

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

A road map for retirement

*Jean C. Johnson, Benefit Administrator
and Jane L. Shoun, Senior Benefit
Specialist*

Planning for your retirement is very similar to planning a vacation. You have your own ideas for the perfect vacation just as you should have your own ideas for the perfect retirement. Where to go? How to get there? What contingencies might intervene?

Why should women be involved with their own retirement planning? Annuity tables reflect that women retiring between the ages of sixty and sixty-five can expect to live three to four years longer than men. **Why do women need to be concerned with their retirement planning?** The fourth quarter 1990 figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reflect that the median earnings for women were 72.4% of earnings for men. The mean pension income for women in 1987 was 59% of the income for men.

Are women at Vanderbilt University involved with their retirement planning? Indications are "yes." The retirement planning program "Start Now Retire Later" offered to faculty and staff has had an 85% female participation this year and in 1990 60% of new enrollees to the Vanderbilt retirement plan were women. But many employees, especially women, have not begun to plan for a secure old age. It is never too late nor too early to start.

As in planning a vacation you need to target a destination before you can plan how to get there. Therefore, the first phase of retirement planning should be to establish a goal, including expectations for retirement, such as age and lifestyle. Also, you should spend time reviewing your current

financial situation. These factors will define where your starting point is and how much time you have to reach your destination.

A retirement "road map" is necessary to determine how much money you will need for retirement. The easiest way to estimate how much income you will need is to pick an amount between 60 and 80% of your current income. Another method requires you to compare two monthly expense budgets to determine what dollar amount you are currently spending for housing, utilities, insurance, transportation, clothing, food, travel, and medical expenses, and how much you estimate you might spend for these items during your retirement years. Remember you will still pay income taxes in retirement so you should know what your present tax bracket is (15%, 28% or 31%) and estimate what it might be when you retire.

You should have a general idea of how much money you can expect to receive from Social Security. The national monthly average benefit for a worker who paid in maximum earnings is \$1,022. The national average monthly benefit for a widow is \$550. You can obtain an estimate of your own Social Security benefit by writing to the Social Security Administration.

A plan that offers employer matching contributions is especially beneficial. These plans grow tax-deferred until the funds are withdrawn at retirement. They often offer a variety of investment choices. To avoid undue risk you should build a portfolio around the three major types of investments — common stocks for long-term

growth, bonds for current income, and money markets for stability. How you balance your portfolio depends on your individual circumstances such as your financial goals, your risk tolerance, and your age. You should review your portfolio at least once a year to make adjustments related to changes in your financial circumstances.

Another advantage to retirement investment plans is dollar cost averaging. The money you contribute to the plan through payroll reduction (usually a percentage of each paycheck) is invested systematically into funds at varying prices — more when the market is down, less when it's up. Your average cost per share will vary as the market price of your investment changes. However, this investment technique, which is designed for long-term goals, usually results in above-average returns.

Retirement plans also provide tax-deferred growth. Sheltering your investments from taxes allows the money to compound freely. An example of this compounding effect is astounding. Assuming a \$4,000 investment per year for twenty-five years and a 10% rate of return on your investment, it would produce a total return of \$279,126 without tax deferral compared to \$432,728 with tax deferral.

Just as you inform your family of vacation plans, inform them of retirement plans also. Know when you want to retire and how many years you have until retirement. Decide on how much money you will need and what investments you are going to use. Estimate how many years you will live in retirement (40% of women retiring at sixty can expect to live to age ninety or older). This should give you an easy, systematic long-term retirement plan.

With your retirement map in place — this is one ride you can sit back and enjoy! ■

Note: See page five for May 15 workshop on women and retirement to be led by the authors of this article.



