

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

Get up and go exploring!

Adele Mills Schweid, book reviewer and former co-owner of Mills Book Stores

There are those of us who are born with itchy feet and, while it is certainly a lot more fun to travel with someone than alone, it is possible to have a great time exploring the world by oneself. Assuming the decision to do so does not rest on lack of finances, which must always be taken into account, how one goes about determining where and how rests first of all, I think, on one's age. Young women seem perfectly capable of traveling all over the world in any fashion from hiking with a pack on their back to driving, hopping trains and boats and everywhere meeting their peers. From youth hostels to the most elegant hotels and inns, traveling alone presents few problems for them but many for their worrying parents at home. For those of us who are middle-aged or older it is a different matter. It isn't that it can't be done, but it is much more daunting; and as one ages it becomes harder.

Thank goodness for tours which enable women over thirty to enjoy the delights of travel with minimal difficulties. There are several things to remember when shopping around for a tour. First, of course, is to be sure that the company you select has a well-established reputation and that you pick a tour which specializes in your interests. There are tours which cater to every known interest and hobby. So, if you want to visit bird sanctuaries, for example, find a tour that concentrates on that and not on visiting museums or listening to concerts.

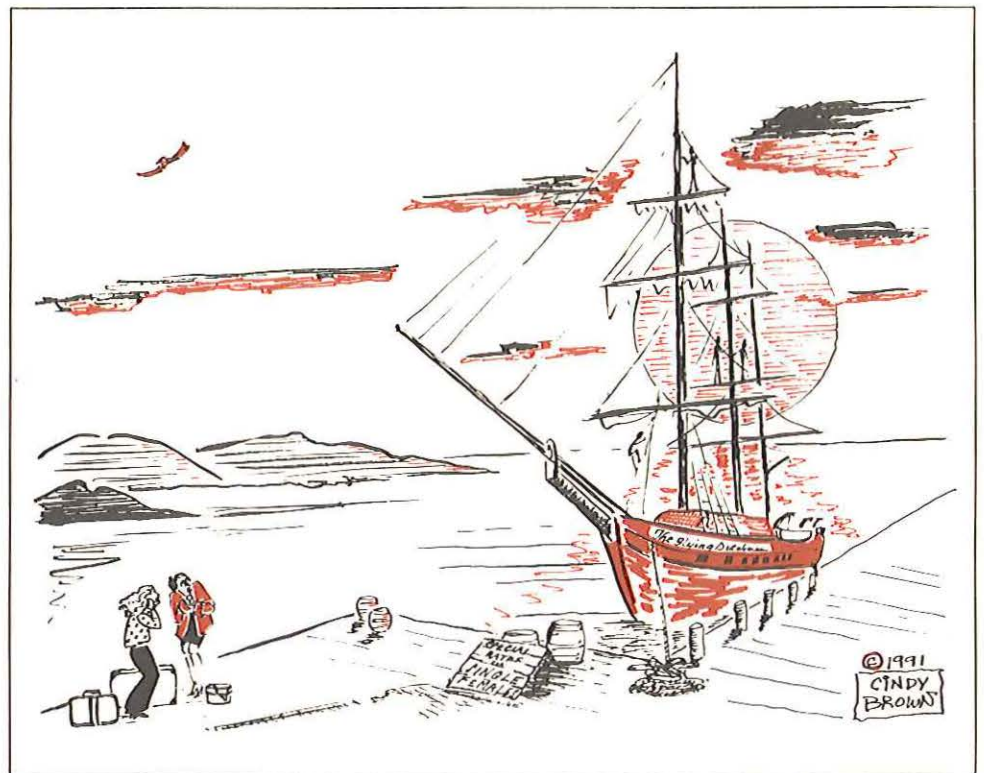
Tours come in all sizes and, as in

most things, it is wise to try to find a tour that is neither too small nor too big. In a very small group it is difficult to distance oneself from a member that one finds objectionable. On the other hand, too large a group means much more time is spent waiting in hotel lobbies and at sightseeing stops. A group of thirty is about the best number. It gives ample opportunity to select those with whom you want to spend most of your time. This is something about which to be careful. Don't get too involved at first. Give yourself plenty of time to look around and make sure that you pick a congenial group to join. Travel alone is enhanced

enormously by the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

Travel by tour takes all the worry out of traveling alone: everything from the transferring of luggage to the responsibility for reservations and sightseeing plans is done for you. You still have all the freedom you want, however, since there is no obligation on your part to spend your entire time with the group. Do not be afraid to wander around by yourself, at least during the day. Most European cities are a lot safer than those in our own country, and in addition, the public transportation is excellent. If you are in a country where you do not speak the language, just ask the tour director to write the name of your hotel on a piece of paper and you can always hail a cab and safely return.

