

Turning Frustration into a Solution



WHILE SPENDING TWO MONTHS in the hospital undergoing a stem cell transplant, Cari Lynn Ugent '95 turned down a larger room with a "gorgeous view." Getting around a bigger room meant more hassles with her essential, but cumbersome, IV pole.

Although the smaller room proved convenient, getting healthy required more mobility. "There was a big push to get up and do laps around the hospital, but I couldn't walk without

kicking that stupid thing."

Out of frustration and boredom, she began sketching a better IV pole. One that didn't trip its users, tip over or allow cords connected to bags of vital fluids and equipment to be dragged along the floor—a pole that helped nurses keep IV bags organized. Ugent, now healthy, tells the story of a 19-year-old female patient she met during a return visit to Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Bald from chemotherapy, stuck in a hospital for weeks and what was the worst thing for her? "She points to the IV pole," says Ugent.

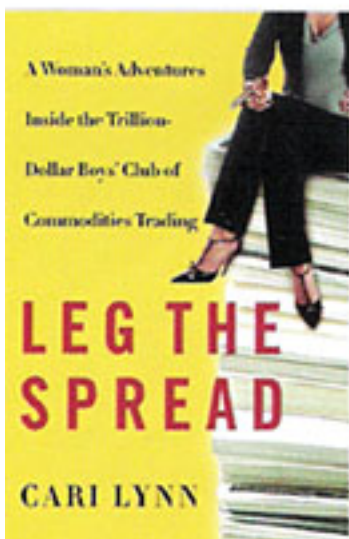


A journalist by training, Ugent began to ask questions of nurses, doctors and other patients. What she created out of her research was *safepole* (www.safepole.com). It features a domed base that covers six rubber wheels. Hooks for IV bags hang from a more stable, inverted U-shaped pole; their cords snake through a tube router. A plastic basket offers handy storage space. A hook secures the pole to a gurney, wheelchair or even a towel rack to prevent it from sliding down pitched bathroom floors.

"When I told doctors and nurses about *safepole*, they were hitting their heads saying, 'Why didn't I think of that?'"

Ugent connected with a medical management company for business advice and an industrial design firm to create her invention. She then sold *safepole* to her first client, the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital. Ugent, author of the recent book, *Leg the Spread: A Woman's Adventures Inside the Trillion-Dollar Boys' Club of Commodities Trading*, has started a company to sell *safepole* worldwide. —MB

Author Cari Lynn Ugent '95 designed the *safepole* (left) during her stay in the hospital.



It's Not Always a Man's World

Cari Lynn (she drops Ugent as an author) turned her two years as a clerk on the floor of the Chicago Merchantile Exchange into a vivid account of what she has called a sexist, though exhilarating experience. The book's provocative title, *Leg the Spread*, is a trading term

that alludes to being able to both buy and sell, covering the spread. In its review of the book, *Business Week* said the title also "coarsely" refers to the common assumption among traders that to be successful women must compromise their integrity.

Lynn, who finished the book during her stay in the hospital, found during her stint at the "Merc" women who thrived, despite the often-toxic surroundings. —MB

