

# Designing the Future

AWLP's 7th Annual  
Work/Life Conference  
February 26-28, 2003

Orlando, Florida  
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The alliance of Work/Life Professionals will unite, support, and provide leadership to individuals, organizations, and communities in order to promote work/family and personal life balance.

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*Alliance of Work/Life Professionals*

The

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## In This Issue

Amy Gage reports on the facts and fictions of changing times.

The experts speak: quotes from some of the field's respected thinkers

Shelley MacDermid discusses the demographics of change

Your chance to weigh in on Sylvia Ann Hewlett's recent research

New AWLP members

# Changing Times for Work-Life?

by Amy Gage

Two months after September 11, when a nation was terrorized and its economy in retreat, a nationally known work-life consultant sent this e-mail to her colleagues in the field:

*With layoffs dominating the business news and fewer people doing the work, we know that staggering workloads, already a huge challenge, will become even more of a barrier to work-life effectiveness.*

What Susan Seitel, founder of Work & Family Connection in Minneapolis, didn't say was that some experts feared the work-life field would never regain its boom-time momentum. Corporate work-life managers were being laid off or demoted. Chief executives were more vocally focused on the bottom line, and some were recasting work-life programs more narrowly, as merely an expense.

One Midwestern corporation – which had made the *Work-*



*Hands-on players in the field indicate that work-life is not on life support, but it is shifting its priorities as it ages and matures.*

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## Editor's Note

by Robin Hardman

In this issue of *The Alliance*, we look at if and how times might be changing for the work-life field. Are employer attitudes changing? Are the goals and priorities of those of us in the field changing? Are demographics changing? And, if things are indeed changing, how are we addressing these changes? Dotted throughout this issue of *The Alliance*, you'll find the voices of experts—a small sample of people with a long history of work-life contributions. We invited them to share their perspectives on the question: "What do you think is the future of the work-life field?" At the same time, reporter Amy Gage addressed the question by interviewing dozens of other experienced work-life professionals for our cover story.

Elsewhere in this issue, Shelley MacDermid fills us in on the what's changed—and what hasn't—in the world of demographics. And your opinion will be sought on the recent research by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, summarized here in a brief article. E-mail us your reactions, and we'll print them in the next issue of *The Alliance*: [rhcommunications@nyc.rr.com](mailto:rhcommunications@nyc.rr.com).

Finally, in the last issue I neglected to thank AWLP Board member David Thompson, who kindly provided us with MicroSoft software. And thanks also to Roger Neugebauer, who pointed out that our website was not listed in the last issue. It's [www.awlp.org](http://www.awlp.org), and it's an excellent resource: I advise you to check it out.

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# These Demographic Times

by Shelley MacDermid

It feels like the world is changing faster every day. Sometimes when I'm having trouble coping with some especially annoying innovation, I feel certain that no one before me has had to deal with so much change. Of course that's nonsense – my grandmother was born into a world that had just discovered the automobile and died after men had walked on the moon!

Taking a long-term view puts the demands on my personal life into perspective, but it also is helpful to me as a professor thinking about families. Some of the trends that have generated concern about families in the last half of the 20th century look quite different when examined in the context of the entire century. Harold Hodgkinson entertained and educated us about many trends during this year's AWLP conference. Here are some other examples:

**Avoiding marriage.** During the last half of the 20th century, the percentage of never-married individuals under 35 rose substantially. Rather than departing from long-term trends, this change *restored* the relatively high ages at first marriage seen at the beginning of the century. In fact, enthusiasm for marriage has remained high — by age 75 only 3.4% of the U.S. population has never married.

**Leaving marriage.** We've also all heard about the enormous rise in divorce since divorce laws were reformed in the 1960's. But the rise stopped long ago. In fact, divorce rates have now declined steadily for almost two decades. Marriages are now about as likely to end as a result of divorce as they were to end as a result of death at the beginning of the 20th century.

**Single-parent families.** The popular press gives the impression that single parents have become far more common than in the past. In fact, the percentage of lone parents did not differ much at the beginning and end of the 20th century—14% and 15%, respectively. What has changed is the *reason* for lone parenthood. At the beginning of the century it was death of a spouse, later succeeded by divorce, which is now being overtaken by the direct route—having children without ever marrying.

What are some less well-known trends that also might deserve more attention?

**Television.** Many studies have shown that high percentages of workers feel a sense of overload or conflict between work and family that saps personal time and involvement with others. The culprit is usually assumed to be work. Consider, however, that the average adult watches more than 20 hours of television per week; the average child watches just 3 hours less. The most popular show on cable television in the U.S. is the World Wrestling Federation, for which 15% of the audience is 11 or younger. It's worth asking what doesn't get done while all this TV-watching goes on—the answers might include exercise, reading, building relationships with friends, or spending time outdoors.

