

# WOMEN'S VU

June 1984

A publication of Vanderbilt University Women's Center

VI:7

## Office Support Personnel How Promotable Are You?

by Pennie Jekot  
Office Training Coordinator

*The following is a summary of a program presented on National Secretaries Day, April 25, 1984, at the Women's Center.*

One of the major concerns of today's office support staff is their role in the organization. They want more responsibility and an opportunity for career growth. The support person of today is assertive, articulate, well educated, and intuitive. With all this going for them, they want to find ways of promoting themselves.

If involvement and self-promotion are your goal, there are many constructive ways to accomplish it within your present job.

### *Talk About Your Job With Pride*

Office support careers can be as interesting and rewarding as you make them. You are only limited by your imagination. You are in a unique position in terms of diverse career opportunity. Unlike most professionals, you can choose your business or industry. Other advantages are career flexibility, ease of entry, apprenticeships to careers with greater responsibility, and income while pursuing additional training.

### *Promote Your Profession*

Walk tall. Your body language will tell others how you feel about yourself and your job role. Demand their respect through your non-verbal communication.

Take responsibility yourself for maintaining and upgrading your skills. Develop competencies that make you the office expert. Support persons of the future will have the opportunity for greater diversity in their responsibilities if they seek them out. Skills such as problem solving, decision making, communication and interpersonal relations are a must. Your attendance at related seminars will provide the necessary background.

Become the office technology expert. Others will seek you out in making purchasing decisions. Assist in implementing strategies

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## Women's Center Dutch-treat Breakfasts Resume in September

Monthly breakfast meetings sponsored by the Women's Center will begin again in September. Any woman who is employed at Vanderbilt is welcome to attend. The Women's Center arranges for speakers and for coffee to be served in the Faculty Dining Room at Rand Hall. Some women come at 7:30 a.m. and go through the Rand line to get their breakfast, which they bring to the Faculty Room. The program begins at 8:00 a.m. Speakers remain for questions and discussion until 9:00. Those who must leave during this time in order to get to work are encouraged to come and stay as long as they can.

A list of the 1984-85 speakers and dates of the breakfasts will appear in the September issue of *Women's VU*. The *Register* will also carry an announcement about each month's speaker the Friday before the meeting.

Suggestions for speakers are welcome. Send your ideas to the Women's Center or call 322-4843.

There has been some confusion about who can attend the Dutch-treat breakfast meetings. All female staff and faculty members at Vanderbilt are invited.

Anyone who is unable to rearrange her schedule in order to attend the breakfast meetings should call Nancy Ransom, Director of the Women's Center, 322-4843. If there is enough interest, similar meetings could be scheduled at a different time.

## A Celebration of Women

July 7, 1984

Noon to 6 p.m.

*Centennial Park at the Bandshell*

A "women's fair" celebrating women's accomplishments in entertainment, business, the arts and politics is being sponsored by the Progressive Organizations for Women network, including TKALS, League of Women Voters, National Organization for Women, Nashville chapter, Business and Professional Women of Nashville, Planned Parenthood, Civil Liberties Union of Nashville, Women in Nashville, and others. Booths will be set up by women-owned businesses and restaurants; hand-crafted items and specialty foods will be for sale. There will also be women entertainers in music, dance, mime and storytelling throughout the afternoon. Information will be available about women's civic, educational, and special resource organizations in Nashville.

For further information or if you are interested in participating, planning, renting a booth, or performing, call Pat Sharkey at the Center for Health Services, 322-4773.



## "The Artist and the Quilt" will show in Louisville

The Artist and the Quilt, an exhibit of 20 quilts co-created by women painters and needleartists, will be on display at the Art Center Association in Louisville, KY from July 14 through August 23 this summer.

The project grew out of a discussion among three women artists: Dorothy Gillespie, Alice Baber, and Charlotte Robinson. They wanted to bring women's experiences and visions into art through unusual media such as performance, body art, diaries, weaving, and needlework. "From the beginning, we

were anxious to eliminate the hierarchical division between fine arts and crafts," Robinson explained.

They asked prominent women artists to design quilts, and then sought embroiderers and quilters to translate the painting into a design in fabric. By the end of the project 18 graphic artists nation-wide had given designs to 16 needle artists. Altogether more than 50 women participated and 20 quilts were completed.

## WHET Holds Spring Workshop

Women in Higher Education in Tennessee held their Spring Workshop April 28th in Jackson, Tennessee. Twenty five women representing primarily colleges and universities from Middle and West Tennessee met at the Ramada Inn for a delicious breakfast brunch to kick off the workshop. The mayor of Jackson, Robert Conger gave participants a warm welcome speech.

