

# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

(617) 354-8807  
TTY and VOICE

Winter '93

## SURVIVING THE FAMILY

On the night of Saturday, November 6, 500 women, men, and children filled the Tsai Performance Center to listen, learn, share, and discuss. The size of the crowd was surprising because of the topic: incest. Once a strictly taboo subject, on this night people could not stop expressing their ideas and feelings about incest.

One theme, which was vocalized by panelist Norma Garcia in the beginning of the event and reverberated throughout the night, was that everyone must be active in breaking the silence and preventing incest. From this idea, a group has been formed to work on the political issues of incest, such as combatting the backlash and denial of incest.

Part of this backlash and denial is accusing survivors of having "false memory syndrome". One survivor from the audience shared how she stopped speaking out about incest when this term became popular because she began to doubt her experience. But at the event she was believed and she helped others remind us what a serious problem backlash is.

The atmosphere was one of community and understanding as survivors from the panel and the audience validated other survivors' emotions and experiences. Another important point the panelists made was that healing is possible and that there are places where survivors can find support. All of the panelists named the Women's Center as a key point in their healing process, as a place to be accepted, supported, and to meet with other survivors.

The event was a benefit for the Women's Center thanks to Sam Kauffmann, who created the film "Surviving the Family" which began the evening. Sam was inspired to make this movie about a woman recalling her childhood sexual abuse because his sister was abused by their

stepfather. Sam wanted to use the opportunity of the event to help the Women's Center continue its dedication to helping incest survivors. Many people generously gave money on the night of the event and donations are still coming in.

The event was a wonderful success thanks to Sam, all the people who shared of themselves, all those who organized it, and the responsive audience. And heartfelt thanks to the panelists, Norma Garcia, Diane Loud, Maria Tramontozzi, and Elaine Westerlund, who had the courage to break the silence.

### HELP!

Is what I screamed as I was being battered  
From the fist in my face to the ugly words in my ears to the false accusations of thoughts I never even imagined.

### HELP!

Is what I urge our public officials give immediate attention to this crisis, Because this is not just an abuse case or control of gender, but a matter of escalating violence.

### HELP!

Is what I've found at the Battered Women's Support Group hosted by Besty Warrior where women of all different backgrounds, ages, financial status  
have one common problem and one common purpose,

SUPPORT and UNDERSTANDING.

-L.S.B.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS IN DECEMBER...

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT GROUP.** Mon.,  
Dec. 20, 7-9pm. Led by Louise Bonar.  
**WHAT PART OF "NO" DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?**  
*Conversations at the Non-verbal Level.*  
Sat. December 11, 10am-1pm. We need  
more coherence between what our words  
say and what our body, posture, and  
voice convey. A workshop by Judi  
Goodman, 862-3699, & Linda Kelly,  
267-3528. Please call to register.

## AND IN JANUARY...

**COUPLES SUPPORT GROUP FOR NEW LESBIAN  
PARENTS.** 6-week group (1st meeting is  
open, then the group will close) for  
lesbian couples & their babies. Led by  
Leslie Loomis. Sat., Jan 8, 2-3:30pm.

**OLDER WOMEN AGING WELL.** Sunday, Jan. 9  
(2nd Sunday this month), 2-5pm. Music  
We All Love with Sophie Paul.

**KEEPING BOUNDARIES AND HAVING GREAT  
RELATIONSHIPS.** Sat., Jan. 15, 10am-  
1pm. Judi Goodman, 862-3699 & Linda  
Kelly, 267-3528. Call to register.

**FOR FEMINISM OR FOR PEACE: EXPERIENCES  
OF "WOMEN IN BLACK" IN ISRAEL.** Tues.  
Jan, 11, 7-9pm. The contributions of  
Israeli women, Jewish and Palestinian,  
in promoting peace. Description of the  
activities of the women's peace groups  
"Women in Black" & "Women in Peace" by  
Hannah Safran and Dalia Sacks, Israeli  
peace activists.

## VOLUNTEER(S)

How is it possible for the Women's  
Center to be open so many hours, offer  
so many groups, overflow with referral  
information, have a library, send out  
this newsletter, operate so thriftily?  
In short, to exist?

