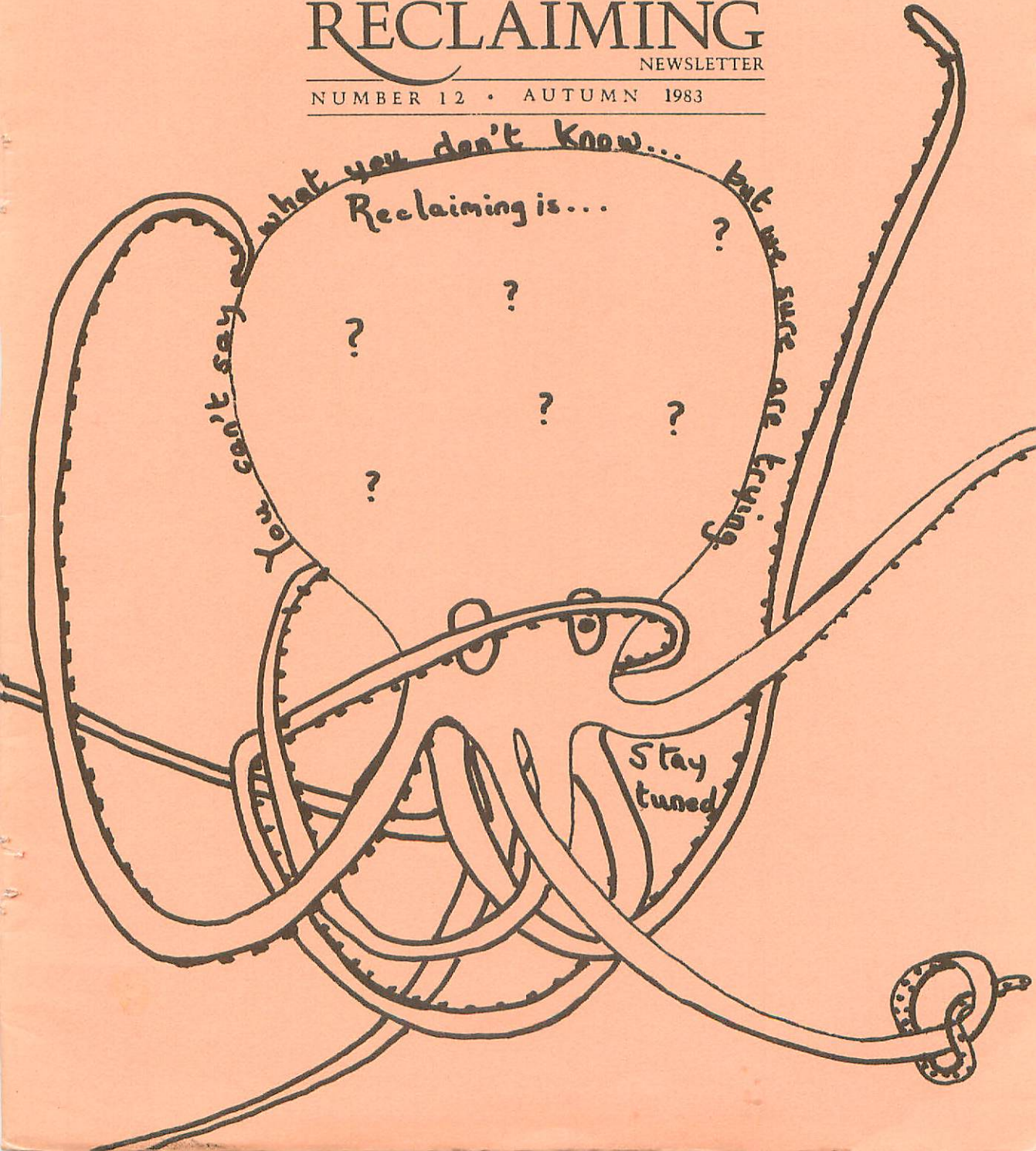


# RECLAIMING

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 12 • AUTUMN 1983



what you don't know...

Reclaiming is...

but we sure are trying.

You can't say...

