

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

(617) 354-8807

TTY and VOICE

summer 86



SUPPORT WOMEN

A women's right to choose a safe, legal abortion is in critical danger in Massachusetts. A constitutional amendment which would severely limit abortion access in this state is pending. Furthermore, should the Supreme Court overturn Roe vs. Wade, the landmark case legalizing abortion, the constitutional amendment would open the door to outlawing abortion altogether. The amendment will appear on the November 1986 ballot.

Under the existing law, the amendment would empower the legislature to:

- stop Medicaid benefits for abortions in Massachusetts. Each year, nearly 7000 needy women would be forced to bear unwanted children or sacrifice meager food and shelter allowances to pay for abortions.

- prohibit private insurers from covering abortion. The state has already outlawed state-funded health insurance for abortion for state, municipal, and county employees.

- restrict medical facilities from providing abortions by denying them tax-exempt bonding, certificates of need and charitable contributions.

!!! Your vote is crucial to repelling this attack on the right to choose. !!!

WHEELCHAIR LIFT

The lift is back in place, after a trip to California for repairs. We're glad it's finally working again, and apologize to those women who were inconvenienced because of it's absence.

PLEDGE A PICKETER CAMPAIGN

A campaign to support abortion rights and undermine the picketers who harass women at abortion clinics has been started by the Reproductive Rights National Network, Boston chapter (Boston R2N2) in conjunction with several other groups. This campaign encourages pro-choice supporters to pledge money for each picketer who appears at the Preterm Clinic in Brookline during designated weeks. The pledges ensure that each time a picketer comes to harass a clinic patient, a contribution is made to the fight for women's reproductive rights. In other states, "Pledge A Picketer" campaigns have actually caused the pickets to stop coming! A flyer is enclosed with this newsletter -
MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TODAY!

VIOLENCE SURVEY

Violence against gay men and lesbians is a serious problem and a growing concern within the gay community. Debbie Potter is doing research on verbal and physical violence against gays and lesbians. If you have been harassed or attacked in the past year because someone thought you were gay, please fill out a confidential survey. The information will be used for a thesis and to write articles for the gay community. Your answers will be kept confidential and there is no reason for us to know your identity. Call 776-5708 for a phone interview if you do not want to give out your name and address. Or, write Violence Survey, P.O. Box 236, Somerville, MA 02143 for a copy of the survey. Any identifying information will be destroyed as soon as a survey is mailed to you.

WOMEN'S SCHOOL

At this time last year, the Women's School was in limbo. The collective that has carried it through several semesters felt that they had to move on and turned the school over to the community. Out of several large community meetings, a band of four women remained and set up a weekend of workshops in Fall '85 and a larger calendar of workshops, slideshows, classes and an on-going writing group this past spring.

This fall semester will bring more classes and workshops beginning in October. A summer of successful fundraising, including a \$200 grant from the Boston/Cambridge Ministry in Higher Education, will enable the school to do wider outreach and to hold classes in areas outside of Cambridge.

What the school needs now are teachers, facilitators and discussion group leaders. Teachers do not need to be "experts". They do need to be committed to sharing their knowledge and interest in a particular area with other women. Collective members can help you turn interest and enthusiasm into a class or workshop. The school would like to offer classes, workshops and discussion groups on topics dealing with classism, racism, creating families, money issues, women's health, feminism, international women, lesbianism, arts and literature and disability issues. If you can think of anything else, let us know.

Past classes and workshops have included Marxism, Lesbian Literature, Wheelchair Repair, Older Women's Lives, Workplace Support Groups, Politics of Mental Health, and Women in the Middle East.

The collective itself, that small band of four, also needs a hand. They not only have a lot of ideas but they actually have some money to work with. What they need now are some women who are committed to real "alternative" education for women to work with them in getting a big fall semester rolling. If you think you might be interested, leave a message for the Women's School at the Center.



OPEN DISCUSSIONS

All women are invited to the Feminist Discussion Group, Wednesday evenings from 8 to 10pm.