It's your health

Heart disease kills women, too

Margaret M. Brennan, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Heart disease is an equal opportunity killer. It is the number one cause of death in women and men in this country. Although the average life expectancy for American women has increased over the decades to seventy-eight years, the average age of menopause, fifty years, has remained remarkably constant. That translates to more than one-third of a woman's life lived in the postmenopausal years, the years of highest cardiovascular risk. One of three women over sixty-five will die of cardiovascular disease.

Because rates of cardiovascular disease and death escalate after menopause, the idea that estrogen deficiency is associated with cardiovascular disease is being explored. Women do lose their favorable cholesterol profile, high levels of "good cholesterol," after menopause. Analysis of the Lipid Research Clinic's study showed that women who used postmenopausal estrogen, such as Premarin, had higher levels of "good" cholesterol (HDL) and compared to nonusers, a relative risk of death of only 0.54. Indeed eighty per cent of all studies done to date have shown a favorable effect of postmenopausal estrogen therapy on cardiovascular disease. However, most of these studies, initiated two decades ago, used estrogen alone. In the nineties, a progestational agent, such as Provera is frequently used with estrogen to minimize the risk of endometrial cancer associated with the use of estrogen by itself. It remains to be seen if addition of a "masculine" progestational agent will reverse the favorable effect of estrogen alone on cholesterol.

The Postmenopausal Estrogen/Progestin Interventions trial (PEPI) will

be a placebo controlled multicenter clinical trial of estrogen alone and three estrogen/progestational agent combinations in postmenopausal women. In these women, the effect of the different hormonal therapies on four cardiovascular risk factors — blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose tolerance, and blood clotting — will be assessed over a two-year period. Enrollment in the trial is ongoing. The results of this trial will better define the contribution of currently used postmenopausal hormonal replacement to cardiovascular disease prevention. ■

War is too important to be left to men

Sheila Tobias

For feminists wishing to forge a post-pacifist position for women on issues of war and peace, there was good news and bad news generated by the war in the Persian Gulf. The good news is that our country is finally learning to think about its service men and women as an integrated force. The phrase "our men and women in the Gulf," was heard at news briefings; now it is a part of America's new image of its fighting force.

For nearly twenty years, women have been recruited into the military as soldiers, sailors, flyers and even marines. Although their participation has leveled off at about ten per cent, women have proven their competence and mettle in all aspects of training and support and, in the case of Panama, even in unanticipated combat situations.

Still, until last fall, the nation as a whole continued to think about our armed forces as not just "male" but "masculine," indeed "macho."

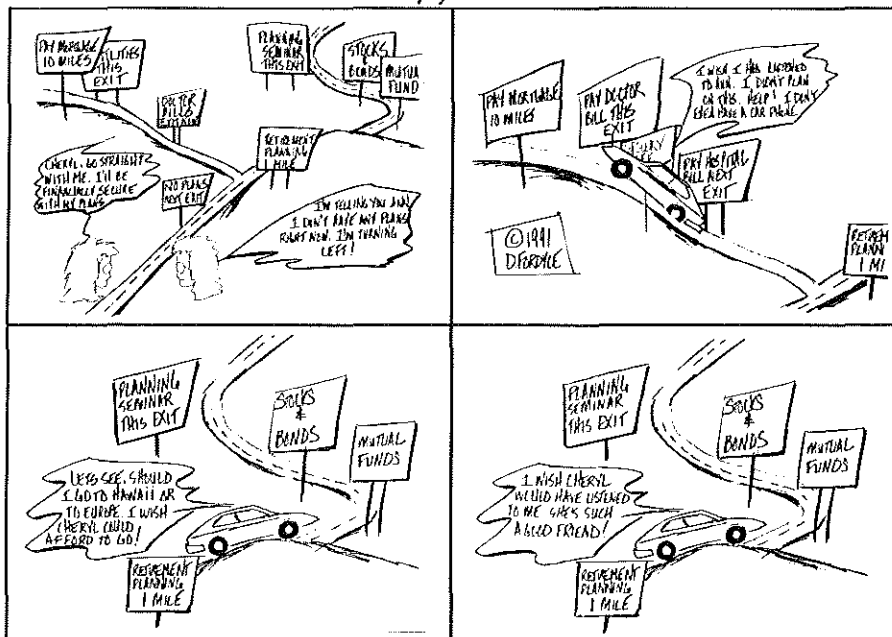
A combat exclusion for women, legislated by Congress, is still in effect, but as the news reports from the Persian Gulf made clear, the line between combat and logistical support is hard to draw. Women died and were taken prisoner along with men at the "front."

