

LABOR CENTER REPORTER

Institute of Industrial Relations • University of California, Berkeley

Work and Family

Issue

By Netsy Firestein

Family Issues are Union Issues

Family issues include traditional guarantees for decent wages, health care, pension benefits, vacation and sick time and an eight hour day. Family issues also include workplace policies and benefits that allow workers to care for their families and earn a living wage such as child care, elder care, paid family leave, shorter work weeks, flexible work schedules and other benefits. Unions are in the forefront of those advocating for these benefits for working families no matter what their income, job or work schedule may be.

Everyone at some time needs child care, flexible hours, paid family leave or eldercare services. But not everyone has access to these kinds of benefits. Families today work long hours, take kids to school, try to get home in time for the baseball game, attend school conferences and student performances, help older parents with finances or meals, and make arrangements for home health care or nursing homes for elderly parents. The list goes on and on and it looks like there's no relief. Besides juggling all these demands, working families need time to be families. They need time to relax, time to volunteer in the community and time to

Continued on Page 6

Inside

Labor Center Notes

Page 2

Bargaining for Telecommuting

Page 3

Coalitions for Child Care

Page 4

New Labor Center Staff

Page 6

The Work Family Tight Rope

Page 9

Letters

Page 10

In The Next Issue:

**"Unions,
 Politics and
 Democracy"**

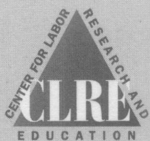
Unions Successfully Bargain Family Care Via Collaborative Strategies

by Lea Grundy and Greig Guthey

At first glance, the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) in Boston, MA and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 2 in San Francisco, CA appear worlds apart. HUCTW's 3,700 members are 83 percent women, all of whom are English speakers working one of the top universities in the country. HERE Local 2 is a 7,000 member melting pot of immigrants from around the world working at 37 hotels. Workers speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Tagalog, to name only a few languages.

But at the bargaining table, both unions set priorities on family benefits based on surveys of their membership. Indeed both won similar benefits centered on flexibility and affordability by using participatory and collaborative bargaining strategies. While different in many ways, their efforts show workers no matter what their backgrounds share common concerns about balancing work obligations and family responsibilities. Through innovative contract solutions, unions like HERE Local 2 and HUCTW are helping keep working parents from falling off the work/family tightrope.

Continued on Page 8



Faculty Sponsor

Kim Voss

Editor

Greig Guthey

Staff Editor

Jacob A. Ely

Editorial Board

Terrence K. Huwe
Head Librarian, Institute
of Industrial Relations

Isaac Mankita
Vice-Chair, Center for
Latin American Studies

Gene Vrana
Research Librarian,
ILWU

Steve Moler
Asst. Director Public
Relations, Operating
Engineers, Local 3

Kirsten Spalding
Chair, Center for Labor
Research and Education

Mara Math
Labor Representative

Andrew Perrin
Sociology

How to Reach Us

Phone: 510-642-0323

Fax: 510-642-6432

E-mail: clre@socrates.berkeley.edu

[http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/
clre/clre.html](http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/clre/clre.html)

The Labor Center Reporter welcomes suggestions for future issues as well as submissions. Submissions should be 500 - 1000 words in length.

The articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Center for Labor Research and Education, the Institute of Industrial Relations, or the University of California. Each author is solely responsible for the contents of his or her article. Labor organizations and their press associations are encouraged to reproduce any LCR articles for further distribution.

LABOR CENTER NOTES

The big news is that we are fully staffed, up and running at full-speed with the addition of Labor Policy Specialists Carol Zabin and Katie Quan and our new Program Coordinator, Rebecca Armstrong. (See our welcome on page 6). This means we have energy for new projects—conferences, trainings, and research. Over the next two months we will be developing our strategic plan, so this is the moment to get involved in the Labor Center and call us with suggestions for new directions or themes for our work. Our mission continues to be to support the labor movement, to bring university resources to labor and to engage faculty and students in research on labor's policy questions.

The summer plans for the Labor Center are exciting. We will be hosting the Summer Institute for Union Women from July 6-11 with the Labor Occupational Health Project. This week-long residential course for union leaders, shop stewards and rank and file members offers courses in leadership skills, the nuts and bolts of collective bargaining and political action. The program includes a full range of seminars on innovative topics such as Ergonomics, Welfare Reform, Popular Economics and Workers Rights. Besides studying, there will be social events, cultural nights, discussion groups and fun.

