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OPINION

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Dating In The Workplace

BY C.M. BROOKS

Dating in the workplace. We have been bombarded with countless magazine articles from Essence to Newsweek espousing this alternative to the standard dating scene. We have viewed television talk-shows such as Oprah and Phil for insight about finding a suitable mate in the workplace. But is this widespread practice the answer to our dating woes? Or is it just the beginning to never ending problems?

Well, here is the good news, folks. Past studies have shown that work productivity is higher for those co-workers who are involved with each other. Why? The answer is quite simple. Because they are happier. They are happier with their lives and about that other individual. And when an individual is content there is tendency to work more effectively and more diligently. Work, as a result, is no longer seen as a tiresome, monotonous chore. As a matter of fact, co-workers who are involved actually want to be at their place of employment! They are not only eager to be with that special person, but they are enthusiastic about performing their work duties.

One has to honestly admit that this reason is persuasive enough to convince even the most severe critics, such as myself, that dating a co-worker is acceptable, very practical, and beneficial to some extent. But, although it is a valid reason, it is the only aspect of this type of mingling

worthy of mentioning. There are far more serious reasons why dating in the workplace should not be practiced.

PROBLEM 1: Jealousy. Not between the two people who are involved, but by other co-workers. They have a legitimate reason to feel that your time and service is being monopolized by your new romance. They may feel slighted by your lack of interest in what they are doing.

PROBLEM 2: Objectivity or Subjectivity? If you are a superior involved with a subordinate co-worker how do you rationalize a pay-raise or a promotion? How do you remain objective without alienating your other co-workers or worse, infuriating your lover! When you are involved with someone at work coupled with a position of authority, you run the risk of short-changing others who work with you. It doesn't matter if your office mate is an industrious worker, there will always be speculation about that person's vacations and job performance and problems will arise because of it.

PROBLEM 3: Employers. Employers are aware of this in-house dating and some of them don't like it for various reasons. Some employers discourage it at all levels because once the honeymoon is over, the problems begin. No one wants two people who are angry with each other over a personal issue in their place of business or people who have lost their professional

objectivity. Some workers have found themselves without a job for dating a co-worker. Yes, some businesses are so adamant about not having their co-workers involved with each other that they have terminated the romance by terminating the employees.

This writer has a strong aversion to dating a co-worker, but far be it for me to tell anyone who they should date and who they shouldn't date. I fully understand that some people do not have many opportunities to meet people other than at their job. But I will suggest that you ask yourself questions like: Can I deal with being ostracized by other co-workers? Can I handle rumors? Will I be able to deal with a break-up? How will seeing that person after a break-up affect my work performance? Can I trust that person not to divulge our private life?

If you have trouble answering these questions or have some doubt about how you might feel in this type of situation or if you have been asked by a co-worker for a date and you feel uncomfortable about it, then do what I do. I simply ask myself why am I here? Why am I working? The answers always come back to I am here for economic reasons, to develop and practice skills acquired in college, and to gain knowledge and work experience. Everything else is secondary. I don't take my work home with me and I don't bring my private life to work. Period.

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

There are several old sayings like, "it is not wise to dip your pen in company ink" and countless others that do not encourage people to date on the job. Over the last decade of my corporate life, I have not found the opportunity or met a co-worker that I felt compelled to date. Sure, I've gone to parties, movies, jogging, to concerts, and a host of other events with female co-workers, but nothing serious ever developed. It was like an unwritten rule that was never really talked about or discussed. On the other hand, I've watched other co-workers meet and fall in love instantly. Eternal bliss as they say. I've also watched friendships and ultimately failed relationships turn the workplace into a battle zone. Ugly, especially when the two people have job responsibilities that overlap and promote consistent interaction with each other. This tension can lead to someone getting fired or provoke a manager to call both of them to his/her office for a serious conference.