The keynote speaker, Mary Frances Lyle, partner, Powers, Venick, & Lyle, talked about the importance of having a lobbyist concerned with women's issues. She said that one of the main problems women have is "they have no voice in the Legislature". She quoted some alarming statistics regarding the status of women: 80% of jobs held by women are clerical, women make 62¢ for every \$1.00 men make, and 72% of persons in poverty are women. These are only a few of the reasons women need more lobbyists. She said as long as the attitude that women are "second class citizens" prevails, women will continue to be held back. She felt the passage of the ERA would help in changing the "psychological state of mind that our government supports the rights of women," but that women need to become more active in the political process. Women need to exercise their right to vote and let legislators know that they are interested in certain legislation. She mentioned a current piece of proposed legislation that establishes a shelter for battered women (H.B. 1603 & S.B. 1674) for which she is lobbying. She gave out some helpful handouts on how to write your legislator along with addresses of all our state legislators.

Joan Williams, Commissioner with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) was the second speaker. She talked about some of the activities of THEC including a plan to study salaries, hiring and promotion practices to determine if discrimination exists in Tennessee public education institutions. She quoted some interesting statistics regarding women in higher education in 1982-83: 52% of all college graduates were women, 60% of all graduates receiving Masters degrees were women, and 40% of graduates receiving doctorates were women.

The workshop ended after a brief business meeting. Changes in the by-laws were discussed and approved. Sarah Lynn, Middle Tennessee Representative from Tennessee Tech, invited the group to hold our Fall Workshop on the Tennessee Tech campus. A date, October 26, 1984 was set and plans are underway to begin publicizing the meeting.

WHET presently has over 200 members throughout the state representing private, public institutes and community colleges. If you are interested in joining our network, please call Pat Pierce at 322-4705 for more information.

## Celebrate Women's History in Seneca Falls, New York

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness . . . The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having its direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her."*

*The Declaration of Sentiments  
Seneca Falls, 1848*

In July of 1848, 300 men and women gathered in the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, and, in the Quaker fashion, approved a series of resolutions. Modeled after the Declaration of Independence and called the Declaration of Sentiments, the resolutions made assertions which many found laughable. The *Most Radical Demand* of all was that women be able to vote. Seventy-two years later, in 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified.

In 1923, leaders of the women's suffrage movement gathered in Seneca Falls to celebrate. Alice Paul proposed a new drive for a second constitutional amendment, which she named the Lucretia Mott Amendment. We know it today as the Equal Rights Amendment.

Today, Seneca Falls, New York, is the home of a number of special places dedicated to the preservation and continuation of the history of the women's movement.

The National Women's Hall of Fame was the first institution to mark Seneca Fall's special place in the history of the women's movement. Although the NWHF inducted its first twenty members in 1973, it was not until 1979 that it found a home in a former bank building in downtown Seneca Falls. Its Grand Opening was celebrated on July 21, 1979, the 131st anniversary of the 1848 convention.

The Women's Rights National Historical Park was established by legislation signed by President Jimmy Carter on December 28, 1980. Later the Elizabeth Cady Stanton

House would be donated to the Park. In the fall of 1983, the National Park Service received approval of a \$500,000 appropriation to acquire and preserve the Wesleyan Chapel property (1½ blocks from the National Women's Hall of Fame), site of the first Woman's Rights Convention. The building, which recently housed a laundromat, will probably be used for historical displays or as a visitor's center.

The Elizabeth Cady Stanton Park constructed under the sponsorship of the National Women's Hall of Fame and with the support of many donors and the village, is across the street from the former Wesleyan Chapel.

A National Women's Center and Educational Institute is being planned. The center will coordinate efforts to formulate public policy and address the specific needs of women in socio-economic, religious, or ethnic groups. Envisioned are a feminist think tank, a center for international cooperation and exchange, a center for elderly citizens, and a place to hold cultural events, conferences, sports events, research projects, retreats, and more.

The 17 member Board of Directors is currently engaged in raising money to hire staff and to secure a building in Seneca Falls. A National Advisory Council includes Alan Alda, Arlene Alda, Rosalynn Carter, Wilma Scott Heide, Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, Linda Lavin, Joyce Miller, Marge Piercy, Helen Reddy, and Jean Stapleton.

If you would like to find out more about the center write the Seneca Falls National Center and Educational Institute, Dr. Constance Timberlake, Co-President, Box 132, Seneca Falls, NY 13148.

## at the Women's Center Library . . .

**RAPE IN MARRIAGE** / by Diana E. H. Russell

This book is the result of a study of wife rape in the United States based on interviews with a random sample of women. The study suggests that at least one woman out of every seven who has ever been married has been raped by a husband at least once, and sometimes many times over many years.