Katie will be working on a Living Wage Summit, here at UC Berkeley July 18-19. This conference will explore issues of setting living wage standards in developing countries as part of our global labor strategies. July 26-31, I will be teaching a week-long course on Active Ownership for union pension trustees at the AFL-CIO's George Meany Center in Silver Springs Maryland. Carol will be continuing her research on bi-national industry restructuring in the electronics industry in Mexico and the US. She will also be working on issues of immigrant organizing in Los Angeles.

We hope to see you all at the CLRE party at the California Labor Federation's Annual Convention July 21 at the Marriott in Oakland. If you haven't been to see us in awhile, come visit our library and drop in to tell us what your union is working on.

Kirsten Snow Spalding, Chair

Bargaining for Telecommuting: The Answer for Families or the Erosion of Union Protections?

by Kirsten Snow Spalding and Lisa Epstein

Telecommuting is generally defined as working from a location remote from a traditional worksite and often involves working at home. Employers in office environments are increasingly proposing this form of work as a bargaining demand. They see telecommuting as a way to increase productivity, reduce departmental office space, reduce commute time and improve air quality in urban areas. Some union members are also pressuring unions to bargain for telecommuting as a way to greater employee autonomy, work time flexibility and independence. Other potential benefits include more time with families and the reduction of expenses associated with clothing, travel, and the costs of meals outside the home. But there are potential pitfalls that unions should confront when they bargain to permit telecommuting.

An on-going project by UC Berkeley researcher Lisa Epstein reflects both the potential benefits and pitfalls to telecommuting. Epstein has conducted twenty informal interviews with non-union white collar telecommuters. While these interviews are not representative of all telecommuters, they raise some of the issues in balancing family and work by telecommuting.

For example, one source, Tina, telecommutes four days a week and has an eighteen month old daughter. She is the primary caretaker for her daughter, and her only assistance on days she telecommutes is a mother's helper for four hours a week. Telecommuting gives her flexibility, enabling her to work around her daughter's schedule. While her daughter is still sleeping, Tina gets up at 4:30 a.m. to begin her work day. She gets half her day in before her daughter wakes up and then the rest in when her daughter is napping and after she goes to bed. By contrast, two other sources, Andrea and her husband Michael, both telecommute. They have a full-time nanny take care of their eight month old son, even on days they telecommute. Another telecommuter, Sam, does not need childcare arrangements because his wife is a full time homemaker. He benefits by telecommuting by being able to spend more time with his family; when he takes a break from his work, he hangs out with his children rather than his co-workers.

In all of these cases, the telecommuters made individual choices about what childcare arrangements would work for their families. This is not always what happens. In the case of another interviewee, Sarah, the company requires employees to have outside childcare arrangements before they will allow telecommuting. As a result, the flexibility benefits of the telecommuting may be lost.

In weighing telecommuting as an option, many of Epstein's interviewees said that they were more productive because when they were working from home they were free from interruptions of people coming by the office, the phone ringing constantly, e-mails blinking. Stephanie says, "It's much easier to concentrate on my work, surprisingly with the baby around." Andrea finds telecommuting has "affected my work [in] that I work longer hours and I work harder at home because there's no interruptions. It's very intensive."

Continued on Page 11

Working Together for Kids

Fact: Child care workers earn less than parking lot attendants and animal caretakers.

Fact: Only 8% of working women have jobs that provide help with child care.

Fact: 7 out of 10 public schools have no after-school programs.

Unions have a long history of winning child care benefits for members. Now we are joining with child care advocates to make things better for all working families. Here is what you can do:

Sign a postcard telling Congress we need high quality, affordable child care. Get other working parents to sign. The AFL-CIO will deliver the postcards to Congress.

Call the AFL-CIO Working Women's Dept. for free postcards and for more information. 1-888-971-9797

Coalitions for Child Care Outside 9 to 5

by Aikya Param

More and more businesses are running seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. The constantly changing and unusual work schedules of these businesses make providing appropriate child care services for workers' children a critical issue.

Take the case of Oregon-based flight attendants. Two-thirds of these workers have difficulty balancing work commitments with child care responsibilities, according to a recent study funded by the state's Department of Health and Human Services.

These flight attendants are not alone. Increasing numbers of families have both parents working or are single parent households.