Noteworthy, too, is the willingness of servicemen (and the reporters who interview them and the editors who shape their stories) to show their many emotions upon leaving family and safety. The old "gung-ho" "giv-'em-hell" attitude of servicemen embarking on a war-time assignment is there. But so are tears and fear and tension.

The way a departing male soldier clings to his child, and the willingness of the news media to dwell on his fatherhood, is new and welcome evidence that our notion of "sex roles"

(continued page four)

Road Map for Retirement



Speaking of women . . .



photo by Judy Kim

Barbara Clarke (left) interviews Debra Creasman.

Debra Creasman has been at Vanderbilt since 1973, and is now the Director of Public Relations at the Blair School of Music. She was interviewed by Barbara Clarke, the Women's Center Librarian.

Barbara Clarke: Can you tell us what your work here entails?

Debra Creasman: My job involves working with the media to promote the school's concerts, classes, and special events, as well as coordinating and purchasing all advertising. I also oversee the publication of all promotional materials and general information regarding the school and its programs. I represent the school on community arts committees and serve as Blair's on-campus liaison with other departments.

BC: How did you come to be in this position? What is your background?

DC: I've been on the staff at Vanderbilt for seventeen years, starting in 1973 as a typesetter in the Printing Office. In 1983 I returned to college to complete my undergraduate degree and continued working full-time in that office until 1986, when I received my marketing degree from Belmont College. At that time Blair had an opening for concert manager and I transferred in the fall of 1986. Until

January 1987 it was a part-time position. I was promoted to Public Relations Director in 1989.

BC: Do you have a background in music?

DC: No. I've had only a basic music appreciation course in college. Fortunately, the two positions I've held at Blair are primarily business-related, and a background in music was not a prerequisite. There is an excellent music library in the building, and I've used their resources when needed. I've learned a great deal from daily exposure to music, and I attend as many concerts as time allows.

BC: What changes have you seen for women over the past seventeen years at Vanderbilt?

DC: I've seen more opportunities for women in all areas of the university. Key positions in higher administration are now being held by women, and they are also more involved in student government. The university is also hiring more women faculty members.

BC: Is it an advantage or a disadvantage to be a woman in your position?

DC: Gender has not been an issue in this position. Being a woman has not

created any barriers in carrying out my responsibilities, and I've noticed in my contacts with other public relations professionals that the field seems to be fairly evenly balanced between women and men.

BC: Do you consider yourself a feminist?

DC: I prefer not to categorize myself. Respect and equal opportunity in all areas of life are rights we all deserve.

BC: Can I ask you about the Blair graduates? Do the women graduates have a harder time than the men finding the type of position they are looking for?

DC: We've had only one graduating class. As they graduated just last spring, it's difficult to give you much information yet. We had nine graduates, and only one of them was a man. The women have done quite well; several of them were accepted into graduate school, as was the one male. I don't think that gender has that much to do with acceptance in the music world.

BC: When you think of orchestras, they're almost all men still, but I guess it's changing.

DC: I think it is changing. The growing number of women in symphony orchestras around the country is encouraging. It has also been exciting to see more women enter the field of conducting, and I hope that, in the years ahead, women will assume more significant roles in all areas of performing and the fine arts. ■

Don't forget to designate!

You can help complete the endowment of the Margaret Cuninggim Lecture Fund by designating all or part of your contribution to the Faculty and Staff Campaign to the Fund.

