

♀ ON OUR WAY

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street Cambridge Massachusetts 02139

(617) 354-8807

TTY and VOICE

AUTUMN 1985



Sophie Weasel, Chicago

WOMEN'S CENTER COORDINATOR

The hiring committee is pleased to announce that after almost a year of searching we have hired a new Staff Coordinator, Sharon Stonekey. Sharon has been working with the Boston Feminist paper, Sojourner, for the past year. Formerly, she was active in the Albany, NY, women's community where she worked with a Women's Prison Project and a community Women's Center.

We are very excited to have Sharon working with us.

TRACY

We'd like take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work that Tracy VillaReale has done at the Women's Center. She has been the temporary staff coordinator for the last 9 months, keeping the place from becoming unglued while the seemingly endless hiring process was completed. She began working here at age 16 through the Somerville summer youth program and has staffed here almost every summer since. She has filled in over the past 6 years whenever the Center has needed her. She will spend the next month training the new staff coordinator. We greatly appreciate her dedication, sense of responsibility, energy, friendliness and caring, not to mention the substantial work she has done updating the referral listings and attending to the myriad of details involved in the day to day operation of the Center.

WOMEN'S SCHOOL

The Women's School is offering a weekend of varied workshops free of charge to all women, from Friday evening, Nov. 15, thru Sunday afternoon, Nov. 17. All workshops will be held at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Camb. (Red Line, Central Sq. stop). Registration will be held at the workshops. Childcare will be available at the Center. Additional workshops may be available during the weekend; call 354-8807 for further information.

GRAFFITI Fri., Nov. 15, 7-9pm & Sat., Nov. 16, 4-6pm

AFTER THE REVOLUTION: Women's visions of utopia Fri., Nov. 15, 8-10pm

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY: A Writing Workshop Sat., Nov. 16, 10am-2pm

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS IN THE WORKPLACE Sat., Nov. 16, 2-5pm

MESSAGE FOR THE NON-PROFESSIONAL Sun., Nov. 17, 10am-2pm bring lunch

WOMEN & POVERTY Sun. Nov. 17, 10am-1pm



OPEN FEMINIST DISCUSSIONS

Feminist Discussions are now for real!!
OPEN to all women, on Wednesdays, 8-10pm
at the Women's Center. Upcoming topics:
Oct. 30. Spirituality; Nov. 6. Racism;
Nov. 13, Exploring our sexual identities;
Nov. 20, Anger; Nov. 27, Mothers &
Daughters. Come on over and join the
fun! For more info. or to make topic
suggestions, call Deb, at 935-0611.

WHEELCHAIR LIFT

We are pleased to announce that the wheel-
chair lift is now installed and will most
likely be operating by the time you receive
this newsletter, as the final electrical
connections are happening now! We hope
women in wheelchairs who would like to
attend meetings at the Women's Center or
just visit will feel free to come over
(and use the lift). If you are interested
in attending a specific meeting, please
call and let us know a little early so we
can make sure the meeting happens on the
first floor.

COMING OUT GROUP

A coming-out support group has
been meeting every other Tues-
day from 7:30 to 9:30 pm at
the Women's Center. The group
averages eight women of varying
ages and backgrounds in an
informal setting. We have
found our shared thoughts and
feelings to be self-validating
and encouraging to others.
New members are always welcome
to discuss any topic of their
choice.



ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

MONDAY

Support Group for Battered Women	6:30-8pm
Self-Help Group for Drug Addicts	7:30-9pm
Boston Bisexual Women's Network - open rap	7:30-10pm biweekly
Staff & Projects	8-10pm biweekly
New Women's Chorus	7-10pm

TUESDAY

Rape Crisis Center	7-10pm
Coming Out Group	7:30-9:30pm
Women's General Support Group	8-10pm
Former Nun Lesbian Support Group	7pm monthly

WEDNESDAY

Support Group for Battered Women	12noon-1pm
Women's School	7-9:30pm
Lesbian Mothers (childcare provided)	6:30-8:30pm biweekly
Menopause Collective	5:30pm monthly
Feminist Discussion Group	8-10pm

THURSDAY

Lesbian Liberation	8-10pm
Incest Resources	7:30-9:30pm monthly
Lesbians Choosing Children Network	7:30pm

Call the Center for more info.

