

on our way

CAMBRIDGE WOMEN'S CENTER NEWSLETTER
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts
September 1979



TAKE BACK THE NIGHT: The Action & Its Meaning

Boston witnessed its 2nd Take Back the Night march on Sat., August 18th when several thousand women from the greater Boston area came together to claim our right to walk the streets at night in safety and without fear. This year's march was unique in that it had three starting points: Kenmore Square, Uphams Corner in Dorchester, and Hyde Square in Jamaica Plain - three arms which converged in Boston's South End and marched together to the rallying point at Blackstone Park. The impetus to have three routes came primarily from women in the Dorchester and Jamaica Plain communities who felt that it was important that the march reach a number of Boston's neighborhoods and, in particular, that it pass through some of these areas where the tragic murders this year of 12 black women took place. In doing so, the march publicly proclaimed women's anger against violence against all women and our intolerance of continued violence. The coalition of organizers also sees the march as a celebration of the ongoing work that is being done by women to both end violence against women and provide services to the victims of violence.

While the march addresses itself to the issue of violence on the street, it is essential that we not lose sight of the depth of meaning implicit in the expression "Take Back the Night." The concept of "Take Back the Night" is concerned with the total spectrum of violence against women. The metaphor, "Take Back the Night," helps us make the vital connections between all forms of violence which are perpetrated against women and which constitute a daily threat to all women. When we explore the richness of this metaphor we begin to make

links with our past, with women's story, with the many forms of violence which women have been subjected to throughout the centuries of patriarchal history.

To grasp the totality of violence against women we must look behind/beyond/through the metaphor to its universal and timeless significance. To say "Take Back the Night" says that women are not only claiming our right to the night but that we are taking it back, reclaiming what was once ours. To fully understand what this means we must ask ourselves, "When was it ours? When did we lose it? Who took it away?!" An examination of the atrocities committed against women throughout time: the fetish of foot-binding in China, the mania of witchburning through the Middle Ages, the sexual abuse of black women in slavery, the persecution of Goddess religions--and around the world: the ritual of suttee (wife-burning) in India, the rite of clitoridectomy and infibulation in some African countries, forced sterilization in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, the rape of women as "spoils of war"--is where we begin to answer these questions for ourselves.

To say "Take Back the Night" also means that we are exorcising the term "night" of its current patriarchal meaning and reestablishing its rich women-identified value. As we now know it, the night is a time of darkness and the hours of our greatest fear. In this metaphor we can understand it to mean, not only the nighttime itself, but all those situations which create terror and endanger the lives of women: the battering of women, the harassment of lesbians and other 'uppity women,' the psychiatric and sexual abuse of institutionalized women, the sexual harassment of women on the job. But it is not the
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Take Back the Night (con't)

night we fear; it is not the night that is dangerous. The night once was a time when women experienced our connectedness to the universe, when we celebrated our power and tapped the energy of the world around us to renew our strength. In taking back the night, we attempt to redefine it, to return to it its rightful meaning as a time of magic and wisdom and power for women.

Women once lived in a world that was free of women-hating violence. As we struggle to end violence and to heal the wounds of the victims we must un/covers the truth of that. As we recreate the world that we live in we must re/member the world and way of life of our foremothers of prehistory. We need that light from our past to illuminate the path to our future. Take Back the Night, as both an action and a symbol, is one step that moves us on our way.

-- Linda Luz

ABORTION . . .

ITS OUR RIGHT

Abortion Rights Action Week is a nationally coordinated series of local events scheduled for October 22-29, 1979. It was initiated by over fifty sponsoring organizations who felt that while the right to abortion was under attack, it was important to visibly celebrate and affirm our reproductive rights.

A local coalition of Boston-area groups is presently being formed to plan events for the Abortion Rights Action Week. The Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights will be holding religious services; The National Lawyers Guild will be holding a Forum of lawyers and legal workers involved in court cases. CESA (Coalition to End Sterilization Abuse) will be showing their slide show on sterilization abuse. On Sat. October 27th there will an all day Fair. All women' groups, community groups and others' who support women's reproductive rights are invited to participate in setting up tables. A Rally will be held later in the day.

For further information, contact:

Boston Abortion Rights Action
Week

P.O. Box 2727
Boston, MA. 02208



THE BIG PAY-OFF

In 1972, the Women's Center purchased 46 Pleasant Street for a total of \$28,000. \$9,300 of that amount was the down payment, leaving \$18,700 owed the bank as a mortgage.

Since 1972, the Center has been making mortgage payments month after month, year after year. To date, we have paid the bank \$13,524.82 but in fact, our mortgage has only been reduced by \$3,574.15 (as of 3/31/79). Where did all the money go? INTEREST!!

In the course of the past seven and a half years the Center has paid over \$9,950.00 in interest. In 1979, for each of our current monthly payments of \$161.67, approximately two-thirds of that sum is in interest payment, while only one-third is used to reduce our principle!

As of August 1979, we still must go on making mortgage payments for 151 months. By
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continuing the payment schedule, the Center would eventually pay a total of \$38,583.67 (over twice the borrowed sum of \$18,700) before the mortgage reached maturity in January 1993.

Operating expense money, from which our mortgage is paid, is the most difficult money to raise for an organization like the Center. Foundations and corporations are reluctant to give organizations money for operating expenses because they want us to be self-supporting, and thus prove to them that we are viable, fiscally-safe organizations. Over and over again while fund-raising, we are told in interviews with foundation people that "If your organization is doing a good job, if it is worth something to the people who are using it, they should and will support it." Most foundations are, therefore, willing to give money only to specific projects which an organization is currently doing (such as building improvements or start-up money for a particular type of service). One-time grants of this kind are what the Center generally receives.

Mortgage payments have been made from what the Center can raise through private donations and benefits. This, as you know if you saw our financial statements, is a very small and unpredictable amount. We, therefore, have found it not only difficult, but very wasteful to spend this hard-to-find cash paying thousands of dollars in mortgage interest. In addition, because we have an open mortgage, (one that can be paid off at any time), the bank has the option to raise our interest every five years. Last year the interest was raised from 8% to 8.5%. If inflation continues, we could be paying even more interest in the future.

