QN OUR WAY

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

WINTER

(617) 354-8807 TTY and VOICE

97-98

THE WOMEN'S CENTER IS GROWING BIRCH "TREES OF LIFE"

Since the installation of our first vibrant and poignant *Commemorative Tile Mural* in the Women's Center kitchen, we have been continually delighted by the response of women to its powerful message.

Now we have the opportunity, with the help of Bekah Perks -- the same artist who designed the first tiles -- to create yet another mural; this time, above the beautiful marble fireplace in our living room. Conceived in the same spirit of honoring and remembering women, or ideas and quotes important to women, the individually donated living room tiles will connect to form three tall Birch Trees. We are thrilled to announce that six tiles have been dedicated thus far by "launching donors," forming the foundation "roots" for the three trees.

Each tile is available for a tax-deductible donation of \$300.00, to help raise much-needed funds for the Women's Center. For a limited time, in appreciation of your investment in the new mural, tile donors will receive a free T-shirt sporting the vibrant floral images of the kitchen tile mural.

My name is Kirsten and I'm helping with the tile project. Please contact me at (617) 596-2719 or Pamela Goldstein at the Women's Center (617) 354-8807 if you would like more information about the new *Commemorative Tile Campaign*. We have snazzy new brochures which we would be more than happy to send you. We look forward to dedicating your commemorative tile soon!

-Kirsten Schutz Volunteer

SURVIVORS' WRITING COLLECTIVE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS!!!

"For Crying Out Loud," the Survivors'
Newsletter Collective, is seeking new
members. Thirteen years old, the newsletter is
by, for, and about women survivors of
childhood sexual abuse. Each member should
be able to commit to two, two-hour meetings
per month at the Women's Center, and is
expected to assist with production tasks as
well as with writing. The newsletter publishes
on a quarterly basis and has subscribers from
as far away as Norway and Kenya.

Come join! Have a dynamic writing experience and become a bridge to other survivors! Contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for further information.







FIESTA!!

Music, fun and food! The Women's Center, in collaboration with the *Intercultural Women's Group*, and Aleyda Sulorzano, will host a night of Latin Dancing and delightful dining on Thursday, December 18. Come at 6pm to master the merengue, taught by Aleyda Sulorzano, and bring your favorite food dish to share (after you've worked up an appetite) at 7pm. Come to watch or participate in the dancing, or for the dinner. The party will run from 6-8pm in the Living Room of the Women's Center. All women and children are welcome.



If you think you would like to volunteer by answering phones during the 63 hours that the Center is open, providing childcare, helping with mailings, or something else, please give Montserrat a call at (617)354-8807.

THURSDAY NIGHT INCEST SURVIVORS' OPEN DISCUSSION

The Thursday night *Open Discussion*Group for Incest Survivors has been available at the Women's Center since the mid-1980's.
Over the years, there have been and are many types of groups available to survivors. It is one of the oldest groups for survivors, and has been both topic-oriented and freestyle.

Right now, the group seeks to re-form. We have only one ground rule: *mutual respect*. With that in mind, let's make this group a reflection of our mutual needs. Let's make it... whatever we want it to be!

An organizational meeting will take place on December 19 at 6:30pm. **Please come** and contribute to the re-shaping of this group.

BEYOND 12-STEP RECOVERY

Carmen Dominguez, MA, LMFT and Helen Spencer LICSW, MPH are both licensed therapists who have extensive experience with the interconnection of childhood trauma, substance abuse, and domestic violence, and the impact these issues have on relationships. Our work is centered on creating a healing atmosphere in which individuals can empower themselves by addressing and working through issues of self-defeating behavior. Both of us are bilingual in Spanish. Starting in January, and continuing on a semi-regular basis, we will present various workshops that address addiction and co-dependence recovery.

In The Cycles of Co-addicted Relationships: Breaking the Patterns, we define the nature of co-addicted relationships, and discuss the internal dynamics of addictive relationships, and the separate cycle of addiction for each partner. Join us on Wednesday, January 14, 1998 from 6:30-9:00 pm. If you have any questions, call us at 646-7513.

Women who have attended previous workshops have been very enthusiastic.

WELCOME MONTSERRAT!!

We are happy to welcome Montserrat Caballero to her position as Volunteer/ Administrative Coordinator at the Women's Center. Montserrat moved to the Boston area about a year ago and began volunteering at the Women's Center soon after. She staffed the Women's Center's front desk, providing peer counseling and referrals to women. In addition, she and her sister Soledad coordinated the Women's Center's International/Intercultural Women's Group. Montserrat is still coordinating the group (newly named the Intercultural Women's *Group*). She emphasizes that all women are welcome and notes that, happily, the group is growing. Montserrat also volunteers at the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center as a medical advocate, works with the Abortion Access Project and will begin working with Centro Presente.

Before she moved to Boston, Montserrat wrote feature articles on feminist issues for the *Greensboro Gazette* and organized feminist events at her school as a member of the Board of the Women's Leadership Coalition in Greensboro, North Carolina

Montserrat was born in Santiago, Chile. In addition to bringing many skills, positive energy, and a strong feminist perspective, her ability to communicate in Spanish is tremendously valuable, as more and more Latinas are contacting the Women's Center. Montserrat has already written up a description in Spanish of procedures for securing and using childcare at the Women's Center.

Montserrat, we're glad you're here and extend a hearty welcome!

BIENVENIDA MONTSERRAT!!

WOMEN'S COUNSELING AND RESOURCE CENTER

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center is looking for women clients with mental health concerns. We service women who are low-income and have no mental health insurance. We offer a very low sliding-scale fee and provide long- and short-term counseling. Please call us at 492-8568 and ask for an intake.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1997

The Women's Center continues to thrive, as many new groups and faces have joined the Center in its ongoing dedication to providing support to thousands of women. Just a few of this year's new support groups: Un Grupo de Apoyo para Mujeres Latinas, Healing Through Art and Jewish Lesbians and Bisexual Women.

