

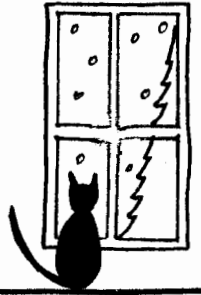


# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

(617) 354-8807  
TTY and VOICE

December, 1991



## FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! SEEKS NEW MEMBERS OPEN MEETING DECEMBER 16th at 7pm

We are delighted to report that after a hiatus of several months, the Survivors Newsletter Collective is becoming active again. The "remaining, struggling collective members" will be holding a meeting here at the Center at 7pm on December 16th for any women who are interested in helping with the production of *For Crying Out Loud*. At the meeting, the current members will explain what's involved in putting out the newsletter.

The next step will be to organize a topic meeting for the re-vamped collective in early January, and to put out a Winter '92 issue. All interested women are encouraged to attend the meeting on December 16th and to become involved in this great project. We are all looking forward to the next issue of *For Crying Out Loud*.

## LETTER ABOUT JUDGE THOMAS

To the Editor:

"JUDGE CLARENCE THOMAS CONFIRMED--TIME FOR HEALING" read the headlines. The struggle to heal has been the story of my life for the past two years.

Several months ago I confronted my uncle with his sexual abuse of me when I was a child. This week on television I watched Professor Anita Hill tell the simple truth about being sexually harassed, while Clarence Thomas used the same defenses my uncle used when confronted: categorical denial, public outrage, self-pity, counter-attack (she's crazy), red herrings (it's a plot), and reputation (everyone else says I'm a terrific guy). My uncle could have written his lines.

I am deeply sad that sexual abuse is still something so many people refuse to look at. Thomas is going to get away with it--as my uncle did. This is a crime of power that thrives in secrecy. It has to be brought out into the open if it is ever to be stopped. I wish to say to all sexual abusers on behalf of their victims:

We are not crazy, we did not fantasize your sexual aggression or desire it, and I, for one, will no longer support your lies with my silence.

Eleanor O'Byron



## ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY GATHERING

Whether you're feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or just want to spend some time in a warm, supportive environment, come to the Women's Center from 6-9pm on Christmas Day. Join together with other women to share feelings, concerns, and strategies for coping with the holiday. All women are welcome; bring food to share if you'd like.  
TOGETHER WE CAN DETOXYFIFY THE HOLIDAY!

## INCEST SURVIVORS NETWORK

Urgently needs volunteers to do light bookkeeping or to co-facilitate some of the third Thursday survivors' drop-in groups. If you're interested please call Judy at (617) 354-8807.

## EXPOSED!

Over the last year, the Women's Center has received quite a bit of attention in the media. A very complimentary article in the Cambridge TAB described the Center:

"The Women's Center is a pleasant place on Pleasant Street. For 20 years this lovely old Victorian home near Central Square has provided a place where women can find friendship, serenity, support and information. It is a peaceful oasis in a not-always peaceful world."

The article went on to elaborate on the "staggering" variety of services the center provides.

The Women's Center has also been mentioned in the media several times as a place for incest survivors to receive help and information. Nationally, we have been listed as a resource in an article about incest in Cosmopolitan magazine, and in several self-help books written for survivors. Locally, our phone number was given out on the Good Day television program. We also sponsored and provided resource information to accompany a photographic exhibit about incest survivors at the Boston Public Library.

Our most recent media exposure came during the Thomas confirmation hearings, when Channel 56 came to the Women's Center to interview Francine Crognale from the Sexual Harassment at Work group, and Manjusree Sen from Surviving in the Workplace for the 10 o'clock news.

We appreciate the recognition we have received in the media, and hope that word of our resources and services will continue to spread.

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

Thanks to Laura McMurry and Dotty Prout for picking up the fixing-up activity at the Women's Center. The transformation of the front of the garage is, after 2 years, nearly finished. Several holes in the walls are now filled, and there is lots of fresh paint (latex, because alkyd paints keep emitting toxins into the environment). A bookcase/table for notebooks in the sitting room has been built.