Taking all the above into consideration, we have decided to start a mortgage drive to pay off, once and for all, the remainder of the debt. Since announcing a mortgage drive in March, we have received donations totaling \$6,249.09, thus reducing the present mortgage to \$8,538.91.

We are now asking everyone to contribute. Please give whatever you can, large or small. Every CENT will be welcome. Make your checks payable to the Women's Educational Center, Inc. and mail them to us at 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, MA 02139, or leave them with the staff.

Help us to stop paying mortgage interest. Our money should be for women, not increasing bankers' profits!



SUPPORT TEXTILE
WORKERS

**DON'T BUY
J.P. STEVENS:**

Sheets & Pillowcases	Carpets	Towels
Beauti-Blend	Contender	Fine Arts
Beauticale	Gulistan	Tastemaker
Fine Arts	Merryweather	Utica
Peanuts	Tastemaker	
(comic strip figures)	Table Linen	Blankets
Tastemaker	Simtex	Forstmann
Utica	Hosiery	Utica
Utica & Mohawk		
Designer Labels:	Finesse	
Yves St. Laurent	Hip-Lets	
Angelo Donighia	Spirit	

J.P. Stevens sells its products under these brand names.

Jordan Marsh is the biggest outlet for J.P. Stevens' products in the Boston area.

* PROJECT REPORTS *

EMOTIONAL COUNSELING PROJECT

The Emotional counseling group is experiencing a time of transition. Over the last several months we have lost some long-time members, and we are in the process of incorporating new members.

In the midst of all these changes, we have undertaken a new project. As a result of having an increasingly difficult time finding referrals for women with limited financial resources, we have contacted many of the area's social service agencies, hospitals and neighborhood clinics in search of the elusive "\$5 or under" feminist therapist. We are hoping to expand our referral list to include feminist-identified therapists within these organizations. If you can help, please get in touch with us at the Women's Center.

This transitional period has also provided the impetus and energy for new skill-sharing within the group. We recently had an in-service training in movement therapy provided by one of our members and excited about continuing to learn from each other and to bring these new skills to our counseling.

W A V A W UPDATE

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), has good news and bad news this month. The bad news is that we losing three of our oldest and most hard-working members, Ann Traynor, Jessi Brewster and Mary Maxfield, to medical, dental and grad schools, respectively. We'll miss them greatly and we wish them the best of luck in their new endeavors.

The good news is that we are in the process of collaborating with Warner Communications, Inc. on a list of guidelines to be used by record company art departments in designing promotional material. We are very excited about winding up our three-year boycott of Warner record labels, and we are looking forward to expanding our focus from record albums to include many other types of media. These changes will be reflected in our slide show, which is currently being revised and updated.

We all feel committed to action against media exploitation of women and equally committed to developing a sense of cohe-

siveness with each other. For the time being, we are a closed collective, but anticipate a time when we will welcome new members.

R A P E C R I S I S C E N T E R

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center's primary concern is the rape victim herself. Our hotline (492-RAPE) is open 24 hours a day for emergencies, questions, or just talk. Rape victims need competent medical and legal aid. After being raped many women experience insensitivity, isolation and confusion as they turn to institutions. Our counselors are available to accompany and support rape victims through the hospital, police and court systems. In addition, we have printed a pamphlet which outlines the medical procedures and legal choices rape victims face. The ordeal of rape does not end when the rapist leaves. BARCC offers long term counseling and monthly discussion groups for rape victims. We, above all, women helping each other, with information, sensitivity and strength.

C E N T E R S T A F F U P D A T E

There have been some changes in the staff of the Women's Center since our last publication. Candace O'Brien resigned as a staffwoman recently - we miss her presence and energy and thank her for her continuing support. Although she is no longer staffing, she is working on a staff manual.

This summer has been a good one - lots of new energy to the Center! Through the CETA Summer Youth program and internship programs we have had four new daytime staff members for the summer months. With so much womonpower, we have been able to do a lot of needed work. We are reorganizing and updating the Center's referral service, trying to make our information more complete and available. We were also able to spend time doing much-needed maintenance work on the house. We are intending to win the Good Housekeeping Award for 1979.

We have updated and revised the Welfare Book and the Childcare Book, and have gathered much information from women visiting the Center from all over the U.S. and other countries who have
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Staff Update (con't.)

given personal accounts of the women's movement where they live.

The number of daytime staff involved in the Center this summer has shown us what can be accomplished with enough womonenergy. We have been able to carry out hoped for projects and spend more time talking to womyn who are new to the Center. Our numbers have also prevented the traditional summer burn out on the part of the staff.

The three month committment of our nighttime staff was over in July. Most of them have made another committment to the Center. Our nighttime hours allow womyn who are working or busy during the day to use our services.

To all the night staff - thank you for your work. Any womyn who are interested in volunteering their time and energy to the Center, your work is needed for both night and day times. Contact Denise or Andrea during the day for more information.

friends. We see intimate connections between capitalist nuclear industry's irreverance for life and patriarchal violence toward women. The women in LUNA feel that fighting the destructiveness of nuclear power is a women's issue, a feminist, a lesbian issue. "We want to expose the treacherous consequences of accepting nuclear power, eliminate its existence, and work toward smaller, more appropriate people-oriented rather than profit-motivated technologies. We want to do this in a context where we feel least oppressed, most able to be ourselves. Thus we choose to work with other lesbians and women-identified women.

LUNA has just finished an educational series covering topics such as "The Politics of the Nuclear Industry", "Physics", and "Women and Nature." We have also organized educational forums and sponsored potlucks with other women's anti-nuke groups, to reach out to other women who want to learn about the issue. We are currently expanding our work to include direct action, a newsletter, fundraising and designing T-shirts.