Our involvement in the community remains strong, as we participated in numerous events, including the *Jane Doe Walk for Women's Safety*, and made numerous community presentations, including one at Shelter, Inc.

In October we said goodbye to Dawn Dougherty, the *Volunteer/Administrative Coordinator*. Dawn's energy and dedication to the Women's Center will not be forgotten. We miss Dawn and wish her the best of luck!!!

Where would the Women's Center be without its volunteers/interns? Due in part to their efforts, our numerous referral books are continuously updated. Just a few of these include the Lesbian and Bisexual Resources book, the Free and Low-Cost Health Care book and the Legal Referrals book.

At the end of December, the Women's Center will say goodbye to Board President Nancy Kackley. She has nourished the Women's Center over a span of 13 years. Her many contributions have included: bookkeeping, attending All Center Meetings, participating on the Finance Committee of the Board, and staffing the phones. Thanks Nancy - we'll miss you!!

A hearty thank you to our group facilitators and volunteers, so many of whom have been with the Women's Center for years. Their courage and dedication is what makes the Women's Center so vibrant.

As the new Volunteer/Administrative Coordinator, I am delighted to be here. It is empowering for me to be a part of a vital link to ending women's oppression. I'm honored to add my voice to the hundreds that make the Women's Center ever stronger.

1997 has been full of hope, excitement, and challenge. We look forward to many more years. As the new century approaches, we will continue to count on your support. Happy New Year!

- Montserrat Caballero

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER

As we wind down another year of supporting and serving women at the Women's Center, I think back on these past twelve months; in that time, we saw the first out lesbian in a leading role on prime time television (hooray!), while unprecedented numbers of women were taken off the welfare rolls, sentenced to lives of government-sanctioned poverty. This year in Massachusetts also saw a near public/media circus over "the nanny case," while politicians came extremely close to making state-sponsored death the law.

At the Women's Center, we continue to be inspired by women's struggles. In 1997, we witnessed countless women as they took courageous steps toward healing and self-empowerment. Again and again, I found myself in awe of women's resiliency, as well as their determination to make not only their own lives better, but also those of others within our communities. We have much to be proud of... and still much work to do.

Financially-speaking, the Women's Center had a slower year in 1997 than in our superstar 25th Anniversary Year (1996). We are thankful that many of you have already donated to the Women's Center this year. But we have quite a way to go to balance the budget by December 31st.

To continue to offer all of the Women's Center's support services <u>free</u> of charge, we need more financial support! As of December 1st, the Women's Center had raised \$63,037 toward our projected annual operating expenses of \$91,135. That leaves a difference of \$28,098.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

So, please, take a moment to read the enclosed letter. If you can, please consider making a donation to the Women's Center by the year's end. Every gift, large or small, makes a difference. Whatever you can do to help the Women's Center avoid a deficit in 1997 is enormously appreciated.

Thank you all for your support! Here's to another year of women's courage and triumphs.

-Pamela Goldstein

WOMEN'S CENTER BOARD BECOMES MORE ACTIVE

Last year, the Women's Center decided to develop a more active *Board of Directors*. This transition has infused new energy and has been both challenging and educational. At present, the Board members are: Vera S. Cohen, Susan Yanow, Libby Bouvier, Peggy Hopper, Tracy Lopes Miller, Anna Tarquinio, Maria Tramontozzi, Judy Norris and Nancy Kackley. The Board takes on important tasks:

The *Personnel Committee* is involved with hiring, creating structures to support and supervise staff, and setting wages and benefits.

The *Finance Committee* works closely with the bookkeeper, fundraiser, and accountant to track expenditures, income and investments.

The *Maintenance Committee* gets estimates for capital improvements and needed repairs to the building, and organizes work days.

In addition, the Board hopes to help the Women's Center both maintain itself and grow in scope. We welcome your input. We also need new members to increase our numbers, We'd also like to add diversity in age and race.

If you are interested in joining or in having input, please contact any member at (617) 354-8807, or write to the Board, Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge, MA 02139

LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

Lesbians Choosing Children is a group of lesbian mothers with children. We meet once a month to do social activities together. We originally met at the Women's Center, but for the past year we have been meeting at various locations for outings.

Over the past few months we have twice been to the Franklin Park Zoo, picnicked at the Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, and spent a Saturday morning at the Children's Museum. Our activities are open to children of all ages, but seem to have a special appeal to those in the toddler pre-school range. We are always open to ideas for inexpensive, fun activities that appeal to our kids.

On Saturday, December 13 join us at a children's "holiday" party at First Church in Jamaica Plain from 10am-noon. Please call us at (617)461-5946 if you have ideas, suggestions or want to get together.

WOMEN WRITING 📈 📈

I first came to Women Writing one
Saturday in 1992, and I've been coming ever
since. When I first showed up, the group had
already been in existence for several years. It
seems to have a life all its own. Once, I went
to a Brown Bag luncheon for Women at MidLife in Brookline. I mentioned the group, and
one of the women present said that it was her
writing class some years earlier that had
birthed the group; the year escapes me now.

This group is very special to me. Every two weeks, I know that if I show up at 12:30pm at the Women's Center, there will be others there to write with me. I will know some of the women; others will be there for the first time. Out of the blend of our energies, words will flow from my pen like no writing I do on my own. I will hear others read, and their writing will move me, amuse me, delight me, nurture me, and help me discover more of my own humanity.

One of the strengths of the group is that is it peer led; there is no facilitator. We have a set of guidelines, based on Natalie Goldberg's Writing Down the Bones.

We agree to give each other only positive feed-back. People make a commitment to themselves, to come whenever they are able. Everyone is encouraged to share, but it is never required. All that is needed is intent, a pen, and a space of respect and open curiosity.