In the situations where I've seen these "on-the-job" relationships succeed, they have been in very large corporations or companies where there was limited contact or met in a social situation where neither knew the other worked for the same company. Corporations like Boeing, Georgia-Pacific, General Motors, and US WEST Communications might fall into this classification. It's very difficult to know

everyone that works with you. Working two different shifts is helpful too. Some companies go as far as to suggest (in writing upon being hired) that if you marry someone on the job, one of you has to leave. Other companies do not allow married couples to work in the same department. The larger the corporation, the better chance for survival in an on-the-job relationship and there are those who would debate or argue against this position. In some industries like communications for example, people date on the job all the time and some attribute this to the amount of time spent together on the job or because of the irregular work hours. All you see day in and day out are the same faces. I think that it boils down to what each individual is comfortable with or the standards they set in establishing relationships. I know countless couples at the Oregonian, KATU-TV, and other places who met their mate on the job and are happy. The situation that turned ugly was at CNN in Atlanta. An anchor person terminated a relationship with a floor director and believe me, there were some very late cues and looks into the wrong camera. It was resolved in the manager's office with a change in shifts for the floor director.

On another issue, there are those who refuse to date people in the same professional organization, health club, college/university, or church for that

matter because of their convictions. These situations, in my opinion, are great places to meet people or establish potential friendships that might lead to a relationship. Now, the big question, what constitutes working together? Working in the same office? The same company or large corporation? The same committee at church? Freelance writing for the same newspaper, where you have limited contact if any at all? Serving on the same community board? People again, define their own standards when it comes to dating. Now what constitutes dating? A movie? Jogging together? Meeting for a drink? A football game? Dating does not mean sleeping with someone. There's nothing worse than coming to work tired and teased by your co-workers when everyone knows your mate. People can be cruel. Then there are those, for their own personal reasons, do not like the idea of everyone knowing their business. Nothing as personal as a relationship should be aired out in public. Some people use work as an excuse to keep others at bay.

Though I have never had a relationship with someone at work, I will never rule out the possibility or say never. Never say never. In this day and age of confusion, moral decay, and erosion of basic values, I will take a good person or mate any day. If we know the positives and negatives surrounding our choice, then go for it. Love is where you find it.

LABOR AND INDUSTRIES COMMISSIONER MARY WENDY ROBERTS RELEASES NEW BROCHURE TARGETED AT WORKING YOUTH

Titled "Know Your Rights" this new brochure released by Commissioner Mary Wendy Roberts, is a wallet-sized hot-pink brochure that gives young people a run-down of their rights as workers.

"Young people often do not know where to turn when they have questions about the workplace," said Commissioner Roberts. "By making this brochure available to youngsters when they apply for a work permit, and by making it available to schools around the state, we hope to reach the children before they have questions-and if they still have questions, now they'll know where to call for answers."

The Bureau of Labor and Industries enforces laws protecting working Oregonians and has a long history as an advocate for working children. Oregon's first child labor laws hit the books in 1903 when children were barred from working under dangerous conditions in mills and on construction sites.

In recent years, the State Wage and Hour Commission, which is staffed by the bureau's wage and hour division, has focused on child labor issues. Its recent ruling to limit the working hours of 14

and 15 year old children during school hours, and Robert's initiation of a Child Labor Task Force illustrate a growing concern about the long range effects of work on children.

"The conflict of school and work, and the transition of students from school to meaningful work are top issues for us today," noted Roberts. "Too many children



are dropping out of school and opting for unskilled jobs that promise them only a marginal future. They are depriving themselves of an education, better career opportunities-and they are depriving Oregon of the skilled workforce it needs to compete in a global economy. Working is a great experience for many youngsters, but it

should be the concern of every Oregonian that all our children complete high school. When kids are working, their fair treatment should be our utmost concern."

"Know Your Rights" will insure that working children have a quick reference guide to their rights. The brochures are available at all bureau offices. Commissioner Roberts is also writing to all the state's school counselors to inform them about the pocket-guides and encourage distribution to all their students.