26th Annual SMU Women's Symposium: The Education of Women for Social and Political Leadership

Sandy Smith, A&S Jr.

What better city to hold a women's symposium than Dallas, Texas — the state which just elected its first female governor and boasts a long list of female mayors. The twenty-sixth annual women's symposium at Southern Methodist University held on February 27th and 28th asked, "Can We Be Human Together?" The symposium stressed the importance of a female presence in the United States government. The male-dominated field of politics does not readily accept women participants. However, the government is an extremely powerful force in our nation. Why, then, do women continue to govern at the lower city levels while men control the upper branches?

Today, women run families, businesses, and other entire countries, yet make up only 5.8 per cent of the American Congress. In the United States, there are only two female senators and twenty-nine female representatives.

Some of the many prominent speakers at the symposium were Michael Kimmel, Sally Helgesen, and Madeleine Kunin. Michael Kimmel, feminist, sociologist, and author, addressed the interdependence of men and women in public institutions. He praised the feminist accomplishments of balancing work and home life, greater gender visibility, and acknowledging sexuality, but challenged society to change its expectations of men. Kimmel felt men have unreachable masculine stereotypes — "testosterone poisoning" as Alan Alda called it. If we change our expectations of men, the gender gap will diminish, AIDS and rape statistics will decrease, and sexuality will be safe.

Sally Helgesen, author of *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership*, discussed women in professional roles. She suggested that female em-

ployers tend to use a "web of inclusion" in their decision making. As men traditionally govern hierarchically, women rely on communication and descriptive titles, which have proven to be advantageous to many corporations. Just as in governmental positions, women are making "grass-roots" changes in corporations as well. Helgesen felt women were prominent in lower levels because there they had direct input, but urged women to participate in higher branches.

Madeleine Kunin, former Governor of Vermont, got her start in politics by being upset with a local railroad crossing. As keynote speaker Kunin urged women to change the government by beginning at the "grass-roots." She suggested that the active life of being the innovator was actually safer than accepting an "inevitable" outcome. Although politics has been a traditionally male field, women have much to offer the American government. In her lecture, Kunin shared a story about her chief of staff, Liz, and Liz's nine year old son, Joshua. Liz and Joshua were visiting a Vermont historical museum when they came upon an antique governor's car with a male wax figure inside. Joshua asked who the man in the governor's car was. When his mother replied, "the governor," Joshua immediately piped up, "Oh, Mommy, don't be silly! We all know men can't be governors!"

Perhaps some day gender will not play an important role in any campaign — political or corporate. ■

Editor's note: Sandy Smith and Ashley Laroche attended the twenty-sixth annual SMU Women's Symposium February 27-28, 1991 under the auspices of the Chancellor's office, Women's Studies, and the Women's Center.

Women and war (continued from page two)

is enlarging. Just as women are freer than ever before to serve their country in war, so men are freer to show their fears and feelings about fighting and dying.

What's disappointing, from a feminist perspective, is that this war was not the absolute "last resort." The feminist message, as articulated by Geraldine Ferraro in her famous debate with then-vice presidential candidate George Bush, was that should she ever have to make that "awesome decision" to go to war, it would be only after every other option had been exhausted.

Also disturbing is the president's wish to rewrite the history of Vietnam. As he sees it, the failure of that policy was the result of tying our military's hands. The way feminists and millions of other Americans see it, the failure of that policy was not simply that it was wrong, in a moral sense, but that it was also futile.

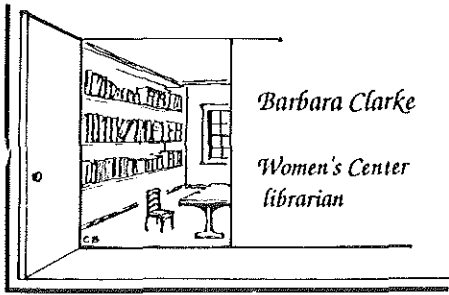
Feminists are not pacifists. We recognize that equal responsibility is the necessary concomitant of equal rights. We believe that war, to quote the French statesman, Clemenceau, is simply "too important to be left to the generals."

