

# on our way

the women's center newsletter  
8 november 71 volume 1 no. 2  
from 595 mass. ave. camb. 661-9650



## about the women's center...

*WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO TELL PEOPLE A LITTLE OF THE HISTORY BEHIND THIS STRUGGLE .....*

It started the summer of 1970, when women at a Bread and Roses meeting voted to create a women's center which would be open to all women. It was announced in several Bread and Roses meetings, newsletters and at a conference, that any women could work on the project. The idea was to provide a place where new women could come, where certain services could be set up, and where existing women's groups could get together. By March 6, 1971 (the day Boston area women celebrated International Women's Day), \$4000 had been raised.

Many different women came up with the idea of seizing a building at different times during the year. About three weeks before International Women's Day a few of those women contacted other women from as many different groups as they knew of, as well as those working on the demonstration for International Women's Day, and had the first meeting specifically to discuss taking over a building. Some of the groups contacted were Gay Women's Liberation, 'Hysteria', the 'Mole' Women's Caucus, the women's health collectives, Hemenway Community Women, the child care action group, Bread and Roses orientation program, Women and Imperialism Group, the women's Law commune, feminist study group, as well as the original women's center group from Bread and Roses.

A lot of us didn't know each other, but one thing we had in common was all wanting to take a building - one that there was a possibility of keeping. We felt that such a struggle would make our movement larger, more unified, and more powerful.

Initially we divided up the labor so that some women were researching buildings and checking into how people would feel about a take-over in their community; others were working on setting up several minimal services (as health referral, child care, legal services, self defense); still others spent time looking into supplies etc. As the plans developed people volunteered for special tasks such as gathering the food, dealing with security, tactics, and negotiating, making banners and painting brigades, entering the building in the first group, and forming welcoming committees. We all saw this as the necessary amount of organization for a few days - a temporary responsibility until other women could get to know each other and sign up to share these responsibilities.

On March 6, while women were gathering on the Boston Common for the march to the Charles Street Jail, and eventually to the women's center, twenty women had entered the building in groups of five, and were making preparations for the arrival of the march.

The march arrived at the center, 888 Memorial Drive, at about 3:30 that afternoon. . . There was a welcoming committee, plenty of women's literature, and food and music and joy. We held the building for 10 days. During that time there were dances, dinners, women's skill classes, meetings, a 'lavender lounge' for gay women, and a really neat children's party for kids from the neighborhood that was a terrific success.

Women left the center with mixed feelings. On the whole it was felt that our energy would be better spent finding a new women's center than trying to bail ourselves out of jail.

Since then there have been some good dinner-meetings, dances, etc., but most of us feel that we have lost touch during the summer. Women have been working on the shitwork part of getting the center all summer. We're pretty close to moving in, and we have to start thinking about what exactly our women's center is going to be.

The house which we've agreed to buy was originally the only structure on that particular lot. Now there are two houses, both owned by the same person on the one lot. Also, since the houses were originally built, the street name has been changed. We must get these changes on the deed, and also get a zoning variance because the two structures are too close to each other as of a 1969 ordinance. The planning board (it grants zoning variances) meets only once a month. We have a hearing date for November 18. When our variance is granted, we have to wait 20 days to allow time for appeals. Then we can sign the bill of sale and move in! In the meantime we've decided to share an office with the Mass. Lawyers Guild and The Women's Law Commune (we're contributing \$15 monthly and sharing a phone bill). We're using the office for a temporary meeting place and information center.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO STAFF THE OFFICE . Call 661-9650, Mon.-Fri. from 5:30-8:30 P.M. Sat. 11-3, or come in. It's good for security and morale to have lots of women around the office - - we've been ripped off once and are occasionally harassed by some young boys hanging around the office - - so we need your help and support.

## alternative jobs —

Most of us run out of money sooner or later, and the first idea that usually pops into our heads is 'get a secretarial or waitressing job'. We haven't come a long way, but we have come a little way. So far, we've heard of women earning money as taxi drivers, printers, piano tuners, school bus drivers, gas station attendants, photographers, gardeners, etc. We'd like to write a more detailed article about these alternative jobs - including how to get them, what skills they involve, etc. Any sisters with more ideas, possibilities, etc, please come and talk with us at the office, or write up your job or experience and send it in. Also let us know your opinion of this sort of article - better still, come and work on the newsletter.

Meanwhile - Robin, 254-4118 has information on gardening in Newton and Brookline for \$30/day, \$20/half-day. She's also interested in forming a gardening collective.

## women and skills —

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00 to 10:00 PM' RINDGE TECHNICAL SCHOOL has free classes for Cambridge residents - - others check with the Women's Center office - - in AUTO MECHANICS, ELECTRICITY, CARPENTRY (Woodworking & Wood turning). Machine Shop, PRINTING (linotype & offset). HOME MAINTENANCE, WELDING, and MORE. Some of these classes - - esp. auto mechanics & carpentry - - have a high percentage of women attending. We have the complete list at the women's center office. Rindge Tech. is on Broadway next to the Cambridge Library. You can go audit the classes now in session, or register for and attend the second term, beginning the evenings of January 4 & 6, '72.

KARATE -- New classes for January are beginning to be arranged. If you'd like to take one, leave your name & phone at the women's center office. They'll probably be like the all-women classes in TAE KWON DO going on now. These classes are good, rigorous, meet every day & cost \$12 for uniform & equipment & \$10 a month.