Another very exciting way to travel is to rent a small apartment in a foreign city for a month or so and take
(continued page two)



I told you there was something strange about those special rates.



Within a month after my injury I was diagnosed at Vanderbilt's Department of Otolaryngology, and a planned physical therapy routine was initiated. I also received support from the staff at the Kim Dayani Rehabilitation Center. This medical intervention, along with supportive family and friends, promoted progress toward recovery.

Dizziness is a serious and sometimes debilitating condition. Severe chronic or episodic dizziness will affect every aspect of an injured person's life.

Women in particular will benefit from becoming informed about vestibular injuries for the following reasons:

1) A majority of the seventy-six million Americans who will suffer from vestibular (inner-ear) disorders sometime in their lifetimes are women.

Dr. Mitchell Schwaber of Vanderbilt's Department of Otolaryngology estimates that 4,000 people in Nash-
(continued page three)

Vestibular disorders: living a life out of balance

Katherine Warren, Ed.S.,
National Certified Counselor

Women who suffer from balance disorders have a decided need to take an active role in their health care. Dizziness and balance problems occur much more frequently in women and can be misdiagnosed if the medical provider does not have the most modern testing equipment or is not specifically trained in this area. I am writing this article in the hope that my experience will help other women

suffering from dizziness and balance disorders.

In December of 1989, I was the victim of an assault which dramatically changed my life. Hit directly in the face, I was knocked unconscious. I sustained a broken nose and serious injury to my vestibular system — the system which maintains balance. Now, on good days, I can operate in controlled settings, avoiding most malls, grocery stores, and other crowded or open spaces. At my worst, I cannot walk without assistance. I can't drive or travel alone but compared to other women with similar injuries, I am lucky because I got help.

Exploring *(continued from page one)*

bus or train trips to the surrounding areas. This method of travel is restful: you don't have to pack and unpack, you sleep in the same bed every night and you really get to experience life on a day-to-day basis in a strange land. "Short lets" (as they are called in Europe) are available through real estate agents and are listed in the daily papers. London is a particularly great place to try this idea.

In the last few years, innumerable hostels for adults have sprung up all over this country as well as abroad. These hostels provide simple accommodations with the added benefits of lectures from top quality professors on an extremely wide variety of subjects.

This is a less expensive method of travel, so be sure to find out exactly what your accommodations will be like. They are usually in dormitories, which can be very sparse in comforts. Hostel programs are for a week to two weeks and fit easily into limited vacation time.

One last piece of advice is offered
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for senior citizens who travel: if you are over sixty-five and rely on Medicare for your insurance, remember that Medicare will not pay for any doctor or hospital care outside the

United States.

If you have done some traveling, you know how rewarding an experience it is. If you have not, get going. ■

Tips for women traveling alone:

When traveling alone, either for business or pleasure, careful planning and a few simple precautions will make your trip more enjoyable.

- Travel light! Nothing is more discouraging than being burdened with too much luggage. Plan your wardrobe around one basic color.
- Do not pack medicine, car keys, or other necessities in luggage you check. If possible, leave valuables at home.
- For security, put your first initial on the bags. You may also wish to put your company address instead of your home address.
- Verify that your luggage is checked to the correct destination.
- When reserving your hotel, verify that room entrances are off interior halls and that there is no outside entrance to the room.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a friend or relative.

Sue Davis, Director of Operations, Wright Travel

Speaking of women . . .



photo by Marni Jo Lessa

Brenda Gilmore, administrator, Campus Mail Services, is interviewed by Margaret Meggs, secretary, Women's Studies.

Brenda Gilmore's career in mail services began "quite by accident." Prior to becoming administrator of Campus Mail Services at Vanderbilt in 1987, Gilmore was Director of State Postal Services for the State of Tennessee — the result of impressing a state commissioner with her abilities to handle difficult situations. Gilmore is obviously enthusiastic about her work, describing it as very challenging.

"In state government, we were responsible for all the mail services in the Nashville area with satellite offices in Memphis, Knoxville and Jackson. When I first started, I was predominantly dealing with males." These conditions kept her constantly evaluating strategies and improving communication skills. Any problems, she thinks, primarily had to do with her age and gender, rather than her race.

"I don't think it necessarily had anything to do with my being Black. Mostly, it just had to do with being a young female asking that things be done differently, making them uncomfortable dealing with me."

At Vanderbilt, Gilmore is responsible for supervising some thirty people and acting as liaison between the campus and the U.S. Postal Service. Her duties include consulting with departments as well as general trouble-shooting and problem-solving.