To address the child care needs of workers, some unions are negotiating benefits like on-site child care, child care subsidies, and resource and referral services in their union contracts. Several unions are also taking further initiative by forming coalitions with governments, childcare providers, and employers whose workers may not be unionized but who do work non-standard hours. Together they are creating options that expand available child care services for workers with work schedules outside the 9 to 5 working day.

Innovative solutions through partnerships

One such collaboration provides expanded days and hours of existing child care services. Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Tonawanda, New York created a coalition of unions and employers seeking

solutions to similar child care needs. The consortium includes UAW/General Motors Power Train Local 774, UAW/American Axle and Manufacturing Local 846, UAW/Delphi Thermal Local 686, and DuPont. The collaboration is called the Western New York Family Care Consortium.

The group offers members priority enrollment in child care services and a discount rate during the hours they need it — from 5:30 A.M., through the day, and during late night hours. The group has funded the development of before and after school programs, and refers parents to holiday and vacation care. In addition to these services, the program provides an emergency telephone network which parents can call when their regular child care is not available.

In 1996, this consortium received a \$100,000 grant from New York State to expand its child care programs. Thus government participation began in what is now considered a model public/private partnership in New York State.

Work and Families by the Numbers

Number ¹ of fathers out of 10 who work	9
Number of mothers out of 10 who work	7
Percent of mothers in the labor force with children under one year old	54.3
Percent of mothers in the labor force with children under two years old	63.3
Percent of married couples with children under 18 in which both spouses work	63.9
Number ² of families maintained by women	14 million
Number of women-maintained families below poverty line	4.2 million
Percent ³ of women with children under five who say "finding affordable child care" is a serious problem	56
Approximate number ⁴ of households out of four providing informal care to a relative or friend age 50 or older, currently or within the last 12 months	1
Percent caregivers working full- or part-time	64
Percent caregivers caring for children under 18 at the same time as elderly relatives or friends	41
Number of wage and salary workers in the U.S. out of four who have access to elder care resource and referral services through an employer	1

¹ Current Population Survey, 1996. "Employment Characteristics of Families" URL: <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nws.htm>

² U.S. Department of Labor Womens Bureau. "20 Facts on Working Women". URL: http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs.

³ U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, 1994. "Working Women Count! A Report to the Nation, Executive Summary" URL: http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Womens Bureau, 1998. "Work and Elder Care: Facts for Caregivers and their Employers" URL: http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/

Creative Approaches to Child Care

Another solution supported by labor-management-government coalitions is to create a completely new child care center for workers on nonstandard shifts.

In 1982 in San Mateo County, California, Mary Pesche, Executive Director of the Child Care Coordinating Council worked with Jerry Nelson, Assistant General Chair, International Associations of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge 141, and the San Mateo AFL-CIO Central Labor Council to increase public support for expanded child care services for San Francisco airport workers.

In 1989, the San Francisco International Airport Administration got employers involved in the child care project. The administration and employers paid to mail a needs assessment questionnaire to airport workers. The study revealed that child care was a major concern for workers whose hours are not 9 to 5.

The survey found that those who had a relative to help out with child care had the flexibility and quality care desired. But with or without family support, the study found many airport workers needed to use multiple care providers, have a good back-up care arrangement and change their work schedules when necessary.

To help workers meet their family care needs, United Airlines Foundation, various local unions, Boeing, Collins Aviation, and the San Francisco Airport Commission worked together to create Palcare in Burlingame. It opened in 1993.

In recognition that the airport was the county's largest employer, San Mateo County officials agreed to buy a building for Palcare, renovate it and then charge rent that is below market rates. Mary Pesche said, "We worked on it for years. (It seemed like) nothing really happened until the employers got involved."

A similar service is provided at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City by Bright Horizons, a company with more than 100 child care centers across the country.

Consortiums provide adequate financing.

The key to success for such child care initiatives is finding sufficient financing. The cost of paying teachers in the hours when attendance is sparse, before 6:00 A.M. and after 9:00 P.M., is very high. Yet these are the most critical service hours for some employees.

For this reason, coalitions between unions, governments and employers can prove essential for the success of a child care program for workers with non-standard work schedules. A single organization may find the cost daunting for such specialized child care. But together, they can shoulder the costs, according to Cynthia Ransom, Vice President for Planning at Bright Horizons. "You need financial resources," Ransom said.

The demand for adequate child care outside the traditional work week, care for sick and school age children is likely to increase sharply as welfare reform sends increasing numbers of parents into the work force. Collaborations for child care, perhaps initially spearheaded by unions for their members, can effectively serve the larger community and could provide benefits beyond a solution to the original problem.