More has been done and there's lots left, so if you'd like to volunteer to repot plants, wield a hammer, or join others for a clean-up day, call Judy at 354-8807.

## NEW AND IMPROVED

The needs of women in our community are always changing, to keep up with these changes we must update old and create new resources. Over the last year, a great deal of effort has been put into this project, much of it on the part of our four summer interns: Greta, Tracey, Amy, and Jennifer. We now have new notebooks on reproductive health issues, eating disorders, and lesbian resources, which are kept in the sitting room. Our former fundraiser, Alice, worked hard on the notebooks containing articles about Ritual Abuse and Multiple Personalities. These books, also in the sitting room, are constantly being used by women who visit the Women's Center.

Another useful, frequently updated resource we have that some women may be unaware of is our therapy referrals--questionnaires filled out by therapists that are kept in the staff office. You need to ask to look at these. They are in folders organized by the therapists' location (Boston, North of Boston, New Hampshire, Cambridge, Somerville, West of Boston, etc.)

Women call for all different kinds of information. If you have any suggestions of good resources (aerobics for pregnant women, health care providers, sports, support groups, temp agencies, therapists, anything!), please give us a call or send them in the enclosed envelope so we can add them to our listings.

## A CELEBRATION OF 2 DECADES!

On Saturday, March 23rd, old friends and new friends gathered together to celebrate the Women's Center's 20th Anniversary at the MIT Student Center. The program for the evening included intriguing recollections about the dramatic beginning of the Women's Center, personal accounts of both good and bad experiences at the Women's Center over the years, poetry, singing, a historical display about the contemporary Boston area Women's Movement, and of course a cake. It was a time to reminisce and rejoice, to think about the value of the Women's Center and to make a commitment to keep it alive for the next 20 years, and the next 20..., and the next....

A dance followed the program, with a music mix to satisfy the oldies and the now generation.

Thanks to all who participated in making the celebration such a success. It was nice to see so many of you there!

## 'WOMEN AND WORK' DAY

"Women and Work" is the theme of the open house job fair that will be held on December 6, 1991 from 12 noon to 9pm at the Women's Center. Despite the "depressin' recession", this event will help women uncover the hidden job market and learn the inside scoops on how to secure the "right" job. The event will include a panel of women sharing their work experiences as well as workshops on interviewing, resume writing, networking, and evaluating the Myers-Briggs Personality test.

### PROGRAM:

#### Noon-2pm - EXPLORING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

A presentation of women sharing work experiences. Panelists will include: Anna Chen (videographer), Terry Haliday (paramedic), Connie Nelson (recruiter, Women in the Building Trades), and Robin Prentice (Small Business Owner).

#### 2:15-4pm - INTERVIEWING WORKSHOP

Elena Cervone, President of Bio Works and volunteer at the Women's Center, will discuss proven techniques to make the job interview a success.

#### 4:15-6pm - RESUME WRITING

Representatives from various career counseling agencies will present resume writing guidelines and provide one-on-one assistance to writing the 'right' resume. Sheila Cook (Women's Job Counseling Center), Alberta Nicholson (My Sister's Place), Gina Milani (Employment Resources, Inc.), and Carol Rosenblatt (Jewish Vocational Services).

#### 7-9pm - NETWORKING

Linda Wong, Associate Director of Sojourner magazine, will lead a workshop on finding the 'ins' in the hidden job market. Network and meet new contacts.

7:30-9pm - MYERS-BRIGGS PERSONALITY TEST  
Eileen Lee, career development graduate student and the Women's Center job program intern, will discuss the Myers-Briggs Personality test.

Currently, the Women's Center has two drop-in job search support groups. Women in the groups have come together to break the isolation of the job search and share resources with each other to encourage a more positive approach to becoming happily employed. Lack of motivation, increased anxiety, and a need for more focused goals have been the common threads that tie the members together. Through the positive reinforcement provided by the group, some women have discovered that there is a possibility of success beyond the "help wanted" ads.