Stay tuned

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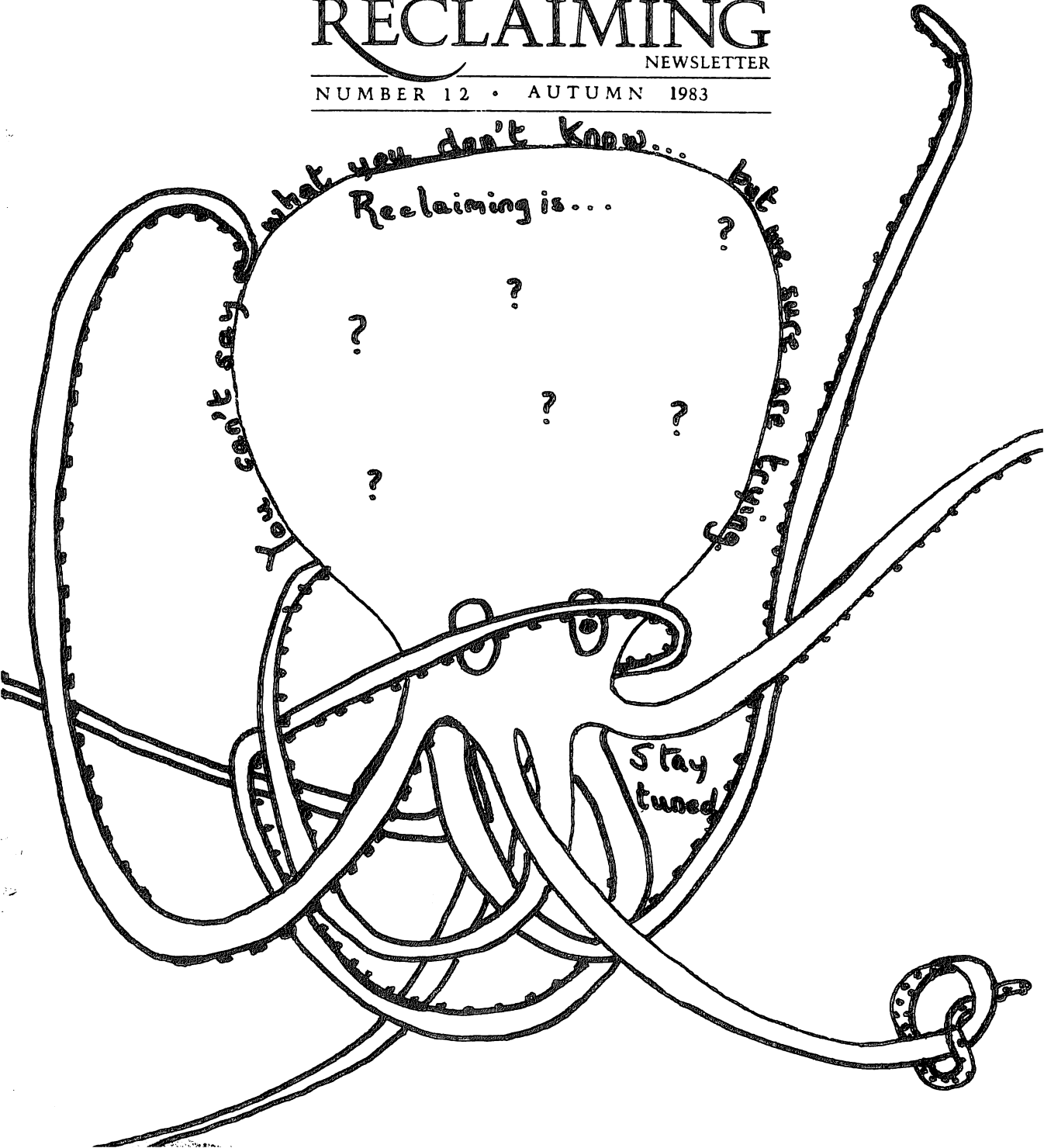
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# RECLAIMING

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NUMBER 12 • AUTUMN 1983



what you don't know... but we're sure are trying  
can't say for sure  
Reclaiming is...  
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Stay tuned

## THE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is a forum for Reclaiming feelings, opinions, facts and controversy. The publication reflects the spirit of the people involved in it and the content of the submissions. If you want it to meet your needs - PARTICIPATE! There is no official membership - the magazine is open to anyone who identifies (or disagrees) with the struggle to unify spirit and politics.

Our production group is currently coordinated by an open group that rotates responsibility. Decisions are made by the entire work group. We always need more members to report, do graphics, typing, layout, bulk mailing, etc. Feel free to come and join us or send in your contributions.

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## SUBMISSIONS

Anyone who submits work is responsible for getting it to the work group in time for layout. The closer to layout you come, the more camera ready the work must be (typed with a carbon ribbon in a 6½" column). We will not take responsibility for chasing down late material.

