

Women Seeking New Life on L.I.

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ROSLYN, L. I., March 27 — In the Roslyn Country Club Community, the street names are displayed on clean white signposts. They follow a rustic theme: Farm, Shepherd, Saddle, Hayloft.

Now, 20 years after the development was built, the trees are fully grown, providing a lush shade that seems to fulfill the promise of the street names.

But the children have grown up, too, and like children everywhere they have left for other communities.

For some of the housewives here, now middle-aged, this has meant a time for readjustment, a loss of the sense of community, and a break from a life revolving around childrearing and its daily concomitants: family dinners, parent-teacher association meetings, Boy Scout outings.

"It begins when they're in high school," observed one mother. "Suddenly you notice you don't have the same daily routine. You're faced with a vacuum of freedom and you say to yourself: 'What in God's name am I going to do with all this spare time I was supposedly looking forward to?'"

What Mrs. Rhe Golobe did was get a job.

Years ago, she had been a teacher in the New York City school system. So upon the graduation of her son, John, now 27 years old and a mathematics teacher at the New York Institute of Technology in Westbury, she returned to her former profession.

Mrs. Golobe, whose gray hair is set in long graceful

waves, works for the Bureau for the Education of the Physically Handicapped, teaching children in Queens.

Her job meant dropping volunteer work, as membership chairman for the North Shore Arts Center in nearby Great Neck. Volunteer activity, she said, brings prestige but "reaches the point of no return" when it consumes a full day without remuneration.

But money was not the object of her employment. It was "to avoid boredom" on those long afternoons when the comfortably furnished house seemed a little emptier.

"When your children are young, you're involved in watching them grow up, sometimes too involved," she said. "Women aren't prepared for that time when the involvement should move on to a different level.

Encouraged by Husbands

"I remember being at the hairdressers one day and the woman next to me asked me if I was working. 'I'm a bum,' she said, 'because all I did all day was go to lunch with a friend.'"

There are a number of women here who appear to be more like Mrs. Golobe than her beauty-parlor acquaintance. Many of them have become teachers, taking courses at C. W. Post College in Brookville or Adelphi College in Garden City to meet educational requirements and they then join their husbands in the commute to the city.

"There was a time when



Mrs. Lillian Levy, left, teaching sculpture to Mrs. Esther Skolnick. Mrs. Levy has lived in Roslyn Country Club Community since 1949. "There's nothing like feeling needed, like having to rise to the occasion," she said.

Photographs for The New York Times by EDWARD HAUSNER

husbands didn't want their wives to work, but now they boast about it," Mrs. Golobe said.

In fact, so many women here work or are steeped in sports activities that some local volunteer agencies—traditionally the energy outlet for the suburban woman—complain of declining participation.

"It's disturbing," said Edwin Kohen, executive director of Temple Sinai, speaking of groups like Hadassah, B'nai B'rith, and the National Council of Jewish Women. "Organizations which used to get 100 people at luncheons now get 20. Some have stopped throwing benefit dinners, others now meet in homes. We try all the gimmicks to get people to come, but they're just too busy."

Two reasons for the lack of attendance, he said, were affluence, which pushed women onto the tennis courts, and the need "to get really involved," which drew them to salaried work.

It is noon, a warm day. The sun shines hard on the blacktop lanes that twist and join in a circular pattern.

In a few hours, the yellow school bus will come through, depositing children who will be greeted by their family dogs. But for now the streets are mostly quiet, the dogs lie lazily on the clipped



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lawns, and the only movement is from delivery trucks that pull into shaded driveways and station wagons that carry housewives to the Daitch shopping center.

Noon, in the Roslyn Country Club Community, is a timeless moment, whose tranquility conjures up the dream-image of the American suburb.

The community is an en-

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clave of 680 homes built upon a potato patch by the man whose name is synonymous with suburban development, William J. Levitt.

The first settlers here were part of that vast, post World War II migration of city-dwellers. They were young, just married and drawn to the idea of owning a plot of grass an hour's drive from Manhattan and the prospect of sending their children to a country club a few blocks away instead of to a camp in the mountains.

Many of the original homeowners are still here. They have gained in affluence, moving up from middle class to upper middle class. The advance is seen in their ranch houses, which have tripled and quadrupled in value and taken on so many new rooms and patios that it takes a discerning eye to realize that the basic floor plans are all the same.

The children getting off the bus do not belong to the original settlers, and for some of them, that has made a difference in the dream.

Some Find Many Changes

Some of the working women, like Mrs. Dorothy Calderon, who dropped her activities with the League of Women Voters and the local school board when she got a job at Bayside High School in Queens, feel that the community has changed.

"Before it was like a small town," she noted. "You never locked your door. When a new family moved in it was a big event. You knew everything that happened to people, all the little tragedies reached you."

The community is tightly knit. Predominantly Jewish and liberal-Democratic, it has a "newcomers club," an active Civic Association, an annual dinner-dance to which everyone is invited, its own newspaper—The Rancher—and its own telephone directory, which lists only the last four digits since everyone has the same first three.

But for some of the original settlers, who still mourn the day when Roslyn Road was enlarged from a two-lane country lane, a "new wave of young people" that they don't know very well has made them feel less a part of what's going on.

Mrs. Golobe put it this way: "At the beginning there was a sense of camaraderie, of common purpose. We were all young and pioneers. Suburbia was an adventure, it was to be something different from the city. Nowadays, all of Long Island is just an extension of Queens."