UPCOMING TOPICS

- 7/16 - Single Parenting - Joys & Stresses
- 7/23 - Being Good to Yourself
- 7/30 - Women & Class
- 8/6 - Having a negative experience with a feminist therapist
- 8/13 - Debate & unity in the Women's Movement
- 8/20 - Independence and Intimacy
- 8/27 - Sexual Harassment

Facilitators are always needed, no experience necessary. For more information, call the Center at 354-8807 & leave a message.

RAPE CRISIS CENTER

The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center will offer a 12-week support group for rape survivors this fall. The group will allow women who have been sexually assaulted to share feelings, experiences, information and support. It is designed for women who were raped a year or more ago.

The group will be co-facilitated by Maria Altamore and Franny Green, two experienced rape crisis counselors. Meetings will be once a week on a weekday evening (to be determined), starting the week of September 15. They will be held at the Women's Center and there is no charge for participation. To set up an interview, or for more information, call 492-7273.

FAT IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

The Fat is a Feminist Issue support group is an anti-diet group which works on developing a positive body image, accepting yourself as you are and liking your body. We encourage women to remove the obsessional concern about dieting and their bodies from their lives. The group is open to all interested women and meets every other Wednesday, 7:30-9:30pm.

SUPPORT

The Back Support Group is an ongoing support group for women with chronic back pain. There are 7 of us in the group and currently we are a closed group. We have been meeting since March, every other week, to talk about our experiences and to share ideas, info and support.

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK

In March 1971, a spirited International Women's Day march and rally culminated in the takeover and ten day occupation of a Harvard University building at 888 Memorial Drive, Cambridge. Harvard (along with MIT) symbolized the erosion of affordable housing in Cambridge. (As a response to the publicity around the occupation and the issue of housing, Harvard promised that housing would be built at the 888 Memorial Drive site. Fifteen years later that promise has not yet been fulfilled. The building was torn down and the land is now a tree and shrub lot of Grower's Market, a commercial garden supply store.)

The Women's Center was the direct result of the energy of the hundreds of women who occupied the building in shifts for classes, support groups, and meetings. As a result of the publicity generated by the occupation, money was raised to purchase a building. In late 1971, the present 3-story house at 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge became the Women's Center. The doors opened in January 1972.

In the past 15 years, the Center has been involved in a wide range of activities and issues. The Center has long been involved in the struggle to insure reproductive freedom for all women. In the first few years of the Center's existence one of the projects at the Center was the Pregnancy and Abortion Counseling Project which provided referrals and support to women before the Supreme Court gave its Roe vs Wade decision. The Center has championed the right of women and children to just and equitable welfare benefits, the right of lesbians and gay men to full civil, political and legal rights, the labor rights of women in the workplace, and opposed the Dukakis administration's homophobic foster care policy. The Center has housed support groups for older women, women of color, single mothers, women recovering from alcohol and drug dependency as well as providing support for survivors of rape, battering, and incest.

The Women's School held its first term in early 1971 and has been offering a wide range of classes and workshops at the Center and in surrounding communities ever since. The Center is a resource for information and referrals ranging from current events and meetings, to health referrals, housing, jobs, childcare and much more. Decisions

about the Center are made collectively and by consensus.

The Women's Center is committed to being supportive to all women and to working in coalition with other individuals and groups toward creating a world of justice and peace, free of discrimination. We welcome all women who want to join the struggle with your energy and ideas.

THE CENTER IS OPEN

Monday-Thursday	10am - 10pm
Friday	10am - 5pm
Friday Coffeehouse	8pm-Midnite
Saturday	11am - 2pm

MEETINGS AT THE CENTER

MONDAY

- Support for Battered Women . . . 6:30-8pm
- New Women's Chorus 7-10pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's 7:30-9:45pm
Network -Intro Mtg. (bimonthly)
- All-Center Meeting 6-8pm
(biweekly)

TUESDAY

- Rape Crisis Center 7-10pm
- Former Nun Lesbian Support . . . 7pm
Group (1st Tuesday, monthly)
- Writing Workshop 7-9pm