**Changing age structure.** You'd have to live in a cave to be unaware that our society is aging. If you haven't read about it, you've certainly seen the explosion of advertising for drugs and products targeting "aging skin"! But here's a fact you may not know—there were almost as many babies born at the end of the 20th century as during the height of the baby boom. This means that we can't deal with our aging society simply by shifting resources for care from children to elders. We are going to continue to need just as many preschools and primary schools and playgrounds as we have now—maybe more—and all of the new facilities our aging boomers will require.

So it's true that "these times, they are a-changin'." But it's also true that the changes aren't always quite what we first thought, once we take the long view and look carefully at the past. If you would like to learn more about long-term trends, check out *American Demographics* magazine and the website of the U.S. Bureau of the Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

*Shelley M. MacDermid directs the Center for Families at Purdue University and is a Professor in the Department of Child Development and Family Studies.*

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Shelley MacDermid

*aren't always quite what we first thought, once we take the long view and look carefully at the past.*

*Marriott was naive in assuming that issues could be solved within the confines of the corporation, says company vice president Donna Klein. Real progress won't occur until work-life efforts focus more on public policy.*



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ing *Mother* list for 10 years – saw key programs discontinued and its vice president of diversity leave with no replacement. “The employees are feeling vulnerable because of layoffs,” said the company’s former work-life manager, who herself has never been replaced. “So they aren’t asking for anything and they aren’t getting anything. This is pure economics. It’s supply and demand.”

More recent conversations with hands-on players in the field indicate that work-life is not on life support, but it is shifting its priorities as it ages and matures.

Some people pronounce such change a setback; others declare it is a natural progression. Those opinions aside, some truths appear to be emerging:

**FACT | Corporate work-life programs have grown less visible.**

Work-life initiatives themselves aren’t necessarily losing ground. “I don’t see companies shutting off resource and referral services or doing a turnabout in flexibili-

ty or closing fitness centers or child care centers,” says Kathy Kane, co-owner of K2 Work-Life Solutions, an outsourcing firm in Freehold, New Jersey.

But she does see in-house work-life departments shrinking, which, of course, is a boon to her business. She also sees some corporate work-life managers being reassigned to organizational development or human resources specialties such as “total rewards.”

“The field is splintering in many directions,” Kane says. “Job redesign has been successful in many companies, but unless it’s partnered with the flexible attitudes and some of the tools provided by the field, it’s not enough.”

Beth McCarty has been in the work-life field since 1991, primarily as a consultant, and has served on the Conference Board’s Work-Life Leadership Council. A “victim” of a recent downsizing – though that word hardly describes her – McCarty says the disbursal of work-life responsibilities throughout companies is the natural

evolution of a field still defining itself.

“People are still trying to figure out where it best fits,” she explains. “I think it fits best in OD, because that discipline looks at the system of the organization. Work-life people have always been seen as almost an addendum to the system, instead of an integral part of the system. To really make it work, we have to be about culture change – but that’s about systems change.”

And that’s why McCarty is working on a master’s in organizational development at Loyola University in Chicago.

**FACT | Public-policy initiatives are an essential next step.**

Asked if the changes in the work-life field are good news or bad news, one long-time practitioner said they’re neither. And they’re both.

“The work has been mainstreamed,” says Donna Klein, vice president of diversity and workplace effectiveness at Marriott International. “The name of

**What is the future of the work-life field?**



*Linda Roundtree*

Vice President, Account Management, Ceridian Corporation  
(formerly Manager of Worklife Strategies, American Airlines)

I’m optimistic about the work-life field, but it’s not going to be the same. The way that it was even a year ago has changed. The role of the corporate work-life manager has shifted. In some corporations, the position no longer exists. In others, the work-life manager has taken on a broader scope of responsibility. The beauty of that is the ability to influence areas like public relations and communications. We have to focus more on seizing those opportunities to influence a broader group of people. I think the tragedies that happened last year opened people’s eyes to understanding and accepting the importance of work-life.

the game in HR transformation is to distribute the work to the operating units. It's happened with a lot of the boutique, content-specific areas – diversity, work-life, workforce planning.”

Lauded for its leadership in addressing the work-life needs of workaday employees, Marriott nevertheless was “naïve,” Klein says, in assuming that issues could be solved solely within the confines of the corporation. “We were the first to focus on the lower-income working population, and we made a lot of headway there, but there's a lot more to go. We have not found adequate solutions,” she says.