"I probably get the most satisfaction from that. When we're able to recover from a problem, I get a real high on that." She laughs. "It's probably hard for some people to understand how you can get a high on mail! But I really do."

Gilmore oversees mail services for both the university and the medical center. While she has to "constantly hustle because everything is duplicated," the position is interesting "because I have to keep readjusting my management style; I learn a lot. I get to stay in tune with both the campus and the medical center."

She attends regular staff meetings, where she is one of several women and few minorities. "The number of males and females is not so out of balance [that] it becomes noticeable. [As for] minorities, in most situations, there are only one or two; in some cases, [there are] none."

Challenges seem to suit Gilmore. While working full-time, she completed a degree at Tennessee State University and a master's degree at Vanderbilt. She serves on the boards of the Susan Gray School and the Margaret Cuninggim Women's

Vestibular disorders *(continued from page two)*

ville have some sort of inner ear problem or balance difficulty.

2) Children who suffer from treatable vestibular disorders are sometimes incorrectly diagnosed as learning disabled, dyslexic, or psychologically disturbed.

3) Symptoms of vestibular disorders mimic other disorders such as multiple sclerosis and clinical depression because imbalance and vertigo (dizziness) can affect the ability to stand and walk, to see and think clearly, to read, to watch television, and to make decisions.

Center, and is also an advisor for the undergraduate chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority at Vanderbilt.

Learning to prioritize and to make decisions are important to balancing personal and professional life. Gilmore credits her family members for their support, then grins as she notes, "even if they haven't always understood why I made some choices I did."

Employee satisfaction, she believes, is a vital tool to meet work force needs. She notes that university management's recognition of the value of mailing centers for customer-service and as a money-saving enterprise has increased employee satisfaction. Emphasis on employees and on overall cultural diversity are changes she has noticed since her arrival in 1987. There is still work to be done, however.

"It's like the sunshine . . . [with] all the rays going out. There has to be a lot of activity simultaneously, targeted to different markets. A key factor is student involvement because we're not just talking about today but about the future — something that will affect all of us."

Gilmore's daughter is an active fifteen-year-old sophomore at Whites Creek High School. What would she like for her daughter? "I'm trying to instill some of the same values in her that my mom instilled in me. Be realistic, but focus on the positives rather than the negatives."

Good, sound advice from mother, mentor, role model, supervisor and friend — Brenda Gilmore. ■

Help is available through the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Department of Otolaryngology. You can also receive important information regarding balance and dizziness disorders by writing to the Vestibular Disorders Association, 1015 N.W. 22nd Avenue, D-230, Portland, OR 97210-3079, (503) 229-7705. If you would like immediate information or feel you need to talk about your dizziness problems, you can write or call me at 3912 Cambridge Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205, 383-1680. ■

News quotes

New movie, 'Eating,' explores women, food, and body image

Movie producer Henry Jaglom grew up preferring the company of women. But one thing has remained enigmatic for him: the relationship women have with food and body image.

Intrigued by the subject, he decided to make a movie about it. He assembled thirty-eight actresses in a house in Los Angeles for three weeks and encouraged them to reveal their most personal feelings about food, men, their bodies, and eating. The movie that resulted, "Eating," opens nationwide through May and June.

Marinda Gregory, who plays the daughter of the main character in "Eating" calls the picture "the most honest film I've seen about how women are with women." Gregory, who once had bulimia, said she now understands how food becomes a substitute for love and self-esteem in a culture where looks are paramount.

Rachelle Carson, another actress in the movie, talks about the comfort of carbonated soda as a child. "That sweetness was something I became very addicted to 'cause I didn't have that in my life. I'm never going to ever be able to be like normal people

with food," she said. "I'm always going to be at the mercy of it. And it's a very, very scary feeling."

Like all of the actresses in the movie, Carson is an attractive woman with a nice figure. Looking at her, no one would suspect that food is a problem. But the movie makes it clear

that the struggle to avoid food, because it threatens fat, and therefore the resultant loss of love, cannot be detected by a woman's outward appearance or her apparent ability to control the problem.

Trish Hall, *New York Times*
May 1, 1991

Unlikely union forms to press family issues

An unusual alliance of conservative Republicans and liberal and moderate Democrats is pressing the Federal Government to adopt policies that members say will reverse the decline and breakup of American families.

On one hand, the coalition includes lawmakers like Representative Patricia Schroeder, a Colorado Democrat who is one of the more liberal members of Congress, and groups like the Progressive Policy Institute, a centrist Democratic public policy research organization.