Women Writing meets every other Saturday from 12:30-2:30 pm. Call the Women's Center at 354-8807 for the exact schedule.

-Judith Poole

JEWISH LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN'S GROUP

The Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group has met since May 1997, and functions as both a support and social group. The group meets on the second Thursday of each month at the Women's Center from 6:30-8pm.

Topics range from "mixed marriages," to dating, to finding our place as Lesbian and Bi women in the Jewish Community, and as Jews in the Queer Community. We also offer social events, such as holiday celebrations, latke parties, etc. Call Idit at 522-6187 for more information.

MY STORY

Last Christmas, I was skinny; only "skinny" wasn't the word most people used when they talked about me. "Dreadfully thin," they'd say, or "shouldn't she be in a program?"

Meanwhile, I took people's stares to mean that they couldn't believe how fat I was.

I had anorexia -- and I was the only one who didn't know it. Though my hip bones jutted out, and my clothes simply hung off my frame, every second of every day was filled with just one thought: "I am too big."

It was only during my recovery this past May that I realized how fully anorexia had ravaged not only my body, but my self-confidence, as well. For almost two years, the "real me" had cowered behind a voice in my head that told me I wasn't worth anything.

This fall, I began my three-month internship at the Women's Center. On the heels of my recovery, I still had days during which I questioned my strength as an individual and my ability to feel whole again. Throughout my time here at the Center, from what I've experienced, and the relationships I've developed, my outlook has changed.

I no longer see myself solely as an individual; I now also see myself as a woman --part of a community-- and a strong, thriving community at that. By coming to and working in "A Place of Our Own," I've learned that we, as women, can and do hold each other up. Here at the Women's Center, women laugh together and cry together; lives intertwine and form indestructible connections. And such connections are what make this life so worth living.

This Christmas I am strong; we all are. Happy Holidays.

- Kim Miller

HOLIDAY T-SHIRT SALE!!

Wouldn't a beautiful Women's Center T-shirt, fashioned after the design of the kitchen tile mural, make a great gift? Act now, and you can buy two for \$20! Or, mix and match, and buy a shirt AND a cap for only \$20. What a bargain! We have all sizes of T-shirts, and caps come in black, off-white or plum. Put your holiday gift money into your community!

OLDER WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Come to a free, open group for women over 60. We discuss a wide range of topics from a feminist point of view, challenge old assumptions and share new ideas. This is not a therapy group, but a warm and supportive place to come. Please join us on Sunday,

January 18th from 2-4pm. The topic will be How we Create Community, and on February 15th, we'll discuss Our Grown Children.

If you have questions, please call Gail at (617) 547-4299, Rita at (617) 937-9567 or the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA MUJERES LATINA

Este es un grupo donde las mujeres podrán hablar de cualquier tema que les esté preocupando. Nos reuniremos semanalmente los jueves de 10-11 de la mañana. Si necesitas mas información llama a María al 492-8306 (ingles) o al 492-2803 (espanol). Si necesitas instrucciones de como llegar al Centro de Mujeres llama al 354-8807.

-María



HOW YOU CAN HELP THE WOMEN'S CENTER THIS SEASON

- 1) Read the enclosed appeal and send back your donation (envelope and slip enclosed).
- 2) Find out if your employer matches your contribution to non-profit organizations. We'll help with the paperwork.
- 3) Consider naming the Women's Center as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, or retirement plan (call for details).
- 4) Become a Women's Center Sustainer by making a monthly pledge (we send updates and return envelopes call us!).
- 5) Buy a Women's Center T-shirt! A great gift no feminist (or ally) should be without!
- 6) Volunteer! Shovel snow, help women in need, and more. Call for a volunteer form.
- 7) Smile and practice random acts of kindness (including for yourself!). ◎♥♥♀♬●

FIESTA! Thursday, December 18, 6-8pm 6pm Learn the Merengue with Aleyda Solorzano 7pm Dinner (bring a dish to share if you can) ONGOING GROUPS SUNDAY • Older Women's Group (3rd Sunday) 2-4pm	
6pm Learn the Merengue with Aleyda Solorzano • Older Women's Group (3rd Sunday) 2-4pm	
7nm Dinner (hring a dish to share if you can)	n
AMANATINA VALIDA VA	
All women & children are welcome • Al-anon Grupo (en español)	n
Battered Women's Support Group 7:30-9pp	
• Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors	
LESBIAN RAP (3rd Monday)	
Mondays, 7:30-9pm December 22 Party! Bring a Dessert & Cheer Percoductive Rights Network (P2N2) (Info: 661-116	
• Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) (Info: 661-116)	l)
January 5 New Year's Resolutions TUESDAY	
12. Video Night (Ellen) • Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesday) 7:30-9pr	
• 30+ Lesbian Rap	n
Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm • Body Acceptance & Conscious Eating Group (Newcomers, call Linda, (508)374-7344)7:30-9pr	n
December 23 Stereotypes: Butch/Femme Sexual Harassment Support Gp (meets one Tuesday/mo	
30 Going through Divorce Louise Bonar, 254-1729 for info, to register) 7-9pr	
BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP • Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Conditions	
1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm (2nd & 4th Tuesdays) 5:15-6:45pm	n
December 16 Families • Writers Circle (Cassandra, 494-2695, for info on mtgs)	
January 6 Bis in the Workplace WEDNESDAY 20 Meeting Women • Battered Women's Support Group	
Battered Women's Support Group	
HEALING THROUGH ART (weekly except 3rd Wednesday of month) 7-9pr Tuesdays. 7-9pm (through January 20) • Boston Bisexual Women's Network	n
Tuesdays, 7-9pm (through January 20) Various mediums: clay, markers, colage, etc. • Boston Bisexual Women's Network (2nd Wednesday, odd #'d months)	n
Call Forest, 576-0647, before attending • Lesbian Al-Anon	
• Separation/Divorce Support Group (1st & 3rd Wedge	
WOMEN'S READING GROUP Info: Margaret, 354-9182)	
Wed December 17 Written by Herself Autobiog-	
raphics of American Woman, An Anthology (181 & Sra Weanesdays)	
by Jill Ker Conway. Info: Mary, 891-5727.	n
OLDER WOMEN'S GROUP Alapan Grupo (an armañal) 6-7:30pr	
Al-anon Grupo (en espanoi) 6-7.50pi	n
January 18 How We Create Community • Chemical Injury Information Exchange (1st Thursday, September-June)	
February 15 Our Grown Children • Grupo de Apoya para Mujeres Latinas 10-11ar	
INCEST SURVIVORS' GATHERING: • Intercultural Women's Group (3rd Thurs) 7-8:30pm	
LET'S MAKE A GROUP • Renewal of Hope Support Group (Begins January 8;	
Friday, December 19, 6:30-8pm. call Anne at (781)639-3219 for info) 3-4:30pm	n
LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN • Women's Community Cancer Project, Open	
Monthly activities = (617)461=5946 for more info	n
FRIDAY FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR • CODA (Codependents Anonymous) 6:30-8pm	
SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE • Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion Group for	11
last Friday/month, September-June, 6-7:30pm Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (last Fri) 6-7:30pm	n
December 26 Compulsions/Addictions • Incest Survivors Anonymous 6:30-8pr	
January 30 Anxiety	
February 27 Courage March 27 Survivor Money Issues SATURDAY • Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages	
(Usually 1st Saturday)	n