AUTO MECHANICS -- Come Saturdays from 10 - 4 to 20 Dartmouth Street, Somerville, to work on your car or to help someone else. If you know of an available 2-car garage with electricity, call Evelyn 776-6740, Lucy 354-1870, or Carol 354-7179 - and we'll have a women's garage! Call these women too if you want help with a tune-up.

EXPERIMENTAL SEWING -- making things without patterns, making things from other things (eg. clothes from rummage sales) tie-dyeing -- Eve - 472-3428 - will teach women.

WOMEN'S PRESS -- Some women interested in the possibility of setting up a women's graphics and printing shop got together for a first meeting Wednesday, Nov. 3. There are already 3 or 4 movement print shops running in the Boston area, so we talked about whether there is a place for another. We think generally that a shop which prints women's material, with more of an emphasis on simply useful things (children's stories, how-to-do-it pamphlets, posters), creative graphics, stories and poetry, -- is something which is needed. It would be fun, too.

One of the women has already set up a silk screen workshop. We decided to try starting to print with a mimeo machine, partly to find out what kind of a demand there is for printing up women's material. Some women in San Francisco did a poetry anthology, with graphics, on a mimeo and it turned out beautifully. Also we'd like to use one of the existing printing presses part-time, say once a week at first. We can learn gradually, and find out whether it is worth the further effort to get money and space for our own print shop.

Meetings are always open. If anyone is interested, even just to sit in, there'll be a late supper meeting Wed., Nov. 10 at Claudia's and Ann's, 278 Broadway (Columbia & B'way) Camb. 3rd floor. Bring some food at 8 pm, or come after supper for meeting 9 - 9:30 pm. If you have ideas about a print shop, please let us know. Or if you have something you'd like to have printed, come and we'll talk about it.

IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN OTHER WOMEN'S SKILLS PROJECTS, LET US KNOW FOR FUTURE ISSUES.



# ouncements —

Do you want to join a collective? Call and leave your name at the Women's Center Office. We're also starting a series of dinners for women who feel out of touch and women who want to get together to talk and think about starting collectives or small groups. The first dinner is at 136 Huron Ave. No. 2, Camb. (354-7179) on Saturday night, Nov. 13, starting around 6 or 7. Bring bread or wine or cheese, etc. if you'd like to. We also need volunteers to host more dinners. Leave your address and the date you'd like to host at the Women's Center office.

Women's discussion group - Monday 8:00 at the Women's Center. The topic for Nov. 15 is 'Laws against Women.' We often go to have coffee together after the meeting.

Does anyone want to work in a collective / abortion - birth control study-group? We presently have five people and want to get more. We try to meet every Tuesday. Call Lesley: 232-9117 or Pamela: 262-4900 x 641.

High School Women's Liberation Project: I'd like to work on some sort of literature packet to be given out to high school women. This would include the writing and distribution. Any women interested in working on this call Sue: 491-8756.

Am trying to get together with women health activists in the Boston area. If you're in a group or want to start one please call Rita 547-0809 (keep trying - around 11 p.m. best).

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN - A conference for women Nov. 13-14th, Yale Law School, New Haven, Conn. Housing and child care available. If you need or can give a ride from Boston to New Haven call 354-3491. Registration Friday evening at 7 and Sat. morning at 9 in Law School Faculty Lounge. Sponsored by Women's Caucus (U.R.P.E.). Sat. night New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band will play.

'The First Time I Was Young': a poetry pamphlet by 2 Boston women, Shay and Gidgette, can be seen at the Women's Center. Copies for \$.50 can be ordered there or by calling Maryann at 876-6749.

Anyone researching women's image on T.V.? Call or write Marcia 698-8873, 95 Franklin St., Milton.

Whoever picked up a pair of work boots at the women's dance, please bring them into the office or call Sue 491-8756. It's getting cold. I need them.

We're working on a Women's Yellow Pages— any woman with services to offer or who would like to help, call Ginnie 254-1380.

We hear a 'Whole Women's Catalogue' is coming out soon — write Marsie: 6 Rumford St., Concord, N.H. if you're interested.

Do you want to be in a food co-op? Call the Red Book Store 491-6930, 91 River St., for a run-down on co-ops in the Boston-Cambridge area.

A 13 week series of radio broadcasts by and for women is starting the first week in November on WGBH 89.7 FM at 10 p.m. Friday and 4:30 Sunday. If you have music, poetry, ideas for topics, comments or criticisms to contribute call Judy Stoia at WGBH 868-3800.

Anyone interested in working on the newsletter come any Monday night at 8 to the Women's Center office. Staff is whoever comes to talk about what should be in the newsletter and helps put it together later in the week (at a time decided each Mon.).

staff for this issue: alison carla laura maryann sue sunny

The reason we put out this newsletter is because we feel isolated from each other, especially since we don't yet have our women's center.

Let's get back with each other again. We've included here as many ideas, projects as we've heard of or thought up ourselves. We realize that it will be hard to get going again without a real women's center, but we do have the office and it can at least be used as a central information and meeting place. We'll have on-going projects to bring to our new women's center when it opens.

Next issue: WOMEN'S PRISONS

We want to put the newsletter out once a week now, but we can't afford to mail it every week. . . . so we've set up the following distribution points and hope people will help in the distribution process.

#### Cambridge:

The Women's Center Office - 595 Mass. Ave.  
Vocations for Social Change - 351 Broadway  
The Red Book Store - 91 River St.

#### Boston

New England Free Press, 791 Tremont St.

#### Dorchester

Teachers' Center, 470 Talbot Ave.

#### Somerville

Somerville Health Center, 326 Somerville Ave.

P.S. Financial assistance would be appreciated