The people in this case, allied soldiers and the soldiers and the people of Iraq, are not just "collateral damage." They are the nation and their voices need to be heard. When, as in Kuwait and Iraq, women are entirely excluded from decision-making roles, the equation is further skewed in the direction of a military solution.

Not all feminists agree with Ms. editor Robin Morgan, but her assessment of the event that precipitated the current war bears noting: Morgan wrote shortly after Iraqi soldiers illegally entered Kuwait last year, "half of Iraq invaded half of Kuwait."

In this death-dealing struggle for land and oil and power, women were not consulted. Food for thought. ■

Tobias is the author of The People's Guide to National Defense and co-editor of Women, Militarism and War.



Barbara Clarke

Women's Center
librarian

In the library

New arrivals in the library

Many women will find that Peggy Reeves Sanday's *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus* is a disturbing book.

Campus gang rapes may occur when young women go to fraternity houses or athletic dormitories, and are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sometimes the women are unconscious when they are raped. Sanday shows how initiation rites, male bonding, pornography, and sexist jokes play a major role in forming attitudes toward women, and condition young men to be very sexist. The degradation of women is seen as a prerequisite to masculinity. Gang rape is a form of male bonding in which the women are only convenient instruments. The young men appear to be unaware of the homophobia and the homoeroticism involved in the attacks.

The fraternity brothers usually consider gang rape to be quite normal behavior, and many are amazed that anyone could consider it to be a crime. Many of the assaults are not reported to authorities, and even when they are, the fraternity members usually receive little or no punishment. In the cases Sanday cites, the college administrators were reluctant to do anything that might ruin the careers of the privileged young men. They also wanted to protect the reputation of their college.

Sanday, a professor of anthropology, demonstrates that rape is not universal to human society. She concludes that "social ideologies, not human nature, prepare men to abuse women."

Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery is a reprint of William Thompson's landmark 1825 British publication. It was written in response to James Mill's *Article on Government*, which he wrote in 1820 for the 1824 supplement to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and which he later reprinted. Mill dismissed the idea that women should have political representation, as he believed that their interests were included with those of their husbands or fathers.

Thompson, a member of the Irish gentry, wrote the book in collaboration with Anna Wheeler, and many of the ideas were hers. She was an Irish woman from a wealthy family and was famous for her revolutionary speeches and writings.

This book is a well-known and important early feminist publication. Thompson and Wheeler pointed out that not all women had husbands or fathers, and that marriage benefitted mainly a husband. A wife was reduced to "an involuntary breeding machine and household slave." Women really had little choice as to whether or not they would remain single. Society expected that they would marry, and it was very difficult for women to support themselves. The authors urged women to demand equal rights and to fight against oppression by men.

Other recent arrivals in the library include: Martha Whitmore Hickman's *Fullness of Time: Short Stories of Women and Aging*; Charlotte Hogsett's *The Literary Existence of Germaine de Stael*; and videotapes of Sheila Tobias' two recent presentations at Vanderbilt: *What Makes Science Hard?* and *The Schlafly Effect*.

We have copies of the *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications*. This is an eight-page pamphlet published by the National Council of Teachers of English, and anyone who is interested may come to the Women's Center to pick up a copy. ■

Women's Center programs
For more information call 322-4843.

13 (Monday)

Book Group will discuss *Writing A Woman's Life* by Carolyn G. Heilbrun. Elaine Goleski will be the facilitator. New members are always welcome. Group will meet from 5:15 until 6:15 p.m. in Godchaux Living Room.