MORDICA

Mordica, one of the two Women's
Center cats, and a resident since November
1972, died in late August of an enlarged
thyroid. She is survived by Tituba, the
other Center cat and all her many human
friends.

SPONSORED BY THE CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A PUBLIC HEARING:

POVERTY in CAMBRIDGE its impact on Women & Children

Thursday, Nov. 21 City Hall 6 - 10 pm
linking issues joining hands making changes

Contrary to the currently popular myth that Massachusetts has a booming economy, poverty persists and grows in Massachusetts each day. In Cambridge, while we watch high-rise luxury office space spread into our neighborhoods, children go hungry and families are homeless. As the legislature and governor prepare to return a large surplus of funds to the "taxpayers" in this election year, both branches of state government require women raising children on AFDC to subsist on a welfare grant 40% below the federal poverty level.

The Cambridge Women's Commission is a founding member of a statewide coalition, The Women's Campaign for Social Justice. The campaign is identifying and challenging poverty in Massachusetts, particularly as it affects women and children. We're focusing also on the poverty created by racism. You may also have heard of our first campaign: to get the governor and legislators to bring the Massachusetts welfare grant up to the federal poverty level, the "Up to Poverty Campaign"

As part of the Women's Campaign for Social Justice, the Women's Commission will hold a public hearing in Cambridge: Poverty in Cambridge -- its Impact on Women and Children on Thursday, Nov. 21 at City Hall, 795 Mass. Ave., 6-10pm. We need you and your organization to help us complete the planning for the hearing. We will hold a planning and organizing meeting on Friday, Nov. 1, 12:30-2pm at Cambridge City Hall, Ackerman Room, 2nd floor.

The goals of the hearing are simple: to bring real poverty in our city to the attention of every neighborhood, elected officials and community organizations.

We want to look at the interlocking issues which create poverty; low wages, underfunded nutrition, aging, teenage pregnancy and access to education, disability, racial discrimination and others. As we face cutbacks, we can join with each other for new strategies to challenge poverty and create hope.

We need the concerns which you and your organization bring to these issues. If you cannot come to the planning meeting, please contact the Cambridge Women's Commission, 57 Inman St., Camb. 02139 or call 498-9014.

WOMEN'S PENTAGON ACTION

Greetings from former members of Boston Women's Pentagon Action!

Sadly, Boston Women's Pentagon Action quietly passed away as an organization last May when women stopped attending meetings. We would like you to acknowledge the end of BWPA and recall its personal and political significance during an afternoon of film, talk and food on Sunday, November 10 from 3-7pm at the Women's Center.

We hope to show the film of the 1980 Women's Pentagon Action in Washington, D.C., discuss what to do with the remaining money, trade WPA stories and talk about our present work. Hope to see you there! Please spread the word among women you know who were part of WPA during its 4½ year lifespan. Bring food and drink to share.

If you want more info or want to send greetings or ideas if you can't be there call Julie O. at 547-2645(eves) or Nancy at 492-1091(days), or send a note to WPA c/o Julie Ogletree, 80 Kirkland St. Cambridge MA 02138.



Nina Sibaroff, Portland, Ore.

OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The Older Women's League of Greater Boston, in cooperation with The Women's Center, is sponsoring a Consciousness Raising Group on Aging. As older women we realize that many of our problems result from living in an ageist society. This awareness group will help us see, through shared insights, how the attitudes and problems of society have affected us. We will listen to each other and be listened to in turn. The group will meet for a brown bag supper and discussion for five consecutive Monday evenings at 6:30 pm starting November 19 at The Women's Center. Enrollment is limited to 10 women over the age of 40. For further information, call Sandra Wayne, 232-7477, (noon-10pm) or leave message on machine.



graphic : Jacquelin Leonard

INCEST RESOURCES

Open to women with incest histories only.
November 21 - Parenting Ourselves
December 19 - Power

LESBIAN MOTHERS

Nov. 13 - Out or not out
Dec. 4 - Open forum
Dec. 18 - Alone as a lesbian mother
with kids at home.
Jan. 8 - Open forum

VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to join the Women's Center staff (women to staff 10am-2pm or 2pm-6pm weekdays especially) or do other work there (library, maintenance, sewing, newsletter, etc.) call 354-8807.

WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS

Monday-Thursday 10am - 10pm
Friday 10am - 5pm
Saturday 10am - 1pm

THE FEMINIST CLUSTER

The feminist cluster is a network of feminist non-violent activists, the majority of whom are members of women's affinity groups. It was formed in 1983 to create a forum for women to plan and coordinate actions, discuss issues raised by engaging in nonviolent direct action, to facilitate the formation of women's affinity groups and coordinate training of women interested in learning about nonviolent techniques.

Meetings are scheduled as needed, through the initiation of a telephone tree (comprised of affinity group contact women and interested individuals).

The cluster has primarily focused on military targets, although individual affinity groups within the cluster also have organized against sexist and racist exploitation and apartheid. Although many participating affinity groups are mostly lesbian, the cluster welcomes all feminist nonviolent activists.

At a recent feminist cluster picnic we agreed to use the phone tree as a resource for those interested in planning educational discussions, study groups, and actions. The cluster does not meet on a regular basis.

To get on the phone tree please call: MaryanneKirkbride 522-7466 or Vicki Dow at 628-4382.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR BATTERED WOMEN

The support group offers help to women free of charge in an informal setting. Battered women can find new directions for their lives by sharing their concerns with others in the same situation and by exploring new ways of dealing with this all too common problem.

Come to the Women's Center any Monday at 6:30pm or Wednesday at noon. For more info call 661-7203 or 354-8807.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

We asked for your help in evaluating the Women's Movement and the Women's Center, their strengths and shortcomings, with a questionnaire. We appreciate the praise, ideas and suggestions on how the Movement and the Center are filling your needs and how we can improve. Here are some of the responses:

Strengths of the Women's Movement

"The support to encourage women to move ahead and take charge of their own lives, growth and development for the sake of themselves, not for others"

"Ability to reach across boundaries of age, race, physical abilities, sexual preference, class. Ability to know + feel + support + grow."

"Support for each other"

"Struggle for freedom"

Current Problems of the Women's Movement

"Diverse focus and age range"

"Need to keep working in coalition"

"There are so many groups"

"Lack of communication"

"The women in the movement dump on it because they take it for granted"

"Factional. Each separate group's insistence that their political analysis is The Right One."

Role of Women's Center in the Movement

"Foster cohesiveness, provide meeting ground for different interests and politics"

"Just be there"

"Just keep surviving, and spreading the word about what women are doing, and helping to keep women finding each other and supporting each other"

Many people said, essentially, "thanks for being there" and felt that our continued presence has been our greatest strength over the last 13 years. The most frequently used areas of the center were groups & meeting rooms, the housing to share and job books, referrals and the bulletin boards.

Strengths of the Women's Center

"good clearinghouse for resources and information"

"free support groups (helped me to survive)"

"openness, versatility"

"comfortable atmosphere, good space for meetings and classes"

"place to organize activities"

"good notice board, library"

"ON OUR WAY keeping me informed!"

Shortcomings of the Women's Center

"limited outreach"

"it's not well known (need more community education about resources there)"

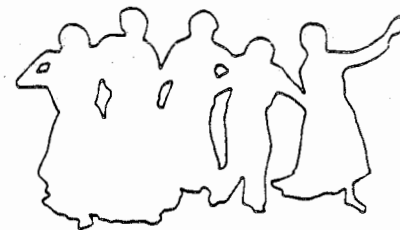
"not connected to other organizations"

"not accessible"

"not extremely warm environment to walk into the first time"

"somewhat loose organizational structure"

The outreach issue has been a priority with the hiring committee while selecting the new staff coordinator. Some ideas on how to make the center more friendly are being kicked around, but those of you who use the center are probably the best source of suggestions. Let us know if you have a specific idea on outreach techniques or how to make women feel more welcome at the Center.



