

Life in the real world

Putting 'working women' myth to rest

Did you know that real working women don't look like Jane Pauley (Or name your favorite morning TV broadcaster) at 7 a.m.?

Of course you know that if you are a working woman (or are married to one), but I thought it might be helpful to shoot down a few myths about our species.

Now, I happen to love Jane Pauley (and even have a signed letter from her in my file to prove it), but 7 a.m. is more likely to find me halfway between housecoat and half-slip, trying to fix toast for an impatient toddler without smearing my still wet hair with buttery fingers.

Real working women don't hire maids. We are the maids. Oh, some are lucky enough to have a cleaning woman, and even luckier ones have husbands who help out a lot with the housework. But I really see red when I read a slick magazine article that implies most working women have maids.

Real working women don't lounge around wearing Aviance when they get home from work. They're more likely to reek of slightly sour Pampers as they hit the kitchen after another glamor filled day sewing slacks at the local sweatshop.

I'm not poking fun at real working women as the books in the "Real Men don't Eat Quiche" genre do. What I'm taking on is the media image of working women who supposedly whip up gourmet dinner parties in 47 minutes flat, call their brokers on their coffee breaks and shop for stereos on their lunch hours.

There are masses of working women out here in North America who don't spend \$800 on one designer skirt, or \$100 for a "no-fuss" hairdo.

We don't frequently jet to London on business or even pleasure. We wouldn't have affairs with our bosses, even if our morals allowed it...I've always wondered who'd have the energy for one, after shuttling kids, cleaning house and noses, and putting in a 9 top 5.

Real working women don't "work" any more than their not-gainfully-employed counterparts. They simply organize and use their time differently.

Women who stay home full time work all day at activities beyond the basic housekeeping chores: they knit, volunteer in the community, sew, chauffeur, organize, plant flowers, chaperone — but it is all work.

Real working women are not the reason for all of society's ills. In fact, by pulling their families above the poverty line, many keep their families from the disintegration that poverty so often brings.

They keep their families from hopelessness and despair. And, contrary to myth, they aren't taking jobs away from men because the majority still work in the "pink collar" sector, at jobs most men don't do: waitressing, clerking, nursing, sewing.

Real working women are not products of women's lib or a gigantic communist plot. Women have worked since the dawn of



YOUR TIME

Melodie Davis

civilization at tasks as varied as planting, wood gathering, water fetching, animal tending, basket weaving, soap making — along with cooking, cleaning and raising children.

It was only in the early part of this century that modern conveniences and mass production in factories made it possible for women to stay home full time and concentrate on homemaking.

Real working women do somehow find time to go to church on Sunday, unlike the gals in the ads who are presented the Sunday paper on a dazzling breakfast tray.

Sure, sometimes we pretend a child is sicker than he really is and stay home to let our minds and souls mend from an exhaust-

ing week. But, on the whole, we find a need for a time apart, a time in worship.

Whether the children go to the nursery or we wrestle to keep them quiet in the pews, there's something missing from the week if we don't take time to worship God in the presence of like-minded believers.

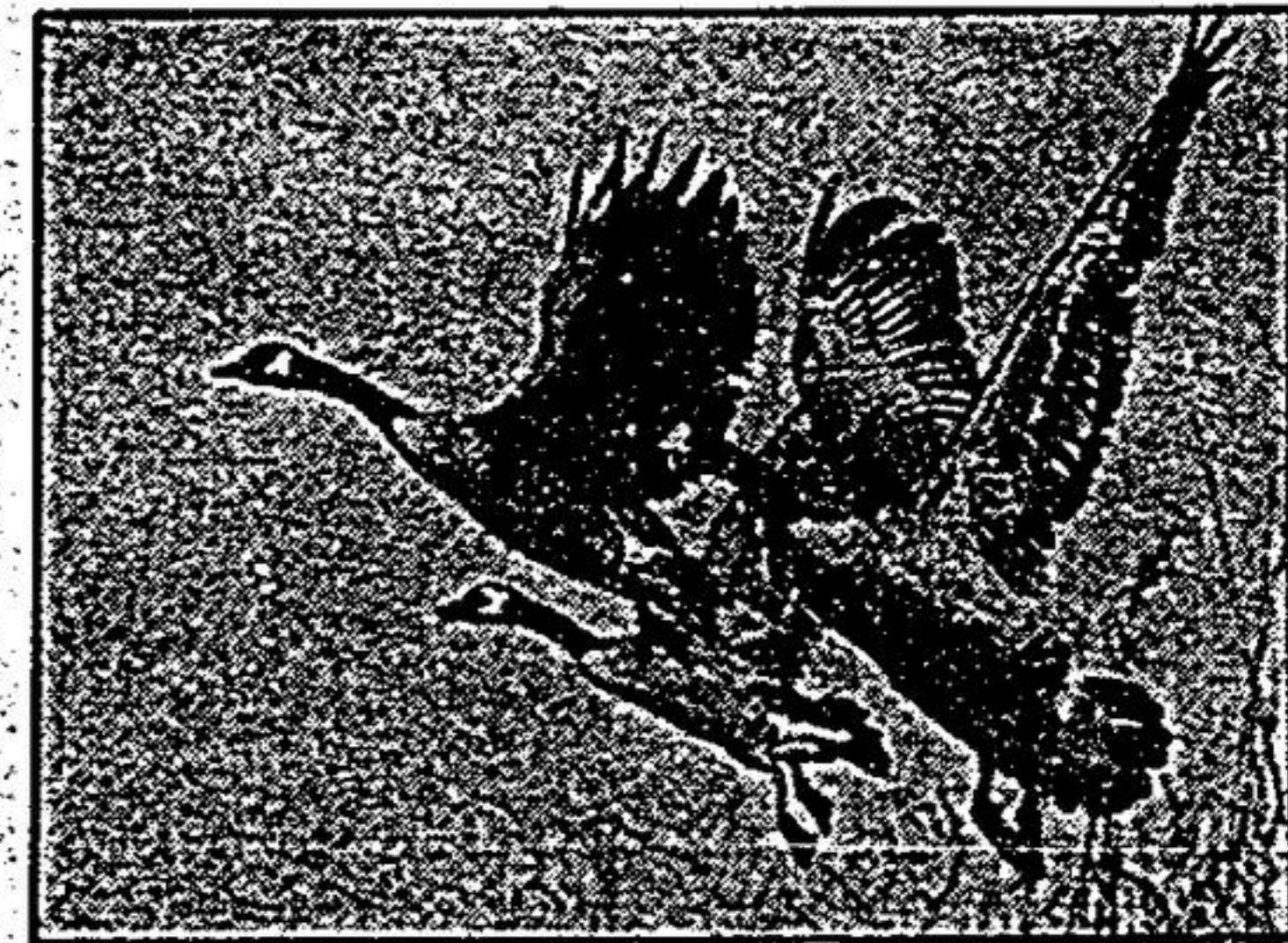
Real working women don't think their style is the only way to run a life. They have plenty of room for friends who are full-time homemakers, single, older, or younger folks.

