; permanent part-time; permanent intermittent;  
and permanent alternators.



## Women Still Draw Unequal Pay, US Statistics Show

By Drew Von Bergen  
United Press International

Washington -- The highest paid men in America last year were aerospace and astronautical engineers while women fared best as operations and systems researchers and analysts -- but women continued to earn significantly less than men, the Labor Department said Saturday.

Data compiled by the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed women's earnings were generally much lower than men's even in the same occupation.

The highest median salary listed for men was \$197 a week more than the highest for women and even in the same profession women earned less than men. The median is midway between the highest and the lowest.

The bureau said that as lawyers, women earned only 71 percent of men's salaries and as doctors 81 percent. The pay was closest among nurses, dietitians and therapists, with women earning 94.7 percent of what men did, and among postal clerks, with women earned 93.9 percent of men's salaries.

The bureau said the earnings rating covers wage and salary paid workers employed 35 hours a week or more, and thus excludes self-employed individuals such as some physicians and attorneys.

Aerospace and astronautical engineers led the male category with a median weekly salary of \$619 -- \$30 more than for the second-place occupation of stock and bond sales agents.

For women, the operations and systems researchers and analysts had a median weekly salary of \$422 -- \$2 more than computer systems analysts. Occupations in the field of education also were among the highest paying for women.

Seven of the 20 best paying jobs for men in 1981 were in the engineering field, ranging from \$507 weekly for civil engineers to the top paying aerospace engineers.

For women, the top 20 occupations and pay were: operations and systems researchers and analysts, \$422; computer systems analysts, \$420; lawyers, \$407; physicians, dentists and related practitioners, \$401; social scientists, \$391; college and university teachers, \$389; postal clerks, \$382; engineers, \$371; ticket, station and express agents, \$370; elementary and secondary school administrators, \$363.



## American Working Women's Supply Co.™

P.O. BOX 100/ DEER PARK, NEW YORK 11729 / TELEPHONE 516 667-6266

Contact: Kaye Sherry Hirsh

For immediate release

As increasing numbers of women enter the nontraditional trades and become do-it-yourselfers around their homes, American Working Women's Supply Co. enters its fourth year of providing protective clothing and equipment designed specifically for women. The retail mail order company began in 1979 with a woman-sized version of a basic, all-purpose work glove and has developed a selection of work products for women: work gloves, safety shoes and boots, workshirts, leather aprons and books.

Founder of the company, Kaye Sherry Hirsh, had searched retail stores for two years for a pair of small, heavy-duty work gloves to wear while cutting wood on her upstate New York property. Finding none available, Ms. Hirsh contacted industrial glove manufacturers and found the glove she wanted. She found, also, that manufacturers' minimum order requirements would give her more gloves than she could wear out in a few lifetimes, and on the theory that other women may have searched in vain for a good pair of work gloves to fit them, American Working Women's Supply Co. was started.

The company has heard from women throughout the U.S. and Canada who work in jobs and professions as diverse as carpentry and construction, ranching and farming, railroading, boat building, forestry, marine biology and commercial fishing, utility installation, welding, landscaping and zookeeping. And from women who grow their own food, cut wood for their woodstoves, and build their own cabins and houses. They ask for everything from hard hats to steel-toed boots, but in that first year they bought 900 pairs of women's work gloves.

As the first retail business specializing in serving the needs of this new breed of working women, the goal of American Working Women's Supply Co. is to provide a catalog offering a complete selection of protective clothing and equipment for women. Their new catalog shows the current collection of twenty-one products from top American manufacturers.

Catalog: 50¢

## MORE ON "WOMEN SPEAKING OUT"

A number of letters written by Forest Service women to Juanita Larson were included in the Nov.-Dec., 1981 issue of Women in Forestry. They addressed the plight of Business Management Assistants (BMA's) on National Forest Ranger Districts. A couple of women responded to the letters by enclosing the article below (from the Feb. 1982 issue of Ms.) which discusses pay equity and recommends some excellent resources for women wanting to take some action. Immediately below is a letter of support written by Jill Osborn, Forest Archaeologist, Colville N.F., in response to Cynthia Hester's letter in the last issue of Women in Forestry.