Aikya Param publishes "Women and Money: Economic Justice and Empowerment Report." For a free copy of the monthly report, send your name and mailing address to: aikya@ix.netcom.com or to P.O. Box 4193, Berkeley, CA 94704-0193. For subscription information, to read past articles, or to have a free article sent via e-mail to you each month, sign up at <http://www2.netcom.com/~aikya/womenandmoney.html>

Contacts for further information:

The Oregon Flight Attendant Study:

Alyce M. Desrosiers, LCSW for the full study "Airlines, Flight Attendants and Dependent Care" by Desrosiers, and Arthur Emlen, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at Portland State University: 415-441-8447.

The Western New York Family Care Consortium:

Angie Kleeh at the Childcare Network for information: 716-639-0717.

On the San Mateo Child Care initiative:

The Child Care Coordinating Council on Pal Care: 650-696-8780
Jerry Nelson at District Lodge 141 of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers on Palcare: 650-873-0662
Nirmala Dillman at Palcare : 650-340-1289



Labor News For Working Families

"Labor News for Working Families" is the only publication in the country which covers unions and work/family issues. It includes model contract language on child care, family leave, flexible work schedules, sick child care, elder care and more. It also covers current and proposed legislation on work and family, and other work/family news items particularly related to labor unions on these issues. To order the quarterly newsletter, send \$25.00 to Labor Project for Working Families, I.I.R., 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.

For a sample copy or more information, call 510-643-6814 or check our web page:

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/workfam/home.html>

Labor on the Cutting Edge An Online Forum

Join us at *Labor On the Cutting Edge*, the online forum on the most current, cutting edge issues in the labor movement.

Each week we will wrestle with the ideas, opinions, and actions which working people face. We'll pose a tough issue, and you provide the commentary. You'll also get to vote on controversial issues affecting labor.

Whether you are a union member, an employer, or an interested citizen, you will find the discussion lively and provocative.

Join us at: <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/clre/LOCE.html>

Welcome!!

The Labor Center Reporter is happy to welcome our three new Labor Center staff!

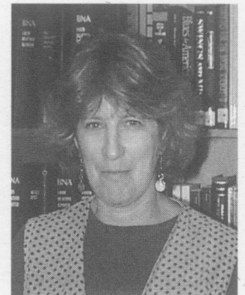
Katie Quan joins CLRE as a Labor Policy Specialist after many years as an active member of the Advisory Board. Quan is a graduate of UC Berkeley, and was formerly manager of the Pacific Northwest District Council of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), and an international vice-president of UNITE. Quan has worked in New York City as a rank and file seamstress and as a union organizer, and is particularly interested in global strategies and labor policies which enhance the empowerment of women workers.



In April, **Rebecca Armstrong** joined the Labor Center as a program coordinator. Rebecca spent the last 3 years coordinating an international, inter-disciplinary seminar program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A native of Ann Arbor, Rebecca spent the last year traveling from the Pacific Northwest to Costa Rica. Rebecca comes to the Labor Center with a strong commitment to the community and has spent time participating in and producing community based radio programs both here in the Bay Area and in Costa Rica.



Carol Zabin is an economist who joins CLRE from the UCLA Labor Center. Dr. Zabin is a researcher and educator specializing in the areas of immigration, labor, and community economic development. She has worked closely with immigrant organizations and unions in California, and has spent many years working with campesino organizations in Mexico. Zabin received her Ph. D. from UC Berkeley and was previously a professor at Tulane University and UCLA.



"Family Issues", continued from page 1

spend with children, grandparents and relatives. Yet, increasing numbers of women are in the workforce. And many families require two or three jobs just to make a living. Working families are struggling with managing home and work responsibilities.

Families need benefits and policies at the workplace that allow them to be families. However our workplaces are not always designed with families in mind. Some work/family policies are for the employer's benefit. For example, sick child care centers allow workers to go to work rather than stay home to care for sick children. Compressed work weeks of 10 to 12 hour days may accommodate the employer rather than the worker. There are services that will help with eldercare responsibilities.

Continued on next page

ties or assist children with their homework. Some of these policies do not necessarily allow workers more family time. Instead, they allow people to have their families taken care of so they can work. While such programs are certainly necessary, they are not all that is needed.