The "Women and Work" day and the job search support group were a result of a job/career program survey that was conducted at the Women's Center. The survey had questions regarding the needs of women who were in the process of looking for a job and the answers revealed that the women were interested in having a job fair and a support group to discuss the difficulties of the job search. When asked "what problems/difficulties have you encountered during your job/career search?", some of the responses were:

"fear, mental block about resume writing"

"figuring out what I want to do. Knowing what to do to get what I want."

"Low pay. Few jobs, many people applying."

"Biggest obstacle is my internal blocks from cold calling, networking, etc."

"Knowing what I want to do has been a lifelong problem. Organization and planning are also difficult."

As revealed through the survey, the job search is difficult, but if you attend a job search support group or the "Women and Work" day, the search does not have to be lonely or impossible.

### THANKS, EILEEN

The Women's Center wishes to thank our intern Eileen Lee for starting up and running the job search support groups, and for all the other work she's done to make the Center a better resource for job-hunters. Unfortunately for us, Eileen will be going back to her masters program in Career Development on the West Coast in January. We hope to be able to keep the job search support programs going when she leaves. If you would like to facilitate a group, or volunteer to help women with job search skills, please call Judy or Jennifer at 354-8807.

### WELCOME, JENNIFER

After working at the Women's Center as a volunteer for five years, Jennifer Norris recently accepted a full-time staff position. Jennifer has been involved in the production of the newsletter, staffed the phones, provided childcare, made flyers, run errands, and was a key to the success of our 20th Anniversary celebration. As a volunteer, Jennifer could always be counted on during the toughest of times, and as our new staff member, we have confidence that she will be a great asset to the Center in the coming year.

### 30+ LESBIAN RAP

The 30+ Lesbian Rap group meets at the Women's Center every Tuesday evening from 7-8:30pm. Each week there is a specific topic and a facilitator who has agreed to start the discussion. The Rap has been going on for about three years. It is a place to discuss topics of interest to 30+ lesbians. New women are always welcome. Attendance varies. Some nights there is barely room for another woman to sit on the floor while other nights the chairs and couches are not quite filled. The faces of the attendees vary as well, there are often some women who have attended regularly for weeks, some who have come for the first time, some who attend now and then. On your first night, it's easy to think that everyone else is a regular. It's not true.

The discussion is started at 7 by the facilitator who welcomes everyone, introduces the topic, and describes whether we should speak at will or in order. No one is required to speak, although everyone is asked to say her first name. The discussion depends on everyone in the room and is often very interesting, fun and lively. At 8:15 or so, the facilitator allows room for those who haven't had a chance to get a word in. Around 8:30, she wraps up the discussion and thanks everyone for coming. Sometimes women in the group will go out afterwards for coffee or food.

Topics vary, from "Lesbians and AIDS" to a sing-along. You can call the Women's Center for this week's topic. Topics are chosen by the group on the first Tuesday of each month for the following month. All suggestions are welcome and everyone is encouraged to suggest topics and to be a facilitator.

### SURVIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

The "Surviving in the Workplace" support group allows participants to discuss job-related problems in a safe environment. Participants are able to creatively problem-solve on issues that impact their lives. Sexual Harassment and Sex/Race Discrimination that can and do cause joblessness are issues of concern for every woman. Participants can help, and have helped one another to find creative solutions to "Surviving in the Workplace". In December we will start meeting on the second Tuesday of each month from 7-9pm.

### INCEST SURVIVORS 3rd THURSDAY FACILITATED DISCUSSION GROUP

This is a topic focused, facilitated meeting. All women who have had incest experiences or who suspect that they might have been abused are welcome.

Acceptance of ourselves where we are now is the key to our healing. Survivors need to be listened to and heard, not judged or advised. We are a diverse group coming from all backgrounds, races, sexual preferences, political persuasions, ages, physical abilities, classes, and professions. What we do have in common is the betrayal and violation that all of us experienced. We can help each other by accepting our sister survivors for who we are now and by giving each other the mutual support that we all need.

Recent topics have been "Dealing with Abusers in the Present" and "Self-Esteem". The topic for the meeting on December 19th will be "Grieving and Mourning". Topics for the next four months will be selected by the group at December's meeting.