Bravo! Bravo! I think it's high time someone pointed out that many women choose traditional roles over non-traditional ones. You stated this very eloquently. All too often women activists feel that to improve women's lot, one must move them into non-traditional roles. The attitude that traditional roles are somehow inferior to non-traditional roles creeps in surreptitiously. How often have we heard, "women don't have to be just secretaries anymore"? Or how about the recent R6 Memo dated December 9, 1981, which gave statistics for women in "significant positions", i.e. Professional Positions, Admin/Tech Positions, TMA's, GS 13's, Class I Overhead Fire Teams, etc.? The implication of such things that we read and hear everyday from well-meaning proponents of women's rights, is, that in order to improve our status as working women, we must move out of traditional roles. What about those who, as you so aptly stated, "don't want to climb telephone poles or fall trees?"

Our efforts should be directed at breaking down the barriers to non-traditional jobs for women as well as improving the career possibilities, financial status, and attitudes toward traditional roles for women. Both are equally important. I, for one, would feel a lot better if I never heard the words "just a clerk" ever again!



# San Jose Shows the Way

The country's first system-wide comparable-worth strike was staged in San Jose, California, last summer. With an expired contract and eight hours of fruitless negotiation, about 1,500 members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees—representing all city employees except the uniformed services—walked off their jobs on July 5 because of sex-based pay inequities. They stayed out for nine days.

The idea of comparable worth was not new to the city, whose mayor, Janet Gray Hayes, believes it to be "the new civil rights issue—the woman's issue of the 1980s." In fact, AFSCME prodded the city into commissioning a joint employer-employee job-evaluation study in 1979. The study, which cost

\$500,000 and was completed in December, 1980, revealed a wage gap between jobs held by women and those filled predominantly by men, when measured according to required know-how, problem-solving, accountability, and working conditions. The mayor's secretary, for example, earned \$1,048 a month, or 47 percent less than an air-conditioning mechanic. Other comparisons revealed that a nurse earned \$750 a month less than a fire-truck mechanic, and a legal secretary made \$754 less than an instrument-repair technician.

Although the city acknowledged the findings of the study, it argued that there wasn't enough money to increase salaries. At negotiations, AFSCME asked for \$3.2 million over four years to correct pay disparities. The city

offered \$1.3 million. As a result of the strike, both sides finally agreed on a two-year \$1.45 million settlement to move many job classifications up to the average pay level.

AFSCME, a union in which women comprise 40 percent of the national membership, recently passed a resolution on comparable worth. "AFSCME is prepared to push the issue wherever possible, through litigation and collective bargaining," says Winn Newman, general counsel for the national union. "Women are beginning to complain more. They're not willing to accept strictly female jobs and low pay." AFSCME has filed a comparable-worth lawsuit in Connecticut and Wisconsin on behalf of all female employees of the state.

Success of the strike is owed in part to the

strong support from San Jose's local labor and women's groups. But most heartening was the support of male employees. "Nearly sixty percent of the strikers were men," says AFSCME spokesperson William Callahan. "There was a lack of division, a feeling of solidarity and support from men because of the fairness of it," he said. "And from an economic standpoint, with two-family paychecks the rule, men recognize that when women earn half of what they deserve, it's going to hurt them, too."

—Annette Fuentes

(The National Committee on Pay Equity is a coalition of workers, educators, lawyers, and women's and minority groups to work against wage discrimination. Contact the Committee at NEA Building, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Room 615, Washington, D.C. 20036; 202-833-4234.)

**F**aced with the state's most severe budget crunch, the California state legislature enacted the nation's most advanced state policy on comparable worth, moving away from sole reliance on the prevailing wage system for setting the salaries of female-dominated jobs in state service—nearly 39,000 clericals as well as nurses and technicians on the state payroll.