WEDNESDAY

- Support for Battered Women. . . Noon-1pm
- Women's School 7-9:30pm
- Menopause Collective 7pm
(monthly, starting in Sept.)
- Feminist Discussion Group. . . 8-10pm
- Lesbian Al-Anon. 6:30-8pm
- Fat is a Feminist Issue. 7:30-9:30
(biweekly)
- Bad Back Support Group 7:30-9:45
(biweekly)

THURSDAY

- Lesbian Liberation 7:30-9:30pm
- Ceres Grove (Spirituality) . . . 7-9pm
(biweekly)
- Incest Resources 7:30-9:30pm
(resumes in Sept., third Thurs., monthly)
- Lesbians Choosing Children . . . 7:30-10pm
Network (resumes Sep. 2nd Thurs., monthly)

SATURDAY

- Searching for housing support. 11:30am-1pm

A HOUSE > A HOME

The Search for Housing/Roommate Support Group meets Saturdays, 11:30am to 1pm. The agenda is based on the needs of the participants. Overall, the group is a place to:

- Meet potential roommates
 - Share resource information about the housing/roommate search
 - Get support for the search process
 - Share your concerns about finding "the right situation"
 - Brainstorm about how to build the kind of living situation you want.
- For more info, call the Center, 354-8807.

SUPPORT THE CENTER

Last year, it cost over \$30,000 to keep the Center operating. This money comes mostly from corporate and foundation grants and donations from individuals. We have no guaranteed amounts of income, so fund-raising goes on from scratch each year. That is why your contribution is so important!

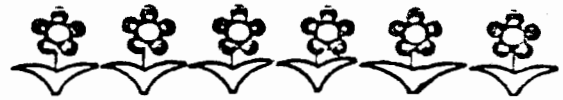
We need your help to keep the Center going and also to help us fulfill our obligation to foundations and corporations which require that their grants be matched dollar-for-dollar by private individuals. Please donate as much as you can.

Other ways you can help:

- Ask your employer if he or she will match a contribution you make to the Center. Many employers have done this to date and it doubles the value of your contribution.
- If you belong to a women's group or women's business or professional organization, please ask if the Center can use your organization's mailing list. Many Boston area women's organizations are already helping us to contact their members so we can tell them about the Center and ask for support.

WOMEN'S COUNSELING AND RESOURCE CENTER

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center has moved to the Women's Center!! WCRC offers women referrals to various services in the area and also offers counseling to low-income women. We're using office space in the basement of the Center and various other rooms for counseling sessions. WCRC hopes to eventually be able to offer consultation and training around crisis intervention and mental health issues to all Women's Center staff. We're glad to have become part of the Center!



WHAT'S IN BLOOM

Thanks to a Cambridge corporation which let us empty its greenhouse once again this year, the Women's Center's yard has been transformed by a wonderful array of geraniums and begonias, subtle shade of impatiens and the decorative foliage of coleus. The flowers were planted by volunteers in beds and above ground in pots. The Center's perennial garden is also in bloom. Right now, it features true and day lilies, just two of the many types of flowers which bloom here from March right through November each year.

All of this makes for an outdoor space that is a pleasant respite from the asphalt of the city. Next time you are at the Center, take a garden break or hold your meeting outdoors rather than spending a long summer evening indoors!

.....
Your contribution helps the Women's Center to accomplish a great deal for women.
EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!! MANY THANKS

Yes - I want to help the Center. Here is my tax-deductible contribution.
\$5 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 other

_____ Rather than contribute now I would like to pledge \$ _____ per month for _____ months.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

LESBIAN FORMER NUNS

The former nun lesbian support group continues to meet at the Center on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm. We are grateful to the Center for providing a space where women from varied religious orders and denominations can meet and share their feelings about their life experiences.

During this past spring, Rosemary Curb, one of the editors of Lesbians Nuns: Breaking Silence and Elizabeth Malloy, a contributor to that anthology, joined us for several meetings. Hopefully, they will return when they are in the area. It was a real delight to have them with us.