**YOUR PENSION RIGHTS AT DIVORCE: WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW**

This booklet from the Women's Legal Defense Fund outlines basic information about the pension rights of women upon divorce. Pension benefits earned during a marriage can be one of the largest assets a couple owns and most states consider this to be part of the marital property to be divided at divorce.

## CONSUMER ACTION NEEDED FOR TAMPON STANDARDS

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective - they wrote *Our Bodies, Our Selves* - is asking all concerned women to write to the Food and Drug Administration in support of voluntary standards for tampons.

In 1981, the FDA asked the tampon manufacturers, consumer groups, and other interested parties to write a tampon standard. Consumers and manufacturers disagreed on the following points:

1. How to rate absorbency on tampon boxes. Lower absorbency tampons are implicated in fewer cases of Toxic Shock Syndrome and other problems. A more specific absorbency rating would help women choose the level of absorbency they prefer.

2. Comprehensive testing of the effects of tampons on living tissue, to measure irritation, drying, tissue injury, effects of repeated long-term use, toxicity, and carcinogenicity. Manufacturers have proposed tests which consumers charge don't go far enough.

3. Tests to measure fragments and small pieces of fiber that may come off the tampon and be left behind in the vagina.

4. Tests to discover any living microorganisms (bacteria and spores) that may be present on tampons purchased in stores.

5. Comprehensive ingredient labeling to identify substances such as binders, lubricants, perfumes, all of which could leak out of tampons during normal use.

6. Specific and precise cautions about possible tampon-related health problems in addition to Toxic Shock Syndrome.

7. Package labels as to the fact that the tampons are *not* sterile. At present, tampons are individually wrapped, not sterilized.

8. Package labels to indicate whether the manufacturers are following the voluntary standards. If the product says it meets the standard and doesn't then the company can be charged with misbranding.

9. Whether the results of tests required by the standard are available to independent researchers and the public. Currently, tampon companies are not required to and refuse to divulge any of their test data.

For additional information, or to express your opinion about the safety of tampons, write the FDA.

John C. Villforth, Director  
NCDRH, Food and Drug Administration  
HFX - 1  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

If you have had any problems with tampons, report them to the FDA, which maintains a publicly available file. Your name and address is kept confidential but problems experienced with particular brands and types of tampons can be an invaluable aid to consumer representatives.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## TKALS

TKALS, Tennesseans Keeping Abortion Legal and Safe, is the only organization in the state dedicated solely to preserving a woman's right to choose abortion as a legitimate outcome of her pregnancy. This fundamental right is currently under attack by a well-funded, well-organized minority of individuals who would like to see present abortion laws stricken from the books. Their aim is to make abortion illegal for *everyone under all circumstances*. Even President Reagan has gone against the mainstream of public opinion which favors the availability of abortion and the regulation of conditions under which it can occur. He has targeted the elimination of abortion as one of his primary goals for his proposed second term in office.

It is naive to assume that abortion will remain legal and safe simply because it has been so for over a decade now. Your active involvement is necessary to ensure that a vocal minority does not impose its values on you through the passage of restrictive legislation. Complacency at this time could cost all women the right to choose. Both volunteers and donations are needed to prevent this vital choice from become a lost freedom. To find out what you can do, call us at 297-8540 or write to TKALS, P.O. Box 120871, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

## Hamilton Prize

The University of Michigan announces the Alice and Edith Hamilton Prize Competition for 1984. The prize of \$1,000 is awarded for the best book-length scholarly manuscript illuminating some facet or facets of the life, roles, position, and/or achievements of women, past and present. In addition to the monetary prize, the University of Michigan Press expects to publish the winning work in *Women and Cultures*, a series of books dedicated to excellence in scholarship on women.

Entrants are asked to submit two-page abstracts of manuscripts by July 15, 1984. After initial decisions are made on the basis of the abstracts, full manuscripts will be solicited by September 1, 1984.

The Hamilton Prize winner will be announced in December 1984. All manuscripts will be returned, postage paid. Send all material to:  
Hamilton Prize Competition  
354 Lorch Hall  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

## YWCA

**Cleo's Cupboard:** Restock your kitchen cupboards for healthy living. Learn about preservative-free food and condiments, cooking with less fats and sugar, and recipe conversion. You can eat healthier and stay thinner while eating better and more than ever by changing your eating habits. 1 session. Saturday, August 11, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Class Fee: \$12.00. Instructor: C. Cowan.

