

Women returning to college cope with discouragement

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attend the workshop's sessions on advising, registration, and counseling.

Ms. Reno explained the necessity of such a peer group:

"Take the example of a woman who has been out of school for 20 years. When she was a sophomore (in college before she quit), the campus was much smaller, she was much younger, and in the habit of studying. She had a different self image. Now, she knows where the administration build-

ing is, but she doesn't know where anything else is. The campus has changed. She's competing with 18-year-olds."

"As one woman who had returned to school told me, 'for 20 years, the only writing I did was notes to the milkman and Christmas cards. Now I'm writing themes,'" said Ms. Reno to illustrate the change and frustration a woman can experience when she returns to school.

A women's group could help other women who are con-

templating a return to college "overcome their apprehensions," said Elouise Soukup, a workshop participant. "The group is something they can share in, if they've had a rough day."

Mrs. Soukup, who completed a bachelor of arts degree in history in 1973, after one year at UN-L, said she returned to school mainly for personal enrichment.

A life insurance agent (one of three women agents among 300 agents in Lincoln), she said her classes were "an intellectual

discipline" that gave her self-confidence.

Mrs. Soukup, had been out of school for 25 years. Previously she had attended the University of Southern California, but quit school and went to work to help support her family.

Her son's college graduation persuaded her to return to school, Mrs. Soukup said. With only one year to finish, going back would be "kind of a novelty," she said.

"But the longer you put it off, the harder going back becomes," she said. "It got to a point where I either had to go ahead (and return to school) or shut up about it."

Mrs. Soukup attended Doane College in Crete, then transferred to UN-L, where her daughter was a junior.

"We would be running into each other in the halls," Mrs. Soukup said. "At times I felt she was watching mother."

One of the first semester's biggest obstacles was tests, Mrs. Soukup said. "I wasn't used to taking them and I was a

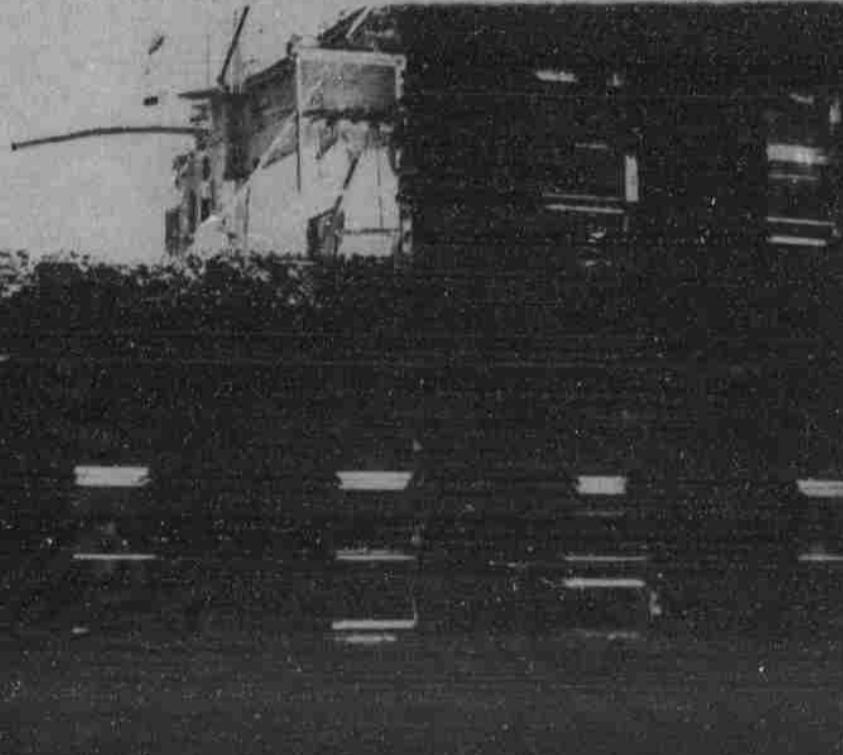
nervous wreck before them. But by second semester, I was over it. Women need to know that this is a normal reaction."