Often what workers need is more time and less stress. There are terrific and innovative programs and benefits for families being negotiated by unions such as paid leave, child care subsidies, flexible work schedules and eldercare resource and referral services. There are models of labor and management working together on work/family issues - innovative collaborations to develop extended child care and child/eldercare committees working to come up with solutions. Unions are also pioneering benefits for low wage workers, child and eldercare development funds, retirement support programs and child care beyond 9 to 5.

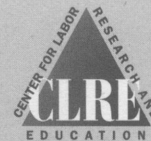
However the majority of workers do not have access to work/family benefits. Contingent workers, low wage and low skilled workers and those working for small employers rarely get benefits such as child care or paid family leave. For those working non-traditional hours, child care is often difficult to find and inadequate at best. Work/family benefits will never reach a broad spectrum of workers as long as they are bargained workplace by workplace and company by company. What is needed is a national work/family policy to guarantee the kinds of benefits that families need. Such a policy would include paid family and parental leave, flexible work schedules and affordable, quality childcare. Currently if a worker has work/family benefits, it is because they belong to a union which negotiated them in a union contract or because they work for a company which provides them. If a worker changes jobs or if their non-union employer changes its policies, the worker is out of luck. Like healthcare, we cannot rely on a piecemeal system that leaves out the majority of workers.

A first step towards the kinds of work policies families need was the Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides parental leave for private sector workers. There are now attempts to expand the FMLA in Congress. Several states including New Jersey, California and Massachusetts either have proposed bills to provide paid leave for FMLA through the state's temporary disability system or are considering such bills. Many unions have expanded on the Family and Medical Leave Act by negotiating stronger family leave provisions. These may provide paid leave, leave for all employees at a work site or extend the length of leave. There are also state and federal initiatives to provide funding for afterschool programs, expand tax credits for child care, allow sick leave to be used for family members and other family-related legislation.

The AFL-CIO has embarked on a National Child Care Campaign, along with other organizations including the Center for the Child Care Workforce, to advocate for more money in the child care system, more after-school programs and higher wages and benefits for child care providers. In addition, labor advocates in many local communities are involved with efforts to increase the supply of child care, raise providers' wages and expand family benefits through legislation.

Work and family issues are part of the whole picture of the workplace. Family issues and family life are an essential ingredient in examining

Continued on page 10



Calendar

June 12-14 Labor and Social Action Summer School at Sonoma State University. This leadership program for youth, labor and community activists offers workshops, plenary sessions and cultural programs designed to empower participants to become more effective leaders and members of their respective organizations. For more information call: 707-545-7349 ext. 18.

July 6-11 17th Annual Summer Institute of Union Women. "Working Women Working Together". Week long residential course for women. Classes, plenary sessions, cultural and social events. Train the trainer programs, political activism, leadership development themes. Co-sponsored by LOHP, UCLEA and AFL-CIO Education Department.

July 21 UCLA and UC Berkeley Labor Centers are throwing a party for all California labor leaders at the California Labor Federation Annual Convention, Marriott Hotel, Oakland.

July 18-19, Living Wage Working Summit. The Labor Center, Institute for International Studies and Sweatshop Watch are hosting a conference at UC Berkeley which will focus on how to compute "living wages" as part of international standards for multinational corporations and will also launch a campaign on behalf of garment, textile and shoe workers.

September 17 Building and Construction Trades organizers program at Hs. Lordships on the Berkeley Marina. The Labor Center will host a luncheon program for organizers to discuss new strategies and success stories in their organizing campaigns.

October 8-9, the 1998 ALJA Forum. The annual Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board conference of the Administrative Law Judges Association will be held at the Kona Kai Hotel on Mission Bay in San Diego. For more information call, (626) 304-7926.

Changing Conceptions of Work

After a ten year struggle for recognition, the HUCTW sat down at the bargaining table to face a set of high level unmarried managers who did not think that the university should be in the business of child care. Their job, they reasoned, was education and research.

But, child care was one of the central issues for many of the new union's membership. According to lead organizer Kris Rondeau, the union looked at family issues in two ways, as a time and flexibility issue and as a money and affordability issue. Successfully negotiating family benefits meant not only getting money but redefining work at Harvard University.

To do this meant allowing flexibility in scheduling, teamwork, and fewer workrules to enable workers to negotiate their worktime more easily. This fit with the unions strategy of using more participatory and cooperative bargaining strategies rather than confrontation at the bargaining table. By using this approach HUCTW negotiators were able to get support for family benefits from those managers who had families and had experienced the same tensions between work obligations and family responsibilities. Work/family constraints affect managers as well.