"For me the transition wasn't difficult because I've always been an active person," exclaimed Mrs. Gertrude Kritzler, leafing through a folder. Inside, under headings such as "peace," "consumer" and "democracy" were copies of the voluminous correspondence that emanates weekly from a political group she organized called Open House for Action.

The group is made up of about 12 women who gather every Thursday in Mrs. Kritzler's living room to send our letters on subjects of concern. They range from the fighting at the Roslyn Country Club to the war in Southeast Asia.

"Every week there's something we're disturbed about," noted Mrs. Kritzler, with a nod of her dark bangs cut just above a pair of tortoise shell glasses. She produced copies of letters to Senators Mike Mansfield, J. William Fulbright, James L. Buckley and Jacob K. Javits.

Lately, the topic that has most stirred the group is "Army spying" and the event they are preparing for, distributing buttons by the box-load, is the April 24 peace march on Washington.

"How effective we'll be, I don't know," said Mrs. Kritzler, referring to her tiny circle of liberal activists. "But we're going to be very loud."

She continued: "We want to see our country get back

on the right track. This war is destructive of everything we've ever stood for. We can sit here in our beautiful, comfortable homes and do nothing, or we can try and stop it and be part of the world around us."

Mrs. Kritzler turned to the role of political gadfly after putting in time in the city school system. As her three children were growing up, she went to Adelphi College for a degree in psychology. When they left home, she and her husband moved to an apartment in the city, where she taught in Harlem and the Bronx. Last year, when her husband retired, they moved back to Roslyn Heights.

"I considered teaching again, but I was discouraged by the slum schools I was in before. I decided that to work just for money was meaningless."

The idea for the group came naturally to her, she said, because "I am the kind of person that sits down to write a letter when I get angry, which is often."

Political involvement among suburban women here rarely runs beyond fund-raising or volunteer work for specific election campaigns. Still, Mrs. Kritzler holds to the vision that someday her group may expand to become a powerful lobby.

"Women in the suburbs have a feeling of helplessness," she noted. "They play golf and they go swimming and that's all. They've got to



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Hayloft Lane in the Roslyn Country Club Community, an enclave built 20 years ago

learn that that's just a cop-out."

"When I have a full day," said Mrs. Lillian Loeb, "then I feel young and happy."

Mrs. Loeb, a grandmother, gives piano lessons one day a week, paints enough modern canvases to cover her living room wall to wall, and frequently uses her oven to melt down materials for collages.

But her consuming interest is sports. She plays golf in the summer and tennis year-round, at any one of four indoor courts. She swims a mile—72 laps in the country club pool—in less than an hour.

"With so much to do, you can go crazy," she remarked.

For many others like her, the Roslyn Country Club, built from a reconstructed mansion, is the social center. In fact, the community can be seen as a collection of smaller communities, each one centered around a particular activity, from astronomy to fencing.

Paramount among them is tennis. The tennis buffs, which include a large number of doctors who take to the courts in the evenings and on Friday, form a tight circle with their own tournaments and their own dinner-dances.

Membership in the country club is granted to any family in the community for \$100 a year. The vacancies of those who choose not to join is made up for by letting in "outsiders" at a higher price.

The practice has led to complaints that families from places like Forest Hills, Queens, are monopolizing the facilities, and sparked a drive within the community to buy up all the memberships.

For Mrs. Loeb, sports take up much of the time that she formerly devoted to her two sons, Harvey and Robert. Both, she said, had wanted to become veterinarians, but are now dentists.

Mrs. Loeb rounds out her spare time with bridge sessions in the afternoon and concerts at night in Garden City. "We've heard the best, [Artur] Rubinstein, Van Cliburn. You don't have to go to New York anymore to hear good music," she maintained.

New Kitchen Scribblings

The crayon scribblings on the kitchen closet of Mrs. Lillian Levy are now those of a grandchild.

Mrs. Levy, whose husband, Henry, is a retired dentist, has lived in the country club community since 1949. Almost before she knew it, her two daughters had grown up and gone away.

While they were in high school she went back to Post College and took courses in sculpture, modern dance and theater. Later she went to Adelphi for a masters in art education, but disliked the "rigid structure" and switched to New York University. With 26 credits out of a needed 30, she quit, "perhaps because I was un-

consciously afraid of being a teacher."

Then, last year a conversation on a tennis court led to the idea of opening up a sculpture workshop in her attic.

"I had all kinds of doubts," she recalled. "What about my background and my feelings about art and its relation to life? Could I give all this to them and not just provide clay and a place where people come to make some little thing?"

Mrs. Levy planned a 10-session course, including instruction on body awareness and spatial relations, equipped her attic with a kiln, and opened shop.

Now, she teaches four classes a week, to 12 adults and four children. "There's nothing like feeling needed, like having to rise to the occasion," she beamed.

She has become philosophic about the problems of suburban housewives.

"You know what's at the crux of what women suffer? We always used our children, we used them to need us. As mothers we overdid it. And that's where the slack is now . . . who can we dictate to? Who can we control? For unless we control, we feel empty."

She reached over to touch the plaster cast of a figure she was working on and followed a train of thought: "It's the same way with sculpture. The need to mold it, to control its development. Sometimes when you're working, you talk to it as if it were a child."