

Spring, 1962

Sarah Lawrence

Alumnae Magazine

SLC ARCHIVES

*Sarah Lawrence students
taking their junior
year abroad, say . . .*

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This



ON these pages we bring you pictures and a report on the experiences of the ten students in Paris this year under the Sarah Lawrence Junior Year Program. The girls are: Susan Albert, Nancy Bradburd, Andrea Cousins, Mollie Falk, Lucinda Phelps, Ellen Picking, Beth Seidman, Martha Strunsky, all Sarah Lawrence juniors, Anya Bozeman, a student from Swarthmore who has transferred to Sarah Lawrence for her junior year and Elinor Bacon, a Bennington student. Pictured on this page are: above, Elinor Bacon (left) and Susan Albert at a bookstall along the Seine; upper left, Mollie Falk asks a question of one of the booksellers; lower two pictures, Andrea Cousins at a newsstand and at a pastry shop. Sarah Lawrence now offers two junior year programs — one in Paris and one in Rome—besides the summer sessions offered in Florence and in Paris. Next year, another junior year program will open in Geneva, bringing the Sarah Lawrence programs offered abroad to five. Dr. Marc Slonim, who is retiring from teaching at the end of this year, will take on the directorship of the entire foreign study program. He will make his headquarters in Geneva. In each of the three Junior Year centers, a Sarah Lawrence College resident director guides the students and supervises their studies. The students not only register in local universities, conservatories and other institutions of higher learning, or have special classes as a group, but also have French or Italian professors as private tutors. The individual curriculum is thus sustained by individual instruction. For Mollie Falk's comments on her junior year in Paris, please turn the page.

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Paris!



Above, Nancy Bradburd asks directions of a Parisian. Below, she and her roommate, Andrea Cousins (right), check over their groceries.



Photographs by George Thomas II
of Guidance Associates Inc.

By Mollie Falk, '63



Mollie Falk

I arrived one September day

in this beautiful, sprawling, soot-stained Mecca. Despite existing legends of the American college girl in Paris, my life here has not consisted of quantities of vin ordinaire, a mad series of French lovers, a literature course in Racine, Baudelaire and Jean-Paul Sartre, and some linguistic trial and error. Since the Academic credo of Sarah Lawrence in Paris can be formulated (the rest of our experience here is less easily formulated) and since it is eminently worth formulating, I will begin there.

The experience of being twenty and quite on one's own in a foreign city can be the most constructive of experiences. Or it can degenerate into a ten-month vacation from responsibility, a sophomoreic "existential revolt." For this reason, and not because we are some strange intellectual mutation interested only in our studies, the work we do is substantial and highly individualized. It forms a valid link between ourselves and the city—and prevents us from feeling that our presence here is amusing but rather absurd. All this besides the intrinsic value of serious study in the city most congenial to it.

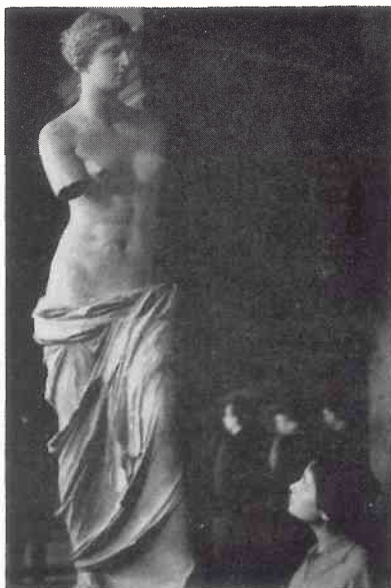
The range of our studies is wide. Cindy, Andrea and Beth study political science at the "Sciences po." Susan studies acting at the "Conservatoire." Martha studies music. Other studies include drawing, art history, and Romance literature. We study privately and also have the privilege of being free auditors at the Sorbonne.

Madame Marguerite Baratin is the director of Sarah Lawrence in Paris, and also, if we wish, our French literature teacher. Madame Baratin is the only person I have ever known who can discuss Rimbaud brilliantly while holding her chattering three-year-old daughter in her lap—without suffering either as scholar or mother. Her ideas on the purpose and value of the Junior Year Abroad are definite and perceptive. The commonplace of "Gai Paris" is for tourists on seventeen-day excursions. In fact, in order to spend a worthwhile year here, we must try to avoid all the cliches of the American-girl-in-Paris. The final conclusion: that we must study seriously—not, of course, to the exclusion of Paris—but intelligently and systematically. We agree with Madame Baratin and try earnestly with, I think, a heartening degree of success.



Above, Elinor Bacon and her drawing teacher, M. Orlandini, work on a picture in his studio.

STUDYING art in Paris is not a proof of diletantism. It is a simple necessity. The Louvre is at once fascinating and frustrating. It is poorly lighted, poorly heated, and poorly organized. Remnants of long ago civilizations are unearthed only to be re-interred there in the dust and half-light. And yet there is much beauty to be found along the chilly halls of the Louvre. We wander through the rooms of Greek sculpture, feeling uncomfortable, as though in the presence of a superior race. (Will anyone have this same impression two thousand years from now, walking among our nightmare sculpture of twisted bronze and copper tubing?)



THE AGE of the pre-cooked and pre-packaged dawns slowly in Paris. Sterilized waxed containers, polythene bags and hermetically sealed cellophane wrappings make slight advances. We cannot help feeling that there is something a bit unhealthy in their appearance. Will the day come when the French too will insist that their bread be untouched by human hands?

