

The Center Times

The Monthly Newsletter of the Lesbian and Gay Community Center

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Janet Kyle: Volunteer of the Month

Janet Kyle doesn't miss an opportunity to gently prod a friend into volunteering at the Center.

"Don't become a Center widow," she urges the woman whose partner is involved with Center activities. "I'm thinking of starting a coffee house. I'll need people to line up performers," she smiles, and her dark eyes twinkle. "Would you be interested in helping?"

It's hard to say no to someone who devotes much of her life to volunteer work for the community. "I'm drawn to it like a magnet," says the Pride Committee Chair. "The Pride festivities ran very well this year. It was one of the most smoothly run events I've ever witnessed. There were no major problems, no reports of violence." Her eyes are serious. "That's amazing when you consider there were a record 70,000 participants. We spent a lot of time planning and preparing for the event." Janet says about a dozen people were on the planning committee, and approximately 75 volunteers helped out.

"Having the Pride office at the Center made a world of difference," Janet says, adding, "One year we had to meet in classrooms at Boston University."

Even though Gay Pride Day has come and gone, the Pride Committee is still active. Election of committee members will occur in the fall. Janet says she'd volunteer as chair all over again.

"I enjoy working for the community," she says. "The more time I spend at it, the easier it gets, and the little things don't shake me up." She munches a few tortilla chips and washes them down with sips of beer. "So much needs to be done for Pride—planning, security, getting entertainment for the stage, obtaining permits, keeping communication lines open with the Boston Police Department. A lot of hard work is involved, but we have fun doing it. That's the way it should be."

Through her affiliation with the Pride Committee, Janet became involved with the Center. "I was in the Pride office a minimum of 30 hours a week, and because I was at the Center I'd answer the phone a lot in the early days."

Janet says it was not uncommon for her to be at the Center on weekends, and often during the week she'd stay until midnight. "I usually was the one who locked up at night."

She was instrumental in compiling a mailing list so that invitations to the Center's grand opening last fall could be sent throughout the community. Janet has also given a very personal part of herself to the Center—her artwork.

"I compiled some sketches of the Center, and one of them was chosen as the Center's logo," she says. (Janet's drawing appears above.) "When I think of the

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From the Desk of the Office Manager

Life at the Center continues to bustle as more and more groups begin to meet here. Some of this past month's highlights included a forum on the lesbian and gay civil rights law sponsored by GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders). A large crowd gathered to hear lawyers explain the elements of the civil rights law and how to use it.

The Center was also host to a marathon endorsement meeting of the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance. The session, which was crowded and at times cantankerous, didn't let out until 11:30PM.

The Center's own Film/Video series hosted a combined video viewing and panel discussion. A video of Michael Lowenthal's Dartmouth valedictory speech, in which he discusses diversity and comes out, was shown, as well as the

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Center to Celebrate First Year

The Center's birth last summer was a giant accomplishment for our community. At last we could enjoy a space of our own! Many people worked tirelessly to weave the strands of a dream into a web of support that would unite all facets of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community.

Although the opening of the Center was cause for celebration, the following months were crucial to its survival: Would the community embrace it? Would volunteers donate enough labor

to make keep it going? Would others contribute badly needed funds? Would the Center really become the core of the community, a place where each and every one of us could feel welcome? Would the Center be able to expand its offerings to include activities and programs?

The Community Center is ready to celebrate its first birthday. You, the community, proved your willingness to sustain the Center. Over 30 volunteers signed up to staff the front desk and telephone. That means the Center can

keep its doors open until 10PM. Thanks to volunteers, the Center is realizing its goal of becoming the most comprehensive source for information and referrals within the community. When organizations send in announcements of upcoming events, the Center makes every effort to publicize them in the calendar section of this newsletter. The Center has also set up a timely listing of events on its computer, which is available to volunteers staffing the phone.

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