METRO AGREES TO PURCHASE SEARS BUILDING

The Metropolitan Service District will move its offices to Portland's east side Lloyd District, after reaching an agreement in principle to purchase the former Sears Building at 524 NE Grand Ave. from Pacific Development, Inc. (PDI). The purchase price is \$5.15 million.

The execution of the sale agreement is subject to an inspection of the building and a feasibility analysis which Metro will complete within 67 days. If all goes well, it's expected that Metro will renovate the building and move into its new offices in about 18 months.

The renovation is projected to cost about \$9.5 million and could potentially include removal of the facade that now covers the building, as well as construction of an atrium in the center of the building. Metro is still evaluating a number of financing options.

Metro will renovate the interior of the four-story, 183,000 square foot build-

ing for use as office and retail space. The agency plans to use about 55,000 square feet of office space and lease the remainder. The interior is currently 100% open space.

The purchase price includes an attached parking garage with 460 spaces. The basement of the building will be converted to indoor parking, giving the building a total of more than 600 parking spaces. As part of the sale agreement, Metro will assume PDI's obligation to provide up to 346 parking spaces for the new state office building being built nearby.

Rena Cusma, Metro executive officer, long expressed a desire to move the agency to the Lloyd District in order to be closer to the Oregon Convention Center and Memorial Coliseum, for which Metro has management responsibility, and to provide better accessibility for the public. Metro currently leases 45,000 square feet of space at 2000 SW First Ave. in Portland.

10th Annual TUNNEL OF TERROR



Peninsula Park Community Center
6400 N. Albina - Off Portland Boulevard



Portland Parks and Recreation

\$.50 youth through 8th grade
\$1 high school ; \$1.50 adult

We Care Fair

Come and get more informed about Foster Care and Adoption

Information Booths and workers available to answer questions
Videos of children
Testimonies of Foster and Adoption Parents

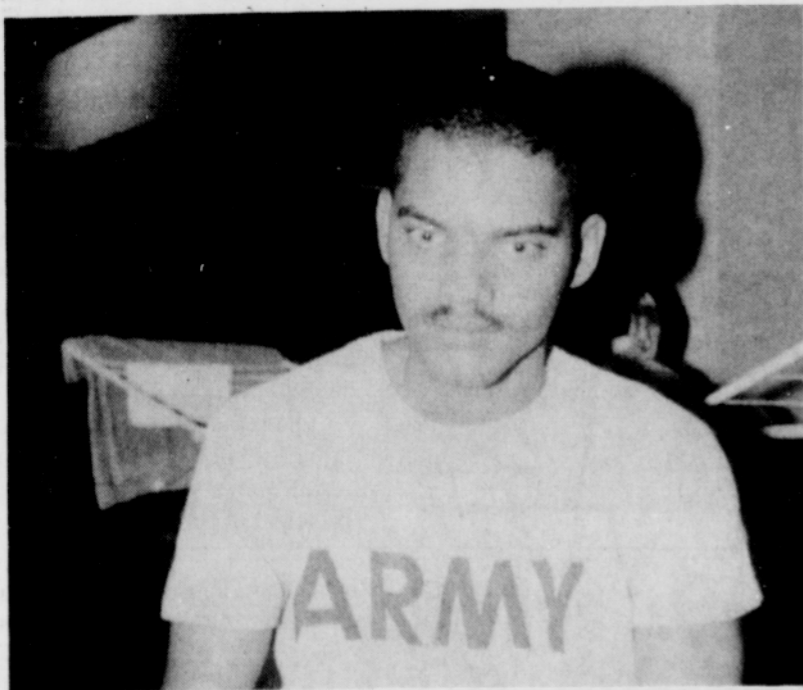
Miracles Childrens Choir and Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Choir

Refreshments

November 3, 1990 10 am-12:30 pm
Maranatha Church 4222 N.E. 12th

Sponsored by ONE CHURCH ONE CHILD/CSD

ARMY AND AIRFORCE HOMETOWN NEWS



Michael R. Harding

BY MARSHALL B. WILKINS

Eastern Saudi Arabia-A jumbo cargo aircraft, sporting a light green/dark green camouflage paint job, looks more than slightly out of place sprawled on the sun baked sandy desert floor. The "beasts'" mechanical jowls are still agape having just released a large contingent of rifle toting, backpack carrying soldiers.

