

## Technology In Women's Lives: Labor Saving or Enslaving?

The Center for Women and Work's annual "Gathering at the Well" forum, held on April 11, focused on the effect of technology on women's work lives. While technology is commonly presented as having a liberating effect on people's lives, a more critical look reveals how, in many cases, it is shaped and designed in ways that serve and perpetuate gendered social perceptions.

This year's featured speakers were Maria Papesh from the Lowell National Historical Park and Roslyn Feldberg from the Massachusetts Nurses Association. Before coming to Lowell, Maria Papesh worked as a Park Ranger in a wide variety of National Parks across the country. Papesh's presentation on the lives of the Lowell mill girls in the 19th century incorporated personal stories and demonstrated how even though technology opened new opportunities for young women to leave their parents' homes and enter the work market, they still had to struggle to organize and improve their poor working conditions. Roslyn Feldberg, Ph.D., is a sociologist who has been studying and observing women's employment for over 25 years. For the last 18 years, she has done so from her position as the Associate Director of Labor Relations for the Massachusetts

Nurses Association. From that vantage point, Dr. Feldberg has observed the ways in which new technologies are introduced into hospitals and has heard nurses describe how these innovations have or have not helped them care for their patients. Prior to this work, she studied clerical workers, focusing on how new technologies affected both the organization of that work and the employees' experience of the work. Dr. Feldberg's examples of the purchase and use of medical technology in hospitals illustrated how considerations other than quality of care influence decision makers. She emphasized that in many cases what solves the problem is not technology itself but the discussion with end users about their needs.



From left: Sue Harris, conference coordinator; Maria Papesh, featured speaker; Meg Bond, CWW director; Roslyn Feldberg, featured speaker, and Sivan Daniel, featured speaker

Sivan Daniel, CWW staff member and community psychology graduate student, presented a slide show entitled: "Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home

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## Student Research Promotes the Goals of the Center

One of the goals of the Center for Women and Work is to build linkages—both within UMass Lowell and throughout the Greater Lowell community. Graduate students working at the Center are particularly encouraged to develop thesis and project topics that involve research on gender and diversity issues. This spring we are pleased to feature the work of Jennifer Gooch, Susanne Harris, Amy Henniger and Alketa Kalaja.

Jennifer Gooch's research hypothesizes a positive correlation between the experience of being publicly sexually harassed and the extent of one's tendency to self-objectify. Sexual harassment of women by men in public spaces is a pervasive occurrence in North American culture. A common myth assumes women enjoy having their body, dress, and general physical appearance evaluated by unknown men while occupying public spaces. Research shows the opposite to be true, and women demonstrate fear and anger as a result of being publicly harassed. More recently, research on general harassment has shown a connection to body image dysphoria and disturbed eating habits. Jen's research builds on objectification theory, which posits that because the U.S. culture overly sexualizes the female body, women are at risk for becoming preoccupied with their appearance. The theory postulates negative health consequences, such as body shame, can appear as a result of women self-objectifying and becoming overly self-conscious of their appearance. Results indicated a relationship between self-objectification and body shame, but not between public sexual harassment and self-objectification. Feminist identity and social support were also assessed, and it seems that they can buffer the negative health outcomes of self objectification.

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**Susanne Harris'** project is based on her practicum work at SuitAbility in Lowell. SuitAbility is a non-profit organization that provides appropriate interview clothing, at no cost, to those who are actively seeking employment through a job-training program. Sue has designed and implemented a pilot mentoring program for clients of this small, non-profit organization. Working closely with the executive director of SuitAbility, Kathy Hayes, she ran focus groups for interested mentors and mentees, designed interview questionnaires for prospective participants, assigned mentor/mentee matches based on interview input, and designed a pretest/post-test survey and qualitative data report for assessing program effectiveness. The status of the program to date includes successful meetings between mentoring pairs and an initial group meeting held at one of the mentors' homes. The program will continue to be administered by one of the staff at SuitAbility and additional funding sources are currently being sought to expand the program.

**Amy Henniger's** project focuses on the sense of community at work. Although it can be difficult to foster a sense of community in the workplace, it is also a setting where community and teamwork can have huge payoffs, both for the profit of the organization and for the individuals involved. Amy is surveying a company's employees about workplace experiences that relate to sense of community. She is looking at four main factors that may influence sense of community: job demands, job control, fair interpersonal treatment and opportunities for interaction. The research site is a wholesale grower of plants, and a major contributor in the New Hampshire horticulture industry, with an extremely diverse staff. The measure of a sense of community is based on Lambert and Hopkins' work (1995). The index captures the extent to which workers identify with the company, and are committed to staying there, while also believing that the company identifies with them, cares about them, and is committed to keeping them. The results of the study will be used by the

company to focus future initiatives.