On the other are conservatives like Phyllis Schlafly, a staunch opponent of sex education in public schools and a prime force behind the defeat of the Federal equal rights amendment, and

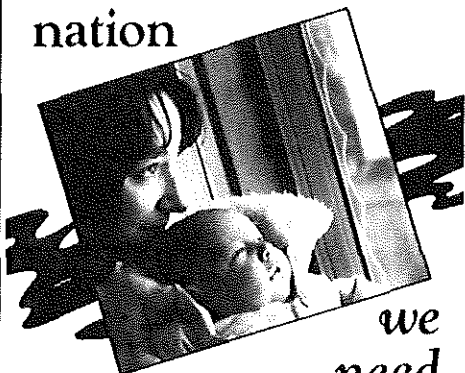
the Family Research Council, a group opposing abortion and gay rights.

The coalition is loose, united by similar views on issues rather than by a formal organization. Mrs. Schlafly and Ms. Schroeder, for example, have never met to plot strategies.

"Liberals and conservatives in this room would disagree on everything, including the time of day, but not on this issue," Gary L. Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, recently told a Congressional hearing on financial constraints and the family. "I am convinced that the politics of saving the family will be the politics of the 90s."

New York Times
May 1, 1991

For the future
of our
nation



we
need
mandatory
family leave
now.

American Association of University Women

Page 4, Women's VU, June 1991

European countries offer maternity leave with pay

The European Commission is asking in a draft directive that, in light of the Single Market of 1992, the right to a fourteen-week maternity leave with full pay or an equivalent benefit be extended to the entire twelve-member Community. Three countries (Germany, Greece, and Luxembourg) currently offer this degree of protection to working women. Only five countries (Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Portugal) guarantee maternity leaves with full pay.

Elsewhere, women receive between seventy and ninety percent of their wages, depending on the country, or, as in the case of Belgium, one hundred percent of their salaries for only four weeks. Statutory maternity leaves exceed this fourteen-week pe-

riod in some countries, but the Netherlands sets the maternity leave at only twelve weeks and Portugal ninety days (thirteen weeks).

The Commission's proposal, which must be adopted by the Council of Ministers to become binding in the Member States, includes other protective measures, such as a ban on night work for a sixteen-week period surrounding the delivery date, including at least eight weeks before the expected delivery date; a ban on exposing pregnant or nursing women to substances or processes that may be harmful to their health; and finally, a ban on dismissing pregnant women or those that have just given birth for reasons linked to their condition.

Women of Europe
Dec. 1990/Jan. 1991

Book documents lives of women pioneers

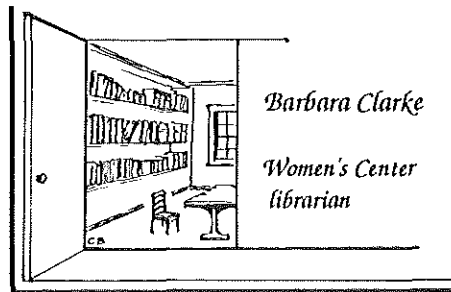
Sandra L. Myres' *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* was recently donated to the library. This is a fascinating book which gives readers an insight into the daily lives of women who trekked West to new homes on the frontier. Though the emphasis is on Anglo-American women, some details of the lives of Mexican, Indian, African-American, and French women are included.

The writer, a professor of history and a specialist in the American West, made extensive use of pioneer women's diaries and correspondence, and frequently quotes from these sources. Through their writings the women show how they coped with the long and difficult treks (which sometimes took as long as six months), and how they set up their homesteads upon their arrival in the West. We see how the women adapted to their new surroundings, what the domestic and farming chores were, and how these were shared by family members. Myres shows how the women felt about themselves and their lives, their families, their new homesteads, and the Indians and others they met from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In their frontier settlements, many women participated widely in community activities, and over the years pressure mounted for women's suffrage. By the end of the period Myres covers, it was not uncommon for women to own and run farms. Some women had entered the professions, and a number of western states had established statewide women's suffrage.

This excellent book includes photographs of some pioneer families, and an extensive listing of Myres' sources.

Rosemary O. Joyce's *A Woman's Place: The Life History of a Rural Ohio Grandmother* is a different type of book on pioneering women and their descendants. This is a study of five generations of a family which has remained within a small area of



In the library

southwestern Ohio for over 130 years. Dr. Joyce interviewed Sarah Flynn Penfield many times over a seven-year period, beginning in 1975. She also interviewed many other family members, including two of Sarah's sisters.

