

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.

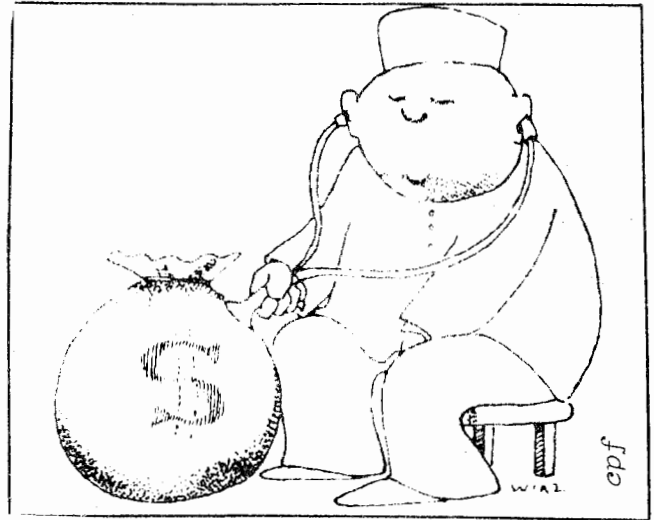
The Center is now seven years old, is one of the two oldest women's centers in the U.S. (Berkeley, CA, is the other) and is one of the very few comprehensive women's centers in the entire country. Many of you already come here on a regular basis or are part of projects or activities which are in some 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