15 (Wednesday)

A Road Map For Retirement, Jean Johnson, Vanderbilt University Benefit Administrator, and Jane Shoun, Senior Benefit Specialist. Women need to take charge of their own retirement planning. This workshop will provide information on financial issues that will affect your retirement planning. Options available to you through the Vanderbilt retirement plan as well as other investment options will be covered. A number of resources will be available for participants including *Making Sense of Social Security*.

This information is part of a more comprehensive program offered through Training and Development entitled "Start Now Retire Later."

Workshop will be held from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. in Psychology 112.

16 (Thursday)

Journaling: The Power of Unsent Letters, Miriam Bassuk, LCSW. Unsent letters used in journal writing can offer the opportunity to explore thoughts or emotions on any subject. In this workshop we will practice this technique to look at job, relationships, and as a means to celebrate yourself.

Workshop will be from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m. in Psychology 112. Fee is \$10, registration required by May 14 (checks payable to Vanderbilt University to Box 1513 Station B). ■

Leadership for Today and Tomorrow Seventh National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, May 30 - June 1, Washington, DC, sponsored by National Association for Women in Education. For more information check the bulletin board at the Women's Center.

Announcements et cetera

Mary Jane Werthan Award

Nominations for the 1991 Mary Jane Werthan Award will be accepted now through the summer. This award to a person who has made a noteworthy contribution to the advancement of women at Vanderbilt will be presented at the Margaret Cuninggim Lecture in the fall.

Letters of recommendation may be sent to the Women's Center.

Planned Parenthood Association of Nashville began offering mid-life services last month. Complete gynecological care for women in mid-life transition, or menopause, is now available.

The program includes a complete medical evaluation and treatment, supplemented by educational and counseling services for a total program of care. Both hormonal and non-hormonal approaches to managing menopause are available along with information regarding the emotional, sexual, social, and physical changes which occur after the cessation of menstruation.

These services are available at reasonable fees. For additional information call 327-1066.

YWCA class on Mothers and Daughters is set for May. Peg Beehan, LCSW, will lead three sessions May 7, 9, and 14 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This comprehensive class will focus on the mother/daughter relationship and the number of different roles it creates. Fee \$45. Registration necessary. Please call 269-9922.

Call for papers

The third Women's Policy Research Conference to be held in Washington, DC, May 15-16, 1992, has issued a call for papers. This 1992 conference seeks to focus primarily on race and ethnicity and the effects of migration and immigration trends and public policy on women. A one or two-page synopsis of a proposed presentation is due by October 15, 1991.

A response form, due by July 1, and additional information on the conference are available at the Women's Center.



printed on recycled paper

First births after age thirty-five

The rate of first births among American women in their thirties has more than doubled since 1970. According to recent studies, women who have their first child after age thirty-five are at little or no higher risk for having a low-birth-weight infant than younger women, and are no more likely to deliver prematurely or have stillbirths. And their infants are at no greater risk for most of the common birth defects.

*University of California at Berkeley
Wellness Letter, May 1991*

Address correction request. If this newsletter is addressed to someone else, please request your own copy by sending us the subscription form below along with the incorrect mailing label.

For readers off campus: if you provide us with your new address as soon as possible, your service will not be interrupted, and we will save money on postage.

Women's VU

Editor: Judith Tefft Helfer

Subscription information: return this form or call the Women's Center at 322-4843.

- Newsletters (published monthly except July and August) are sent free upon request to all students and contributors.

Faculty and staff subscriptions are free to a campus address.

- A yearly subscription to off-campus addresses is \$5.00.

Please make checks payable to Vanderbilt University.

- This is a copyrighted publication. Reproduction is encouraged with permission of the editor.

Name _____

Department _____

Address _____

Student (give school and class) _____ Staff _____

Faculty _____ Adm. _____ Contributor _____ Other _____

Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Vanderbilt University
Franklin Bldg., West Side Row
Box 1513, Station B
Nashville, TN 37235

**Address Correction Requested
Include mailing label**