How to Make the Questionnaire More Fun

"have us draw a cartoon"

"leave a space for doodlings and drawings" (Send us your drawings for the newsletter!!)

"Why does everything have to be fun?"

"It's been fun"

"ask us what we do in bed"

GENERAL SUPPORT GROUP

The General Support Group for women meets weekly on Tuesdays from 8-9:30pm at the Center. An open forum of discussion includes such issues as dependency, inter-dependency, self-sufficiency, self-image and self-confidence in family, career, and intimate relationships and situations. Goal setting and discussion of progress is done at each meeting by participants. Contact: Milly Holmes, 492-9079.

LESBIAN LIBERATION

Lesbian Liberation is an open discussion group for women to discuss issues of concern to them as lesbians. The group is open to all women of all ages who identify as lesbians or are unsure of their identity. The topics discussed are chosen by the group. For the past year, very few women have participated in Lesbian Liberation. The Center is presently attempting to revive it.

Young women, Old women, Women of color -- please come!!! We need your vitality! The group meets every Thursday 8-10pm at the Center. For mor info. and to offer suggestions, please call Debbie, 469-4057.

NEW WOMEN'S CHORUS

Originally called Red Choral Bells, what is now the New Women's Chorus began rehearsing together over 7 years ago in a Chorus member's basement. We are a collectively run chorus. Our music expresses what is important to our lives as women---our hopes, our fears, our visions for the future. We sing at rallies, in the streets, in the subway, at benefits and events such as International Women's Day and World Fellowship.

At present we have seven members and are looking to expand. We will be announcing auditions for New Women's Chorus in the near future. For more information about the Chorus or about auditioning call Jennifer at 524-8664.

LESBIAN NUN SUPPORT GROUP

This past April Rosemary Curb, one of the editors of Breaking Silence: Lesbian Nuns, and two other contributors to this anthology read their stories at New Words Bookstore. A response from the audience was one of gratitude to these women for courageously 'coming out' as former lesbian nuns. Several former nuns who had had lesbian experiences in the convent expressed a sense of relief knowing that they were not alone and showed an interest in developing a former nun, lesbian support group in order to network with other women who had had similar experiences.

Thanks to the Women's Center this support group is now meeting at the Center on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm. At this time we are in the process of defining who we are and we would like to encourage other lesbians who have been affiliated with religious life to become members.



LESBIAN TEACHERS

The Lesbian Teachers Support Group is a new group as of fall '85. It meets on alternate Wednesdays from 7-9pm. The format of the group is flexible to the needs of the women who come, ranging from support and validation to discussions of the issues that affect us as lesbians in education, to just being a place to meet and socialize with other lesbian teachers/administrators. Please feel free to call 497-1311 for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Holly Near will return to Boston for a rare solo performance on Saturday, Nov. 2 at the Orpheum Theatre at 8:00pm. Tickets are \$10.50, 12.50 & 14.00. The concert, produced by Boston Mobilization for Survival, will be opened by folk band, Bright Morning Star and will be interpreted for the hearing impaired. The Orpheum is wheelchair accessible. For more info. call 354-0008.

PURPLE PASSION: Love stories of older women told by Jay Goldspinner. Sat, Nov. 2, 8pm, cave under New Words 186 Hampshire Street, Cambridge. Donation \$5(more/less). Info and reservations 666-2615.

Scenes from the Country and Other Exotic Places -- Gallery showing by Eileen Kennedy at The Rising Phoenix Gallery, 244 Columbia St., Camb. Opening for women only, Nov. 3, 1-4pm to benefit Lesbian Land Project. Info.: 492-7522.