**Basic Auto Mechanics:** Want to understand what your auto mechanic is telling you? Acquire the technical skills to unravel the mystery of what makes an automobile run. Learn about the transmission, ignition and fuel systems, the brakes and wheels, and internal combustion in order to prevent costly repair bills and needless service. Don't end up at the mercy of the service station when something goes wrong. Classroom and demonstrations. 5 sessions. Thursdays, July 19-August 16, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. YW Building, Class Fee: \$30. Instructor: A. Alderman.

**Calligraphy:** Learn the art of beautiful writing for your own enjoyment or earning extra money. For beginners highlighting the popular italic style. 6 sessions. Wednesdays, June 20-August 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m. YW Building, Class Fee: \$25. Instructor: C. Percy.

**Career/Life Planning Workshops:** Designed for those considering career change, re-entry into the job market, continuing education. Responds to questions, "Who am I?", "What do I want to do with my life next?", "Where do I want to do it?", and "How am I going to get there?". Includes vocational interest testing and individual consultation. YW Bldg. Instructor: J. Beisswenger. Several sessions are offered at varying times. For further information please call the YWCA, 385-3952.



## RSAC

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Davidson County will train volunteers who are interested in working with victims of rape and/or sexual abuse. The next training program will be on three consecutive Saturdays, September 15, 22, and 29.

Volunteers must be over 18 years of age. If you are interested, please contact the Center, 383-3849.

## Women Are Quietly Taking Over Country's School Boards

During the last decade an unheralded revolution has occurred in this country's 15,800 school boards. In 1972 women constituted only 12% of those serving on school boards nationwide; in 1983, their numbers had reached 37% and are still on the rise. In California, the number of women school board members increased from 20% to 45% in the same period. In Detroit, Milwaukee, San Francisco and San Diego, women are the majority on the boards.

Kenneth Underwood, professor of education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, who has been tracking the changes, expects in the near future women school board members to reach 60% to 70% of the nationwide total. The increase in the number of women school board members is already causing changes. The most frequently cited change is a greater awareness of classroom problems among school board members and a willingness of the boards to propose solutions of their own, instead of deferring to school administrators. While male school board members usually come from backgrounds in business or the professions, it appears that most women members have been classroom volunteers, teachers, members of school committees or active in the PTA.

Another likely change as a result of women's increased participation may be a significant increase in the number of women appointed to top administrative positions in the school system. Only four of Los Angeles County's 81 public school superintendents are women, but three of those were appointed by boards with a majority of women.

-The Eleanor Smeal Report  
April 19, 1984

## Office Support Personnel *cont. from p. 1*

for restructuring work patterns. Develop support networks within the organization and with similar organizations to encourage the sharing of information.

Join a professional association. Professional associations are helpful to assist you in expanding your view of yourself and your career, as well as for networking potential.

### *Promote Your Reputation Within The Organization*

Look beyond your immediate boss. Bosses have a way of moving on. Devote yourself to one individual and you lose touch with the goals of the organization. To maintain an identity work at being known by your name, not as John Doe's secretary. A simple way to start is to use your name when you answer the telephone.

Join the office team. Offer to help others when they need help. Learn to take credit and give credit when it is deserved. Admit errors when they occur, and forgive others when they err. They will respect you for it.

### *Distinguish Yourself*

Project a consistently professional image. Learn to interact comfortably with others regardless of their status in the organization. Impress others with your competence by demonstration.

Be prepared for opportunities. Develop a portfolio to include copies of certificates earned, awards, and letters of appreciation. Include information and articles written about projects in which you have had responsibilities, as well as samples of your work. A current resume is a must.

Get your name in print. Get credit when it is due by signing your own name to materials you have written. One way to start is by authoring articles for staff newspapers, which inform and educate others.

Volunteer to be involved in special employee groups. Offer to take responsibility for special projects, and learn how to direct others in the process.

### *Take The Initiative*

Ask yourself, "What more responsibility could I be taking in my office?" Your boss may be wishing you would volunteer to take on more assignments, but may hesitate to ask for fear that you are already overloaded. Look over the responsibilities of your office and volunteer to do activities that will expand your skills in the direction of your career goals.

Think like a manager. Managers delegate, and you can too. Learn how to use the skills and services of others. Use time management techniques to control your time so you have the time to take on more responsibility while not neglecting your regular duties.

Image it to make it happen. Visualize yourself in the role you want to hold. Map out the path to your goal in your mind so you can see its details. This will help you to achieve peak performance.

You build your own barriers. Your view of yourself will determine the importance of your role and how others will view you. Start now to act like the person you want to become.

The next issue of **Women's VU**  
will be distributed  
September 1, 1984  
*Deadline for announcements is  
August 1, 1984*

*Edited by Linda Karwedsky*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Vanderbilt Women's Center  
E-2 West Side Row  
Box 1513, Station B  
Nashville, TN 37235