In the bill, the California state legislature explicitly recognizes the essential contributions of women to the work force and to the support of households, as well as the historical patterns of sex discrimination reflected in undervalued occupations with low wages. The legislature declares its intent to "establish a state policy of setting salaries for female-dominated jobs on the basis of comparability of the value of work."

Carried by assemblyman Bill Lockyer (D.-San Leandro) and sponsored by Women In Politics (WIP), a Sacramento-based state-lobbying organization, which formed a 60-group coalition of

labor, women's and civil rights organizations, this bill required a series of parliamentary maneuvers—the defeat of six measures to table the bill in the senate and the near-arrest of the author for contempt of the senate for presenting the bill without the approval of the chair—that stopped California's political leadership in its tracks and forced it to deal with the "women's lobby" as effective political power brokers.

Governor Edmund G. Brown made a commitment at the bill-signing to supply comparable-worth data to the collective bargaining process. Point systems developed in existing comparable-worth studies will be applied to California civil service classifications.

For more information and an organizing kit for legislative action, contact: Eileen M. Cohn, Cochair, The Employment Task Force, Women In Politics, 3225 McKinley Boulevard, Sacramento, California 95816.

At the end of June last year, 230 secretaries of Minnesota's third largest school district in suburban Minneapolis went on strike, demanding the same raises as custodians. Seven weeks later, the secretaries and their union, School Service Employees Local 284, settled. Though the increase they won of approximately \$1.65 per hour over the next two years still fell short of the custodians' increase of \$1.70, the school board agreed to conduct a job study on the issue of pay equity.

The secretaries claimed, with the support of the custodians, teachers, and some principals, that their salaries were low because "women's work" traditionally has been undervalued. (More than 70 percent of the secretaries earned less than \$5 an hour, while a new custodian's

hourly wage was \$6.04.) Thus the school district's prestrike across-the-board offer of a 22-percent salary increase was unacceptable to the union. "Twenty two percent of nothing is still nothing," said Callie Heil, the union steward representing the strikers.

The secretaries walked out demanding the same salary increase the custodians would receive. Though the new contract fell slightly short of this goal, the increase won was more than their wages have grown over the last decade.

While the secretaries hope that the planned comparable-worth survey will address more inequities, Heil says that the strikers have already won "our own self-respect and pride in each other for holding out for what we are worth."

*Pray McElin Gustafson*

## WHEN THE TYPING STOPPED



Holding out for what they're worth: (left to right) Kathy Maccazio, Sibyl Drake, Gigi Evelett.

## One Woman's Fight

Virginia Casey, a 50-year-old senior secretary, filed the first comparable-worth lawsuit in California on June 25. The suit is the final step for Casey, whose career with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), she charges, was marred by sex discrimination, harassment, and retaliation from her employer.

Casey's struggle began in March, 1980, when she was denied promotion to administrative assistant. Although she claims she was already performing the duties of this job, she saw that less-qualified men were promoted over her. So in April, she filed a charge of sex discrimination with the California Department of Fair Employment Opportunity Commission, hoping to get the promotion she deserved.

Soon after, Casey uncovered another pervasive source of sex discrimination in the wage structure for SMUD employees. "An incoming clerk must have a diploma and two years' experience and is paid \$838 a month," says Casey, "but a utility helper who might pull weeds or wash cars doesn't need a diploma and starts at \$1,173 a month." Women comprise the majority of those low-paid clerical jobs—74 out of 75 clerk-typists are women. Meanwhile, men hold 196 out of 207 of those better-paying, low-skilled jobs.

Faced with such pay inequities, Casey drew up a petition asking SMUD to do a comparable-worth evaluation. She collected 290 signatures. "We took the petition to the board of directors five times, and they told us, 'We want to think about it for a year,'" says Casey. What ensued was what she describes as a campaign of harassment

and retaliation against her that lasted more than a year and forced her to resign. "They took away my supervisory duties, demoted my work, and finally threatened to rearrange the office, making me a receptionist," says Casey. "At one point, they gave me the work of an electrical engineer, hoping I'd quit."