• Finding & Surviving the Workplace

one Saturday/month. Info: 461-5946)

• Friendship Connection (2nd Saturday) .. 12:30-2:15pm

• Women Writing (biweekly) 12:30-2:30pm

• Lesbians Choosing Children (Activities with children,

BREAKING THE PATTERNS OF

CO-ADDICTED RELATIONSHIPS

Wednesday, January 14, 6:30-9pm

On addressing self-defeating behaviors.

With therapists Carmen Dominguez & Helen

Spencer. Questions? Call us at 646-7513.



WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY

The Women's Center is pleased to announce the 4th Annual *Women's Health Day!* Join us on Saturday, May 10th, from 10-4pm for a day dedicated completely to women's health. The day includes free workshops, a keynote speaker, lunch, information on local women's resources, and massages!

Workshops, designed to help women negotiate between western and alternative medicine, include: Nutrition Tips for Women from Around the World; Life in Overdrive: When Your Child has ADD; Osteoporosis; Meditation; Abortion Options; Women at Midlife; When Someone You Love Is Drinking; Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse; Self-Massage; Breast Health; Hormones: Yes or No; Self-Hypnosis; Acupuncture: Chinese Herbs: Tai Chi: Stress Reduction; Yoga; What Happens in Psychotherapy; Lesbian Health Care; Holistic Health; Breath of Life; Physical Stress and Emotional Wellness; Body Sense-Body Strong; Multiple Chemical Sensitivities; African American Women's Health; Aging: When Doctors Don't Help; Let's Talk Sex; Living with Chronic Pain: Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Illness: and more!

The days keynote address will be given by Dr. Henrietta Robin Barnes, a physician at Cambridge Family Health Center. Dr. Barnes will be discussing what she learns from her patients.

All activities are **FREE** and open to all women. Join us at 10am at the Cambridge Senior Center for coffee, tea, and opening announcements. Workshops will start at 10:30am and will take place at the Cambridge Senior Center, the Women's Center, and Graham and Parks Community School.

For more information or a schedule of workshops, call the Cambridge Women's Commission at (617)349-4697 or the Women's Center at (617)354-8807. *Women's Health Day* will provide auxiliary aids and services, ASL interpreters, written materials in alternative format, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request. Please call by May 2nd to request childcare or disability assistance.

FINDING YOUR POWER IN RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes we find ourselves in a relationship which we can't live with, and can't live without. This can lead to feelings of powerlessness and unmanageability in our lives.

We are excited to offer two evening conversations to share our experience and expertise about regaining a sense of one's self-worth and vitality in relationships, and in life in general. Participants will explore how "boundaries" can have a positive impact on how we see ourselves in relationship to others.

The meetings will take place Thursdays, April 17th and 24th, from 6-7:30pm. If you have any questions, please call us at (617)646-7513.

-Carmen Dominguez and Helen Spencer

Summer Closings

The Women's Center will be closed on



Memorial Day

Monday, May 26th and

Independence Day Friday, July 4th



Enjoy your holidays!

W.I.T.C.H.

April brings three authors to the Women's Center for the *W.I.T.C.H Feminist Lecture Series*. On April 10th, Laurie Lindop discusses Virginia Woolf and E. Annie Prioux as mentors in her writing career. She is particularly interested in conversing with other writers, so we hope you can attend. On April 17th, Ellen Frye talks about the Ancient Mediterraneans from an Amazon point of view. Ellen spent many years in Greece and uses those experiences as the focus for two novels. On April 26th, R. Amy Elman will discuss her years of researching sexual subordination in Sweden.

For more information on these or any other **W.I.T.C.H.** lectures, call (617)666-0828.

WRITERS' CIRCLE

Writers' Circle is a group for experienced writers who are interested in writing for publication. The purpose of the group is to provide respectful and meaningful responses to one another's written work, to discuss the writing process, and to exchange information about publishing opportunities.

The group is interested in creative writing of all kinds: memoirs, fiction, personal essays, poetry, and journal writing. We request that writers don't bring work that has already been published. Usually three writers read their work and the groups spends 20 to 30 minutes with each writer. We try to hear from different writers at each meeting. Near the end of the meeting, the group discusses the writing process, staying motivated, and publishing opportunities and/or markets. Any issues pertaining to writing are welcome.