Please call the Women's Center at 354-8807 for topics and information.

### COMING OUT GROUP

The Coming Out group welcomes women of all ages and backgrounds; those who have recently acknowledged their feelings of attraction towards other women and those who feel that coming out is a life-long process. The topics are varied, flexible and responsive dealing with issues such as: coming out to ourselves, friends or family; lifestyle issues; work problems; or finding or defining "the community". Women are encouraged to share, question, or discuss their ideas, experiences or feelings in a relaxed and accepting atmosphere.

The Coming Out group has been ongoing for two and a half years with the same facilitators. The meetings, usually well attended, are the first Saturday of every month from 11am to 1pm. There are always new members as well as many returning friends.



## PERFUME

Remember when you were considered a wimp or health freak for telling someone their cigarette bothered you? That was before the days of studies on passive smoke and cancer rates in non-smokers. Well, it seems that quite a few women these days are allergic to strong perfume, and it's not all in our minds.

Formaldehyde or other heavy chemicals are used in some perfumes, and a number of us develop headaches, sweats, fatigue, nausea or muscular weakness in response to these perfumes.

It's hard to tell people that their perfume is making us feel sick. Who wants to imply that someone smells, after all? But if people are aware of the problem, they're less likely to be offended. It's not a personal criticism, it's an allergy--just as some women are allergic to cats.

Please, when you come to the Women's Center--in fact, when you go out anywhere that you are in prolonged contact with others--be aware of this issue. The person next to you on the bus or in the movie theater could be very allergic to that perfume.

## REMINDERS

We ask that if you use the Women's Center you will do your part to keep our space clean, neat and uncluttered. Hundreds of women come in and out each week, and while staff are happy to help women get information, we do not want to clean up after anyone.

Another request: please don't congregate in large groups out front before your meeting or during a break. Many women talk about how hard it is to get themselves to come to meetings here, and we want to make sure it is easy for anyone to get to the door. Your help in making the Women's Center a welcoming place is most appreciated!

And, lastly, on the cold days and nights of winter, please keep the front door closed until you are really going to exit. Often, *in the past*, women stopped to chat after opening the door and the Women's Center absorbed chilly air that lingered long after they had gone.

Thank you for your cooperation!



## CHILDCARE



It's Friday morning, and you walk into the Center to sounds of crying, laughing, screaming, and singing echoing through the house. No, it's not a staff meeting, it's childcare for the Mother's Support Group. For the past several weeks, Lisa Watson and I have been taking care of between four and six (the more the merrier!) children while their mothers meet upstairs, sharing with and supporting one another. Every week I look forward to Friday mornings, when Lisa and I have the pleasure of getting to play with and getting to know these fascinating little people. They can certainly be a handful, but are always a delight. Thanks Morgan, Jack, Philip, Theona, Kelsey, and Jenna Rae for making childcare SO MUCH FUN!

By the way, women are requesting childcare so they can attend support groups, particularly the Battered Women's Support Groups on Mondays 7:30-9pm or Wednesdays 7-8:30pm. If you would be willing to do some childcare during meetings, please call me, Jennifer Norris, at (617)354-8807.



## AND FOR MOMS

The Mothers Support Group meets from 10:30am-noon on Fridays at least through December. If you are interested, we'd love to have you and your kid/s! Call (617)354-8807 to get in touch with the facilitator, or just come by. If it's not a good time for you, call anyway to leave your name, #, and schedule. The Women's Center often offers time-limited Mother's Support Groups with childcare.

## THE WOMEN'S SCHOOL

The Women's School finished another exciting semester this Fall. It included a great variety of classes which were met with a high level of enthusiasm.

The school is currently gearing up to start planning for next semester, and they need YOU! They are looking for volunteers to join the collective, and/or to facilitate workshops. No experience is needed for voluntary positions, and the Women's School will provide any necessary training.