The supermarket a l'Americain exists in Paris. In every "Quartier" there are "Monoprix" and "Supermags"—which sell everything from coca-cola to pate-de-foie to woolen underwear. The customers wander along neon-lit chromium aisles carrying yellow plastic shopping baskets while a loudspeaker plays "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "My Foolish Heart."

The traditional small "epicerie" is more expensive and stocks less of a variety of merchandise, but is considerably pleasanter than the "supermags" and "monoprix." (Besides, what could be a better exercise in French pronunciation than to ask for "trois grands yaourts"?) There is something very heartening about the un-cellophane-wrapped, un-glass-enclosed array of cheeses and fruits. The grocer himself inevitably has some very definite and not unintelligent ideas on Paris, France and the world. Perhaps we make a grave mistake in preferring the esthetic to the efficient, and yet . . .

When we do not eat solitary meals of yoghurt, bread and fruit in our rooms, we eat either in special student restaurants or in a nearby inexpensive restaurant. Student restaurants serve the usual institutional chicken and noodles. There are inevitably long waiting lines and the self-service system has become the rule—but an enormous, well-balanced meal costs less than thirty cents. For a more luxurious dinner we sometimes go to the restaurant de Beaux-Arts, where a complete steak dinner costs a dollar or less. The patrons are usually students and long-time residents of the "Quartier," with occasional readers of *Europe on Five Dollars a Day*. The restaurant is always crowded, noisy and gay. Harrassed waitresses pass in front of oil paintings long blackened by smoke and grease, carrying our artichokes, chateaubriands and the mousse au chocolat we



Susan Albert, who is studying acting at the Comedie Francaise, is pictured here backstage in the costume room.



Beth Seidman in the Restaurant de Beaux Arts, Rue Napoleon, a favorite eating place of the students.

absolutely should not have. Were we to go there more often, we would become "regulars" entitled to a napkin and napkin ring.

IN THE practical business of living in Paris, we have a great deal of freedom. We arrange our time as we wish and live where we wish, with help if we need it but little supervision. This year several girls rent rooms in private apartments and several live alone. Susan and I live in the Foyer des Etudiantes du Maroc, a student dormitory principally for girls from Morocco. The foyer is on rue Bonaparte

in the Latin Quarter, within sight of the Eglise de Saint Germain and the Cafe des Deux Magots. There are always fresh flowers in the entrance hall at 24 rue Bonaparte. The walls are hung with posters of Morocco and the archways are painted in Moroccan style, with an absurd embellishment of plastic petunias. Beneath a large sign which admonishes "Silence, noise kills!" a group of chattering Moroccan girls await the arrival of the mailman. In the mosaic-paved courtyard pigeons fly and the concierge's year-old daughter plays. Madame la Directrice, a genial megalomaniac, surveys rue Bon-



Andrea and Nancy discuss a point with M. Kauffman, their philosophy professor, in his office.

aparte from her office window.

Arriving in Paris with our chauvinism intact, Susan and I were outraged to find that at the Foyer linen is changed once every three weeks, that hot showers are a matter of pure luck, that we can iron our clothing only on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sunday mornings and use our hair dryers only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We reacted violently to the fact that we can receive phone messages only between the hours of seven in the morning and nine at night, that we must be in each night by one, that we cannot go out after ten. But slowly,

Below, Anya Bozeman. Right, Madame Baratin, Director of the Sarah Lawrence Junior Year in Paris.





Ellen Picking (right) has lunch with her French "family" in their Paris apartment.

our anger disappeared, and the memory of it made us feel guilty, as though we had been very spoiled children. There are still moments of exasperation, moments when we would gladly call down the wrath of the Great-American-Something-Higher on la civilisation Francaise . . . when, for instance, an important telephone message is lost or the shower is too icy for even the most determined mortifier of the flesh. And yet we come to feel that there is some terribly human about the uncertainty and inconvenience, about the radiator's chronic indispositions, about the slightly peeling paint, and the jumble of extension cords. We will remember our year here with pleasure.

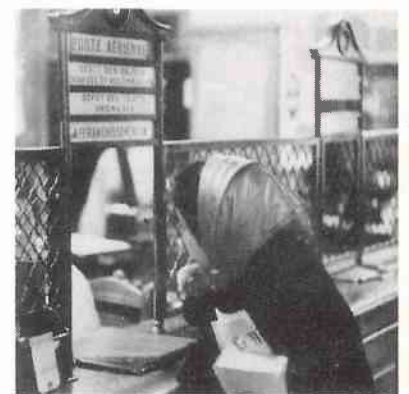
For, in general, Paris is the most human of great cities—non-functional and totally livable. It has spread haphazardly outward, unlike New York, which grows steadily upward, dwarfing and oppressing our humanity more and more each year. Paris is too human to be as consistently cosmopolitan as leg-

end and travel folders would have it. Certainly, there is the Paris where civilization is pushed to its furthest limits, but there is also the Paris of workers, shopkeepers and "fonctionnaires," a great provincial city carrying its fresh bread through the streets.

Life moves at a slower pace than we are accustomed to. The metro runs slowly, a week of speculation is necessary before the heating can be fixed, lunch takes two hours, and half an hour and an elaborate form filled out in triplicate allow one to borrow a library book. We are recognizable as Americans not so much by our dress and our accents but by our tendency toward exasperation. Eventually we find ourselves chatting lengthily over frequent cups of coffee and browsing in the bookstalls along the Seine . . . In the end, everything is accomplished, by what I can only imagine to be some mysterious interior logic. I would not like to see a team of efficiency experts invade Paris. Taking one's time is, after all, a far more genial alternative.



Cindy Phelps on the "Metro."



One of the girls at the post office.