LUNA meets at the Women's Center every Monday night at 7 p.m. and all women are invited.

For information call Sue Haley at work, 426-1882, or home, 628-9385.

UPDATE FROM THE COALITION TO STOP INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

First, the good news: We stopped the Women's Unit!

Since 1973, when the state started illegally transferring women from the Framingham prison to Bridgewater (one of the pits of the men's prison system), the Departments of Correction and Mental Health have been trying to find a place to dump women who they consider "management problems." The Coalition came together in 1976 to block construction of a special, maximum-security, behavior modification unit planned for Worcester State Hospital.

With strong and constant support of the Women's Center community, Mental Patients Liberation Front, prison abolitionists, and Worcester residents, we have finally stopped funding for that unit. We know that if it had not been for us, that unit would now be open. We can and do claim a partial victory!

The Department of Mental Health cannot demonstrate any need for its construction, and cannot, at least this fiscal year, get money.

Meanwhile, the Coalition's workload has in-

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L. U. N. A. E N E R G Y

After a year of dormancy, L.U.N.A. Energy (Lesbians United for Non-Nuclear Action) has reconvened in response to the disastrous Three Mile Island incident. LUNA originated shortly before the Seabrook nuclear power plant demonstration in 1978 in reaction to the sexism women felt in existing anti-nuke groups.

Presently, LUNA is a loosely defined open group for lesbians and their women

COALITION Update (con't.)

FEMINIST ART PROJECT

creased. In monitoring developments at Worcester State Hospital, we discovered plans to construct a similar unit there for adolescents. We then discovered that a similar unit was in planning at Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham. We have also been in the process of analyzing developments at U. Mass Medical School in Worcester. That institution, which is supposed to be upgrading the quality of care available to all Massachusetts residents, is generating numerous proposals for so-called "discrete units"...the most frightening of which is a psychiatric ward for eight children ranging in age from "birth to 15."

Finally, the Special Consultation and Treatment Team, which has always been part of the original women's unit proposal -- the roving gatekeepers for the unit--is still being funded. And word from regular visitors to Framingfam is that women are being tightened down even more than usual.

So, we're having an orientation for new women in the fall. New women can help us shape our strategy for the next year. We can't fight the Department of "Corrections," "Mental Health," and "Youth Services" without having a clear sense of who we are and how best to coordinate our energies. Join us, and help us dismantle them.... Contact us through the Women's Center.

The Staff and Projects are in the process of discussing the place of womyn's art in the Center. As of now, womyn's artwork is not exhibited in Center space. There has been a lot of work done in the Womyn's movement on the connection between art and politics. Feminist art is both a vision of ourselves as strong womyn and a representation of our daily struggles and oppression. It can be a powerful political tool as well as artistic expression for women-identified artists. There are many problems surrounding the issue of womyn exhibiting art at the Center. For instance, the artwork would be exhibited in the living room, where womyn work and meet throughout the week. This has both positive and negative aspects.



Art, in our society, has been shut away in museums, reserved for the rich. It has been taken out of the realm of daily living. Part of the feminist art movement is to reintegrate art into our lives, making art alive again.

On the other hand, using our major meeting space for artwork makes it important to choose artwork that is easily lived with since our living room is collective space. We are trying to come up with some criteria for artwork that will get us through these problems.

This should be a collective effort because we all have very different feelings about artwork and how it should or should not be judged. If you are interested in being a part of this project, please contact Denise at the Center between 10am and 6pm.

I N T R O D U C T O R Y

OPEN LETTER TO THE FEMINIST COMMUNITY

Wednesday night Introductory discussions are back! After a short space of time where Introductory did not meet, the staff of the Women's Center has started it again. Introductory is a space for women who are new to the area, new to the Center, and/or new to feminism. We begin our meetings with a brief rap about the Center-- what services we have to offer, where women can plug in and use their energy with and for other women. We then have discussions on different women's issues. Through sharing our experiences, we can explore our common concerns as women in a supportive space and share different ways of coping with our oppression. So far this summer we have discussed our feelings about our bodies, our mothers and daughters, long term relationships and violence against women. The discussions have been really helpful to many women and the group is growing larger by the week. As facilitator of the group, I have learned a lot from different women's experiences and am excited that there is, once again, a place at the Center where women who are new, and often scared, can share their lives and find support.

Introductory, as is true of all feminist projects, should be a collective effort. I am looking for other women who are interested in planning discussions and facilitating meetings. If you are interested in working on Introductory, call Rebecca at the Women's Center: 354-8807.

REMEMBER: Introductory Meetings are every Wednesday night at 8 p.m.

Consciousness-raising and Support groups are also formed out of the Introductory meetings.

Dear Sisters,

I am writing this as a kind of open letter to feminists because I have several things on my mind that I want to communicate with more immediacy than I could by writing an article.

As usual, as a Black feminist I am concerned with the intersections of race and sex in my politics and in my life. I am feeling these intersections more viscerally than ever, because I think that we are finally at a stage when the Black community is having to deal internally with the implications of sexual politics, feminism and most crucially Black feminism. The evidences of this are many during the past year and I won't go into them here. I feel that it is urgent, however, that women familiarize themselves with some aspects of the "debate" over feminism that is now surging among Black people by reading several recent Black publications.

In April, 1978, THE BLACK SCHOLAR did a special issue on "Blacks and the Sexual Revolution." It was an astounding mixture of pro-feminist and even pro-Lesbian articles by, for example, Assata Shakur and Audre Lorde and the most reactionary anti-Black women articles by Black male writers. This year THE BLACK SCHOLAR published a virulently anti-Black feminist article by Robert Staples in its March/April issue entitled, "The Myth of Black Macho: A Response to Angry Black Feminists" and asked people to respond. The May/June 1979 issue entitled "The Black Sexism Debate" again contains many more articles that are pro-feminist, anti-feminist, innately anti-Lesbian though the word is hardly mentioned and ones that fall somewhere in between. I think what these issues show is that sexual politics is finally up for discussion among Black people and that there is a massive amount of the resistance to the idea of Black women being autonomous on the part of many Black people.