The Winter deadline is Friday, October 28. Call Events Line for editorial meeting and layout dates. Send material to Reclaiming P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco CA 94114 marked "Newsletter."

## LETTERS and GRAPHICS

The number of letters we are receiving is still increasing. We really appreciate your responses. Don't be discouraged if we don't have room to print what you write straight away or if we have to edit to make space. If you feel we have misrepresented you, please say so.

We are short on interesting graphics, though we have received some good cartoons this issue. Send us more!

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## PARTICIPANTS

This issue was dreamed, coaxed and sweated into existence by Iris May, Shawn, Gaby and Dragon's Tongue.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Shawn Usha, Cerridwen, Roberta Werdinger, Dragon's Tongue, Jim Martin and the letter writers (more and more of them).

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Our SPRING ISSUE will emphasize parody. Feature articles might include "How I Came to Love My Microwave and Still Be PC." Contributions strongly encouraged.



## RECLAIMING MEETINGS

Red carpet invitation to join Reclaiming's working cells or sub-groups; most meetings are announced on the Events Line. Please join us. This is how to "break in" and begin sharing in our collective work. Cells are Newsletter, Public Rituals, Teaching, Music, Archives and Administrative Support. Be Welcome.

## EVENTS LINE 547-4830

The events line is a phone recording to announce events which happen too late to be included in the newsletter. Some are sponsored by Reclaiming, while others come via the grapevine. The number is 547-4830. To put something on the events line, leave a message on our machine. Be sure to include your number.



## LETTERS

Dear Reclaiming,

My days and nights in Honduras were both enlightening and darkening. My summer there spawned much magic and change in me and my spirituality/politics.

The lush immanence and the true harsh realities of the Central American world are lost to us because we are so distantly removed (in time, space, consciousness and context) from what is coming down on a daily basis for these people. All the news and reports remove the context of it all and what is vital is lost to us. We cannot grasp it from sitting in our living rooms watching our tubes. It removes the living from it, the essence that is invisible to the eye. It removes what is essential.

My trip to Honduras and its revelations on the intricate and hideous forms of oppression and dominance has led me to question the effectiveness of all of our webs, circles, rituals, spells and chants, and of any form of protest against it. It is now much easier for me to know my powerlessness against it.

My integrity came into scrutinization; my mouth talked all day and night about oppression and exploitation of simple peasants and farmers and then munches down on some Dole bananas... Much hypocrisy and once again the waves of hopelessness and powerlessness.

This summer has been a season of affirmation, confirmation and decision. I now feel a keen sense of purpose and a reason for all my magical crap. However small and immaterial it may appear, it's just about the only thing I can do. My desire to become more directly involved in acts of empowerment is reinforced and has now been given new meaning and purpose. I now feel sure that the path I've been following is leading me to the power I/we need to reclaim our world. My anger has grown and the energy of its flames must not be wasted. I now feel ready and sure.

Almost-discouraged, Dan Mejia

## MORE LETTERS

Dear Reclaiming,

I didn't attend Reclaiming's May Day ritual, so I may not be addressing the issue properly. However, I did want to respond philosophically to Starhawk's concern over the maypole's representing a heterosexist ritual.

What we celebrate when we celebrate sex is the life force. This has at least a dual nature: 1. The life force as the creation of another creature, in most cases (but not all) effected by the entering of one polar cell by another; 2. The life force as energy, the Kundalini, pleasure, celebration of existence and creation.

Not all of us experience a penis in a vagina. But we all got here that way, except for those of us who were artificial insemination products (or fungi or amoeba). Surely we can celebrate our existence, the result of sperm entering egg. And we can also celebrate the entrance of protuberances of all sorts into orifices of all sorts. I realize that phallus and vagina are the obvious symbols that spring to mind, but how can we deny that for millions of years humans (and others) have reproduced that way? All I'm saying is, don't deny it, just elaborate on it. Hetero- and homosexuals alike can be polymorphously perverse in our loving and our symbology.

The maypole can be seen as our divine spirit, trapped by the DNA/RNA spiral into incarnation. The maypole can be our spiritual community, a foundation for the interweaving of our individual lives. Or it can be the sun that we revolve around. And so on. I don't want to bowdlerize or sanitize May Day, but I think only to see the maypole as a phallus is to ignore many layers of meaning. Please a little subtlety - or else wear your "Fuck me, I'm a pagan" button so I can stay out of the way!