We encourage any lesbian who has been involved in a religious community to join us.

COFFEEHOUSE

The Coffeehouse was organized this past winter, first & foremost to be a not-for-profit-women-only-space, a free 'hang-out' space where women can come to kick off our shoes, relax, meet one another, . . . or just sit and read feminist periodicals or a book in our own community center. The Coffeehouse has evolved to being more event-oriented over the past few months. Right now, it is heating up for a "Night of Older Women's Writing" (July 18th) and a variety of cultural events this summer.

Whether or not an 'event' is scheduled, women should feel free to come and bring your own entertainment. (Bring a musical instrument to jam, a friend to chat with, a favorite game to play).

Keep your eyes out for flyers and notices in calendars about the Coffeehouse. Or call the Center anytime to inquire. If you would be interested in working with the Coffeehouse in any capacity, or would like to schedule a performance or event of some kind - please leave a message for Sky or LaVon. P.S. Donations of coffee, tea, money, a music system, games, etc. are very welcome.

Fridays 8pm - 12

PLEASURE PALACE

SATURDAY JULY 26

7:30pm-midnight

to benefit the
SAINTS COLLECTIVE

Massage, games, food
\$5 (more or less)

At the WOMEN'S CENTER

46 Pleasant St. (by River St.)

426-4469 (Kim) or the Center for info.

Sponsored by Positively Revolting
Affinity Group

"FROM BOOKS TO CLIPPINGS"

The Archives of the Contemporary Boston Area Women's Movement started in 1981 as a result of a small foundation grant awarded to the Center to organize the records of local feminist groups. The Center has been entrusted with the records of:

NO MORE FUN AND GAMES (a radical feminist journal), 1968-74

The Abortion Action Coalition

The Boston Women's Music Collective

SISTER COURAGE, an early women's paper
Bread & Roses (1968-70)

Bread & Roses was an early socialist-feminist group in Boston which was instrumental in organizing dozens of women's groups and coordinating activity around a range of issues including opposition to the Vietnam War, welfare cutbacks, and sexist portrayals of women in the media. The archives also retains records of many of the Center's projects and groups.

The Library and Archives are used regularly by many women from both the Boston area and by women from other areas doing research on the early roots of the contemporary Women's Movement. As a result, the Archives and Library requires constant work to just maintain it.

We need an on-going group to coordinate the work involved in maintaining the Library and Archives as well as to hopefully initiate new projects. There is a lot of exciting and valuable material to work with and a clear need for women power! If you are interested, please leave a note at the Center for Libby.

THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC.
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Phone: (617) 354-8807

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Boston, MA
PERMIT NO. 59699

BUILDING BLOCKS

The Children's Room at the Center cries out for consideration. Imaginative (but practical) suggestions about how to create a more appealing children's space (all ages) that can double as a comfortable meeting space are what's needed. Anyone who would like to contribute ideas, information, time or toys, please call Judy at 354-8807.



Meanwhile, work continues on the first floor, widening doorways, lowering thresholds, moving the refrigerator and stove, etc., as the wheelchair accessibility project nears completion. Some volunteer help would be wonderful, and any info about a good licensed woman electrician! Call Judy at 354-8807.



SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY

On August 9, 1956, over 20,000 women of all races demonstrated in Pretoria, South Africa in defiance of the pass system. In commemoration of this important day the South African Women's Day coalition will hold a day-long celebration on August 9th at the Blackstone Community School in Boston.

A week prior to this celebration, on Aug. 2nd, leafletting will be organized at area supermarkets to raise public awareness of corporate boycotts targetting Shell oil household products and Beatrice Food products as well as other South African goods.

For further info, call Free South Africa, 437-0228, or Women for Racial and Economic Equality, 522-4648.

NEWSLETTER

'ON OUR WAY' comes out four times a year. If you have not received it before, and would like to keep getting it, fill out (legibly) the form below. Bring it or send it to the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Cambridge, MA 02139. There is no charge for the newsletter; donations are always appreciated.

I'd like to be on the Women's Center mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip Code _____