

on out way

the Women's Center Newsletter

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From 46 Pleasant St. Cambridge

what - me feel guilty?

OR... (the importance of feeling important)

A woman at the door of the Women's Center. I open it; she says "are you open?" Me? Confusion. What is she expecting? Am I the women's movement? Where does that leave her?

If someone is in the building, it is open. Women come, wondering what is happening that they can connect with. Which is fine, but I feel that what is very important is that each of us feels she can make things happen, not just join what is happening.

The women who come to the Women's Center should be allowed to feel that they can and should decide what they want to do. Instead they are told, "you should picket," "you should babysit," "give money," "think about the needs of your sisters."

At least for me, my involvement in a rap group two years ago led me to feel that I am as important as anyone, my opinions are as valid, that I do not have to deny myself everything while giving, giving, giving.

Women coming to the center are important, where they are is important, and not just for what they can contribute. It is hard not to feel, under the circumstances (most women are not picketing, etc.) that when women come, needing, and are told to give, they can't.

A lesbian coming to a Lesbian Liberation meeting wants something, instead is told someone else's needs are more important than hers. What can she say? She is not important, so her opinion is not either. How can she argue? Women without money, babysitters, whatever, should have those things. But there are very real limits to how much other women can give, especially if they feel used, disregarded.

Telling someone what she should do only reinforces her feelings that she cannot be trusted to make her own decisions, and that what she "should" do is more important than what she feels like doing.

Judy

It is conceivable that one implication of women having to put other interests before their own (which, to me, is simply an extension of a societal role) could be that some women who will, for reasons of their own, take advantage of that willingness to renounce their needs.

One real concrete example of this behavior is the manipulation of what can be called political guilt feelings. These are feelings related to class and race backgrounds. Women who, say, are coming from an upper class or middle class family, having parents high in the economic structure, etc., may feel guilty about the advantages which they may have through their class status.

Politically, the guilt feelings are in a sense desirable because they incur in the people feeling them the desire to change a system responsible for allowing class and race advantages to exist. But guilt trips are a great manipulatory weapon. And from what I can see, when women from oppressed classes use their oppression to hide behind like merit badges, use it to justify anything they do, say, propose to do, etc., and manipulate and/or intimidate other women by laying guilt trips on them, they become the oppressors. Everything is turned upside-down, the oppressed becomes the oppressor and so what else is new in this society?

What is most disturbing about such a situation is that it pretty soon becomes a matter of dogma and in my opinion, dogmatic thinking is rigid thinking with no place for people in it. Let us face it: all women have needs (whether they are obvious or not. . .) and to assign priorities to them is unfair.

Anne

THE TROUBLE WITH KIDS

The Women's Center has recently been subjected to harassment by a group of community boys, ranging in age from about seven to twelve. Their tactics have involved creating a general disturbance by hanging around on the front porch or peering into windows, and have also resorted to vandalism resulting in broken windows, gaining entrance to the building and ripping off money, keys, etc.

There seem to have evolved several lines of attacking the problem, ranging from attempting to deal with the boys' needs to "kicking their asses." The latter proposal is disconcerting in that it is an attitude which has been expressed directly to the boys and has inspired them to more hostility and general hysteria.

Instead of reacting to the problem impulsively, we should try to deal with it in a responsible manner, since obviously the welfare of the center as well as all the women who use it is at stake. Women who have expressed their own personal anger and hostility toward "the little pricks" have increased the problem and have successfully demonstrated their immaturity in dealing with kids.

The following suggestions could be considered as a possible means of solving the problem.

1. Women who do not wish to constructively deal with the problem should keep their derogatory expressions to themselves.
2. Women who are interested in getting together and dealing with the boys directly should sign up in the Women's Center as soon as possible.
3. Until some sort of decision or solution is arrived at, the boys should NOT under any circumstances be allowed entrance to the building.
4. Women should not attempt to staff the office alone.
5. Women who can sleep in the building (perhaps three or four at a time) should do so, at least until we can reduce the threat of vandalism.

Linda

Coordinating Committee Meeting - Tuesday March 21 - 6 p.m.

A New Group.

