

## EMPLOYED MOTHERS' NEWSLETTER

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
FAMILY LIVING EDUCATION  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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# How to Get 'Em All in on the Act

One of the concerns of many a working mother is how to involve her family in the running of the household. It's unreasonable for you or your family to think it is possible for you to work outside the home and still carry out all the tasks of caring for a family alone. Though other family members agree to share the responsibilities, the transition may not be easy. Breaking out of familiar patterns requires a change of attitudes and a great deal of adjustment on everyone's part.

It is especially important that children participate in maintaining the household. Not only is their contribution greatly needed in a home where mother works, but knowing that their efforts are valuable to the family helps them develop healthy attitudes towards work. It also gives them a sense of self-worth and importance.

## Hold a Family Staff Meeting

One way to get kids into the act is to hold regular family meetings to divvy up the tasks. There are chores for even very young children. A two-year-old can put toys in a toy box; a three-year-old can set a table or, with the parent's help, make a bed. Older children can help with the cooking and cleaning, as well as caring for the younger children.

Allowing the children to choose their chores may help them feel more positive about doing them. Children's switching or trading jobs prevents boredom and allows them the opportunity to learn how to do all the tasks.

After the jobs are divided, a schedule should be made and placed where all can

see--on the refrigerator door, for example. As children complete their tasks, reward them with a word of praise. Let each child be responsible for making sure his/her chore is done--don't do it for him/her.

## Guidelines for Group Action

**Be patient.** The going may be rough while everyone learns you mean business. Family members may run out of clean clothes and dishes before they appreciate the necessity of their cooperation.

**Compromise.** Everyone has his own way of doing things. You may not like what your husband or children prepare for dinner, but appreciate the fact you didn't have to cook it.

**Be flexible.** Allow the children to take over as much as they are willing to do, but be realistic in your expectations. An occasional misplaced sock or broken dish is a small price to pay for the reduction of your workload and the spirit of cooperation that can bring your family together.

When each family member contributes to the family's functioning, he/she develops a sense of pride and togetherness and learns to function independently and confidently. Everyone benefits from a system of sharing housekeeping tasks.



# Sharing Jobs Spreads the Benefits All Ways

Families that consist of a working husband and a homemaker wife account for only 7 percent of today's population. But many women and mothers who are finding permanent positions in the labor force are feeling frustrated as they try to cope with the demands of their dual role. Sandra Gross, a staff member with the Alternative Employment Opportunities Study, which is associated with the Lansing Human Resources Department, suggests that job sharing is one way to restructure employment opportunities that would benefit both employees and employers.

Many women must work full time, but for others who would like to pursue a career without sacrificing motherhood or an education, job sharing may be an ideal way to avoid falling into the trap of trying to fill the shoes of a superwoman.

Job sharing means two people share the responsibilities, salary and benefits of one full-time job. Almost any kind of job can be shared, and the duties of a position can be divided according to tasks, specialties or experience. Such an arrangement offers unlimited advantages to the employees.

Employers' first reaction, however, tends to be negative. "It will cost too much and it won't work," they contend.

## It Helps the Boss Too

Sandra points out that there are many advantages for the employer, too. Employees who share jobs are more loyal, have less absenteeism, take less sick leave and are more productive and creative, she insists. Job sharers can cover for each other during illness or vacation periods, so employers don't have to find someone to fill in. All things considered, an employer may even save money.

In the past, some employers have hesitated to hire women, considering them only temporary employees who wouldn't be around after marriage or children came along. Job sharing would establish per-

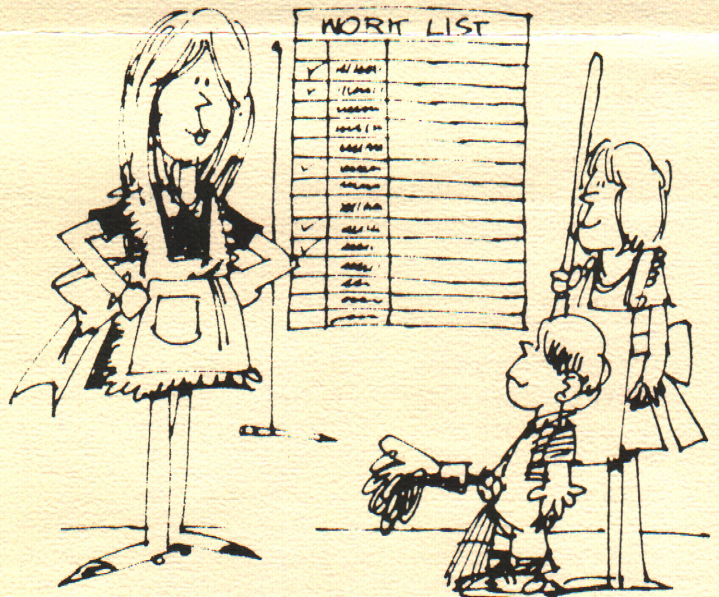
manent part-time employment so marriage or motherhood wouldn't have to be an all-or-nothing decision. Women could still pursue a serious commitment to a career.

