

# Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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## Table for One

Unusual combination of benefits can come from a travel on your own

By Lorraine McClish  
staff writer

**T**HERE AREN'T too many things a woman can do that will pamper herself and build her self confidence at the same time.

"It's an unusual combination, but getting away for a trip on your own will do it," said Linda Heard, assistant to the president of AAA Michigan.

"So many times we just tag along. We dream of going to Paris and find ourselves on a golf course in Scotland. On a trip alone you can indulge yourself, take control over your own life, take total responsibilities for all of your choices. All of the decisions are in your hands. All of the options are yours and yours alone.

"And it doesn't have to be London or Greece. It could be a weekend to a spa, a weekend of skiing, a drive up north to see the colors."

"Table for One" is the topic for the day when Heard is the guest speaker for the annual holiday brunch hosted by Farmington Chapter of OWL (Older Women's League).

The event begins at noon Sunday, Dec. 4 in Botsford Inn, Grand River east of Eight Mile Road. A silent auction is a traditional part of the chapter's pre-holiday party.

Reservation, at \$15.50, are taken by Virginia Nicholl, 474-3094, through Nov. 2.

***'I've just recently started some serious research on this subject that I know can help women make events happen — rather than their being swept along with events that happen around them.'***

— Linda Heard  
assistant to the president,  
AAA Michigan

GIVING TRAVEL advice to women traveling alone is not a part of Heard's job at AAA, but it is certainly allied to it.

"I am not doing this to sell cruise tickets. I am keenly aware of the number of women who travel alone for business — the ones who don't know how — and the number of women who are intimidated by traveling alone just for pleasure," Heard said.

"I've just recently started some serious research on this subject that I know can help women make events happen rather than their being swept along with events that happen around them."

The first time Heard indulged herself on a trip alone happened by accident.

She was planning a short trip to Mackinac Island with a friend, the first get-away she was to have had in

a long while. The packing was done, the baby-sitter had been arranged, the animals were boarded out, and then the friend was forced to back out.

"I went by myself. It was exhilarating. It was rejuvenating. I couldn't remember the last time I had been able to do just exactly what I wanted to do and when I wanted to do it," she said. "I will always remember that trip as the best trip I ever took."

Years later Heard was vacationing in the Bahama Islands and overheard the conversation of four women on a bench.

"One wanted to shop for perfume, one wanted to stay on the beach, one wanted to go back to the hotel, one wanted to go to the casinos."

It was that conversation that decided me to start telling women to start thinking about making their

own good times on their own vacations. I accepted one speaking engagement and all the rest of them I've done has been by word of mouth," she said.

OWL IS A national organization addressing the special concerns of mid-life and older women. Through research and education, it works to improve the image and status of the older woman, to provide mutual support for its members, and to achieve economic and social equity.

"OWL got its start in 1980 during a White House conference when it became so apparent that aging affects men and women differently," Nicholl said, who is heading up the arrangements for the Farmington chapter's brunch.

"Our sole purpose is to work to reform the many injustices that are built into our social and economic structure, nationally and locally."

"One the local level we educate our members."

"Educating ourselves on how to take total control — even on a mini vacation — and educating ourselves on how to pamper ourselves at the same time, certainly is an education many of us can use."

Heard calls traveling alone a "character builder and a confidence builder."



Linda Heard's first trip alone was caused by happenstance. Now she's doing research for a book aimed to help the woman who must travel alone for business and the woman who shies away from traveling alone just for pleasure. She will tell of the benefits of traveling alone in her talk called "Table for One," Dec. 4, hosted by Older Women's League Farmington Chapter.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

After raising her family, Norma Kobel turned to selling sweaters. She is owner and operator of "The Pelican" in downtown Farmington.

## Sweaters

Plain or fancy to warm the heart

By Susan Bick  
staff writer

Norma Kobel has goods that can warm any woman's heart.

At this chilly time of year, her women's sweater store called "The Pelican" lends a homey atmosphere to the cold winter ahead.

The 25-year Farmington Hills resident opened the boutique more than five years ago in downtown Farmington, at 33345 Grand River.

"Twenty-five percent of the sweaters are hand-knit," said Kobel, who became sole owner of "The Pelican" after raising four children.

Before moving to its present location, Kobel operated the store out of a location in back that's now occupied by "The Rocking Horse."

"You don't have the walkers up and down Grand River like you have on the main streets of Plymouth and Northville," she said.

When she started her business, Kobel enlisted the aid of Tom Proudfoot, a friend and former neighbor, who Kobel said is well-known in the sweater industry. Proudfoot operates retail stores in Ohio and Arizona.

"It wasn't any problem at all get-

ting started," Kobel said. "I had Tom Proudfoot as a reference. The first year, he probably ordered half of my merchandise."

The name of the store came by chance. "We all like water and we thought it was a catchy name," she said.

KOBEL STOCKS items seasonally, going heavy on the sweaters during winter months and turning to lighter weight items in spring.

Christmas sweaters arrived in the store last week. Now the store is dotted with sweaters featuring whimsical snowmen, Christmas trees with a child's train set and teddy bears with glitter-thread eyes.

All manufacturers are sized differently, Kobel said. "I special order a lot. Many of my customers know the names of the manufacturers, have seen the sweaters up north and want to know if we have them," she said.

Among the most expensive are sweaters by Maria Christina at \$118-\$128. On the tags of one manufacturer, Glensheen Woolens of Scotland, each handcrafters personally signs her name.

Kobel's present inventory was or-

dered in January.

"This stuff was ordered in January. You just kind of listen to the salesmen and then you have to sit back and try to decide for yourself. Salesmen will try to sell you anything. One thing you learn is that you don't write orders when you see the merchandise. You take a lot of notes and then you come back, look over everything and the costs and then you write your orders."

A common, wrongly held belief is that fine sweaters must be dry-cleaned, Kobel said. She prefers washing them. "I wash all my sweaters. I think they are all better off washed. People are so afraid to wash them," she said.

"A LOT of the cotton sweaters made now are just fantastic," Kobel added. "Especially anything made by a company called Alps. They're all made in the U.S.A. and they can be put in the washer and dryer. We've really come a long way with cotton. Cotton used to get big and nobody wanted to put it in the dryer because it would shrink."

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Please turn to Page 2