Real progress won't occur until work-life experts focus more on public policy, Klein contends. Corporate Voices for Working Families, a nonprofit organization supported by Marriott, Verizon and other large employers, has been formed to help corporations partner with politicians on both sides of the aisle. (See [www.cvworkingfamilies.org](http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org).)

“It needs to be a bipartisan issue, because the two parties have different avenues to the same truth,” she says. “And the truth is, we are the only industrialized country that has no support system for working families.”

If the United States doesn't address issues such as early education, elder care and the need for high-quality child care in a society where most parents are employed, the gap between rich and poor will only widen. “And that, in itself, has huge cost implications to the country and the companies,” Klein says.

Unions have had legislative goals on the table for years. “In the labor movement, we talk about working *families*, and we bargain and try to get legislation passed for working families,” says Donna Dolan, director of work and family issues for the Communications Workers of America in District 1, which encompasses eight northeastern states.

“We do call it work-*family*, and I feel strongly the field should have retained the word ‘family.’ It makes it clearer what the whole picture should be.”

## **FACT | Work-life practitioners must work to be strategic.**

During her 22 years at American Express, Sharon Klun evolved into the company's work-life guru – first at American Express Financial Advisors in Minneapolis and later for the New York-based corporation overall. When she left in December 2000 to take a similar job at Accenture, her expertise came with her, but her profile, naturally, was less high.

What did Klun do? She trod lightly.

“Before you can begin to convince any senior executive of anything, you have to establish your knowledge, credibility and expertise,” she says. “It's a philosophical position people adopt when they go into organizations. You either storm the castle or hammer out a drawbridge and hope it reaches.”

Personally, Klun prefers the subtler approach – but she is not shy about making her value known. “When 9/11 happened, because I had a lot of background in EAP, I was able to support initiatives there. Little by little, you build your track record. Then you step up and say, ‘Here are the gaps in work-life.’ I had a competitive analysis done of the 2002 *Working Mother* winners. That's how I made a case for backup dependent care.”

As director of workforce effectiveness at Pitney Bowes in Stamford, Connecticut, Ed Houghton deliberately links his initiatives to the strategies of company Chairman and CEO Michael Critelli. If the company is talking cost control, he speaks that language, too.

Given that the governor of Connecticut fondly calls Houghton's boss the “transportation czar,” Houghton gladly works on commuting and other traffic-reduction programs.

“It's no secret that I have a great interest in this because the company does,” he says. “The ability to get press on transportation issues is exponentially greater than on work-life. I've been able to talk about our work-life programs and flex

## **What is the future of the work-life field?**



### *Netsy Firestein*

Executive Director,  
Labor Project for Working Families

**F**or unions, work-life benefits and policies have been fairly stable. The economy, September 11—these can't affect benefits or policies that have already been negotiated for. When current contracts are over and being renegotiated, then we'll see if these events have had any effect. Regarding the future, the researchers I call “labor-friendly” are thinking more about flexibility—how can we approach it in really new ways, how can we look at structuring work differently? Another important area to focus on for the future is public policy. After all, when you work with companies you are working employer by employer, workplace by workplace, and not touching a large percentage of the workforce. But pass a state law and you have a much greater impact. And this is beginning to happen. For example, the California AFL-CIO is responsible for a paid family leave bill working its way through the state legislature right now.

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## Ellen Galinsky

President, Families and Work Institute

**T**he work-life field is in the midst of a major transition. We've been through these transitions before, so we know more about managing them. There are a number of external and internal things happening to cause this particular transition: the events of September 11, the economy and unemployment, and the fact that many of the field's pioneers are moving on to other things or retiring. What we need to do is to be proactive, not just let change happen but steer our way through it. I think we need new language: the old work/life language—even terms like “work-life integration”—still conveys a zero-sum game. We need language focused on *how* we work. We need to focus on new definitions of leadership. We need to address elder care and the aging workforce. And we need to reframe the business case for these changing times.

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initiatives whenever I'm talking about transportation. It's an additional way into the external marketplace. It's a way to get funding.”

It's also a way to get heard. “People always define being strategic as being ‘at the table,’ like you have to meet with the CEO every day,” says Alice Campbell, who recently expanded her work-life role at Baxter International in Chicago to include “best citizen” initiatives. “You just have to understand who is at the table, where you are in their world and how your work bolsters what they're trying to accomplish.”

### **FACT | New movement will come from new models.**

Celina Pagani-Tousignant went to Levi Strauss in 1993 to manage the San Francisco-based company's early work-life initiatives. Her prior background as an EAP professional at Pacific Gas & Electric in California came in handy when Levi Strauss sent her to a plant in Brazil and elsewhere to deal with social issues.