Along with the other members of the AEOS, Sandra developed a project aimed at promoting shared-time career opportunities in Michigan, specifically in Ingham County. The AEOS has also collected an extensive library of resource materials that are available to the public. Staff members conduct workshops and are preparing manuals for employers, employees and bargaining units to assist in the development of job-sharing possibilities. Though this concept is particularly relevant to Michigan because of its economic problems, a network of groups similar to the AEOS exists nationwide.

## For More About It

Further information about alternative employment and job sharing is available from:

Lansing Women's Bureau  
Alternative Employment  
Opportunities Study  
119 North Washington Square  
Lansing, MI 48933



# Creative Casserole Cookery

## You Can Keep it Simple and Delectable

Tired of the same old meat and potatoes? Ready to break out of the humdrums and try something different? Why not a casserole that anyone can create? There is a simple formula to go by. You will need meat or fish, a starchy food, a vegetable, seasonings, sauce and a crunchy topping. Choose one ingredient from each of the following lists:

Meat or Fish (1 1/2 - 2 cups of cooked or canned meat)

1 lb. ground beef    1 can tuna or salmon  
1 can luncheon meat

Cooked or Canned Vegetables (1 1/2 cups cooked or 1 16 oz. can drained or 1 frozen 10 1/2 oz. box cooked and drained)

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| green beans | peas     |
| carrots     | broccoli |
| lima beans  | corn     |

Starchy Food (1 1/2 - 2 cups) - cooked

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| noodles        | macaroni |
| rice           | potatoes |
| spaghetti      | corn     |
| sweet potatoes |          |

### Sauce

1 cup medium white sauce  
1 can of condensed soup: tomato, mushroom, celery, cream of chicken

Crunchy Topping (Sprinkle on top)

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| cracker crumbs       | dry cereal             |
| potato sticks        | fried onion rings      |
| bread crumbs         | (canned ones are fine) |
| crushed stuffing mix |                        |

For all casseroles, add one teaspoon of salt and pepper to suit your taste. For

extra seasoning, add one or more of these: 1/4 cup chopped onion, celery, or green pepper cooked in oil or margarine for a few minutes.

To mix your creation, add seasonings and sauce to meat. Grease baking dish. Make layers. Start with your starchy food, then vegetable, then meat. Top with crunchy topping. Bake in oven (uncovered at 350° degrees until bubbly (about 20 minutes).

## LEGAL TIPS



*By William G. Youatt, Attorney at Law*

A recent headline in one of Michigan's daily newspapers reported "Sex Harassment Still Widespread." The article proceeded to quote the head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, J. Clay Smith Jr., who said, "sexual harassment in the workplace is not a figment of the imagination. It is a real problem." What is sexual harassment, and what can you do about it? Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination. It is an unwelcome advance, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which is offensive and unwanted. Sometimes there is a direct threat, but more often a subtle one that a refusal to submit to sexual or social relations will adversely affect a person's employment or academic standing.

Such harassment violates state and federal law.

Statistics compiled by the EEOC indicate that the overwhelming majority of victims are women harassed by men. There have been reports, however, of men sexually harassed by women and of men and women being sexually harassed by members of their own sex.

The purpose of this column is to advise any reader who may be a victim of sexual harassment that such behavior can and should be resisted. The first step is to make the harasser aware of your objection to such conduct. If the harassment continues, put your complaint in writing and ask for a prompt written response. Contact the personnel department or the affirmative action officer of your employer or academic institution. If you have a grievance procedure, use it. If for any reason you lose your job or suffer from a change of assignments or working conditions, contact one of the agencies listed below immediately.

Michigan Department of Civil Rights  
District Office  
309 North Washington Square  
Lansing, MI 48913  
Telephone: (517) 373-3590

U.S. Employment Opportunity Commission  
231 W. Lafayette Street Room 461  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Telephone: (313) 226-7636

Michigan Employment Security Commission  
EEO Division  
7310 Woodward Room 605  
Detroit, Michigan 48202  
Telephone: (313) 876-5544

Michigan Task Force on Sexual Harassment  
in the Workplace  
c/o Office of Women and Work  
P.O. Box 30015  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 373-9475

A pamphlet published by the Michigan Task Force on Sexual Harassment and reprinted by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights served as a resource for this article.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
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