Writers should bring in their written work along with six or eight copies to share with the other writers. Second drafts or better are preferred. This is a good place to work on revising work and preparing to send it out for publication

Writers' Circle meets every other Tuesday and is open to newcomers once every four meetings. On open nights, new people should arrive at 6:30pm for an orientation. The next open meetings are April 15th, June 10th, and August 5th. Please call me, Cassandra Oxley, at (617)494-2695 for more information.

-Cassandra Oxley

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

The Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Support Group has been meeting at the Women's Center every other month for the past year. Group members offer each other emotional support and share their experiences with different medical treatments and lifestyle changes. The group, which has been in existence for almost four years, has been an invaluable source of encouragement in women's efforts to cope with and heal from their illnesses.

We are particularly grateful for the space at the Women's Center because, due to many members' severe sensitivities to chemicals, finding a permanent location for our meetings has been a struggle. Chemicals found in most buildings (paint, construction materials, gas stoves, many cleaning products, new carpets, furniture, etc.) cause some of our members to become very ill. We truly appreciate the Women's Center's commitment to making their space accessible to us.







BI WOMEN'S RAP

For many women in the Boston/Cambridge area, the *Bi Women's Rap* group at the Women's Center is the first contact they have with the bisexual community. It is a space for women to come out as bisexual, to meet other bi women, to explore what bisexual means, and to discuss many interesting topics in an open, informal setting. Each meeting has a topic that focuses the discussion, but often women come to the group with particular thoughts and ideas they want to discuss.

Bi Women's Rap was originally scheduled as a once a week gathering, but last year the turnout was low and the schedule was changed to twice, and then once a month. Luckily, there has been a renewed interest in Bi Women's Rap and it will again be meeting twice a month, on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9pm. If the group continues to strengthen and grow in size, it could become a weekly meeting again.

You don't have to identify as bisexual to come to *Bi Women's Rap*; the group is very open to exploring identity issues. However, the purpose of the group is to provide a bi-friendly environment. Topics range from bisexual politics, to holiday stress, to coming out stories, to monogamy, to dating, to bi life in Boston. April's topics are: April 1st, *Is this a Date or What?*, and April 15th, *First Kiss.* These topics are sure to prompt lots of interesting and humorous stories!

While not an official sponsor of the group, the **Boston Bisexual Women's Network** (BBWN) helped start the group many years ago and many of its members have been active in **Bi Women's Rap**. On the second Wednesday of every other month there is an informational meeting at the Women's Center for those who want to learn about, and get connected to, BBWN. The next introductory meeting of BBWN is on May 7th from 7:30-9pm. You can also pick up a copy of the BBWN bi-monthly newsletter, **BiWomen**, at the Women's Center. **BiWomen** is not only a great source of information for bisexual women, it also includes a calendar of bi-friendly events in the Boston area.

For more information about BBWN, call the Bi Resource Center at (617)424-9595. For information about *Bi Women's Rap*, call the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.

WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday 10am - 10pm Friday 10am - 8pm Saturday 11am - 4pm

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER...

Just a quick note about how the Women's Center closed our fiscal year on December 31, 1996. We did great!

For the second consecutive year, and after several years of shortfall, the Women's Center finished "in the black." The year-end fundraising appeal, which you received with your last issue of On Our Way, raised an all-time high of over \$7,000!

Thank you to everyone who supported the Women's Center's 25th Anniversary Year by attending our gala Benefit Concert and Celebration, supporting the Commemorative Tile campaign, and/or making a donation during the course of the year!

At the Women's Center, every dollar matters, and is put to good use in service of our mission to empower women. In true springtime spirit, we hope this growth will persist in 1997. If we missed you last year and you'd like to make a contribution now (or you feel inspired for any other reason!), you can send the Women's Center a tax-deductible gift by using the coupon on the last page. Thank you again for your support. With your help, the Women's Center will continue to remain strong for another 25 years!

-Pamela Goldstein Development Coordinator

p.s. Keep your eye out for a possible extension of the *Commemorative Tile* campaign into another area of the Center. Interested in dedicating a tile? Call me at (617)354-8807.

MEDITATION FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

Deirdre Fay is back again to offer her transformational workshop, *Meditation for Trauma Survivors*, on Saturday, April 12th from 12:30-3:30pm. This workshop is designed to teach and practice different meditations to support healing and integration—without triggering trauma histories.

"Most trauma survivors have a difficult time finding a safe way to inhabit their bodies," Deirdre says. "Rest, relaxation, and quiet can be hard to come by."

Deirdre is a clinical social worker and experienced group leader and is currently on staff and leads groups at the Trauma Center at HRI/Brookline. A trauma survivor herself, she has 20 years of training and practice in Eastern and Western meditative techniques.

To register, call the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.

OLDER WOMEN'S GROUP

Once again, there's a group for older women at the Women's Center! Come to this free open group for women in their 60's, 70's, and 80's (you can come if you're older or younger, too). We have so much to talk about! We are looking to enhance our lives and raise our consciousness as we age, in a warm, supportive atmosphere. Meetings are on the 3rd Sunday of the month, and are wheelchair accessible. We hope you'll come by for good conversation and good company.

The next meeting is on Sunday, April 20th from 2-5pm. Please call the Women's Center at (617)354-8807 if you have questions or need directions.

P.S. We'll also be having a workshop on Women's Health Day (Saturday, May 10) called "When Doctor's Don't Help." Hope to see you there!

BODY ACCEPTANCE AND CONSCIOUS EATING GROUP

The *Body Acceptance and Conscious Eating Group* is open to any woman interested in exploring the possibility of accepting her body and eating with awareness. It is not a diet group, a weight loss group, or a 12-step program, but a forum for each woman to discover her own path to feeling comfortable, and creating a loving relationship with, her body.