“I realized that work-life was more than just putting programs together,” Pagani-Tousignant says. “This was about changing culture.”

Her position was eliminated in 1997, and Pagani-Tousignant has been on her own ever since – consulting on work-life, EAP, diversity, corporate community involvement. “I help companies be socially responsible,” she says.

Increasingly, the companies that need her help are small, and the ways they execute work-life, by financial necessity, will look different from the standards set at IBM or Levi Strauss. “I've known this world as a work-life manager who's in charge. Maybe that's not going to be the model in the future,” Pagani-Tousignant says. “It's not what I, the manager, can do, but how can I create a community within the company that understands work-life? It's not my voice. It's everybody's voices.

*“We have to get away from the  
that needs to drive this. We still  
continues to push but more as  
someone who's in charge.”*

“We have to get away from the department or function that needs to drive this,” she explains. “We still need someone who continues to push but more as an influencer and less as someone who's in charge.”

Given the relentless pressure for shareholder gain in publicly traded companies, the future of work-life may reside in small, privately owned operations, one expert contends. “They're not in this for all of us to get rich,” says a former corporate work-life manager, who asks that her name not be used. “Many small companies have a broader mission to provide jobs and serve the community. They're trying to create genuinely friendly work-life environments.”

### **FACT | People are struggling to sort out their priorities.**

Susan Seitel entered the work-life arena in the late 1980s, when child care was the name of the game. She says the balancing act working mothers still face and sometimes fail at (witness senior Bush advisor Karen Hughes' recent decision to return to Texas) makes work-life primarily a woman's issue to this day.

“If June Cleaver were still at home, there would not be a work-life field,” she contends. “Women are 46 percent of the labor force. Companies are going to want to attract talented women and help them be productive.”

Asked whether her argument could be interpreted as dated or sexist, Seitel cites her talented daughters who recently have quit or cut back on paid work.

“I don't see my sons or sons-in-law

*e department or function  
will need someone who  
an influencer and less as*

—Celina Pagani-Tousignant

quitting work to take care of their family,” she says. “The primary responsibility is still with the woman. Men are becoming much more active in caring for their families, but you still hear men talk about babysitting when they take care of their kids.”

The defection of Hughes and other women from high-level positions on the face of it looks like bad news. Seitel, however, has a different interpretation – one that echoes Klein and Dolan’s argument for more family-friendly public policies. “We must care for our children. It’s got to be a high priority,” she says. “With the advent of women in the work force, it

seems to be taking a lesser role. Is that secondary, taking care of our children?”

Employees, managers and even some executives are reassessing their priorities in the wake of 9/11. “Executives especially understand that they need to address employees’ stress,” says Linda Roundtree, a vice president and account manager at Ceridian and former manager of work-life strategies at American Airlines in Dallas.

“I see work-life moving into the EAP and health-and-wellness areas, which will allow work-life strategies to be accepted on a broader scale,” she explains. “Employees are saying, ‘My priority isn’t my work, it’s my family.’ And executives, too, went through 9/11. Being in health and wellness allows work-life to be part of the solution.”

*Amy Gage writes on work-life and women’s issues in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Reach her at amygage@LL.net.*

#### What is the future of the work-life field?



### *Fran Rodgers*

CEO, WFD

**T**hose of us in the work-life field learned very early on that time was the issue—not flexibility. Flexibility is just a subset of time. We should be the most focused on the fact that people’s time is not respected. If you ask people around the world how they spend their work time, you find a whole day a week is wasted—spent on things where they don’t understand who their customer is, or why they’re doing something. Employers need to focus on that day and give it back to people. They need to focus on an internal “respect for time” campaign. That’s the only thing that can make a difference. We’ve gone beyond other things: dependent care and flexibility may not always go far enough, but they are at least on the table like health benefits. But we have to break the cycle that says more time spent is equivalent to meeting the war on competition.

#### What is the future of the work-life field?



### *Paul Rupert*

President, Rupert & Company

**W**hen we look broadly at where we are headed, a big part of the work-life agenda is to advance a different style of management and greater amount of autonomy in which flexibility will be an aspect but a diminishing aspect. By this I mean people will have flexibility but it won’t be called that. We’re moving to the opposite end of the spectrum from Taylorism, to a work environment in which there is an extraordinary degree of self-management. We are definitely heading this way, the question is how will companies adapt and enforce those changes – and this is an area that we in the field can have some effect on. We can bring in work redesign, which is just an examination of how time and talent and task come together. There are a bunch of different entry points to say “there’s a better way of getting things done.”

