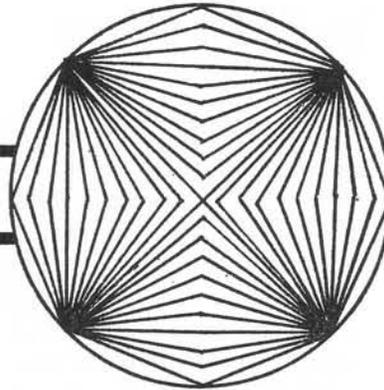


## Points of View



### Hurrah!

Knowing what a lonesome world we live in, I must tell you of today's experience. Up until today, not a living soul in Indiana had mentioned having seen the piece on aging (Summer, 1972, *Journal*). Now in the corridor I met a community development agent from Kokomo.

He says, "Well, looks like we'll get the project funded."

I say, "What project?"

He says, "Oh, didn't you know! As a result of reading your piece in the *Journal*, I wrote up an Extension project for working with the older people. They say it came up with a high priority rating."

Anyway thanks for running the "old" story.

RALPH REEDER  
*Lafayette, Indiana*

### Roses and Thorns

Dear Dr. Borich:

Your article, "Is an Advanced Degree for You?" which appeared in the Summer, 1972, issue of the *Journal of Extension*, was exciting to read. It was refreshing to see results of "applied research" such as yours published.

All too often "basic" research dominates the professional journals in the adult education field. Extension faculty everywhere who have contemplated graduate study should find this article stimulating and helpful.

It must have been challenging for you to encapsule your findings into a journal article. I'm pleased you saw fit to enumerate the implications of the study in two categories. This reinforces my thinking that the findings will be useful to Extension administrators as they formulate professional improvement policy and to adult education researchers searching for problems in need of study.

FOWLER C. HUMPHREY  
*Madison, Wisconsin*

Dear Editor:

I would like to raise a question with respect to the research of Patrick J. Borich reported in the *Journal* article, "Is an Advanced Degree for You?" (Summer, 1972). The assumptions basic to including only male agents in the sample for the study appear to be erroneous.

The first assumption, that female agents have lower tenure, is not borne out in Ohio. In 1971-72, the adjusted tenure for agricultural agents in Ohio

was 20.8 years, and that of 4-H agents was 6.0 years. (In Ohio in 1971-72, there were no female agricultural agents, and there were 6 female 4-H agents out of a total of 86.) Thus, the average tenure for agricultural and 4-H agents, who were 96.6 percent male, was 13.5 years. In that same period, the adjusted tenure for the female home economics agents was 13.5 years.

The second assumption, that using the sex variable would have required enlarging the sample, is also debatable. An original sample of 926, out of which 774 completed and returned questionnaires, is a large sample. It would not have had to be larger to include the rest of the population of agents. A sample of the same size drawn randomly from a list that included all Extension agents would have been adequate.

I am left with a further question. If, as I maintain, these assumptions are invalid, for what actual reason were women excluded?

I believe that research must take the sex variable into account, and refrain from general statements such as are found throughout the article. These statements tend to encourage the casual reader to interpret the data to apply to both sexes instead of only to the sex that was in fact studied.

MARJORY M. MORTVEDT  
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Editor:

Contrary to the inferences of Ms. Mortvedt, I am not a male chauvinist pig. I respect and appreciate female Extension workers. Some of my best friends are female!

Seriously, let me attempt to expand the two assumptions used in the

study. The first assumption, that female agents have lower tenure, may not be borne out in Ohio but is borne out in Minnesota (and according to discussions with administrators, also in other states). The average tenure for 164 male Extension agents, associate Extension agents, and assistant Extension agents in Minnesota as of July 1, 1972, was 13.3 years. At the same date, 101 female Extension agents had an average tenure of 5.9 years. I am pleased that Ohio does have a similar tenure for both sexes and am sure many Extension administrators would appreciate a *Journal of Extension* article on the secrets of this success in extending female tenure.

