

# NEWBURY STREET & BACK BAY GUIDE

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## Alternative Lifestyles

*"Work is the refuge of people who have nothing better to do". Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)*

The hallmark of lifestyle today is choices. Technology and increasing life expectancy give us multiple resources and more time to craft lifestyles over and over - today a writer, tomorrow a rocket scientist. The average person now changes jobs 8.6 times between the ages of 18 and 32, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. More and more adults are exploring creative careers, crafting dual careers and embarking on skilled and meaningful leisure activities. Alternative once denoting weird now brings a renaissance of acceptance and gives new meaning to the adage, "What do you want to be when you grow up"? Explore some alternative lifestyles and you might just find your self with something better to do.

### Learn Something New

According to Mary McTigue, Executive Director of the Boston Center for Adult Education (BCAE), "The BCAE offers 3,000 different classes a year in 35 subject areas. Last year we had 30,000 registrations which is double what we had three years ago. People are taking classes, learning new things for a variety of reasons. There seems to be a strong emphasis on enriching leisure time with fun and useful activities" In existence for 67 years, the BCAE started by offering classes in ballroom dance. Still popular today, the dance programs have expanded to include Swing, Tango, Belly and the hot Salsa dance. McTigue says, "People take the dance classes not only for the pleasure of dancing but to learn how to enter competitions where they can travel and perform." Bill McEntee, a thirty-one year old employee of State Street Global Advisors in Boston frequently takes classes at BCAE. The classes are a great way for McEntee to meet new people and expand his knowledge in new areas. "I particularly like the wine and cooking classes but

I have also taken some finance classes that have helped me both personally and in my job", says McEntee.

Adult education centers offer the opportunity for convenient life long learning. Here you can test the waters to see if a particular subject is one you want to pursue. BCAE's McTigue says, ideas for our classes come from three sources: proposals from teachers, national trends and from talking to students." Currently BCAE is offering such dynamic and fascinating classes as "Exploring the World of Private Investigation", "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain", "New York Acting Marathon", Sailing and Walking in Spain", and "A Three-Day Immersion in E-Commerce" to name a few. For a complete listing of the 3,000 courses offered at BCAE visit their web site at [www.bcae.org](http://www.bcae.org) or call 617-267-4430 and ask for their catalog, which is an adventure unto itself. For an on-line resource for classes throughout the Boston area visit [www.takeaclass.com](http://www.takeaclass.com). According to the site info "This is the web's finest site for continuing education and personal development. The site provides ultimate learning resource for adults, identifying opportunities and offerings for professional development, continuing education and learning and learning as a path to life enhancement and personal growth".

#### Career Assistance

The Women's Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU) can help you determine ways to find new career paths. Harriet Clisby, one of the first female physicians in the country founded WEIU in 1877. Joined by Louisa May Alcott, Julia Ward Howe and other dynamic women of that era, she created an organization to assist those in need and promote the advancement of women. Still active today, WEIU. Offers low income and underrepresented women with their "Boston Career Link" program and their "To Market" project that offers market access and technical assistance. In 1995, WEIU implemented a job-training program for employment advisors with the goal of equipping career changers, new entrants into the job market, and unemployed workers with the skill to provide job counseling to job changers. Located at 356 Boylston Street, Boston, WEIU can be reached at 617-536-5651.

Here in Boston those looking to consider the art field, a large selection of educational resources are readily available. The School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SFMA) is a premier arts school in Boston and is a division of the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) at 230 The Fenway and has been affiliated with Tufts University since 1945. The Massachusetts College of Art at 621 Huntington Avenue offers a broad curriculum of art subjects. The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley College at 700 Beacon Street offers programs designed to prepare students for professions as graphic designers, illustrators, animators, photographers and exhibiting artists. And for over 80 years the Butera School of Art at 111 Beacon Street has been training men and women in the art of commercial and sign painting. Other schools to consider are the North Bennet Street School located at 39 North Bennet Street, Boston for workshops in bookbinding, fine woodworking (hand skills and machine skills), jewelry making, piano technology, and preservation carpentry. If fashion is your passion then call the School of Fashion Design at 136 Newbury Street

and the New England School of Photography 537 Commonwealth Avenue. Boston is not only the walking city but the learning city too!

### Distance Learning

Currently, there are at least three million distant learners nationwide, attending one of the 54,000 on-line-education offerings in 1998. Forty-four percent of higher-education institutions are offering distance learning classes, up from 33 percent in 1995, according to NCES. It is the rise of the Internet, which is widely popular and accessible and allows educational content to be posted and transmitted fairly easily that has launched the growth of distance learning. Most adults find distance learning an ideal way to earn college credits and try new venues. The most comprehensive web site for distance learning is right here in Boston at the International Center for Distance Learning at Ten Post Office Square. Their web site is [www.CollegeLearning.com](http://www.CollegeLearning.com). The Boston Center for Adult Education is also offering a first-time on-line offering in the Boston area. You can join the BCAE virtual classroom and take the MBA in a Nutshell®.

### Gaining Insight

For those not sure of which way to turn, a new profession has sprung up in a helpful way called "Personal Coaching". In a discussion with Deirdre Dufour of VIP Coaching she gave me examples of people she has helped with career transitions, "I am currently working with a 47 year old client who has been a high level executive assistant for 17 years. She is working with me to realize her dream of being self-employed as an importer of specialty items. I have also been working for quite a while with a 34-year-old former software executive who left the high-tech world a little over a year ago and has now built her own marketing consulting company from her home." Dufour says that according to her clients, coaching has helped clarify their thoughts, and most importantly, to start taking the actions toward their goals that they knew they should have taken years ago. To contact Dufour call 617-876-5309. To find out more about the coaching professions visit the International Coach Federation of New England web site at [www.icfne.org](http://www.icfne.org).

Author's note: A few years ago I took a class at the BCAE on how to get published. Since then my writing has been published nationally and on a regular basis. I also worked with a personal coach, Nancy Levy, Vice President and Community and Member Service Committee Head for the International Coach Federation of New England who helped me to finally focus on my personal goals.