Personally, I feel that May Day is the time of year to fall down and worship sensuality in all its forms. May is frivolous and lusty and not so particular. It's a time to "go blissfully astray" and "make divine mistakes." It's the month of Taurus, of Earth, of being glad we're part of this mad dance of life. Revel in it, lovers of all proclivities.

Blessed be  
Pattie Whitehurst

Dear Reclaiming,

I do not particularly feel that the old 'don't-take-money-for-it' idea is in fact outmoded: it seems likely to me that it points toward the notion of barter (rather than money) which seems already to be expanding within what the national newsmagazines call 'the private sector': people trading goods and services without the need for paper or electronics as a medium of exchange. (I love electronics, and for that matter, paper, but I am not enthralled with money.) Also, there is perhaps room for the notion of a gifting cycle, in which people give of themselves freely, and receive freely as well. Obviously this only works in an atmosphere of full trust and cooperation, which is near-impossible for any group of people to achieve, but who knows what evolution may bring us?

Jon Singer  
Boulder CO

Dear Reclaiming,

In keeping with my beliefs that there is an imminent and constant danger in the threat of nuclear war, I was moved to participate in the June 20 International Day of Disarmament. As a result, my life situation changed. I was held at Santa Rita in a tent under extreme and primitive conditons. The sentences being handed down were as severe (if not more) than my confinement and were unacceptable. I felt my only recourse was to stay and "wait it out," thinking that in our numbers we might have "bargaining power." But by the seventh day, severity of my confinement became too great for me. I went for arraignment on the eighth day and asked that my charge of "obstructing" be dropped as I felt surely I had been punished enough already. I cried when Judge Hyde shook his head "No." I then made my plea. I said "As a matter of conscience, I am forced to plead not guilty" and asked to be released on my own recognizance, which I was. I have never participated in civil defense as a vehicle for change before. I believe my right to dissent becomes a responsibility when I find my government acting without care for human life as well as the life of our planet.

Today, I am faced with going to a "readiness hearing" where I can change my plea, pay a \$240 fine (which I cannot pay as I've lost my job) or go back to jail for 8 or so days, or ask the judge to grant a representative trial (which can be refused) where my/our case/s may be heard.

"The choice is no longer between violence and non-violence. It is between non-violence and non-existence." Martin Luther King, Jr. Something to think about.

Margo Dodds

Dear Reclaiming,

Thanks for your most recent newsletter. I agreed pretty much with Starhawk's appraisal of the Beltane ritual - especially about the unnecessary time taken to teach the group songs which everybody promptly forgot anyway. Plus I busted my butt (if you'll pardon the expression) to make it there by "2 p.m. sharp," as the Events Line recording severely put it, only to wait around an hour or more for the thing to get started (I did help, though). To tell you the truth, next time a Reclaiming event is announced to start at "such and such sharp," I probably won't believe it.

Also, since everybody has seemed to agree with Roy about the need to receive money for Services Rendered, why was the request for donations announced in such a haphazard way, almost as an afterthought, after the ritual ended and everybody was stampeding for the food? (There wasn't enough food, by the way except for some absolutely scrumptious quiche.)

Well, but despite all these matters, we all know that the Goddess of Fog (local Bay Area deity) descended down upon our gathering, redeemed it...

With much love  
Roberta Werdinger

## CREATING A WORLD WORTH SAVING

"He is singing the end  
of the world again,  
he has sung it before--

He dwells in threats of fire, Armageddon, Hiroshima, Saigon,  
and Tyre, Berlin, Gomorrah, Hell itself,  
the story of fire, his theft of it. "Put  
a large wad of flame on  
the wand's tip. Wave it,  
shouting: Fire, Fire."

--Judy Grahn, "Spider Webster's Declaration:  
He is Singing the End of the World Again"

He is singing the end of the world again. He pokes us in our survival chakras with the sharp stick of nuclear holocaust, and we respond, "No!" We will push back the bombs, with our bare, non-violent hands, with our bare minds, with our naked will to live. How not to respond to such primordial threat?

Part of me leaps, automatically, to the challenge. Knee-jerk survival instincts spring into action, and I am ready to channel all my energy, all my heart, into this one cause, the failure of which obliterates all other causes.

Another part of me steps outside of my survival panic, with folded arms and a bitter smile. He has us where he wants us, doesn't he? By pouring all our energy into our determination to save the future from his holocaust, we abandon the present. How can we spare the time to plant trees, save whales, pass the ERA, ensure reproductive freedom, address the evils of racism, when all these things can be evaporated in the menopausal hot flash of a few old men who are soon to die and may as well take it all with them? Certainly we do not have time to create deep, playful rituals, raise free children, nurture our personal bonds, create new ways of relating. How can we think of having time to rest, to love, to dream, when, we tell ourselves, he tells us, not just our lives but the life of the Earth is at stake?