This community-based Women's Center  
continues while most others haven't  
because of the reliability, dedication,  
and enthusiasm of volunteers. The crucial  
contributions of these women (100 volun-  
teers to 2 full-time employees) can not  
be overstated. To all our volunteers, a  
huge THANK YOU!

And of course more help is always  
needed. Would you like to help out in any  
of the following ways?

- ◆ Do childcare so mothers can attend  
groups (upon request).
  - ◆ Enter info into the computer.
  - ◆ Be available at times to women in need  
of practical support (e.g. accompany-  
ing a battered woman to court).
  - ◆ Update referrals on a specific topic.
  - ◆ Help during a cleaning/fixing day.
- If so, please call Jennifer at 354-8807.

## SUPPORT GROUP FOR CANCER CARETAKERS

This group for women friends,  
relatives and/or caretakers of women with  
cancer provides women with a place to  
share ways to care for ourselves as we  
care for others. In other words, an  
informal, safe place to express feelings  
we may not be supposed to feel, but do.  
Come as you need to. We meet the 2nd and  
4th Tuesdays of each month, 7-8:30pm.

For additional information, contact  
Anna at 547-6240.

## SAVE THE BI RAP

We know there are plenty of you bi  
women out there! To keep the Bisexual  
Women's Rap group going, though, we need  
one or a few women who will be committed  
to attending the group regularly, so that  
no one coming to the group will find an  
empty room. She (they) would be contact  
person(s) and possibly facilitator(s).

Over the years the group has been a  
source of strength, support, and friend-  
ship for countless women, and it's  
important for the Women's Center to  
continue to have a group for bisexual  
women. But, after December, the group,  
which is held Tuesday nights, can only  
continue meeting if new energy is found.

So, if you're interested in  
revitalizing the Bi Group, call the  
Center. They'll connect you with others  
who have called. Don't delay, make your  
call now! DON'T LET THE BI RAP DIE!!

## WRITE ON WOMEN

The Women's Center Saturday Writing  
Group was begun by students of a Women's  
School workshop who continued to meet  
after the workshop ended. They opened  
their meetings to any women who wanted to  
attend, and several years later, the  
group is still flourishing as an open  
workshop. While membership has changed  
greatly, and continues to do so, many of  
the techniques of the original workshop  
are still practiced.

Fundamental to the group is a non-  
critical and supportive approach to  
writing. It is not a place for critiqu-  
ing. Feedback is positive or neutral.  
The process of the writing and reading is  
honored as an end in itself, not just as  
a means to producing a finished piece.

New members are always welcome! The  
group meets every other Saturday from  
12:30 - 2:30pm. Call the Women's Center  
for dates or to be put in touch with a  
contact person for the group.

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

We would like to thank all of you who showed your concern and support for women's safety by helping us to buy a "panic alarm" and to pay for one year's monitoring of the alarm by a security agency. You have the gratitude of all of us and the comfort of knowing you're helping to keep some women safe in a very practical way. The alarm we purchased has been used by three women.

In our desperate effort last spring to get an alarm for one of our members, we contacted a member of the Middlesex County Deputy Sheriff's Association. He gave us information on borrowing an alarm from the Sheriff's office and he and two of his associates generously volunteered to install the alarm for us.

Subsequently, they decided to set up a Domestic Violence Project to provide six panic alarms for battered women with restraining orders who needed them. This was an unexpected and much appreciated aftereffect of our work.

About a year and a half ago we began a call-in campaign to Cambridge City Council members about the need for panic alarms. Recently Councilor Sheila Russell contacted us to let us know that she had introduced an order for the Council to appropriate money for the police to get alarms. Councilor Wolf also wrote us of her support.

We've had alarms installed for members of our support group in both Middlesex and Norfolk Counties, thanks to the Deputy Sheriff's Association. We are worried about women outside these two counties having access to alarms - as we have women from all over attending our group. We are trying to get some reassurance now from Suffolk County (Boston area). We have called District Attorney Ralph Martin's Office (Rachael Kimmich, 725-8600) and Rep. Barbara Gray's Office (Kate Russell, 722-2400), but so far we've received no response. We also hope to contact Boston Police Commissioner William Bratton (343-4500). If you can help us by contacting any of these officials and urging them to allocate panic alarms to battered women, it may be of critical help.

We thank you all for the support and encouragement you've given to our work.