Committed white feminists should also read issues of ESSENCE, EBONY, JET and other Black publications not only to familiarize themselves with what is going on in the Black community around issues of sexual politics, but also to see what we as Black feminists are up against. The most recent issue of EBONY, for example, is a special one devoted entirely to the theme of "Black on Black Crime" and yet it does not deal with the epidemic of violence against women or sexual oppression and patriarchal

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NOTES FROM TRANSITION HOUSE

Support Groups

Support groups by and for battered women are held weekly, mornings and evenings, at the Women's Center. This is an action group--by talking about living with violence with other battered women, you can act on it. For more information call our 24-hour hot line: 661-7203.

* * *

Volunteer Staff

Transition House is a refuge for battered women and their children. The refuge is run by a collective of feminist women, most of whom are volunteers.

The women who come to Transition House are from all different race, class, and ethnic backgrounds. We would like the staff to reflect the same diversity in order to be a more supportive place for all women. Therefore, before we do another volunteer staff training, we would like to recruit more Third World, former battered, mothers, and older women.

Our next training will be in late October or November. Any woman interested should call 354-2676 and leave a message for Nathalie or the training committee.

* * *

We Will Not Be Beaten

Our hour-long videotape is now a 35 minute 16mm film.

Through interviews with former battered women, the film shows how difficult it is to escape a battering situation, the lack of alternatives, and how your life can change.

For information about purchasing and renting the film call Transition House Films at 426-1912.

* * *

Job Opening

Transition House has a job opening for a child-care coordinator. She should be someone with a lot of experience working with children of all different ages. The job involves coordinating our childcare and tutoring program with other paid and volunteer staff, as well as working with the mothers around parenting issues. In accordance with our affirmative action policy, preference will be given to Third World, former battered, mothers, and older women.

If you are interested call: 354-2676 and ask to speak with Bridget.



"Every person is born with the capacity for dignified work and a human existence."

organizing for women's safety

Women in the Boston area are organizing for women's safety. The need for direct action was first voiced by the TAKE BACK THE NIGHT march last August and has been constantly urged on by the horrifying succession of murders and rapes of women throughout the year. Our strength has been shown in the formation of two large coalitions and many small community-based safety programs.

The Coalition for Women's Safety is organized around the murders of 13 black and 1 white women in the Roxbury, Dorchester, and South End communities. The Coalition is a federation of grass roots, feminist and human service groups in those communities.

The Coalition, realizing that the problem of women's safety goes far beyond the recent rash of murders, has been devoting time and energy to organizing community safety networks, including phone networks and safe houses. They have also been conducting leafletting campaigns to educate the community about violence against women and how to resist attack. New projects include an educational program, directed toward adolescents in Youth worker programs, alerting the youth to the issue of violence against women in our society, and SAFE TAXI campaign, determining the incident rate of assault and harassment of women in taxis and seeking a way to insure safety in taxis.

The Support Group for Women's Safety is a coalition of primarily white women and women's groups from Cambridge and Somerville who came together months ago in response to the murders for the purpose of "supporting the women in the (Third World) communities without being intrusive," according to one group member. The women came together to offer material support to the women

doing grass roots organizing and offered them child care, transportation, typing and lay-out skills and financial support through fundraising and writing grant proposals. Two big fundraising events for which they were responsible were the Freedom Stride, a road race in early August, and two evenings of women's poetry in early July.

Community Programs Against Sexual Assault (C.P.A.S.A.) is a consultation and educational program of the Solomon Fuller Mental Health Ctr. in Boston. CPASA maintains connections with social workers in Roxbury, No. Dorchester and the South End, monitoring their services and providing them with information about sexual assault in the context of racism and sexism. They also have informational resources: a library, films and run workshops for agency staffs, schools and community groups. They are also working on providing rape counseling training to Third World women. They are also trying to place the issue of violence against women on the curriculum in schools, and to keep track of the media's treatment of the issue and of current rape laws.

Safe House/Green Lite programs have started in Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, the South End and Cambridgeport/Riverside. Safe-House programs are a way of insuring community participation in crime prevention. The original SafeHouse program was started in Washington DC about three years ago, and others are springing up all over the country. The Dorchester, Roxbury, J.P. and South End programs, which are coordinated by the staff of RAMA Day Care Center and sponsored by the Dorchester International Women's Day Committee, coordinates a network of "safe houses" where women experiencing the threat of violence or harassment can seek help. The "safe houses" will be identifiable by a green light in the window and/or by a fluorescent door sticker. Volunteer residents will contact a main Green Lite number to report the incident and see that the woman's safety is insured.

The Cambridgeport/Riverside SafeHouse project was started as a result of the TAKE BACK THE NIGHT march last year. It is coordinated by a collective of twelve women. Their first training program was held in July and approximately 50 women from 30 households participated. Participants received training from members of the Rape Crisis Center and Transition House. They also learned First Aid, self-defense techniques and security for households. Information on medical and legal services was also provided.

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Organizing for women's safety (con't.)

SafeHouse is currently sponsoring two free self-defense classes for women residents of Cambridge and will soon make a second outreach effort by leaf-letting in Central Square and addressing parent committees and community and church groups. SafeHouse is currently being funded by the Cambridge Commission on the Status of women and the Cambridge Crime Prevention Program. They are considering becoming a project of the Women's Center.

These are only a few of the ways women are organizing to support and protect each other. "Together we can make a Safe home."

For further information contact the following groups:

COALITION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
c/o Women Inc. 442-6166

Support group for Women's Safety
c/o Somerville Women's Center
623-9340

Community Programs Against Sexual
Assault (CPASA) 442-9603

GREEN LITE
c/o RAMA Day Care Center
427-4910

Cambridgeport/Riverside SafeHouse
c/o Cambridge Women's Center
354-8807

RAPE LAW REFORM?