Their facial features are distorted behind the tinted, oversized goggles they wear to protect themselves from relentless solar rays and seasonal sandstorms. These are faces etched in equal parts of determination, bewilderment and anticipation.

U.S. Army Spec. Michael R. Har-

ding, son of Peter and Majorie Harding, Portland, is one of the servicemembers ordered to duty in this Middle eastern country by President George Bush. He's here as a member of a multinational force to halt further Iraqi aggression.

Operation Desert Shield is the world's response to Saddam Hussein sending legions of troops storming across the border to annex tiny oil-rich Kuwait.

The reactions of soldiers here are almost as numerous as the troops that land on the swirling dusty surface planeload after planeload.

"I left Fort Monmouth August 30 and arrived here Sept. 1 excited and not knowing what to expect because I didn't know the current situation," said the 23-

year-old 1985 graduate of Jefferson High School, Portland.

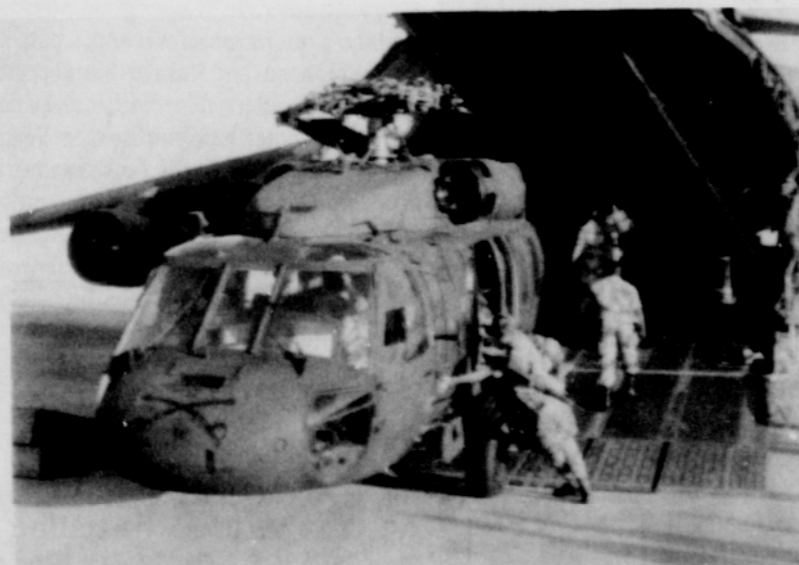
As the seemingly never-ending flow of troops continue to arrive, men and women on the ground are enhancing their defensive positions performing their job specialties and constructing makeshift living arrangements.

Harding said, "Since my arrival I have been helping set up our living an-

Kuwait's government," said the communications analyst assigned to the 174th Military Intelligence Company, Fort Monmouth, N.J.

Harding and his wife, Kelly, have one son, Michael Jr.

Soldiers march with their respective companies shortly after arrival for duty in Saudi Arabia (U.S. Army photo by John A. Bohmer)



working areas, and participating in training exercises."

American "fighting men" don't know how long they'll be stationed here. They can only voice their hopes about what will happen next and what the final outcome of this crisis will be.

"I'd like to see this crisis end peacefully. But if force is needed to drive Iraq out of Kuwait, I'm prepared to defend American interests and help restore

Flightline workers unload a helicopter from a Military Airlift Command aircraft in Saudi Arabia. Troops and equipment arrive on a regular basis. (U.S. Army photo by John A. Bohmer)

U.S. Army Spec. Michael R. Harding prepares to write a letter home during his off-duty time at a camp in Saudi Arabia. (U.S. Army photo by John A. Bohmer)