Tests and classes don't have to upset a woman's household schedule either, according to Mrs. Soukup. Organization comes with maturity, she said, and women returning to college after raising their families are more goal-orientated than some college students. She suggested that women schedule a two or three-day class week instead of spreading classes over a five-day period.

Another fear Mrs. Soukup said she started out with, was that the younger students would resent an older person in their classes.

But "some wonderful people," students and instructors both, "helped me get over my stage fright," she said.

"It (returning to school) has been a very enjoyable experience for my whole family," Mrs. Soukup said. "My kids even like me better."



Only a bit of foliage still hangs on Stout Hall, one of the last ivy-covered buildings on campus. Stout is being torn down to make room for a new life-sciences building.

Kids learn at day care centers

By Pat Moynihan

The thought of 25 preschool children running under foot on these hot summer days would be enough to send most mothers scrambling for cover.

But for the staff of the University Child Care Project, this is an everyday occurrence.

The University Day Care Centers, which were begun in 1968 by the Office of Financial Aids and ASUN, were initially intended as aid for low income families. Since then, they have come under the supervision of the Graduate School of Social Work and the Office of Student Affairs, but families are still screened for eligibility by the Office of Financial Aids.

The project operates three centers for different age groups. Sessions for the youngest group, the 6-month to 3-year-olds, are held in the First Plymouth Congregational Church, the 3-to 5-year-olds meet in the Commonplace Church, and the elementary school children go to St. Mark's on the Campus Episcopal Church. A total of 63 children can be accommodated between the three centers.

The main goal of the program, according to project supervisor, Mary Joe Ryan, is not to formally teach the children, but rather to expose them to different concepts and ideals.

"There is so much time for them to learn," she said, "we just want to start them thinking on their own."

Recently the 3- to 5-year-old children have been learning about different cultures through films, songs and speakers. They have also made a piñata and visited a local Mexican restaurant, ate fortune cookies in a Chinese restaurant, and went out for a real Italian pizza.

The next project will be ecology, Ryan said, and plans are to plant seeds and explain how they grow, explain pollution and take trips to illustrate what we're saying, and to go on a litter pickup outing.

Although the day care centers are located in area churches, the program is not sponsored by any church, Ryan said. Funds for the project come from a variety of sources, which include the Student Fees Allocations Board, the Work-Study Program, the federal government and donations.

"We operate on an annual budget of approximately \$45,000," Ryan said, "and this is only about half of the cost of running a commercial day care center."

Costs at the centers are kept down by programs such as the federal lunch programs which help pay for the children's breakfasts and lunches, Ryan said. Parents are expected to pay for the remainder of the food costs, she noted, but donations of surplus food from the university also help out.

However, even this cannot keep costs down completely. Toys for the centers must be built much stronger than toys made for family use, Ryan noted, and these institutional type trucks and cars cost approximately \$10 a piece.

Ultimate responsibility for the activities of the centers rests with the parents, Ryan said, resulting in a more cooperative program than in most day care centers.

"Because the parents make most of the final decisions," Ryan said, "they are more aware of what their children are doing and the costs."

They also help out considerably by raising money for the center, she noted.

All of the parents are college students, Ryan said, and so they tend to be more aware of the development of the child, especially if their field of study happens to be psychology or education. Therefore, these children are perhaps better adjusted to behavior in an educational atmosphere.

"For this reason, we have as few rules as possible here," Ryan said, "but these rules must be firm and always

carried out."

During a normal day when the children are not visiting a Mexican restaurant, they are allowed a great deal of freedom, Ryan said. They are allowed a choice of playing outside under supervision, using one of the tables which are set up for activities such as collage, or playing with the toys.

One type of toy you won't see at the day care center is a gun, Ryan said.

"There are so many more constructive things we can contribute to the child's environment," Ryan said, "but if the child wants to introduce this type of thing into his own environment by constructing one with tinker toys, that's fine."



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