Not that they have much time to maintain such friendships. But they try hard to squeeze time into lunch hours, phone calls, and with visits on weekends. While I find lots in common with other em-

ployed mommas, I need the perspective of others as well.

Let's not let the media shape us into its mold, but with our lives

transform the media image into lots of different images, lots of different God-given choices for women and men today.



George McLean

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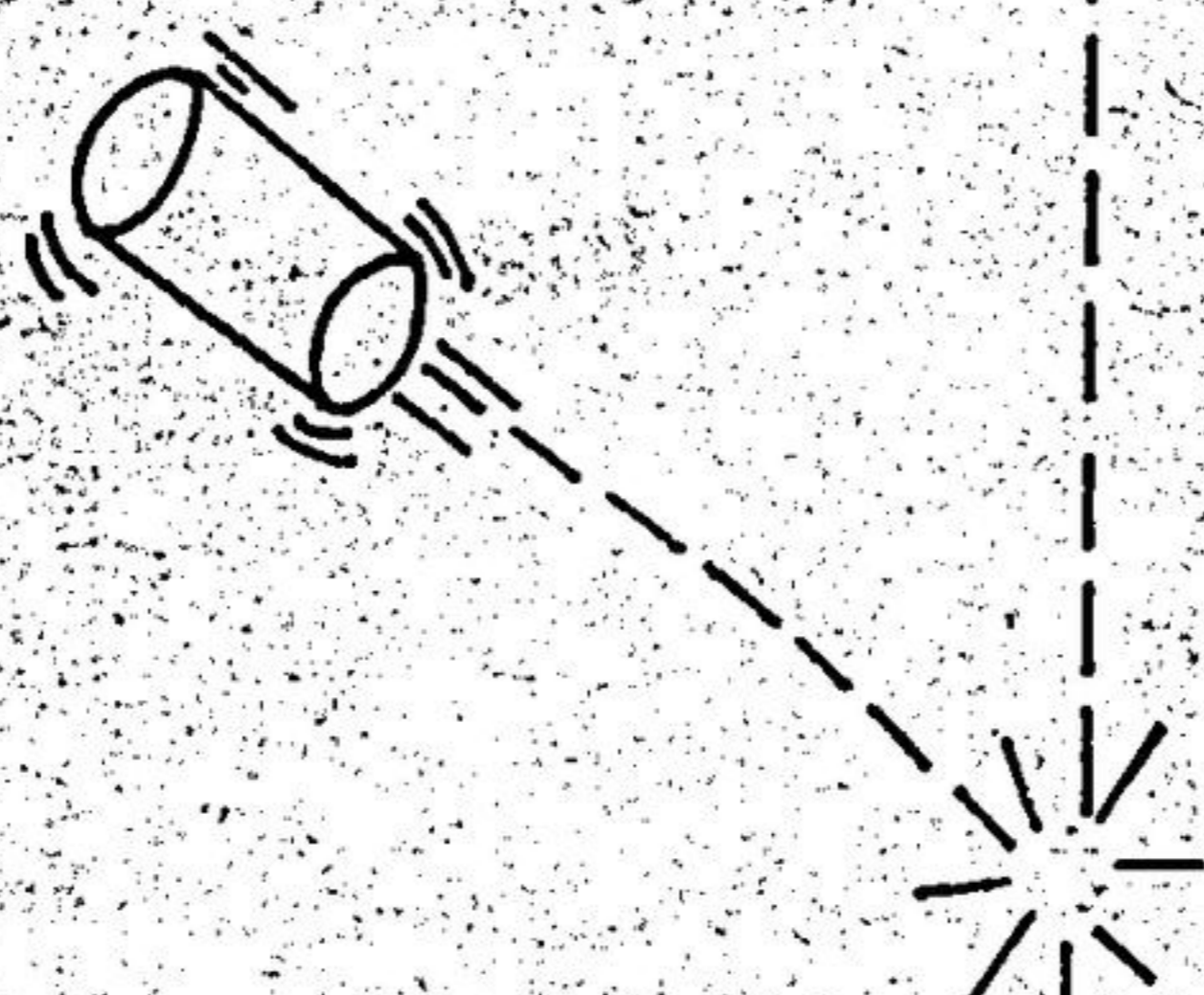
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