

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE REGISTRAR(S)

In these busy days before the start of summer classes, **Caren Brosi** sometimes spends the entire day on the telephone. She is the Administrative Assistant responsible for the mechanics of registration under the direction of **Connie Sedberry**, who is both Registrar and Assistant to the Director. Together they handle the myriad details and policy decisions which are necessary to place students, scholarship recipients, studio assistants, Core Students, instructors and their families in classes and beds.

They are in the business of serving students but they also need to be mindful that the School depends upon tuition and room and board fees for about 90% of operating expenses. It is therefore in everyone's best interest to keep enrollment at a good level without overcrowding the housing or studios: a tall order!

To find out what is involved in this process, I chatted with Connie and Caren in a conversation punctuated by frequent phone calls which provided examples of the complicated situations which arise daily.

The application fee, a standard charge at craft schools, supports but does not cover the cost of doing the paper work of registration. This includes determining if the desired class and housing is available, entering the information in the computer, processing the payment and initiating and mailing the receipt with any needed information. This involves three or four different people and takes about an hour if there are no complications.

If the registration is mailed in but there is room on the wait list, then the student's check is returned along with a letter saying that Caren will call if a space opens up. In Session Three this summer the beds are all filled even though there is still space in some classes. So now they have a wait list for beds!

A great many people register by phone using a credit card. These calls are often lengthy because the caller will ask questions about several classes before making a decision. Connie and Caren have learned not to take for granted that people have read everything in the catalog so they remind people of various policies which might affect their decision.

If someone withdraws from a class either by withdrawing entirely or by switching to another class, this involves another hour of staff time and the transaction frequently

involves four people: Caren and Connie plus Helen Cate, the accountant, and Hunter, if a check needs to be signed. The withdrawal fee which Penland charges covers this additional cost to the School.

If the cancellation involves a class with a wait list, the fun really begins. In this day of communication by machine, Caren often plays telephone tag as she tries to catch up with people by leaving messages or calling several numbers. The first person on the list has, upon occasion, been a resident of Brazil or Chile or Japan which complicates the process with different time zones and languages. If she leaves a message, she gives a stated period for response. Since she is often pursuing three or four people for different classes, she has to figure out a way to keep track of each process and often comes back at night to make phone calls.

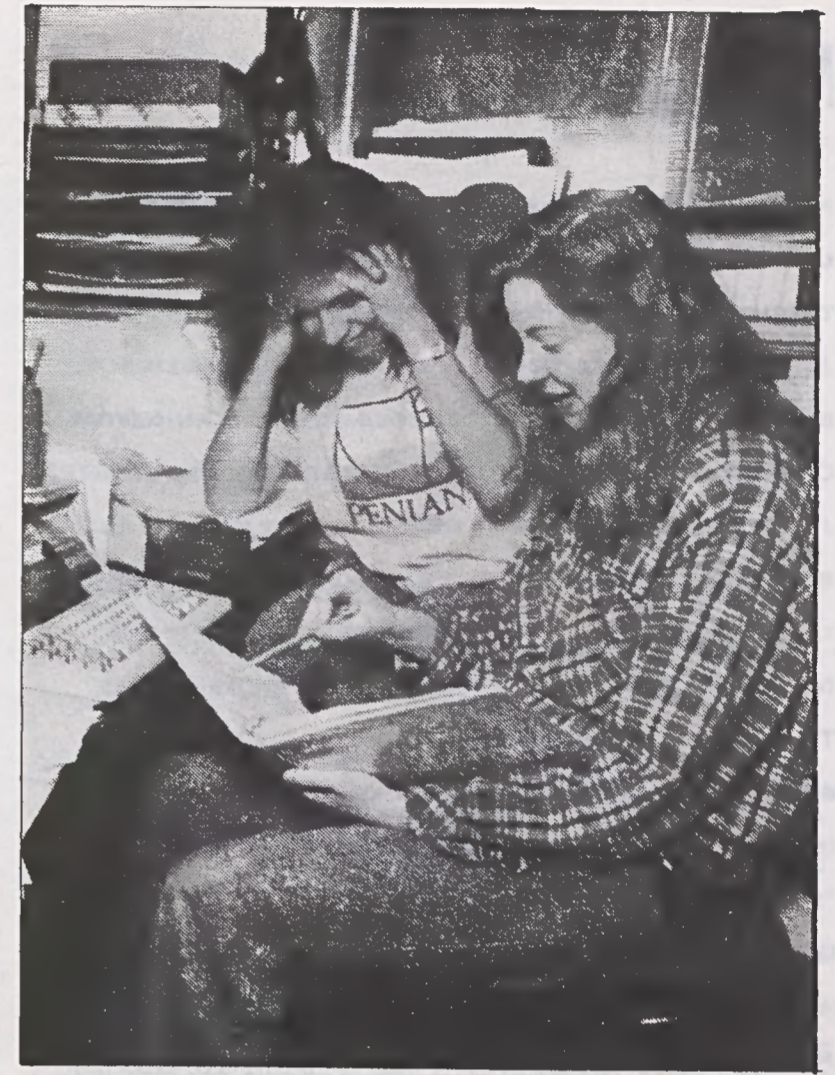
Three weeks before a session is to begin, Penland makes a "go/no-go" decision on any class with marginal enrollment. At that point, the School has to make final travel arrangements with the instructors and make sure supplies are ordered. This then becomes a solid commitment that must be honored. At the other end of the spectrum, for classes which have been filled for weeks, it becomes much harder to fill vacancies created by last minute cancellations or switching. Most people on the wait list have by then made other plans for the time slot. It is for this reason that Penland, as well as other craft schools, does not make any refunds if students cancel in the three weeks before a class begins or once the session has started.

As an example of the domino effect of cancellations, Caren and Connie cited the case of a very popular ceramics class last year that filled early on and had a large wait list. Shortly before the start of the class, a couple cancelled out of two spaces. The people on the wait list were unable to make arrangements at the last minute. A call to Japan filled one spot with a woman who had registered in the other clay class but wanted to switch if possible. The second slot was filled by an instructor's family member. (non-paying student) The slot vacated in the other clay class was not filled. So basically, Penland did not receive the full tuition or the additional room and board. Had the cancellation occurred earlier, Caren felt sure the spots could have been filled.

People have lots of reasons for cancelling and Connie and Caren are often moved by the hardship stories which they hear. But they had little sympathy for the person who called on his way to jail to say "I would never miss a class at Penland for any other reason. Can't you send me a refund? I need it to pay my fines."

Caren believes that most people understand the problems because there are five people who forfeited their deposits last year but nevertheless have registered for classes this summer!

- Donna Jean Dreyer with Connie Sedberry & Caren Brosi 



"We've had a cancellation in Session 4 metals so I've got to shift some wait list people. Let's move Sue from Session 2 lower metals to Session 4 upper metals and Tom to Session 1 upper metals from Session 4 lower metals and Jan from Session 1 upper metals to Session 5 lower metals which means that Sue who was in a dorm will have to be in a doubleand then we can move the scholarship from upper metals to lower metals for Session 2."