If you are interested in becoming a part of the oldest continuously-run women's school in the nation, call Beth Rosen at 848-4981, or Holly Daschbach at 876-4818.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS GROUPS WITH TOPICS

**Lesbian Rap** Mon, 7:30-9pm  
 Dec 2 Getting Over One-way Crushes  
 Dec 9 Cruising 101  
 Dec 16 Holiday Party: Games & Potluck  
 Dec 23 How to Deal with your Family & the Holidays  
 Dec 30 Coming Out Stories

**Bisexual Rap** Tue, 7:30-9:30pm  
 Dec 3 Reclaiming Language  
 Dec 10 Games Night  
 Dec 17 Dealing with Family in the Holiday Season  
 Dec 24, 31 - NO MEETINGS

**30+ Lesbian Rap** Tu 7-8:30pm  
 Dec 3 Lesbians & their Families  
 Dec 10 Breaking Up or Making Up  
 Dec 17 Holiday Party Potluck  
 Dec 24, 31 - NO MEETINGS

## INCEST SUPPORT GROUPS

### FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION GROUP

3rd Thursday, each month, 7:30-9:15pm  
 December 12: Topic - 'Sadness & Mourning'

### INCEST SURVIVORS THINKTANK

Wed, Dec. 4: Anti-racism & Incest Survivor Work

Wed, Jan 8: Public Accountability of Perpatrators

\* The group will begin promptly at 7:15pm and will end at 9:15pm. Please be on time!



## "Say It, Sister!"

"Say It, Sister!" is a community radio program with a strong feminist and progressive political perspective that is currently on the air every other Wednesday, 7-8pm, on WMBR, 99.1FM. "SiS" NEEDS NEW BLOOD! NO RADIO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY to join, just a hearty enthusiasm for getting women's voices heard, and a desire to learn about radio in a fun, non-competitive women's collective. We especially need women interested in training to be engineers.

To get involved, or for more info., call Michele at 623-8681 (eves, wknds.), or write to: WMBR Radio, "Say It, Sister!" 3 Ames Street, Cambridge, MA 02142

Thanks!

## ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

### SUNDAY

-Women for Sobriety.....2-3:30pm  
 -Birthmothers (Women who have surrendered children to adoption) first Sunday each month.....1:30pm

### MONDAY

-Job Search Support.....11am-12:30pm  
 -Support for Battered Women.....7:30-9pm  
 -Women's NA 12 step.....7:30-9pm  
 -Lesbian Rap.....7:30-9pm  
 -Boston Bisexual Women's Network (1st Mon, even #'d months)...7:30-9:45pm  
 -All Center Meeting (biweekly).....6-8pm  
 -Reproductive Rights Network R2N2 (2nd, 4th Mons.).....6:45-9:30pm  
 -Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors (1st & 3rd Mon.).....7-8:30pm  
 -Women w/ Disabilities (3rd Mon)..7:30-9pm

### TUESDAY

-Bisexual Women's Rap.....7:30-10pm  
 -30+ Lesbian Rap.....7-8:30pm  
 -Eating Awareness and Body Image.....7-9pm  
 -Surviving in the Workplace (2nd Tuesday).....7-9pm

### WEDNESDAY

-Lesbian Al-Anon (childcare).....6:30-8pm  
 -Battered Women's Support Group (Weekly except 3rd Wed. of month).....7-8:30pm  
 -Incest Survivors' Thinktank...7:15-9:15pm (Usually first Wed. of the month)  
 -Job Search Support Group.....6:30-8:30pm

### THURSDAY

-Incest Survivors Open Discussion Group (weekly).....7:30-9:30pm  
 -Facilitated Open Discussion for Incest Survivors (3rd Thursday).....7:30-9:15pm  
 -Women's Community Cancer Project (1st Thursday).....7-9pm  
 -Cancer Support Group (no mtgs. in August) (2nd & 4th Thursday).....7-9pm  
 -Lesbians Choosing Children Network (2nd Thurs, monthly).....7:30-10pm

### FRIDAY

-Incest Survivors Anonymous.....6:30-8pm

### SATURDAY

-Women's Writing Group (biweekly).....noon-2pm  
 -Open discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages (monthly, 1st Sat)...11am-1pm

## WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday 10am - 10pm  
 Friday 10am - 8pm  
 Saturday 11am - 2pm