The Massachusetts legislature is presently considering a bill that would reform state rape laws. Senate Bill 1911, sponsored by Sen. Alan Sisitsky (D-Springfield), proposes classification ("staircasing") rape offenses and penalties and specifies the expenses for which a rape victim may be compensated.

S. 1911's classification scheme operates on the well documented principle that juries will not convict sex offenders, except in cases involving extreme atrocity, where the potential penalty is life imprisonment (as is now the case in Massachusetts). Staircasing the penalties allows juries to find a defendant guilty of an appropriate lesser offense in non-aggravated rape or sexual contact cases, and would thus lead to an increase both in the rape conviction rate and in the number of rape victims choosing to prosecute. Similar legislation has been passed in the last few years in such states as Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Vermont. where it has resulted in a greater volume of reports, reports substantiated, warrants issued, and convictions obtained; fewer case dismissals occur in staircase jurisdictions as well. For example, the conviction rate in Michigan rose 90%, the reporting rate 30%, and the arrest rate 62% in only the first two years under the law.

It may seem paradoxical that feminists should support legislation lowering rape penalties; however, high sentences are pointless if they simply remain in the books. The example of some of our sister states shows that bills such as S. 1911 are effective vehicles for improving rape law enforcement.

Section 3 of the bill, enumerating items compensable to victims in cases of rape, recognizes that certain needs of the rape victim are unique. Theoretically, under Massachusetts's victim compensation program, a rape victim is presently compensable for expenses incurred (such as medical, surgical, and hospital costs). However, such services as counseling, evidentiary examinations, and emergency funds for housing, unnecessary to most victims of other violent crimes, are not necessarily recognized as essential by certain jurisdictions. By en-

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Rape Law Reform (con't. from page 10)

umerating items compensable in rape cases, S. 1911 would assure uniform determination of awards from case to case, court to court.

At the time of this writing, S 1911 is being considered by the House Ways and Means Committee. When it is sent to the House, it will probably receive considerable opposition from conservative representatives who support mandatory sentencing. If this opposition can be overcome, the way will be open for significant positive change in rape law enforcement and rape victim compensation in Massachusetts. If not...well, there's always next year.

(If you support S. Bill 1911, please write your representatives and let them know!)

--Daniela Weiser-Varon

Open Letter to the Feminist Community (con't. from page 7)

notions of 'manhood' as causes for Black women's abuse and deaths. I find this particularly ironic since in my own community 12 Black women were brutally murdered in a four month wave of killings this year and there has been a complete "white-out" in all types of media about this. Feminists might also be interested to know that there is a slick PLAYBOY type magazine aimed at Black men called PLAYERS. (A pro-Black feminist publication which I consider to be "must" reading is the Black Women's Issue of CONDITIONS which I co-edited with Lorraine Bethel.)

The other thing on my mind dovetails with encouraging white women who are actively anti-racist to read Black publications to find out what's happening and this is my frustration (con't on next column)

that white women in general do not grasp that the Black feminist movement is in a very different period historically than the white feminist movement, even though the participants in these movements are each other's contemporaries. I have been constantly aware of this "time-lag" during my seven years of involvement in Black feminist politics. If measured by the closedness of the Black community to feminism, the still relatively small number of Black women who identify themselves as feminists and the lack of Black feminist institutions Black women have, our movement is still in its early stages. Merely by comprehending this, the lack of support that Black feminists have for being Black feminists, white women might be able to give at least psychic and preferably practical support to Black women who they know and not assume that it means the same thing for us to be feminists and Lesbians as it does for them to be feminists and Lesbians. I don't know if my point is clear, but just think about the last time you went into a Black/Third World women's bookstore, restaurant, or women's center or read a Black/Third World feminist newspaper or magazine or a book printed by a Black/Third World women's press. Think about whether you've even heard of these things existing.

I am optimistic. I see our movement growing, the Black feminist movement in particular and the women's movement generally. I know things will change. But in the meantime Black feminists don't have a lot of alternatives, particularly alternative institutions, and we are also up against a very resistant Black community which is, given racism, particularly racism in the women's movement, a community where we need to feel at home. White feminists not only need to fight racism, but to familiarize themselves with the substance of our lives and struggle. Reading some of the things I've suggested and every- you can find about Black women is one way to do this.

In Struggle,
Barbara Smith
Roxbury, MA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AGORAPHOBIA SUPPORT GROUP

There is a self-help group for agoraphobics (Only) meeting in Watertown. For more information call Debbie, 628-1430 or Evelyn, 926-4781.

A study group is being done on agoraphobia. Whether or not you've had, or have, agoraphobia you can participate. The study is being done by questionnaire survey. If you have (or had) agoraphobia and would like to fill out a questionnaire please call the Women's Center (617-354-8807) and leave your name and address, and say you would like the agoraphobia questionnaire and it will be sent to you; or drop a postcard to: Health & Stress, c/o Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St., Camb., MA. 02139, saying you would like the agoraphobia questionnaire sent to you. If you do not have agoraphobia, please ask for a "control" questionnaire. The short amount of time that you spend filling out the questionnaire might go a long way in helping us understand and overcome this disorder.

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SHELTER DIRECTORY

A new (8th) edition of the directory of service and shelters for battered women, "Working on Wife Abuse", is in the making. If you have information or updates you would like included, please send them to: Betsy Warrior, 46 Pleasant St., Camb., MA. 02139.

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BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Support groups are being held for battered women every Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. and every Wednesday morning at 11 a.m. For information on the location of these meetings call 354-8807.