Conscious eating can be defined as being aware of our hunger and nourishing ourselves physically and emotionally. It can also mean creating a healthy and nurturing relationship with food, while making peace with our choices around it. One objective that many of us share is to be in tune with our bodies and its signals. Some of us are working towards being aware of and trusting our inner guidance and signals.

Our format allows women to share and then to receive feedback if they choose. Some women find that food and body awareness issues are tied into other pertinent themes, such as sexual abuse, patriarchy, family, economics, or the media. While sharing, attention is focused on the speaker. When she finishes sharing, she receives non-judgmental and supportive feedback.

The *Body Acceptance and Conscious Eating Group* meets every Tuesday from 7:30-9pm. If you're interested in attending for the first time, we suggest that you attend a newcomer orientation, held on the first Tuesday of every month from 7-7:30pm. If you're unable to attend the orientation, or for info, call Linda at (508)374-7344 or Liz at (617)625-3109.

3



Looking for a creative outlet to plug into? Do relaxation exercises followed by acting out your most recent life problems sound like a great way to release some pent up energy? Or perhaps writing a silly song or role playing a funny scenario is more your idea of a good time. If you're interested in any of the above, then you need to come to the next meeting of *Let's Play* at the Women's Center!

Let's Play is an improvisation group that meets the third Wednesday of every month from 7-8:30pm. Let's Play is an improvisation/psychodrama support group that was conceived with the idea of joining women together to participate in an evening of creative performing arts therapy.

"In our first two sessions, women from the Battered Women's Support Group, Lesbian Rap, and Women of Colors Rap joined together to create a supportive atmosphere where several of the group's participants were able to act out current problematic situations in their lives and successfully release a lot of unwanted tension!" boasts Meredith Apfelbaum, group facilitator. "We also had fun making up funny characters for each other to play."

The next meeting of *Let's Play* will be on April 16th. All are encouraged to participate. We <u>all</u> need to make more time to play!

For more information, call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807.

DISCOVERING YOUR PATH TO CREATIVITY

Discovering Your Path to Creativity is an Art Therapy group for all women, particularly those dealing with difficulties or with trauma histories. The group's purpose is to help women explore their own creativity and issues of self-esteem, self-confidence, trust, and anger. Through artistic creativity, women will find their own way of being expressive and connecting with others.

You do not have to be an artist to attend. This will be a hands-on, experiential group in which we'll use drawing, writing, and clay mediums. Women are encouraged to bring whatever art supplies they have. Additional supplies will be provided.

Discovering Your Path to Creativity is scheduled to begin in June. Call the Women's Center at (617)354-8807 for more information. I hope you're able to attend!

-Karen D. Chapman.









WOMEN WRITING

When I walked into *Women Writing* for the first time, I didn't know what to expect. Here I am, in my twenties, and new to the Women's Center. My first inclination was to leave, fearing that there would be women with thick glasses and red pens, crossing out my mistakes, telling me my material wasn't good enough. Would they allow someone at my level of writing experience to join them?

As I walked into the room, I noticed women writing away with thick pads and no glasses. They were holding pens, but not red ones. Women who were busy scribbling away looked up at me to say hello or to smile and acknowledge my presence. At this moment, I knew I was accepted into their writing group. But what was the format? Would I be able to do it? After all, I had started writing because I had been extremely shy and writing was my only way of expressing my fears and dreams.

It turned out that the only thing we did was to write what we felt like writing by using simple cues to jump start our creativity. All you had to do was to let your imagination and creativity flow. We were only a group of women who enjoyed writing and sharing our love for this art form.

Reading is not required; nothing is required besides respecting others' work by giving only positive feedback. Reading is encouraged, and I was encouraged to read my work. I had been shy all my life and sharing my work with all these women would have been a disaster had it not been for their warm and supportive feedback. I had noticed as we were taking turns reading that there were always chuckles, smiles and compliments; the red pens were not allowed to exercise their critical voices, hindering our progress and stifling our creativity.

It was easy reading in such an environment, so much so that I've been doing it since last August. I come back every other Saturday afternoon at 12:30, not because I don't have anything to do, but because I value the support we give each other in the often solitary world of writing.

I also look forward to sharing my space with women who range in age from their mid-twenties to their fifties. I no longer fear reading my work. The once mighty red pen has lost its power to censor me and smother my creativity.

-Yok Soo Hoo

FINDING AND SURVIVING THE WORKPLACE

Today's employees, job-seekers, and career changers often discover that they are dissatisfied with their jobs, or just do not know what kind of career would "work" for them. Having faith in your ability to find the right opportunities, whatever the circumstances, has become increasingly necessary in today's job market. Don't become discouraged: the rewards of careful planning, support, research, and persistence will eventually pay off.

Workshops and support groups can help. At the *Finding and Surviving the Workplace* support group women will find topic-based discussions on workplace issues, the job market, and job search strategies. Participants learn to take positive steps to empower themselves in their job search, or cope with difficult situations they might be facing at their current place of employment.

The group meets on the second and fourth Saturday of the month from 11:30am-1pm. Facilitators Manjusree Sen and M. Calico Rechy have been working on restructuring this group into a dynamic, informative and supportive meeting. Come join us and share your ideas, experiences and thoughts. April topics are: April 12, *Interviewing*, and April 26, *Is there a Survival Guide to the Workplace?*

LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

Lesbians Choosing Children meets on the third Thursday of the month from 7-8:30pm at the Women's Center. The group is an open drop-in group and attendance ranges from 5 to 14 women.

We are a diverse group joining together for various reasons. Some want to talk about whether or not to have children, others have already made the decision and are trying to decide whether to adopt or inseminate. Some in the group are currently pregnant while others already have children. Women come to meet and talk with other moms about the various issues involved with raising a family.