A woman came to ask for space in the Women's Center for depressed overweight jobless women to come to exercise together and try to help each other with writing resumes, sewing, feeling more secure about job hunting. Everyone agreed that was a good idea. Women interested in joining the group can call Joan at 354-7626. It will meet at the Women's Center Thursdays at 8 p.m., also possibly at times during the day if the women involved can and want to.

Strike at Cronin's.

What can be done about the lack of support for the strike from the Women's Center? Women who might picket don't because they don't know enough about what is going on. A small support group for the waitresses formed, to work on and put out a paper presenting all the details of the strike, to visit classes to encourage support, and to plan an open meeting with some of the waitresses. Everyone felt we could more easily support the strike if we concentrated on a specific time slot and from 6 to 8 p.m. daily was agreed upon.



A Dancing Class.

Wanted to use the lesbian lounge for classes Sunday night from 6 to 8. The lesbian rep will bring it up at the next meeting.

Coordinating Committee Meeting - Tuesday April 4 - 6 p.m.

Waitresses Strike.

6 to 8 p.m. is a critical time to have picketers at Cronin's. If each woman from the Women's Center would commit herself to picket one night a month, we could cover that time slot. There is a sign-up sheet at the Women's Center and there are flyers to give out while picketing.

Hours.

Office staff rep stated that staffing the building from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. is more than the women currently staffing can manage. It was suggested that groups using the center should be responsible for staffing for specified time periods, and reps will bring that up when their groups meet. It was agreed that for the present, the office staff will keep the building open definitely from 12 to 4 p.m. daily, with other times dependent on people signing up. There is a sign-up sheet for women interested in staffing for any time period.

Library/Lounge.

To what extent should the lounge/library room be a library? Most women present agreed that it should be primarily used as a lounge, that some feminist books, newspapers, magazines, should be in it, other books kept somewhere else (by the stairs, in the basement...)

Care of the Building.

Women using the building are responsible for CLEANING UP any rooms they use. (Who else?)

Next Coordinating Committee meeting on Tuesday April 18 - 6 p.m.

Announcements

Sunday potluck suppers at the Women's Center at 6 p.m. Open to all women. Bring food, friends. For women to meet other women, find out what's happening. Discussions afterwards (beginning at about 7:45).

Lesbian get-acquainted meetings - Wednesdays - 6 p.m. - Women's Center

Lesbian Liberation meetings - Wednesdays - 8 p.m. - Women's Center

Abortion and Birth Control Laws

Open discussion for Cambridge women at Y.W.C.A., Thursday, April 13, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. Sponsored by Y.W.C.A. Public Affairs Committee and Cambridge League of Women Voters. Discussion topics will include:

1. Do you consider Massachusetts statutes on birth control and abortion to be just laws?
2. Why do unwanted pregnancies occur?
3. Is it society's right and duty to establish rules concerning reproduction?

All Cambridge women are welcome to participate. Nursery available. Refreshments. Call 491-6050 for more information.

Auto Mechanics for Women

A course in Auto Mechanics for Women is being offered at the Cambridge Y.W.C.A. The course offers instruction both in how the car works - what operates what - and also in repairs and basic maintenance - changing tires, setting points, timing, etc.

The course will be offered at two different times: beginning Monday, April 10, 9:30 - 11:30 for 8 weeks at \$17. and beginning Tuesday, April 11, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. for 8 weeks at \$10. For more information, call the Cambridge Y.W.C.A.

A WEEKEND OF FILMS

To be shown at Tufts University, April 14-16. Free/donations requested for Tufts day care center. Discussions following films. Child care available Sat. and Sun. afternoons. Call Tufts Day Care Center (628-5000 x 518) by April 12 for details.

1. Women at Work - ADAM'S RIB; THE WOMAN'S FILM, Friday, April 14, 1:30 p.m.
2. Women's Political Struggle - SALT OF THE EARTH; HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY. Sat., April 15, 1:30 p.m.
3. Women at Home - JULIET OF THE SPIRITS; JANIE'S JANIE. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m.
4. Women and Sexuality - RACHAEL RACHAEL; ABORTION; MAKEOUT. Sun., April 16, 1:30 p.m.

Cambridge - Goddard Feminist Studies Program presents an open lecture series Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 1878 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Free, everyone welcome. April 13 Miriam Palmer reading her poetry. April 20 (?) Ginger Golder, "Psychic Survival, Toward a Radical Psychology". Call 492 - 0700.

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