True to its continuous organizing strategies, the union also added in its own measure of membership activism to influence Harvard negotiators by redefining the kinds of workers they were. They held "baby picket lines," handed out peanut butter sandwiches and balloons to spotlight the fact HUCTW members were workers, parents and family members both inside and outside their offices. For the union members, family boundaries do not stop at the university gates.

HUCTW negotiators won their family benefits. The results of their negotiations include:

- A child care fund to subsidize licensed childcare based on financial need. The fund started at \$50,000 annually but has since grown to \$175,000 annually and includes grants for after-school programs for members' children.
- The right to use sick time to care for sick family members.
- Up to 13 weeks paid maternity leave for biological mothers and up to 13 weeks paid leave for biological fathers and adoptive parents to take care of their newborn or newly adopted child.

Accommodating Multiple Schedules and Values With One Plan

Hotel and Restaurant workers schedules are anything but regular, often requiring night shifts and early morning hours. As a result, family care is a priority for the HERE Local 2 workers in San Francisco. This much Union President Michael Carey knew when he began planning for contract negotiations in 1994.

But he didn't know what strategies to use at the bargaining table. Casey consulted the Labor Project for Working Families at the The University of California, Berkeley's Institute of Industrial Relations for help and advice. The project advocates on work/family issues and can provide contract language examples for union negotiators.

As a result, Casey was ready when industry officials came to the table complaining about high absenteeism and low productivity. He proposed they try reducing the work/family strains on workers by starting a child and elder care fund managed by a labor-management committee. Industry officials agreed.

The Local 2/Hospitality Industry Child and Elder Care Plan started out using surplus contributions from another health fund. Contributions were calculated at five cents per worker per hour worked, but have since risen to 15 cents per worker per hour worked. Because the funds originally came from an already existing fund, there was no cost to management. When the surplus does run out, the parties have agreed to continue the 15 cent contributions in 1998 and 1999.

The question was how to use this fund for the benefit of Local 2 members. The labor management-committee contacted a consultant to determine the memberships' needs. The consultant's survey found that HERE Local 2 members already had adequate informal care providers but they didn't have the money to pay them for caring for children and elder family members.

Based on the survey results, the committee decided to provide subsidies to the membership. They began receiving funds in

Continued on Next Page

1997. The benefits from the fund include:

- \$60-\$100 per month for childcare expenses
- \$125 per month for newborn expenses
- up to \$400 per year for youth programs and enrichment classes
- \$150 per month for elder and disabled adult care expenses
- Free resource and referral services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in languages appropriate to the membership

The Here Local 2/Hotel Industry fund provides workers with the flexibility and support they need to care for family members. And it does this no matter what language workers speak, what culture they have or what work schedule they are given.

Adapted from an article by Lea Grundy and Netsy Firestein originally printed in the New Labor Forum. Thanks to the New Labor Forum for allowing LCR to reprint portions of the original article.

The Work Family Tight Rope

By Lea Grundy

Working people are more than just the hours that they spend at their jobs every day. They are whole human beings with lives, families and personal needs. But in today's economy, it is growing harder and harder for working women and men to balance the demands of their jobs and the needs of their children and elders.

Across the country, unions are responding to the struggles of working families—going to the bargaining table to negotiate for benefits and policies which will make their lives a little easier. Some of the key bargaining language being developed addresses the following issues:

Child Care - the nurturing and supervision of children at home, in centers, or in home-like settings. Child care is needed not only during regular work hours for healthy kids, but also after school, in emergency situations, for sick children, on vacations and holidays, and during extended and off-hours for parents who work irregular shifts. Almost half of all workers in the United States have children younger than age 18—so reliable, affordable, high-quality child care is a national necessity.

Unions have negotiated many different kinds of child care. These include:

- Resource and referral programs
- Child care tax programs and funds
- Providing child care through on-site or near-site centers, networks of family day care homes, or subsidized slots
- Back-up and sick child care
- Allowing members to take their sick time to care for sick kids
- Extended hours day care and before/after school care

Elder Care - One reason elder care is so important is that the population of elderly people in the U.S. is expected to more than double by the year 2050 to more than 80 million people. Working people are increasingly responsible for their parents, spouses and other elders who may need constant care or just someone to drop in once in a while, to help with housework or personal care, to run errands, or to take care of other matters.