In the past several months we have had a monthly topic. We've discussed dealing with the holidays, being an out lesbian, and relationships. Women who come to the group find a supportive environment where they can discuss any issues or concerns they have about parenting, in addition to meeting new friends.

For our May 15th meeting we'll be joined by guest speakers, Ann Arberthnot and Mary Notaris, who will discuss financial and legal issues for lesbians considering having children. All women are welcome!

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

Twice a month, a small peer-support group meets to share common experiences, and to give mutual support to members dealing with disability and illness. Any woman with any disability or chronic condition is encouraged to participate in sharing in this safe, confidential, and nurturing environment. We find hope in each others' struggles and triumphs; we grieve our losses, and celebrate our strengths; we honor women's choices in this complex journey.

Facilitator Jean Turner, LCSW, consults nationally on brain injury, disability and women's health issues.

The Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Illness group meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 5:15-6:45pm.

AL-ANON GRUPO

Admitimos que no tenemos poder sobre otras personas y que nuestra vida se ha convertido inmanetable. Que no tengo poder sobre otras personas, sobre mis hijos, mi esposo, o mis amigos?

Viniendo de familia alcolica donde el control era primordiar, yo pensaba, antes de entrar al Al-Anon que mi trabajo era vigilar la conducta de mis seres queridos, que todos se comportaran como yo quiesiera. Yo nunca pense que era yo la que perdia el control de mi misma cuando me metia in los problemas que no eran de mi asunto, ni mi funcion. Esto no me daba resultos porque la gente no se comportaba como lo que yo esperaba.

En *Al-Anon* vo he aprendido que es el medio. mi rabia, mi dolor y mis necesidades insatisfechas traidas desde la ninez lo que me hacia actuar de esta forma. Vive y deja vivir, es unos de los temas de Al-Anon. Ser feliz para dar felicidad a los que me rodean y deja la gente al cuidado de Dios, que sea él, el que se encargue de ellos. Parar de controlar a otros y dejar que ellos vivan su propia vida. Despegarme emosionalmente de las personas que yo amo. Identificar lo que puedo cambiar y lo que no puedo. Aprender a identificar cuando estoy tratando de hacer lo imposible o estoy tratando de hacer lo que no es mi trabajo, porque es trabajo de Dios. Dejar de sentirme demasiado responsable por el bien estar de otros. Apartarme emsionalmente, me permite concentrarme en mi, y vivir mi propia vida. Parar de controlar a otros, cuando me siento canzada de vivir en locura, peleando la batalla que no puedo ganar.

Todo esto aprendi en *Al-Anon*. Reuniones los lunes de 6 a 7:30, Centro de Mujeres.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION	ONGOING GROUPS
LESBIAN RAP	SUNDAY
Mondays, 7:30-9pm April 7 Networking	• Older Women's Group (3rd Sunday) 2-5pm
14 Coming Out to the Older Generation	MONDAY • Al-anon Grupo (en español) 6-7:30pm
21 How Class affects the Lesbian Community.	Battered Women's Support Group
28 Relationships between Lesbians/Gay Men	 Women's Reading Group (1st/3rd Mondays) 7-9:30pm
30+ LESBIAN RAP Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm	• Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors (3rd Monday) 7-8:45pm
April 1 Friends as Family	• Lesbian Rap 7:30-9pm
8 Individuality in Relationships	Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) (usually 2
15 Children in our Lives22 Fun Vacation Spots	meetings/month; call 661-1161 for info) 7-9pm • Sexual Harassment Support Gp (last Mon./mo.) 7-9pm
29 Taking Risks	TUESDAY
BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP	Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesday) 7:30-9pm 7:30-9pm 7:30-9pm
1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm April 1 Is this a Date or What?	 30+ Lesbian Rap
17 First Kiss	(Newcomers, 1st Tuesday, 7pm)
WOMEN'S READING GROUP	• Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Illness (2nd & 4th Tuesdays) 5:15-6:45pm
1st & 3rd Mons, 7-9:30pm - Info: 665-7396 April 7 The Female Experience in 18th and 19th	• Writers Circle (Cassandra, 494-2695, for info on mtgs)
Century America by Jill Ker Conway	WEDNESDAY
April 21 Road Songs by Natalie Kusz	Battered Women's Support Group Anathy group 2nd Wodensday of worth 7 Own
INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP	(weekly except 3rd Wednesday of month) 7-9pm • Boston Bisexual Women's Network
Usually the last Saturday of each month, 1pm	(2nd Wednesday, odd #'d months) 7:30-9pm
The next 4 meetings will focus on prominent women	• Incest Survivors' Thinktank (1st Wed.) 7:15-9:15pm • Lesbian Al-Anon 6:30-8pm
from various cultures: what they've done/their impact	• Let's Play (Improvisation Gp; 3rd Wed) 7-8:30pm
FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE	THURSDAY
last Friday/month, September-June, 6-7:30pm	• Chemical Injury Information Network (1st Thursday)
April 25 Intimacy May 30 Loss and Abandonment	• Lesbians Choosing Children (3rd. Thurs.) . 7-8:30pm
June 27 Healing	• Incest Survivors Open Discussion 7:30-9:30pm
INCEST SURVIVORS' THINKTANK	• Women's Community Cancer Project, Open General Meeting (1st Thursday)
1st Wednesday, each month, 7:15-9:15pm	• W.I.T.C.H. Lecture Series (March-May) 7:30-9pm
April 2 Cycle of Abuse: Intergenerational Legacy May 7 Antiracist Work for Sexual Abuse Survivors	FRIDAY
June 4 Confronting Denial: Individual, Familial,	 CODA (Codependents Anonymous) 6-7:30pm Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion Group for
Societal LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN	Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (last Fri) 6-7:30pm
3rd Thursday, 7-8:30pm - for all lesbians	• Incest Survivors Anonymous 6:30-8pm
April 17 Gender Roles & Children	• Broken Hearts/Broken Relationships (for lesbians from
May 15 Financial/legal Issues (with guest speakers Ann Arberthnot & Mary Notaris)	long-term relationships; 1st & 3rd Saturdays) . 2-4pm
MEDITATION FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS	• Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages (Usually 1st Saturday) 11am-1pm
Saturday, April 12, 12:30-3:30pm	• Finding & Surviving the Workplace
Led by Deirdre Fay, MSW, survivor, 628-6842	(2nd & 4th Saturday)
AL-ANON IN ACTION: MEETINGS & LUNCH Sat., April 19, 11 am: Spanish & English meetings.	• Friendship Connection (2nd Saturday) 12:30-3:30pm International/Intercultural Women's Group
12:30pm: Mexican lunch for all women. Please call	(Usually last Saturday) 1pm
354-8807 to register for lunch; \$5 donation requested.	• Women Writing (biweekly)