She also describes personal humiliation: "The engineers abused me. They'd put their cigarettes out in my coffee as they passed my desk. One threw a banana peel at me. And I'd find obscene cartoons and notes on my desk in the morning."

Her suit charges violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963 in denying Casey promotion and confining her to a low-paying job. SMUD lawyers have asked the court to dismiss the comparable-worth claim, insisting that there is no legal precedent to support it. A spokesperson said that no court has required a business to disregard prevailing wage rates and increase salaries of white-collar clericals—both male and female—to blue-collar levels.

Casey's lawyer, Randall Yim, believes that the issue of comparable worth is the logical extension of civil rights and pay-equity suits, and is hopeful after the Supreme Court ruling last year in another case, *County of Washington, Oregon, v. Gunther*. "Although the Court did not endorse the concept, it basically said that the Court could conceive of the possibility of a comparable-worth suit. Now it's up to the lower courts to rule on the equity of individual cases," he says.

—Annette Fuentes

## A CASE STUDY—

# How Not To Do It

An attempt by the Berea (Ohio) City Council to negotiate the minefield of comparable worth set off explosions that could make it a textbook case for communities of how not to deal with the issue.

In response to charges of pay inequities, Berea commissioned a study of its municipal salary structures to establish pay levels based on objective factors that could be documented. To make sure that the study addressed the problem of undervalued, traditionally female jobs, council member Mary Ashbrook raised the issue of comparable worth so that it would be firmly in everyone's minds.

Council member John R. Hauff responded by sponsoring a resolution saying that the proper way to deal with "such personal inequities" was "in an adjustment of hiring practices." When asked what that meant, Hauff said, "by hiring the opposites." Comparable-worth supporters saw the

resolution as an attempt to avoid the issue of providing equity by raising salaries, but it passed without further debate.

In a newspaper story the following morning under the headline "Battle of Sexes Splits Men, Women on Berea Council," another council member, John G. Whipple, was quoted as saying: "We are not saying that women's pay should be less than men's; we are saying that certain jobs pay less. . . . We may have reached this point because most secretaries are women, but we are not going to raise their salaries."

Reacting to this last statement, 14 of the 20 women who work in administrative positions at Berea City Hall left their typewriters to frame their response. They called Whipple's remarks "inappropriate and arbitrary" and said that the consultant's study of job classification and salaries would be a \$10,000 waste of taxpayers' money if the

**T**he Comparable Worth Project is a national clearinghouse on the issue of pay equity across sex-segregated job lines. Project resources include a speakers' bureau, attorney and expert referral network, support and technical help for workers, unions, and employers, and information on job-evaluation studies, legal pleadings and opinions, and research and analysis.

Virginia Dean, project coordinator and cofounder with Patti Roberts, says that the idea of equal pay for jobs of comparable value

existed back when the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was formulated, but it was consciously rejected as a goal. However, the ever-widening wage gap between men and women workers and the increasing numbers of working women have made the current struggle inevitable.

The Comparable Worth Project puts out a quarterly newsletter. Subscriptions are \$8, individual, and \$16, institutions, from: Comparable Worth Project, 488 41 Street, No. 5, Oakland, California 94609; (415) 658-1808.

## RESOURCES

*Manual on Pay Equity: Raising Wages for Women's Work* (1980), by the Committee on Pay Equity (*Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies*, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; \$9.95). Provides an overview of the issues, and an explanation of federal remedies, legal strategies, and state and local actions.

*Equal Pay for Work of Comparable Worth: An Annotated Bibliography*, by the staff of the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (*American Library Association*, 50 East

Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611; \$4). Reviews 120 publications on comparable worth, including surveys, case histories, and studies.

*Preliminary Memorandum on Pay Equity: Achieving Equal Pay for Work of Comparable Value*, a report (April, 1980), by Nancy D. Perlman and Bruce J. Ennis (*Center for Women in Government*, SUNYA, Draper Hall, Room 302, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12222; 518-455-6211; \$2). Gives an overview of litigation, research, organizing, and legislation, as well as a bibliography.

council had no intention of implementing those recommendations. Whipple now contends he was quoted out of context: "I don't know that I said exactly that."