PROJECTS AND SUPPORT GROUPS CURRENTLY MEETING AT THE CENTER

SUNDAY

*4pm Jewish Lesbians (2nd and 4th Sunday)

MONDAY

*7pm Lesbians United for Non-Nuclear Action

**7:30pm Battered Women's Support Group

6pm CORE

*8pm Staff and Projects (every other week)

TUESDAY

10am Mother's Group

7pm Rape Crisis Center Meeting

7pm Women Against Violence Against Women

8pm Third World Lesbian Mothers

WEDNESDAY

**11am Battered Women's Support Group

6pm Emotional Counseling Group

*6:30-8:30pm Fat Lesbians Support Group

*Introductory

THURSDAY

6pm Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project

7:30pm T House Staff Mtg. (every other week)

*8pm Lesbian Liberation

*8pm Lesbian Mothers Group

FRIDAY

Noon Staff Meeting

* Open Meeting

** Open to Battered Women



LIBRARY UPDATE

We have been buying a lot of books for the library with monies we received from the US Office of Education - Post Secondary Education grant. The library collection gets a lot of usage and many of the books we have had never return. We strongly urge all users of the library to return any overdue books they have!! Because we do not have the staff necessary to help women check out books - we have to rely on everyone following the check out procedure in the library - unfortunately, we are continuously 'missing' books....?



We appreciate any and all donations of materials to the library and we are particularly in need of more women to join the library collective - which at present has 1½ members! If interested in working in the library leave your name, phone number and best times to reach you for Charlotte or Libby at the Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Women's Community Health Center (639 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. 547-2302) September calendar: 10th, Self-Help Slide Show, 5:30pm; 17th Fertility Consciousness and Women-controlled Birth Control", 5 week group begins; 18th Lesbian Self-Help Group, 4 week group begins; 18th Open House, 5:30pm.

Elizabeth Stone House Benefit: Phyllis Chesler, speaker, DAUGHTER-RITE, a new film which explores mother-daughter and sister-sister relationships in the nuclear family. At Sanders Theatre, Harvard Univ., Kirkland St., Cambridge. Saturday, SEPTEMBER 29th, 8:00 P.M.

Boston Bail Project/Bail Funds Benefit: A Rummage Sale at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, on Mass. Ave., between Harvard & Central Squares. Saturday, SEPTEMBER 22nd, 10am-4pm.

Cambridge YWCA Forum: Program on Racism featuring Adrienne Rich at the Y. Sept. 26th, 7:30 pm.

Cambridge Women's History Task Force : A photographic exhibit , WOMEN'S WORK: An Historical portrayal of Cambridge women from 1850 to the present. Opening Thursday, September 27th, 6pm at Cambridge City Hall, Mass. Ave., Central Square.

Anti-Draft Demonstration: Sept. 15th, 1 pm. Boston Common. Speakers: Denise Levertov, Karen Lindsey, Mel King and others. For info. call 864-1615.

Third Annual Lesbians with Children Conference: Audre Lorde, keynote speaker. Saturday, October 20th, at the Friends School, Cambridge. Registration 8 to 9:30 am. \$3. childcare provided. A women's Harvest Dance will be held in the evening at the Friends School, \$1. For more information, call the Lesbians with Children Support Group, on thursdays from 8 to 10 pm, at 354-8807 or write care of the Women's Center, 46 pleasant St., Camb.02139

ON OUR WAY

Cambridge Women's Center Newsletter

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1
'79

HELLO!

We are finally back in print after a long absence. The Women Center Staff is now responsible for ON OUR WAY, since CETA no longer pays the newsletter staff. For this reason, we have had to change the format back to project reports and announcements. Nevertheless, we welcome articles and graphics submitted for consideration.

ON OUR WAY subscriptions are still \$1.25 for six months, and \$2.50 for the year. Copies will be on sale at various women's places for \$.25. Many apologies for the delay to those of you who have already subscribed.

Feedback is much appreciated. The next issue will hopefully appear in early May.