Some unions are providing services directly to address the needs of elders. Others are bargaining for benefits to retirees and members with elder care responsibilities. Strategies include:

- Resource and referral programs
- Elder care tax programs and funds
- Family leave to allow members to care for their elder dependents
- Long term care
- Support services

Parental and Family - Parental leave is time off work to bear, bond with, and/or care for newborn, newly adopted and newly placed foster children. Family leave is leave to care for sick children or other family members or to cope with other family emergencies. Short term leave allows working people to take leave in increments as short as an hour or two to deal with family needs such as attending a parent/teacher conference or taking a child to a medical appointment. Although the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) gives eligible workers some rights to unpaid leave, almost 41 million Americans are still not covered by the FMLA and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave.

While parental and family leave are often unpaid, unions have bargained for paid leave as well. Unions have also come up with many creative strategies to give working families more time to together. Strategies include:

- Family leave
- Paid and unpaid parental leave
- Part-time return to work after the birth or adoption of a child
- Short term leave in increments of a one day or just a few hours
- Expanding the definition of family to allow working people to take leave to care for grandparents, in-laws, domestic partners, etc

Alternative Schedules - Alternative work schedules allow working people to manage day-to-day family needs while keeping their jobs. Alternative schedules may be accomplished through flexible scheduling, through telecommuting or through arrangements such as job shares or part-time work with benefits. In almost all surveys on work and family issues, working families say they need more flexibility in their work schedules.

Unions have bargained for a broad range of alternative work schedules to help working people have greater control over their work lives and how they spend their time. Some strategies include:

- Flextime
- Part-time work with benefits
- Telecommuting
- Job sharing
- Compressed work weeks, such as working four ten hour shifts per week for one extra day off

Lea Grundy is a program associate at the Labor Project for Working Families

"Family Issues", continued from page 7

economic issues, work time and the structure and organization of work. And, labor unions are leading the fight for more family friendly work policies at the bargaining table and in the legislative arena. Unions advocate for all workers to be covered by work/family benefits. They negotiate for paid family leave, flexible work schedules, health coverage, quality, affordable and accessible child care, eldercare services, living wages, pensions, decent wages for families' caregivers, and paid time off for families. Unions put the needs of working families first because family issues are union issues.

Netsy Firestein is the director of the Labor Project for Working Families.

Letters...

Editor,

I am most appreciative of your item reporting the untimely death of Charles ("Charlie") Reiter, as found in your Spring, 1998 issue. However, I must take issue with a fundamental misunderstanding on your part, and a singular omission in your memorial.

As a contemporary of Bro. Reiter, of the same age and experience as a practitioner, your

chastising him for having devoted his latter career in the service of the California Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, demonstrates an ignorance of the American Trade Union movement and its success. Bro. Reiter, as am I were trained, steeped and grounded in the principles of "business unionism"; that is, our first obligation is to improve the wages, hours and working conditions of our members. Instead of our depleting our energy and resources on various and sundry social causes, whatever is in vogue at Berkeley, and other academic circles and campus romantics.

And most important, you make no mention, completely ignore, the fact that Bro. Reiter (myself, and many others) were (sic) trained, served long apprenticeship under Henry Clarke, founder and organizer of the 25,000 member *independent* PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION, Local No. 1 headquartered in Martinez, California. "Charlie" was Hank Clarke's special and beloved protégé and foremost among us who deeply mourn his passing.

Sincerely
Tom Bond

Apart from the potential problems of work intensification, another down side is that many of the telecommuters stated they expected that their career movement would be limited while they telecommuted. Andrea explains, "My career goals have just shifted focus. I'm concentrating more on my family and my family needs than I would on my actual career needs for this period of time." Tina is the first to admit she is "solidly on the 'mommy track'". It's kind of annoying sometimes as I watch people who have no more seniority than I have who are no more intelligent than I am being promoted and I'm not. But you know what? I have a better life than they do. . . it's worth it to me."

Unions fought long battles against "homework"—the home-based sweatshops where garment workers set up factories in their homes and were paid piece rates that kept them working for much less than a minimum wage. Telecommuting cannot be used as a way to make employees independent contractors or subcontractors. It cannot be seen as a way to turn full time jobs into part-time work or to save the employer from liability for job related injuries that occur during employee's telecommuting hours. It cannot be seen as a way to eliminate overtime pay or call-in pay, nor can it be used to keep the shop steward from having access to employees during their work hours. Telecommuting must not lead to a dead end in an employee's career path and certainly must not be a preliminary step in a company's plans to downsize its workforce.