WOMEN'S CENTER GUIDELINES

If you've been coming to the Women's Center regularly, you'll notice some new shiny yellow signs posted in the meeting rooms. These signs were developed to help introduce visitors to the Center and share general information about the use of space.

The signs read:

Please follow these guidelines while you are here:

If a room has no scheduled activity, you are welcome to use it. If you're unsure, please check with the staff person at the front desk.

By Cambridge City ordinance, smoking is <u>not</u> permitted in the Women's Center. When smoking outside, please move away from the entrance area in consideration of women entering and exiting.

Alcohol and drug use are <u>not</u> permitted in the Center.

Please refrain from wearing perfume or heavy scents, as many women are allergic or chemically sensitive.

If you use the kitchen, please clean up after yourself, including washing dishes, wiping off counter and table, and discarding trash.

When you leave a room, please discard all garbage and make sure the room is in the same order as when you arrived.

Please refrain from watching television in the living room, as the noise is distracting for the staff person on duty. If you use the television on the third floor, please keep the volume low.

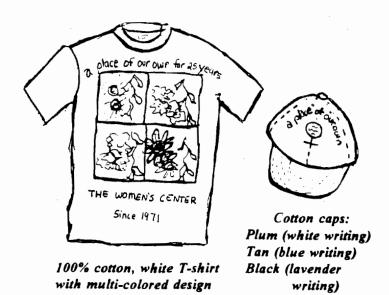
When you are leaving, please exit quietly so as not to disturb meetings in progress.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask the staff person in the office by the front door. Please be patient, as she is a volunteer and may have many priorities to juggle.

Thank you for your sisterly cooperation.

We hope the signs are helpful and answer any questions you might have. If you have any feedback, feel free to call the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.





WOMEN'S CENTER T-SHIRTS AND CAPS
A beautiful gift for yourself, and/or for others! Buy
them at the Women's Center. Or order by returning
the completed form to: T-Shirts & Caps, Women's
Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

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I would like to purchase
T-shirt(s) Quantity: × \$12 =
(circle size) S M L XL XXL XXXL
Cap(s) Quantity: × \$10 = (circle color) black plum tan
Shipping Handling 1st item $1 \times 4 = 4$ Additional items $\times 2 = 4$
Allow 10 days for delivery - \$1 item additional charge for express mail: total items: × \$1 =
TOTAL =
Make check periable to the Warren's Center

TOTAL = _____

Make check payable to the Women's Center

Please send item(s) to: (if different from above):

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Enclose separate sheet with any additional instructions

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Phone: (617)354-8807 TTY/Voice

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WISH LIST

If you're taking a trip to the grocery or office supply store, keep the Women's Center in mind! Whether it's a box of paper clips or a ream of paper, your donation helps keep the Center up and running.

We could use the following office supplies: White copier paper (20lb recycled), colored copier paper, large sheets of posterboard (white or light colors), transparent tape (rolls for dispensers), masking tape, stamps (\$.32 and \$.23), pens (ball point and roller ball), paper clips, rubber bands, composition books, computer mailing labels (dot matrix, pin fed printer), pushpins, ink pads, ink bottles, glue sticks, notebook paper (college-ruled), correction fluid, small white security envelopes, and reinforcements.

We also need the following household items: Unscented liquid soap, light bulbs (60, 75, or 100 watt), honey, tea (herbal or regular), coffee, sugar, tissues, tampons, sanitary pads, cleaning supplies (Murphy's Oil Soap, Bon Ami, sponges), art supplies (clay, paints), garbage bags (tall kitchen or large trash), battery operated wall clock, and coffeemaker (10 cup).

If you have any items that you want to donate that aren't listed here, please call Dawn at the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.



The Women's Center needs you this summer! ☐ YES! I want to help out the ♀'s Center! Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:		
□\$100 □\$50 □\$25 □\$10 □\$other		
 I'd like to be a regular monthly sustainer, with a pledge of \$ /per month. (we send a monthly update and a return envelope) Name: 		
Address:		
City: Zip:		
send to: The Women's Center ■ 46 Pleasant St. ■ Cambridge MA ■ 02139		
Thank you for your needed support-we appreciate it!		

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

The Women's Center hit the airwaves last April with its own Cable Access show called *WomanSpeak*. This monthly show, hosted by Dawn Dougherty, focuses on groups and projects at the Women's Center. Topics have included: 25 Years at the Women's Center, the Women's Community Cancer Project, the Reproductive Rights Network, and Women Writing.

WomanSpeak can be seen in Cambridge on Channel 55, the second Wednesday of every month from 5:30-6pm. Women are encouraged to come to the Women's Center to watch the show live. If you're involved with a group or project at the Women's Center and would like to be on WomanSpeak, call Dawn at (617)354-8807.