

One job in 5 is part-time — and trend is up

After the birth of her son, Carol negotiated to resume her job as a clinical researcher but worked only three days a week. Her part-time position lets her spend more time with her child and continue her career — the best of both worlds, she says.

Rhonda works part-time also, but not by choice. The supermarket where she is a cashier hires only hourly employees in order to avoid paying overtime and fringe benefits. To make ends meet, she cleans office buildings at night, and she baby-sits, putting in more than 60 hours a week at minimum wage.

Some call it opportunity, some say exploitation. Part-time employment is a fast-growing phenomenon in the American work force, according to Joyce L. Kornbluh, research scientist at the University of Michigan's Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations.

"In 1982, one out of every five American workers was employed on a part-time basis, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some studies have predicted that half of all jobs will be part time by the year 2000," she said.

In professions such as dentistry or medicine, part-time work offers practitioners attractions such as flexible hours and more time for family, education and leisure pursuits.

But in the rapidly expanding service sector, the advantages of part-time employment are more heavily weighted on the side of the employer, Kornbluh said.

"Relatively few part-time employees receive paid vacations, health insurance, pensions or other benefits beyond Social Security. In 1982, they earned an average of \$3.88 per hour, compared to a \$6.44 average for full-

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time workers. Part timers have little job security or opportunities for advancement.

Employers not only save on labor costs but can increase productivity by scheduling part timers during peak business hours, Kornbluh points out.

"For example, many banks hire extra tellers for the noon-hour shift. Similar patterns are apparent in retail outlets and fast-food chains.

THE PEOPLE who fill these positions also are changing, the U-M labor expert says.

"Part-time jobs were once considered suitable only for teen-agers, retirees, or persons who were either unmotivated or incapable of filling full-time jobs.

"Now we are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of people who are working part time because they are un-

able to find full-time positions," Kornbluh said.

"This category more than doubled between 1970 and 1982, from 2.19 million to 5.8 million. The number of involuntary part-time workers is the highest ever since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began keeping records 30 years ago."

The majority of such workers are women, who likewise are concentrated in the lower-paying service industries, she continues. "While men hold 30 percent of all part-time jobs, they are likely to be moonlighting to augment a full-time salary. For women, it is often their only option.

AS THE part-time job market continues to expand, Kornbluh sees a need

to ensure part-time employees more parity with their full-time counterparts.

"We need legislation that protects part timers with some benefits. Raising the minimum wage would help, since many are paid at minimum wage."

Another solution, she believes, is to shorten the work day. "A six-hour work day would coincide with school schedules and enable both men and women to spend more time with their children," she said. "The 40-hour work week was established during the 1930s. Why not set it at 35 hours, or 30?"

"This would reduce the disparity between full and part-time jobs, and give people more time for family and volunteer activities, continuing education, and other personal interests."

Bus drivers new 'Rodeo' stars

Bulls and steers aren't the only critters in rodeos. Buses are the newest addition.

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) will hold its 1985 Bus Rodeo Saturday in the Pontiac Silverdome.

SEMTA drivers will compete against each other on several different tests: a written safety quiz, a personal appearance rating, a pre-trip bus inspection and a driving test.

The driving course will be set up in the parking lot of the Silverdome near the Opyde Road entrance and the competition will begin at 9 a.m. The program is free. Refreshments will be available.

First-place winner of the local Rodeo will travel to Los Angeles in October to compete against coach operators nationwide for the title of International Rodeo champion.

Purpose of the Bus Rodeo is to reward safe and skillful driving. Only drivers with outstanding safety records are eligible to enter. Approximately 35 SEMTA bus drivers from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties have entered.

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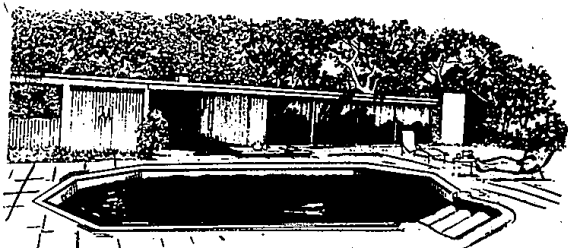
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