The writer makes extensive use of quotations transcribed from the interview tapes. Sarah was born on a farm in 1903, and the book describes the lives of five generations of her family, beginning in the 1850s with Sarah's grandparents and her husband's grandparents. Sarah and her sisters tell what they know of the way of life of the previous two generations, who were farmers who grew or made almost everything they needed. Sarah describes in detail what her own life has been like: from childhood on she worked both on the farm and in the house, and her life has always been centered around her family.

Though Sarah has a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward women's role in society, she is well aware of the injustices that women and girls have endured, particularly in the early part of this century. Dr. Joyce has found that Sarah's attitudes are common among women of her age and background.

Another of our interesting books on pioneer women is Joanna L. Stratton's *Pioneer Women: Voices From the Kansas Frontier*. This work is based on the memoirs of 800 white women who settled on the Kansas frontier. The manuscripts were collected in the 1920s by Stratton's great-grandmother, who had planned to publish a book on

pioneer life. However, the book was never published, and the memoirs were locked away in a filing cabinet until they were discovered by the author in 1975. The pioneer women described events that occurred as far back as the 1850s, and the book contains an interesting selection of photographs illustrating life on the frontier.

Hillbilly Women by Kathy Kahn is a study of nineteen rural white women from southern Appalachia. Kahn interviewed women of all ages, and even the young women tell of difficult lives and poverty. Many of the women grew up in mining towns or camps, and a number worked in textile mills.

Books recently received by the library include: *Silences* by Tillie Olsen; *Integrating Women's Studies Into the Curriculum* by Betty Schmitz; *One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage* by Anne Firor Scott and Andrew MacKay Scott; *Making the Invisible Woman Visible* by Anne Firor Scott, and *60 Catalan Language Women Writers Today*. ■

Library Wish List

We would be happy to accept the following books if anyone has copies they would like to donate. Please call the library at 343-4849.

Brittan, A. & Maynard, M. *Sexism, Racism, and Oppression*; Cockburn, C. *Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How*; Gittins, D. *The Family in Question: Changing Households and Familiar Ideologies*; Klein, E. *Gender Politics*; Luker, K. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*; National Research Council (ed. Reskin, B.P. & Hartmann, H.I.) *Women's Work, Men's Work: Sex Segregation on the Job*; Russell, L.M. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*; Schur, E.M. *Labeling Women Deviant*.

Announcements et cetera

The Women's Center Book Group will meet on Monday, June 10 to choose books that the group will read and discuss during the next six months. Members should come ready with suggestions of books available in paperback (to keep down the cost) by or about women. The group will meet in Godchaux Hall Living Room from 5:15 p.m. until 6:15 p.m. New members are welcome.

The YWCA offers an employment and training program designed for women who have been primarily homemakers and now wish to become self-supporting. Workshops include self-assessment, career inventory, job readiness, and job placement assistance. The program serves Metro Nashville and sixteen counties of Middle Tennessee and is funded by the Job Training Partnership Act. For more information call 269-9922.

Call for Papers. The Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA) 16th Annual Regional Conference, "Celebrating Feminism and the Diversity of Women," will be held March 12-15, 1992, at the University of South Florida in Tampa. The

planning committee invites proposals for papers, posters, workshops, and round table discussions in the area of women's studies and related fields. Interested participants should submit an abstract of 500 words no later than October 15 to Janice Snook, Women's Studies Program, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, HMS 413, Tampa, FL 33620-8350.

SEWSA, founded in 1977 at the first National Women's Studies Association convention, is a group of feminist individuals and organizations who are committed to the promotion and support of women's studies and women's advocacy in schools and communities.

Editor's Note: This is the last issue of *Women's VU* for this academic year. We do not publish during July and August. In looking back over the past ten issues there are many people to thank for their help and support.

Nancy Ransom, director of the Women's Center, provides clear and

valuable advice which helps the newsletter improve each year. A new addition to our staff this year, Barbara Clarke, has proven to be an expert proofreader as well as an able writer of the "In the library" column. Gladys Holt, secretary, manages the huge task of maintaining the mailing list and organizing the distribution of the newsletter.

Many thanks to all the capable writers of lead stories, health, and interview columns! Cindy Brown's wonderful cartoons continue to delight and make some great points. This all reminds me of the wealth of talent in the Vanderbilt community.

For a final proofreading each month I've been able to call on some loyal supporters to lend their expertise: Margaret Meggs, Beth Matter, and Elaine Goleski. They've kept me from some embarrassing moments.

Beginning with this issue we have a welcome addition to the staff, Michelle Manzo, layout and design editor. Her experience with *The Hustler* and *Versus* is giving me some new ideas and welcome relief.

Have a good summer. We'll publish again in early September.

Judy Helfer, Editor



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Women's VU

Editor: Judith Tefft Helfer

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