**Alketa Kalaja** is involved in a qualitative research study, which is examining the quality of parent-child relationships and adjustment in Asian American families. Negotiating between different cultural values may pose an added strain for immigrants, especially in the relationships among family members. This is a continuation of the work of Dr. Khanh Dinh, a faculty member in the Psychology Department. The main objective is to explore the inter-relationships among cultural values, quality of parent-child relationships, and psychological well-being as reported by Asian American college stu-

dents. Gender and generation status will also be taken into consideration in this investigation. Thirty students participated in 30-minute interview sessions, in which they were asked questions relating to life satisfaction, parent-child relationship and attitudes toward the Asian culture. The analysis of the data will be guided by grounded theory, which allows the researcher to derive themes from the study of the phenomenon. The results from this study will contribute to our current understanding of relationship dynamics within Asian immigrant families and will have implications for future research with immigrant populations.

## Announcing 2003-04 Acting Directors

**C**WW Senior Associates Paula Rayman, Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development, and Laura Punnett, Sc.D., Professor in the Department of Work Environment, will take over the leadership of the Center during 2003-04. As acting co-directors, their focus for the year will be to enhance the intellectual community of CWW and to foster new collaborations. Meg A. Bond will be on sabbatical for the year as a visiting scholar at the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center and devoting her time to writing about her long-term collaboration on workplace diversity issues with a regional production firm.



## CWW Lowell Women's Week's Celebrations: Open House, Film Festival and More

As part of Lowell Women's Week, CWW celebrated its new home in Coburn Hall with an open house honoring those involved in the transformation of Coburn B11 into professional office space central to CWW's activity. To symbolize the contributions of the many individuals whose efforts provided the "building blocks" of the new Center, guests in attendance were asked to personalize brightly colored wooden blocks by adding their signature as well as colorful designs to the blocks. In ceremonial fashion, each guest took a turn placing their unique block upon a foundation as they articulated their vision for CWW and wished the Center prosperity. This symbolic ritual underscores our assertion that the success of CWW is highly dependent upon the many individuals whose efforts have and will continue to provide the "building blocks" of our well-established foundation.



CWW Open house. From top left: Jennifer Gooch, Ana Valdez, Courtney Shull, Dianne Cazeca, Sue Harris, Youngju Seo and Meg Bond

The celebration was preceded by a talk by Dr. Maria Julia Brunette of the Department of Work Environment entitled: "Women's Perceptions of their Conditions of Work in Peru: Do They Differ from Those of Men?" Dr. Brunette presented the results of a study conducted among manufacturing workers in Lima, Peru. The goal of the study was to explore the relationships between various aspects of the work environment and workers' health and satisfaction. Certain socio-economic variables were also included in the analysis of gender differences among these Peruvian workers.

Following Dr. Brunette's talk, the CWW and the Gender and Development Group held the First Mini-Film Festival on International Women's Work and Lives. Two films were shown. The first, *Working Women of the World*, depicted the harsh realities of globalization and its impact on women workers. The second, the highly acclaimed *Chain of Love*, is about the Philippines' second largest export product—maternal love, and producer-care giving women workers—and shows how this export affects the women involved, their families in the Philippines, and families in the West. The events were supported by the Council on Diversity and Pluralism. The films were purchased with a grant from the UML Bookstore Fund.

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to Office." The pictures of ads for domestic and office appliances from the 1930s to the 1960s were taken from a book by Ellen Lupton, which incorporates a feminist critique on the social shaping and gendered messages of technology and design. Discussants formed a "Listening Panel" and shared their own



Listening Panel — From left: Susan Goodwin, Rita Mercier, Jeanne Osborne and Maureen Ridge

visions for an empowering relationship between women and technology. The panel included Susan Goodwin,

UMass Lowell Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance; Rita Mercier, Mayor of the City of Lowell; Jeanne Osborne, Director of the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce; and Maureen Ridge, Public Services Division Director of SEIU Local 285. The forum started with a musical performance by Amy Henniger and Imogene Stulken from UMass Lowell, and ended with a creative opportunity for participants to make a representation of their own vision of technology in women's lives from various materials provided to each table.

This year marks Susanne Harris' fourth, and unfortunately last, year as a stellar forum coordinator. Other planning committee members included Dianne Cazeca, Sivan Daniel, Jennifer Gooch, Imogene Stulken, Robin Toof, and Meg Bond. The forum was funded by the UMass Lowell Council on Diversity and Pluralism, the Committee of Federated Centers and Institutes, and the Bookstore.