-Betsy Warrior

\*\*\* YOUR DONATIONS KEEP THE WOMEN'S  
CENTER GOING AND GROWING! \*\*\*

## MULTIPLE SUPPORT

For the past three years the Women's Center has offered encouragement, information, friendship, and help to women with multiplicity (or in psychiatric language, women with Multiple Personality Disorder [MPD]) in the form of small support groups. Currently there are four such groups at the Women's Center, two of which have openings for new members after a long period of being closed.

For those women trying to come to terms with their multiplicity 'out there' who feel isolated, confused, unsupported, or just new to the discovery of multiplicity in themselves, this might be a good opportunity to find answers and validation. These support groups meet weekly or biweekly and provide a place where women like yourself share their feelings about emerging memories and frightening and threatening daily experiences. We also talk about gained strength and coping mechanisms and share information - at times appearing to be more at the forefront of MPD and all of its intricacies than the psychiatric and medical establishment, who sometimes blunder along in their own inexperience, prejudice and ignorance.

Because these groups are not facilitated by professionals and are therefore not therapy groups, each member is held responsible for herself and her 'system' (or 'alters'). While all inner people are encouraged to participate in the group meetings, including inner children, it is expected that there is always an 'adult' present who can take charge at a moment's notice. We offer warmth, encouragement and validation - but are not therapists.

If this brief description sounds like what you have been looking for, call the Women's Center now and the staff will have one of the groups' contact people return your call. And be reassured: If you are experiencing the phenomenon of multiplicity - with all the vast array of experiences, feelings, sensations, and just plain strangeness that implies - please know that we in these groups have been - and are still - there too.

## BAM

A new group, Boycott Anorexic Marketing (BAM) has formed to fight against images in advertising which set up unrealistic standards of thinness for women. These standards contribute to eating disorders and women hating their bodies. BAM is seeking new members. For info call Mary Baures at (508)927-4901.

## SUPPORT GROUP FOR NEW LESBIAN PARENTS

A Short-term, Six-week Support Group, on Saturday Afternoons, starting Jan. 8.

There is so much pleasure and joy in having a baby and forming a new family that lesbian couples are often caught unaware of the need to adjust to new parenting roles. Becoming a new family is often so disorienting and overshadowing that couples don't come up for air until a year later. Then they may feel alienated from each other and confused that their relationship has become less trusting, intimate and caring. The already strained family can also be undermined by pressures and discrimination an alternative family experiences in a homophobic society.

Lesbian moms need a place to feel validated and supported. They need time to share their family and couple experience in a safe environment with other lesbian couples who are going through similar situations. This can decrease the isolation which happens so easily during the initial phase of parenting. The Women's Center is responding to this need by offering a short-term, six-week, couple support group for new lesbian parents, starting January 8th. Babies are welcome and if we need childcare for older babies, the group can decide how to provide that. Leslie Loomis, a lesbian mom and psychologist will facilitate the group. It will meet on six consecutive Saturday afternoons from 2 to 3:30pm. If you are interested, please attend the first meeting. The group will be closed after that. This group will continue in six week intervals, interrupted by a two or three week hiatus. New members can join at that time and old members can decide whether or not to continue.

## MANIC DEPRESSION AND DEPRESSION GROUP

This unique weekly self-help group for women in treatment for manic depression and depression meets at the Women's Center at 1pm on Thursdays.

The facilitator is a woman in recovery from long-term manic depression. She uses her experience, strength, humor and hope to create a warm, casual and empowering environment. New members are welcome!

## OFFER OF FREE POLARITY MASSAGE

Free Polarity Massage for very low to no income women. Call Lin, 776-9734.

## HOLIDAY WISH LIST

Here are some things we'd love to have at the Women's Center. If you could donate any of them, or know where we could get something donated, please let us know (all donations are tax deductible). Happy Holidays!

- Photocopier
  - Answering Machine
  - Laser printers for IBM or MAC
  - Books for the Library concerning women of color, parenting issues, child sexual abuse, multiple personality, ritual abuse, and self-injury
  - Household supplies (lightbulbs, tea, coffee, paper towels, etc.)
  - Office supplies (pens, white-out, tape, clipboards, notebooks, etc.)
  - Office chair, lamps, end tables
- Call Pam at 354-8807 to donate. Thanks!