The second assumption used indicated that the sex variable would have required enlarging the sample. This may be debatable, however, with an original sample of 926 agents, the maximum agents selected in any state was 20. Since we were reasonably sure, due to a pre-test, that female Extension agents did identify some different and unique reasons for a positive or negative attitude toward graduate school, we decided to attempt to provide as much basis for accurate conclusions from one part of the total agent population rather than saying a great deal less about all Extension workers.

I agree with Marjory that the degree-seeking activities of female Extension workers should be studied. I feel a companion study to what I have attempted to accomplish would be very helpful in pointing out differences and similarities between male and female Extension workers as they contemplate securing an advanced degree.

I pointed out in the article, at the beginning and again at the end in the limitations, that women agents were not included. Although this may

have been overlooked by some readers, I believe that the information obtained should not be disregarded because of its masculine limitations. I believe that would be real evidence of sex bias.

PATRICK BORICH  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### Parsons-Stellman Revisited

It seems fairly obvious that any reactions to the Parsons-Stellman controversy demand much more attention than what is being attempted here. I would prefer, therefore, to respond briefly around it rather than to it.

The role of 4-H in the inner city has been the object of considerable debate, agitation, and some deserving research during the past 10 or more years, and promises to remain so for some time to come. Notwithstanding, what seems rather apparent is the need for further testing of the 4-H model with modifications to accommodate image building for youth and potential volunteer adults in urban communities.

Both Parsons and Stellman present stimulating and encouraging correlations that indicate that 4-H programs are and can be innovative and sensitive to environmental situations and the needs of inner-city youth. Quite frankly, I don't think we should feel like the Kentucky father whose two sons died in battle — one in Union blue, the other in Confederate gray — the father inscribing on the stone over their double grave: "God knows which was right."

Some assumptions and "guidelines" presented by Parsons have yet to be tested in these times. Time is a compelling force; it accords moments to test our assumptions. Times have changed. So has 4-H.

The *Journal* is certainly not the place to attempt a resolution of this controversy. Many have questioned the relevance of 4-H in urban communities. In looking back, I don't find too many youth models that have worked too effectively with urban youth. But as someone once remarked: "At least in 4-H we're trying."

HOWARD F. SWONIGAN  
Madison, Wisconsin

### From the Southern Hemisphere

I have just been reading the Spring, 1972, *Journal of Extension* and would like to make two comments.

First, as a reader living in the Southern Hemisphere, where your *Journal* is widely read and respected, I wonder why you bother with a seasonal title at all. Unlike farming journals, the content has nothing to do with the seasons and it appears to me that the month of issue would be less parochial and more meaningful for readers scattered around the globe.

My second point is sparked off by Donald Mocker's note "An Extension Center — A Learning Center." There seems to be a tendency these days for people to believe that we need expensive hardware and expensive environs to learn. It has been my experience, especially when dealing with the adult learner, that a familiar and comfortable environment is more effective than a "foreign, sterile school-room situation."

I have found ideal teacher-learning situations under very primitive conditions. Farmers' meetings I've attended, sitting on bales of straw in Iowa and bales of hay in New Zealand, have been exciting and stimulating learning experiences. And I have sat in many "sterile" university lecture

rooms where adult learners have been ill at ease. I am sure that schoolroom-type environments can frighten some adults, especially if their own school days weren't particularly happy or successful.

The learning environment is very important. You've probably all noticed how certain conference rooms seem to stimulate discussion while others inhibit it. I suspect there may be many factors involved, including acoustics, lighting, decor, seating, and perhaps

even color, but I've never seen any written work on this subject. Yet environment can be a limiting factor in learning.

GEOFFREY MOSS  
*Wellington, New Zealand*

*The seasonal notations are used as an obvious way of designating the number of issues published a year. It's also an easy way to refer to a specific issue.*  
Ed.