CWW would like to thank Sue Harris for four years of great devoted work in coordinating our annual forum "Gathering at the well."



## CWW Staff at the Toronto Conference on Occupational Stress and Health

Lana Tsurikova and Dianne Cazeca, graduate students at CWW, each presented the results of their research as part of a competitively selected interactive poster session held at the *5th Interdisciplinary Conference on Occupational Stress and Health* during March in Toronto, Canada. The conference, entitled “Work, Stress, and Health: New Challenges in a Changing Workplace,” was organized by the American Psychological Association (APA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the School of Business, Queen’s University, Canada.

Tsurikova’s study, entitled “Professional Knowledge and Work-Family Balance for Women Psychotherapists,” was carried out under the supervision of CWW Director Meg A. Bond. The study explored the dimensions of psychotherapists’ knowledge that might be useful to work-family balance and their experience in pragmatically applying such knowledge. Lana conducted extensive interviews with 10 full-time female working psychotherapists with children under the age of 5. The interviews focused on the key challenges that the par-

ticipants face in managing their work and family demands, and the participants’ perceptions of their professional knowledge as a possible facilitator in establishing and sustaining work-family balance. Among the many notable findings, it was learned that while psychotherapists apply their professional knowledge in unique ways to establish and maintain balance between their work and family domains, they share many of the same work-family balance issues faced by other working mothers. Findings of this work will have implications not only for psychotherapists but for all those who may consider adopting professional techniques to facilitate work-family balance.

Dianne Cazeca presented a paper, entitled “Sexual Harassment in Context: Understanding Departmental Influences,” written by a multi-disciplinary team



Three graduate students who have developed thesis topics or projects involving research on issues related to women and work are, from left, Yingying Deng (RESO), Dianne Cazeca (Work Environment) and Lana Tsurikova (Community Psychology).

bridging psychology and occupational health, including CWW Director Meg A. Bond, CWW alumna Eileen Maloney, and Khanh Dinh of the Psychology Department. The study examined the relationship between departmental characteristics within the university setting that foster sexual harassment and assessed the effects of sexual harassment on the health and well being of graduate students during

their academic training. It was found that the perception of tolerance of sexual harassment within a department led to increased incidence of sexual harassment and, in turn, the experience of gender harassment was shown to adversely affect health. The main implication of these findings is that if academic environments/organizations are serious about wanting to reduce sexual harassment and thereby improve student health outcomes, then they must be *explicit* in their intolerance of such behaviors and attitudes. It is hoped that this work will enhance efforts toward the prevention of sexual harassment and thereby better enable women to pursue education and overall professional development in an atmosphere that supports their work and well being

### Selected Publications

Messing, K., Punnett, L., Bond, M.A., Alexanderson, K., Pyle, J., Zahm, S., Wegman, D., Stock, S. & Grosbois, S. Be the fairest of them all: challenges and recommendations in the treatment of gender in occupational health research. Forthcoming in *The American Journal of Industrial Medicine*.

Pyle, J. & Forrant, R. (Eds.). (2003). *Globalization, Universities, and Issues of Sustainable Human Development*. Edward Elgar Press.

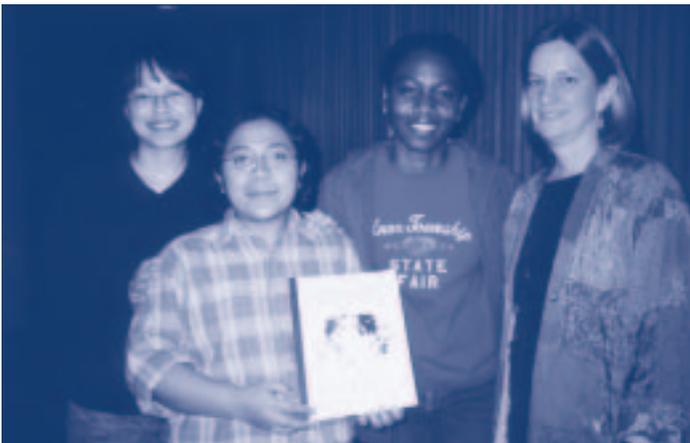
Bond, M.A. (2003) Prevention of the sexual harassment of women. In Gullotta, T. & Bloom, M. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Primary Prevention and Health Promotion*, Kluwer Publishing.