## FOR CRYING OUT LOUD

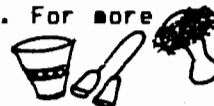
A quarterly newsletter for women survivors of child sexual abuse. We welcome submissions of poetry, prose, and artwork from women survivors. Also, we currently have openings for two new collective members (must live in the Boston area). Contact us at FCOL, c/o Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139. No phone calls, please.

## WRITE PHIL DONAHUE

The Phil Donahue show of October 28 featured people who claimed they were manipulated by therapists into believing that they were survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Essentially, the program promoted the views that "False Memories" of sexual abuse are common and easily implanted by unethical therapists, and that real child sexual abuse is not prevalent in our society. Many survivors feel it is irresponsible and damaging for the Phil Donahue show to present such a slanted and distorted view of the problem of child sexual abuse. Petitions protesting the show can be signed at the Women's Center, and comments may also be sent to: Phil Donahue, The Donahue Show, National Broadcasting Company, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10112

## THE BATUCADA BELLES

The women's percussion marching band you know and love, is opening to new members. No experience necessary. Women of color encouraged to join. For more info call Beth at 848-4981.



## A YEAR TO REMEMBER

1993 has been a memorable and exciting year, a year of growth and many successes. This growth has happened in various different areas, and has meant that the Women's Center is able to reach out to more women, to serve more women and provide more and better resources for the women who use the Center. Some examples:

In 1993, 13 new groups were formed at the Women's Center. Among these groups are: Ritual Abuse Survivors Support and Education Group; Women Supporters of Women with Cancer; Single Mothers Group; International/Intercultural Women's Group; Anxiety Support Group; and two more groups for Women with Multiple Personalities. It is satisfying to be able to host so many important groups for women, although it does make coordinating use of space much more complex!

In addition to the new groups in 1993, the Women's Center also hosted several well-attended workshops including Living with Loss; Friendship; and Moving Beyond Survivor to Personal Power.

Many existing groups at the Women's Center continued to thrive in 1993. The monthly Open Discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages often fills two rooms and is usually ASL interpreted. More mothers also seemed to be attending groups at the Women's Center this year, childcare was provided for many groups including Parenting and Single Mother's groups, Battered Women's Support Groups, the International/Intercultural Women's Group, and Incest Survivors Anonymous.

1993 brought an influx of much-needed new volunteers to the Women's Center. We also had more interns than ever before (11 so far) who have done a tremendous amount of work staffing the Women's Center and working on our resource books. This year's group of interns had an international flair brought by Sonja, our German intern who was here for 7 months.

The year also welcomed our new full-time staff person, Pam Goldstein. We are proud to have Pam on staff, and celebrate the growth of adding this new position. Right now Pam is concentrating on raising funds to keep the Center going.

The Women's Center received a considerable amount of media attention in 1993. Articles about the Women's Center appeared in the TAB, Sojourner, and the Cambridge Chronicle. We also did outreach to our community by participating in events such as Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Pride Day, the Cambridge River Festival, and Somerville's "Say No to Violence" event.

This fall brought the most exciting event of the year for the Women's Center, the "Surviving the Family" benefit. All the hard work that went into the event certainly paid off - the evening was a tremendous success. (Please see article about the event in this issue).

Thanks to everyone who helped the Women's Center accomplish so much in 1993! We look forward to more growth and new successes in 1994.

## TITUBA: 1972(?) - 1993

Tituba the cat lived at the Women's Center for about 20 years. In the last 10 months she found a new home with me. She left us peacefully on November 5. Her favorite place was the fluffy down comforter on my bed and that is where she died.

Though I have only known Tituba for a little over a year and lived with her for less than that, she was very special to me. I believe that we were meant to be together this past year - we offered each other love and companionship that served us both. We were the best of friends and she was a wonderful roommate. She let me watch as much television as I wanted without judging me and I let her yowl for food at 4am without scolding her.

She was not only wise and gentle, but well-known. When friends and colleagues learned that I adopted "the Women's Center cat" they'd say "I know that cat! Tell her I said hello." Needless to say, it was an honor and privilege to have the dear girl in my home.

I miss her terribly but find comfort in knowing that she had the fullest life of any cat I know. Her spirit will live on in the Women's Center forever because she was there almost from the beginning and helped to create the warm, loving atmosphere that exists there. Her spirit will also live with me because of the love she brought into my home and heart.