SOJOURNER

THE BOSTON WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER
celebrates its 10th anniversary
with a benefit reading by
TILLIE OLSEN

7:30pm Wednesday November 6 at
Saunders Theatre, Harvard U.
\$5 donation/advance: \$6/at door
Call 661-3567 for info

First Night of Solidarity

Come together for an evening of ethnic food and live entertainment as we share our work, celebrate recent victories and enjoy a cultural evening together, Saturday, November 9, 6:30pm (dinner at 7). Mass College of Art Cafeteria, 625 Huntington Ave., Boston. \$5 (more or less) incl. dinner & entertainment. Organized by: ALAS, City Life, R2N2, GCN, Nat'l Lawyers Guild, Black & White Men Together, & Casa El Salvador Farabundo Marti.

Angry Arts Film Series

"Abortion - Stories from North & South" and "The Business of Hunger" at the Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St. near Central Sq., Nov. 15-17 at 7:30pm. Donation: \$2.75. Info.: 625-9279.

PUBLIC HEARING ON POVERTY IN BOSTON
November 20. Call 354-8807 for info.

FOSTER EQUALITY UPDATE

The Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee continues its Foster Equality Campaign, aimed at overturning the state's new foster care policy, which effectively bans lesbians and gays from serving as foster parents. Also, because the first stage of adoption is considered to be a foster placement by the state or any agency accepting state funds, adoption is now also virtually impossible for lesbians and gays.

GLDC's Dukewatch "dogs the Duke", showing up wherever Governor Dukakis does, to protest this policy. On Oct. 26, Dukewatch broadens its scope for a Birdwatch, assembling at 11:00 a.m., at Cardinal Law's home in Brighton, 2101 Comm. Ave., to protest his recent homophobic statements.

GLDC is in the process of planning two other events, a community forum on strategies for gay resistance, Nov. 22, and for Nov. 25, an action involving alternative hearings, presentation of testimony from the state hearings and other evidence against the policy, to Gov. Dukakis, who remains determinedly uninformed about it. For more information, or if you have any tips on the Governor's schedule, please call 628-6007.

GLAD

GLAD, Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, is asking for names and addresses of people who you think would be interested in learning about and supporting GLAD's work, so that they can send them GLAD Briefs and information about joining. GLAD's mailing list is held in complete confidence and is never traded or sold. Write to Park Square Advocates, Inc., GLAD, P.O. Box 218, Boston, MA 02112 or call 426-1350.

THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC.
46 Pleasant street
Cambridge, MA 02139

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Address correction requested

Transition House, a shelter for battered women and their children, urgently seeks a fundraiser. It is a multi-cultural women's collective. Women of color especially encouraged to apply. For more info call 354-2676.

OSTEOPOROSIS/MENOPAUSE INFO PACKET AVAILABLE

A collection of articles and bibliographies compiled by members of the Menopause Collective is available for \$5. Send to Kanta Lipsky, 34 Speri-dakis Terrace, Camb. 02139. For further info about self-help groups or open houses on this topic, call 354-6015.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Women in the Workplace, a conference sponsored by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will be held Friday and Saturday Nov. 8 & 9th at Northeastern Univ. This first annual conference will bring together working women, representatives from government, unions, business, academia, and women's organizations to identify the barriers working women of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds face in the workplace, and to develop positive solutions for change in Massachusetts. Workshop topics will include occupational safety and health, economic, and social issues. For more info, contact Cynthia Daniels at 727-0941.

PROJECT PLACE

Project Place is a volunteer counseling center offering a 24 hour hotline, face to face counseling and a drop-in center for the homeless. We offer our volunteers training, supervision and a supportive community. Project Place needs volunteers. Come and join us. If interested or have questions call Place at 262-3740.

MADRE FUNDRAISER

WOMEN: Dance up a storm and do all your holiday shopping at the women's dance and craft fair on Friday, November 22, from 8pm to 1am at the First Congregational Church in Cambridge. Sponsored by Madre, this is an alcohol/drug free space for women. D.J. for the evening will be Claire Francis. All proceeds to go to Madre, a fundraising organization for a hospital for women and children in Nicaragua. Madre is a feminist collective that is affiliated with CASA, the Central American Solidarity Association.

Admission: \$4 donation. Refreshments and snacks will be sold along with the works of local craftswomen and artisans. The church is at 11 Garden St. in Harvard Square. Info: 522-7884