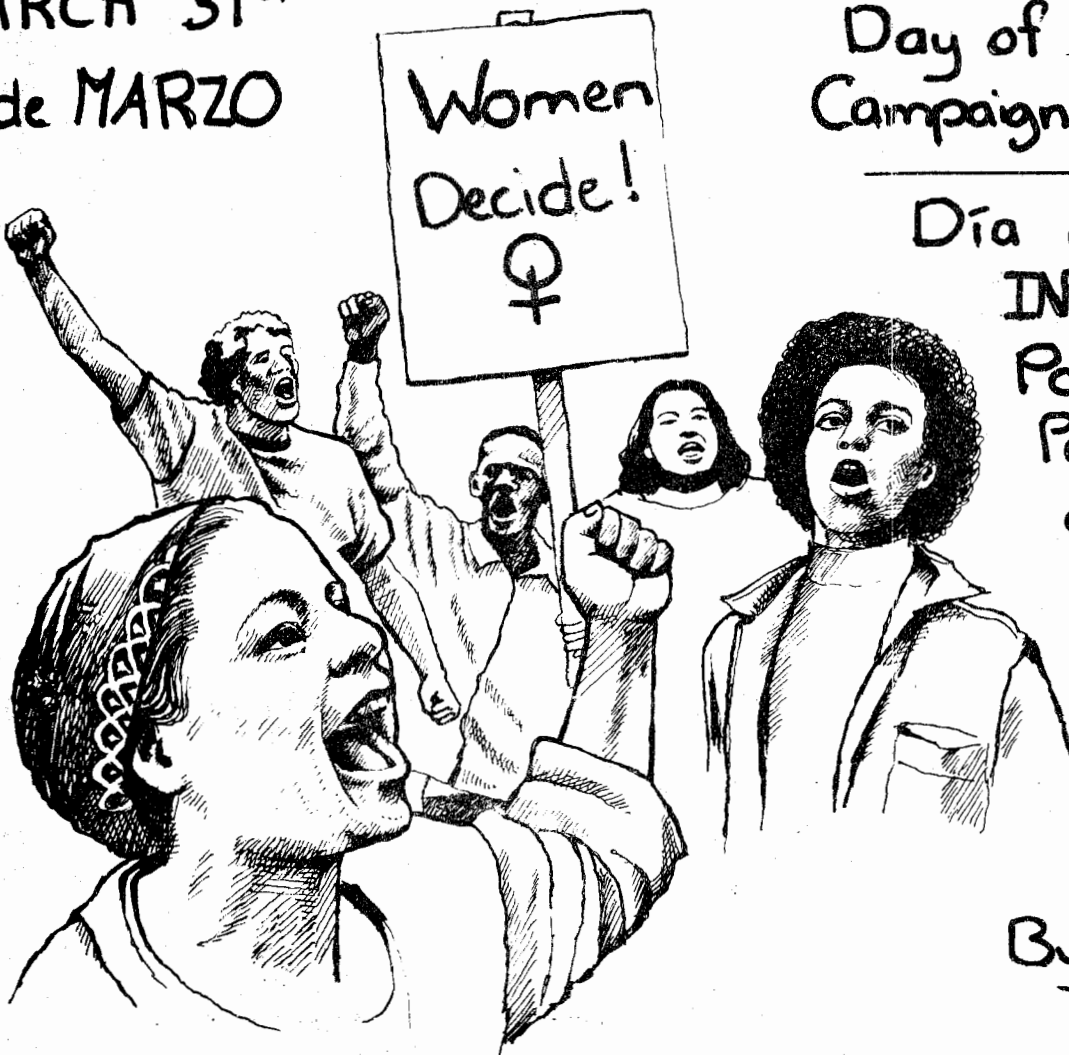
MARCH 31st
31 de MARZO

INTERNATIONAL
Day of Action
Campaign for Abortion Rights

Día de Lucha
INTERNACIONAL
Por Abortos,
Por los Derechos
de la MUJER

For more
info-call
354-8807

By N.C.R.R.



— WOMEN'S — SCHOOL

The traditional educational system mostly trains women to be passive and dependent instead of encouraging us to actively learn about the real nature of American society -- or what we can do to change things around us. The Women's School is a collective effort of women who want to teach ourselves and other women what we need to know, such as our own history, how to look at the world critically and the way that our bodies work.

What is a collective effort? We feel that an educational experience is one that encourages women to share our experiences and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, one where competition to give the "right" answer is replaced by students participating and classes are small and informal. "Teachers" or facilitators may be women who know a little more about a topic than the rest of us and who agree to take responsibility for organizing the course. We've found that the success of courses depends on the involvement of the "students" not only in class discussions but also in constant evaluation of how the class is going. Our hope is for all members of the class to share in a collective experience.

We see the School as part of the larger political process and education as a way for students and facilitators to become more actively involved in work for social change. The School is run by a small collective of women, some who teach and some who have taken courses at the Women's School. The collective and the teachers are women who volunteer their time to make sure that the School exists and continues to grow and that information is made available to women which would not be made available elsewhere. The School has existed since 1971. Originally our office and all of our classes were held at the Cambridge Women's Center at 46 Pleasant Street and the School was called the

Women's Center School. Although we now have our office at 595 Mass. Ave. in Central Square, we are still affiliated with the Women's Center and hold several of our classes there.

The current semester has just started, and we are offering eight classes. SELF DEFENSE on Sunday night teaches basic self defense techniques, both physical and psychological, relying primarily on Karate. Physically handicapped women are welcome. MARXISM on Monday night explores basic marxist and socialist feminist theory by balancing the theoretical and the personal. Tuesday night, WORKING WITH CLAY is held at a local pottery studio. Through various handbuilding projects, the class works to demystify the creative process, look at feminist art and the effect of class background on art. THE NEW LEFT AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT is held on Wednesday night, and on Thursday a WOMEN'S HISTORY class covers oral histories, an area of women's lives often overlooked. The WOMEN'S QUILT PROJECT is for women who would like to work together on a "friendship" quilt while sharing various skills such as history and stitching. GROWING UP FEMALE: WOMEN IN SOCIETY looks at how we have been taught to become women. LESBIAN LITERATURE examines the many images of lesbianism presented through literature; this class is open to all women.

The Women's School provides free childcare for all mothers who take classes. Other students provide childcare in the mother's home as a part of taking a course. Classes begin the week of March 12th and the registration fee is \$5; classes are free. For more information, call 492-4845 on Saturdays between 12 and 5 p.m.

We want to thank all those who responded so quickly and generously to our December request for funds and to ask all of those who have not contributed to the Center to reconsider our request.

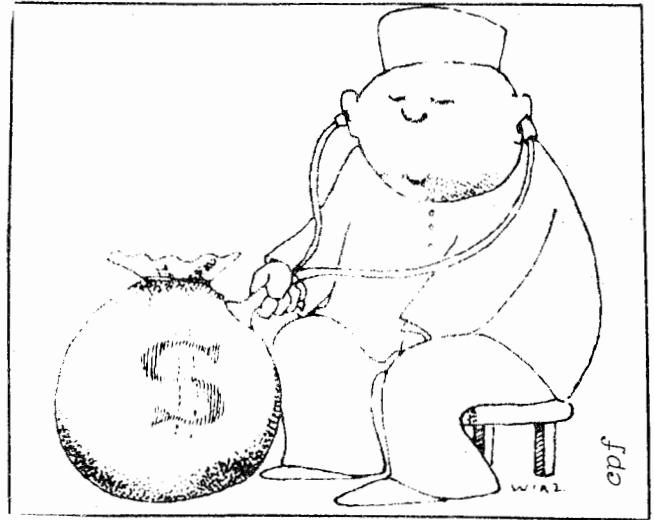
The Center is now seven years old, is one of the two oldest women's centers in the U.S. (Berkeley, CA, is the other) and is one of the very few comprehensive women's centers in the entire country. Many of you already come here on a regular basis or are part of projects or activities which are in some way supported by the Center. If you haven't had a chance to pay us a visit, please do so in the coming weeks.

In 1979 we are determined to become more self-sufficient and are making every effort to involve the entire Boston area Women's Community more and more in our fundraising efforts. As we said in our December, 1978, fundraising letter, it takes \$2,132 per month to operate the Center. This requires a great deal of time and effort -- which when spent raising money is not being spent in doing political work around women's issues -- which is our real reason for having a Center in the first place.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions as to what future events you would like the Center to sponsor. We welcome everyone's input and energy!