## A New Collection on International Women's Issues

Sharing information about the real conditions of women workers in diverse countries is essential for building effective strategies for women. Members of the CWW Gender and Development Group (also known as the International Women Students Group), established in 2001, have shared their experiences and knowledge about women's issues in a collection of papers, "International Women's Issues." These papers by students and faculty at UMass Lowell reveal a rich and complex picture of women's problems, concerns and situations in

different countries. The collection was compiled by Elisabeth Nophie Satya Dewi and Youngju Seo, both graduate students in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development. The group's closing meeting for the semester, and the reception for celebrating the collection of papers, were held on April 30. The group's work will continue with new members welcome to join. For more information, contact Youngju Seo (978-934-4381, Youngju\_seo@hotmail.com)



Celebrating the collection of papers. From left: Authors Youngju Seo, Elizabeth "Nophie" Satya Dewi, Mana Wambebe and CWW Director, Meg Bond

### Take Note

#### Family and Medical Leave Act at Orlando Conference

Jean L. Pyle (Senior Associate at CWW) and Marianne S. Pelletier (graduate student in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development (RESO) and active in CWW) presented their paper, "Family and Medical Leave Act: Unresolved Issues," at a conference in Orlando, Fla., on February 28. The conference was entitled "From 9-to-5 to 24/7: How Workplace Changes Impact Families, Work, and Communities" and was sponsored by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation and the Community, Families & Work Program at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. This paper will be published in the journal *New Solutions*.

### Senior Associate Spring Highlights

Laura Punnett was a plenary speaker at the 13th Annual Ergonomics Conference at the University of New Hampshire April 23. Her talk was entitled, "Do Risk Factors for Musculoskeletal Disorders Differ Between Men and Women?" She has also accepted an invitation from the Research Council of Norway to participate in an evaluation of the scientific quality of clinical, epidemiological, public health, health-related and psychological research in Norway (all universities and government agencies).

Jean L. Pyle made several conference presentations this year, including one this Spring on "An Alternative View of the Effects of Globalization: An Increase in Women in Sex, Domestic, and Export-Processing Work" at a conference co-hosted by University of California at Santa Barbara and the Global Studies Association May 1-4. The theme of the conference was

"Towards Critical Globalization Studies: Continued Debates, New Directions, and Neglected Topics."

Paula Rayman delivered the annual Zuckerman Lecture at Mt. Auburn Hospital on March 25. Her talk was entitled "Reclaiming Our Calling: Caring for the Caregivers." She is also working on a Schwartz Center Grant at Mass General Hospital, focusing on health-care workers, and is continuing her NSF-funded Project TechForce work on women and men in IT.

Meg A. Bond is scheduled to make two major conference presentations this summer on workplace diversity dilemmas and the difficulties in addressing differential privilege. The first is at the Society for Community Research and Action Biennial Conference in Las Vegas, N. Mex., June 4-6, and the second is at the Interamerican Congress of Psychology in Lima, Peru, July 14-18.



## CWW Staff Honored

**Y**oungju Seo, research assistant in the CWW, was selected recently as recipient of the prestigious Solomont Scholarship in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development (RESD). Youngju worked for the Labor Institute in South Korea (her home country) for nine years and actively participated in labor and feminist movements there. She co-edited three books: *Contingent Workers and Trade Union, A Model Agreement for Women-Friendly Work Environment, and The Reduction of Working Hours and Trade Union's Policy*. Her present research interests are on gender and development issues in South Korea.

Yingying Deng, former RA at CWW, has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in Sociology at Northwestern University where she will focus on gender issues

and economic sociology. She also received full financial support.

Sue Harris and Amy Henniger were selected this year's Outstanding Graduate Students in Community Social Psychology. Sue has been coordinator of CWW's annual forum since 2000 and has done her master's project on mentoring for women making the transition from welfare to work. Amy was a CWW staff member during 2001-02, and is currently writing her master's thesis on issues of workplace diversity.

Mary Lee Dunn was selected this year's Outstanding Graduate Student in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development. Mary Lee was very active in the CWW during our initial start-up phase.

## Differing patterns of working conditions, stress and health in Sweden

**A**nnika Harenstam, Ph.D., from the Swedish National Institute for Working Life, presented a multivariate approach to occupational health studies, with results from the Swedish "MOA" study. The holistic approach revealed conditions that are important for health and had higher explanatory power in relation to ill-health than applying socio-economic groupings or the demand-control-support model. It showed how psychosocial, ergonomic-physical and occupational-hygiene fac-

tors combine and interact to create settings with different risks of ill-health. The chosen strategy is recommended for future occupational health studies and is particularly suitable as guidance for preventive actions relevant to specific clusters of working and living conditions. Annika's talk was organized by the Department of Work Environment and co-sponsored by the Center for Women and Work.

### The Center for Women and Work 2002/3

Director: Meg A. Bond

Senior Associates:  
Laura Punnett, Jean L. Pyle  
and Paula Rayman

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Sue Harris, Alketa Kalaja,  
Youngju Seo, Courtney Shull,  
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