The whole episode was quite painful to Jack Kafer, Berea's mayor. "It's very embarrassing for me as mayor to have a council acting and reacting the way this council does . . . but that's life in the squirrel cage in Berea.

"But even more important is the issue itself," he continued. "I have a feeling that some of the men didn't really understand the concept."

Mayor Kafer believes that despite Hauff's resolution, comparable worth could hardly be divorced from the salary study. "This whole internal equity question comes down to whose job is more valuable," he said.

In spite of its confusing history, on June 1, Berea City Council voted to implement the recommendations of the job-classification study. As a result, women's total share of the City of Berea's payroll increased slightly from 17.7 percent to 18.5 percent.

"This is the first time we have had this kind of analysis," Ashbrook says. "I

am pleased with some of the results. Police clerk-dispatchers, for example, have been underpaid for years, and I think they are the prime example of where this study has restored some equity." The traditionally female job of police clerk-dispatcher went from a Grade 11 with a beginning salary of \$9,966 to a Grade 17 with a salary of \$14,036—a 30-percent pay increase.

"I am not satisfied that an account clerk is still being paid at a level considerably below a laborer's," Ashbrook adds. "I think this is a very good example of how society's biases are built into the instrument used to do the analysis."

"I think it's very exciting that there was a study done in the first place," says Carol Kurtz, speaking for Working Women: National Association of Police Workers. "It's a big step forward for the issue of comparable worth to have city governments begin to reevaluate their job-classification systems. It's something we would like to see private industry do more of. The next step will be to actually do away with the sex biases that are in the evaluation instruments themselves." —Cheryl Jensen



# EDITORIAL

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**G**rit: It's a truly American virtue, right up where Mom and apple pie were until the Pill and Lo-Cal dimmed their watts. While some American symbols have lost luster over the years, grit still comes shining through. That quality that *Webster's New World* describes as "obstinate courage; brave perseverance; pluck" has won wars for us, opened the West and created out of wilderness the richest nation in the world. Far be it from me to knock true grit.

Yet something's awry. What I'm seeing increasingly appears to be nitwit grit, a blind refusal to give in or let down under any circumstances. Nitwit grit commonly afflicts women. It may be a corollary to brat-ism, a form of male-think whose apologist, nay, inventor, is George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty*.

According to brat-ism (my word, not Gilder's), a man is able to perform at his productive best for God, country and Ivy League only if he has a little woman at home providing cookies, kids and other forms of encouragement and support. Surely, only spoiled brats demand the fully concentrated attention of another human before they will stop sulking—or hanging around the pool hall with the boys—and get to work. Women, it seems, do not require (nor do their abilities merit) equivalent support. Men deserve women; women can hack it alone.

So, where does nitwit grit come in? In women's willingness to accept brat-ism while trying to achieve magnificently in spite of it, that's where. You can't let a feller down, can you? If he really *needs* you to cook, clean, iron, bake and bear in order to produce his bit of the GNP, shouldn't you provide those services even though you're working full time to bring in a fair share of the family income? Don't you owe that much to your country if not to him?

Frankly, I respect men too much to believe that brat-ism represents for them an inescapable raging hormonal imbalance. I think it represents an encrusted growth of customs and privileges we're too lazy (*f.*) or fond of (*m.*) to abandon. I think we women who add to or protect this unpleasant growth by demonstrating that nothing is too much for us, that we are willing to give to others until we drop, are showing not grit but nitwit grit.

If we owe anything to our country, its men and ourselves, we owe the good-riddance of brat-ism and nitwit grit at once. Seems feasible. Yet sometimes, in the dark hours, I wake up to a nightmare specter: What if—what if (gulp) we shall never, ever be able to achieve equality because men are, really *are*, after all, the weaker sex?



Kate Rand Lloyd

Working Women