*****RAPE CRISIS CENTER*****

This month marks the Rape Crisis Center's sixth birthday. We are continuing to offer our services as a 24-hour hotline to any woman in the Boston area who has been raped. We are also continuing to offer long-term counseling as well as advocacy for women that we are counseling in the courts, police stations and hospitals. As usual, the center is in need of money, but we are managing through speaking engagements, of which there have been enough in the past few months, to keep our heads above water.



We have recently undergone an extensive reorganizing period. The result is that our members have divided into three committees: Counseling; Education and Outreach; and Administration. The decision to form committees was made out of a growing awareness that we were spreading ourselves too thin, resulting in a high incidence of "burn out" on the part of the counselors. We are also hoping that now we will be able to offer more efficient services to the community that we serve.

In addition to reorganizing the center, we have recently completed a training session for new volunteers. Twelve more women have become members and we are happy to have their added energy and input. We hope that these women will remain with us for a long time to come.

In recent months, we have done a lot of soul-searching and there was a time when it was doubtful whether the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center would continue to operate. We are happy to report that we are not going to disband and, in fact, are stronger than ever!

Greetings from the Women's Center Staff.

What a staffing day consists of can be anywhere from welcoming a new woman into the Center to a busy day at the telephones. Giving such referrals as health services, legal services, childcare resources and support groups and taking messages for projects of the center, posting notices of upcoming events in the women's community and doing light maintenance

BENEFIT POETRY READING

for

"AGORAPHOBICS WORKING TOGETHER"

(a national newsletter for agoraphobics)

Reading their poetry will be former
CELL 16 activists:

ELLEN O'DONNELL

and

JAYNE WEST

To the accompaniment of:

JENNIFER HASTINGS

of

BLACK STAR FEMINIST THEATRE

To be held at:

AMARANTH RESTAURANT

(women only)

134 Hampshire Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 8:00 p.m.

***** INTRODUCTORY *****

Introductory is still meet-
ing as usual, on Wednesday
nights from 8PM-10PM. Topics
of discussion are as follows:

- March 21- The Women's Movement
- 28- Women & Health Care
- April 4- What is Security?
- 11- Women & Media
- 18- Money
- 25- Friendship & Love
- May 2- Aging
- 9- Superwoman Syndrome
- 16- Alternatives to
Family Lifestyles

of the Center. There is a discussion
group for American women to learn Spanish
from Spanish-speaking women and vice-
versa. The group meets Fridays at 3 p.m.
and is held by Eliza, a new volunteer.
We are presently trying to start a black
and Hispanic women's rap group to share
information or just to talk. For more
information, please contact the Cambridge
Women's Center at 354-8807. Present day
staffwomen are Candace O'Brien, Andrea
Rogers, Larae Carter,
and Libby Bouvier.

-----PLEASE TAKE NOTICE!-----

THE WOMEN'S CENTER IS ANNOUNCING
A DRIVE TO PAY OF THE MORTGAGE!
WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

As of February 28th, we still owe
the bank \$15,180.00, for the mort-
gage on the house. Last year, we
paid a total of \$2049; \$647 on the
principal, and \$1402 IN INTEREST!
It is intolerable to be paying such
huge sums to the bank for their
profit. The sooner we raise the mon-
ey for the total, the less interest
we will have to pay.

Please send us your nickels and
your dimes, and specify if you want it
it to go towards the mortgage. From
now on, there will be staffers col-
lecting contributions at most of the
women's concerts. We raised \$111.76
at the Meg Christian concert. Many
thanks to those of you who lightened
your pockets of a lot of change!

We will publish the results in
each issue of the newsletter.



\$15,000

\$10,000

\$5,000

National Lesbian Photograph Drive

The Lesbian Herstory Archives announces the start of a National Lesbian Photograph Drive. The roots of the Archives lie in the silenced voices, the love letters destroyed, the pronouns changed, the pictures never taken, the euphemized distortions that patriarchy would let pass. To end the legacy of lost faces, we are asking Lesbians all across the country to send a photograph of themselves, friends, children, homes, pets, activities, to the Archives. Help us make sure our future sisters will be able to see us.

For further information, contact Joan Nestle or Deborah Edel at the Lesbian Herstory Archives, P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10001; or call 212-874-7232 or 212-873-9443.

The new Seventh Edition of "Working on Wife Abuse" is now in print.

- * Over 2,000 entries.
- * Information on shelters and support services for battered women all over the U.S. and the world.
- * Extensive bibliography of books, films, newsletters, etc.
- * Resources and addresses for funding information.
- * Up-to-date supplement.
- * Easy-to-use geographical order with graphics.
- * Suggestions for initiating hot lines, facilitating support groups and shelter procedures.

Price: \$5.00. Send prepaid orders to:

Directory, Betsy Warrior
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

If you're one of the millions of women who suffer from agoraphobia, chances are you might not be aware of the prevalence of this disorder, or even what it is.

Agoraphobia is severe, seemingly unexplainable, anxiety attacks that sometimes seriously restrict a person's activity and mobility. Estimates of the number of sufferers go as high as 12 million, and the great majority (up to 89%) are women.

Because of the lack of understanding of this disorder generally, and also specifically on the part of the medical profession, agoraphobics are often at the mercy of unscrupulous and ignorant doctors who misdiagnose and reap millions of dollars for destructive and erroneous treatments.

As very little information on agoraphobia has been available in the past, sufferers sometimes believe that they are the only ones who have this disorder or think that they are going crazy. Some agoraphobics believe they have a heart, lung or blood pressure problem. When agoraphobia is so acute and disabling that it restricts a person to an increasingly narrow range of activities and space in an effort to avoid the attacks, the agoraphobic can virtually become a prisoner of this ailment.

Finally some understanding of this problem is beginning to emerge, and new ways of dealing with it are achieving some success. If you would like to learn a little more about this problem, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with 50¢ for xeroxing to:

Agoraphobia, c/o Betsy Warrior
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