What can unions do to maximize the benefits that workers like Sam, Tina, and Andrea have found without losing the battle that unions have long fought for fair wages, reasonable hours and good working conditions? For telecommuting to work, it must be subject to all of the protections of a collective bargaining agreement. Furthermore, the option of telecommuting must be voluntary on the part of the employee. The union, the employee and the employer must jointly negotiate individual arrangements that balance employers' needs, the union's interests and the family's needs. In so doing, the company may find that workers are even more dedicated to their jobs. Epstein's interviewees saw telecommuting as a benefit and expressed gratitude toward their employer for allowing them this added freedom. While telecommuting can offer potential family benefits, unions should enter this bargaining realm with caution and caveats.

Lisa Epstein is a graduate student in the Haas Business School. Kirsten Snow Spalding is the Chair of the Center for Labor Research and Education.

Get The Union Telecommuting Packet

While many unions are exploring the option of telecommuting, there are many issues and concerns for protecting workers rights. Telecommuting can isolate workers from their co-workers. Unions may not be able to organize workers who are telecommuting. Monitoring working conditions may be difficult. And employers could fire telecommuters and then contract out work to others who will work at home without benefits.

The challenge is to offer flexibility for members while retaining the strength of the union and not undermining gains unions have fought for. The Labor Project for Working Families has compiled some examples of union policies, standards, contract language and appeals procedures on telecommuting form union in the United States and Canada. To get a copy call Netsy Firestein at 510-643-6814

Responses...

Marty Morgenstern, author of the memorial, replies:

Brother Bond does well to note Charlie's involvement with Henry Clarke and the Public Employees Union, Local One. Charlie did indeed have a long and close relationship with Henry Clarke and Local One. I wrote the article to meet an urgent need, the memorial distributed at the final services for Charles, and undoubtedly left

out many of his important associations and accomplishments. To Henry, and any others who should have been acknowledged, I apologize.

Rather than chastising Charles for his work with the Building and Construction trades, the intent was to give high praise to that effort. No other reader seems to have interpreted it otherwise, but if any did, I hope this clarifies the matter.

Sincerely
Marty Morgenstern

The Labor Center Reporter welcomes your comments and criticisms. Send letters to:
Labor Center Reporter
Attn: Editor
2521 Channing Way, #5555
Berkeley, CA 94720

FMLA Pocket Guide

The California Public Employee Relations Program, at U.C. Berkeley, has published the first edition of the *Pocket Guide to the Family and Medical Leave Acts*. It is a *must* for any employee entitled to family and medical leave benefits, for union officials who are questioned about employee entitlements, and for labor relations managers charged with implementing the act.

This addition to CPER's Pocket Guide Series is a "user friendly" reference tool that explains the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and the California Family Rights Act of 1993. The 75-page paperback is a perfect training tool for both union and management practitioners who need a working knowledge of the laws' sometimes confusing (and conflicting) provisions. Its easy-to-use format makes this guide the perfect resource for resolving the practical, day-to-day questions as they emerge.

Order by calling BookMasters, Inc., toll free, at 1-800-247-6553. Visa and MasterCard orders are welcome.

17th Annual Western Regional Summer Institute for Union Women

The Summer Institute for Union Women celebrates working together and promotes an agenda for action. Come join union sisters from the Western United States for a week of solidarity, skill building and fun in Berkeley, California. The Summer Institute for Union Women brings together rank and file members, staff and officers from different unions to share ideas, learning and problem-solving in a supportive environment.

Highlights of the week include in-depth classes to build union skills, as well as workshops and plenary sessions that examine current issues ranging from the global economy to organizing marginalized workers. Cultural events and workshops on popular theatre and labor songs will take place throughout the week, inspiring us to think of new ways to link culture to organizing. A teacher apprenticeship program provides an opportunity for women to learn various teaching methods and pair up with mentor instructors.

Register now for the Western Regional Summer Institute for Union Women. Spend a week with 100 other union sisters learning new skills, sharing experiences and building leadership.

To register call Rebecca Armstrong at (510) 643-2355 or email rra@uclink4.berkeley.edu

IR-35

Center for Labor Research and Education
2521 Channing Way #5555
Berkeley, CA 94720