**Editor's Note:** Much has been made recently of a new book by **Sylvia Ann Hewlett**, *Creating a Life, Professional Women and the Quest for Children*. We're curious to know what you think.

Dr. Hewlett has summarized some of her research at right. Please let us know your thoughts by email: Does this research seem to accurately depict what you see in your own life and workplace? Do you find it relevant? Has the research itself or the media's response to it had any influence on you, either personally or professionally? Do you think it will have any actual impact on programs and policies at your workplace?

Email us your thoughts and we'll print selections in the next newsletter (though we'd prefer to print your name, we will also respect any requests for anonymity). Send your thoughts to: [rhcommunications@nyc.rr.com](mailto:rhcommunications@nyc.rr.com).

# An Unfinished Revolution

by Sylvia Ann Hewlett

**F**orty years after the birth of modern feminism, large numbers of professional women still don't have what they want — and what their male peers take for granted: the ability to choose lives that contain both career and children.

A new survey contains some startling data: 33 percent of professional women are childless at age 40, and this figure rises to 42 percent in corporate America. The vast majority of these women did not choose to be childless — only a small percent said they planned it that way. For most, childlessness was “a creeping non-choice,” a condition forced upon them by high maintenance careers and skittish partners. Many of these women end up feeling regretful and bereft.

Career women are not the only ones facing painful tradeoffs in their lives. If women with careers find it hard to have children, women with children find it hard to have careers. The survey finds that large numbers of professional women are forced to abandon their careers when they have children. Indeed, fully 22 percent of all women with graduate degrees (MDs, MBAs and the like) are not in the workforce at all because of the ways in which family and career continue to clash and collide.

Professional men have it easier. The

data show a rough equivalency between those who want and have children.

Indeed, the more successful the man the more likely he is to have children. Fully 81 percent of men on the top rungs of career ladders are fathers.

So, why this continuing deep inequity? At the heart is a multi-layered time crunch.

Careers these days—especially in their early stages—are extremely time-intensive, requiring long hours in the office and umpteen other hours dealing with e-mail and voice mail. The survey shows that close to a third of these women work more than 50 hours a week. Even with a modest commute this translates into 11-hour days.

Overload at work is compounded by overload at home. This is because professional women continue to pick up three-quarters of all domestic responsibilities (housework and childcare). According to the survey, fully 43 percent of these women consider their husbands/partners a net burden on the domestic front, in

*33 percent of professional women are childless at age 40, and this figure rises to 42 percent in corporate America.*

that they create more work than they contribute around the house!

All of which helps explain why professional women tend to postpone marriage and family until their careers are safely launched. However, as women move through their thirties they find it increasingly difficult to find a partner — the data show only 3 percent get married for the first time after age 35. They also begin to run into barriers on the fertility front. *Time* magazine quotes figures from the Centers for Disease Control showing that the chances of a woman over 42 years old having a baby using her own eggs, even with advanced medical help, are less than 10%.

So what can be done to ease the choices facing professional women?

We need greater public support and understanding for women attempting to balance their lives. Businesses and government can help. The survey demonstrates that work/life policies can make a significant difference. A policy package of work/life policies, for example, a “time bank” of leave, reduced hour jobs, “off-ramps” and “on-ramps,” and expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act would be a start. Career choices also have an impact: the data show that doctors do a much better job balancing work and fami-

ly than professors, and entrepreneurs do best of all.

One thing is sure. Women need to do much more than clone the male competitive model if they are to find fulfillment in both love and work. This new research tells us where to start.

*Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the author of Creating a Life (Talk Miramax Books, 2002), and directed the study “High-Achieving Women, 2001,” at the National Parenting Association*

What is the future of the work-life field?



## *Alice Campbell*

Director of Community Relations and Work-Life, Baxter International

**P**eople who've been in the field for a long time are looking at the horizon to figure out what's next. That's a natural progression, and it should not be characterized as the field lacking momentum. There are people behind us clearly looking to make a difference. A lot of small businesses are doing their own things to support work-life. We shouldn't define it only in the world of corporate America. I clearly see at industry meetings that people can be jazzed up and excited about this area.

What is the future of the work-life field?



## *Perry Christensen*

Senior Consultant, WFD

**W**ork-life should be one piece of a broad systems approach to managing. The challenge is, we tend to label it in a way that sets it apart. Calling it a “field” may marginalize it, and make it easier to take potshots at. Business is always asking, “how can we economize and make the most of what we have, what can be gotten rid of?” The more work-life stands out as an isolated target as opposed to an integral part of the landscape, the more it is at risk. Work-life needs to be fully integrated into the business in a way that becomes seamless with the way we manage people and behave with each other.

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