Tituba's ashes will be buried in the back yard of the Women's Center.

So long, Titch!

by Kathleen Collins  
Women's Center volunteer



**WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS**  
Monday - Thursday 10am - 10pm  
Friday 10am - 8pm  
Saturday 11am - 4pm

## ONGOING GROUPS

### SUNDAY

- & Older Women Aging Well (1st Sun)....2-5pm
- Single Mothers Group (1st & 3rd Sundays, call if childcare is needed).....1-4pm

### MONDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group...7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors (1st & 3rd Mons.)....7-8:45pm
- Lesbian Rap.....7:30-9pm
- & -Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) (usually 2nd & 4th Mons.)...6:45-9:30pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (meets once every 2 months).....7-9pm
- & -Women with Disabilities (3rd Monday).....7:30-9pm
- Women's NA 12-step.....7:30-9pm

### TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap.....7:30-9:30pm
- Eating Awareness and Body Image (Open to newcomers 1st Tuesday at 6:30pm)..7-9pm
- Job Search Team (Priscilla, 387-8562)
- & -30+ Lesbian Rap.....7-8:30pm
- Women Supporters of Women with Cancer (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)....7-8:30pm

### WEDNESDAY

- Assessing Your Therapy (2nd Wednesday, once every 3 months).....7-9pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (weekly except 3rd Wed. of month).....7-9pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network: Intro Mtg. (2nd Wed., odd months)..7:30-9:30pm
- Incest Survivors' Thinktank (1st Wednesday).....7:15-9:15pm
- & -Lesbian Al-Anon.....6:30-8pm
- Women's Anxiety Support Group (open to new members 1st Wed./mo.)...6-7:30pm

### THURSDAY

- & -Cancer Support Group (2nd & 4th Thursdays).....7-9pm
- & -Facilitated Open Discussion for Incest Survivors (3rd Thursday)....7:30-9:15pm
- Incest Survivors Open Discussion Group.....7:30-9:30pm
- Incest Survivors Unstructured Open Discussion Group.....7-9:30pm
- Manic Depression and Depression Support Group (lunch out after, optional)...1pm
- & -Women's Community Cancer Project, Open General Meeting (1st Thurs.).....7-9pm

### FRIDAY

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

### SATURDAY

- Finding and Surviving the Workplace (2nd Saturday).....11:30am-1:30pm
- International/Intercultural Women's Network (usually 4th Saturday).....1pm
- Open discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages (lunch out after, optional; often ASL interp'd; 1st Sat.)..11am-1pm
- Write On Women (biweekly)....12:30-2:30pm
- Women Writing Life Stories (biweekly workshop).....12:30-2:30pm

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION



### LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm



- December 6 Games - Bring Your Favorite.
- 13 Biological Families, Families of Choice, and the Holidays.
- 20 Women-oriented Spirituality.
- 27 Potluck and Holiday Stories.

### BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30pm

- December 7 The Joys and Hardships of Bisexuality.
- 14 Finding the Bisexual Community.
- 21 What to Tell Your Straight/Gay Friends.
- 28 Why Bisexuality.

### & 30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- December 7 Diversity in Relationships (Age, race, class...).
- 14 Long Distance/Internet Dating.
- 21 Lesbians Creating Community.
- 28 Lesbians and the Law.

### INCEST SURVIVORS THINKTANK

1st Wednesday 7:15-9:15pm

- December 1 Rebuilding Relationships.
- January 5 Societal Responsibility of/for Offenders.

### & FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR INCEST SURVIVORS

3rd Thursday 7:30-9:15pm

- December 16 Overcoming Feelings of Helplessness.
- January 20 Our Bodies.
- February 17 Trusting Yourself.
- March 17 Dealing with Emotions.
- April 15 Coping/Honoring Ourselves.
- May 19 Breaking the Silence.



### WOMEN'S POLITICAL POETRY WORKSHOP

Saturday, January 8, 1994, 11am - 1pm.

A political poem can mean many things. Some political poems validate women's everyday experience, or our views on world events. This workshop will consider the poems of some leading women writers to discuss the politics of women's lives: in families, as workers, as activists, as world citizens. Through in-class writing exercises participants will discover the challenges of creating effective poems from their own experiences and opinions. Possible homework assignments and a follow up meeting will be discussed at the workshop.