It is a dangerous illusion, this notion that Man has the power to destroy the Earth. The Earth operates on a timescale unimaginable to us. She could spend a billion years mirroring the barren splendor of the Moon, then casually whip up a few diatoms, spin them into a strand of algae in her Cauldron, and start all over. Let's not fall into the ridiculously self-important Patriarchal construct of envisioning the Earth as dependent upon our good will. At the 1981 Medicine Wheel Gathering, Joan Halifax, (Author of Shamanic Voices) warned that if we persisted in our fantasy that we could destroy the Earth, that people--especially women--would become very ill, a prophesy I have seen unfolding in our community. The Hubris Blues.

It is more realistic to say that Man may have the power to destroy Man's habitat. In the advent of nuclear war, humans might well vanish, or be so changed as to evolve into something no longer recognizable as human. From a cosmic overview, I am not so sure this is a tragedy. Species come and go. Of the half billion creatures estimated to have once thrived on this planet, two percent remain. I am a human, and I wish our species to survive for eons to come. But let us be honest and concede that this biosphere which has birthed so many creatures and welcomed them back into the cauldron of darkness can survive our passing as well.

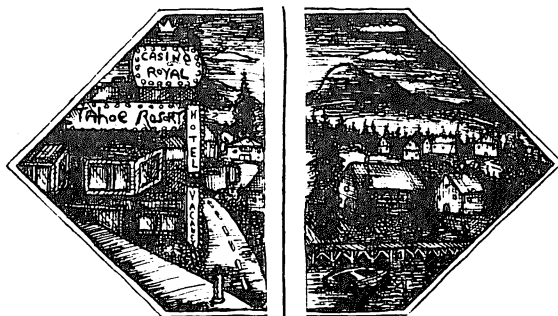
Our mission is not to save the world, but to create a world worth saving. We are creating an environment where humans can live happily with each other and in harmony with the Earth's rhythms. Not sustaining it, not preserving it. Such an environment does not currently exist. And it cannot exist unless we work and play and sweat and will it into being. I have mixed feelings. I am of two minds.

I support the anti-nuclear work we have undertaken. The vindictiveness of the authorities in response to the June Livermore action enraged me, but was also oddly reassuring; the effect we are having is important enough to threaten them. It is a measure of our effectiveness that they flex so much muscle to try to stop us.

And I am concerned. They can dangle the threat of their holocaust over our heads for a long, long time. We can easily allow it to drain us into illness, apathy, and despair, to distract us from the other work we need to do. We must be cunning and canny with our tactics, never sacrificing ourselves except when absolutely necessary. Losing our lives for the cause is showy, but over the long haul, living heroes accomplish more than dead ones. And we must harbor our energies shrewdly, lest we play the mirror game and evaporate in the hot flash of our own intensity. Patriarchy deals in instant solutions. We cannot. The work we need to do is complex and many-armed as Kali. We must ensure that we still have time to love, to play, to create--even to rest. We have tribes of lovers and much loved children to create and nurture, plots of vegetables and anarchy to tend. We have a long cold night ahead of us, and a limited supply of wood, and we must keep the fire burning until dawn.

--Cerridwen Fallingstar

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A





## PROPOSAL TO LAG

I feel that the proposal (presented at the August 14 LAG Congress) that follows Cerridwen's article is relevant and may echo some of her disquietudes in another way. (ed.)

"Our direct experiences of our direct actions, extra-legal, have empowered and excited us all. Our actions revealed our analysis, that nuclear weapons will never be dismantled as a result of mediating our wishes through representatives in the so-called democratic electoral process. Our actions have answered, in deed, the question "Why has the Freeze campaign failed?" We break the law because we have had a taste of real freedom and democracy and now we recognize no other processes but our own.

Once we have tasted this freedom, we realize that we have virtually no decision-making power in any aspect of our daily lives. We see that our choices are all slanted by the enforced logic of need: to pay the rent, the bills, and to feed ourselves. I trade an inordinate amount of time to bosses who give me back nothing more than is necessary to keep me from dying. Then the admen and the politicians promise me an ever-increasing freedom from drudgery and toil.

I think that LAG should connect the disarmament issue with the popular movement for collective, social control of our daily lives. This same issue is posed by many folks in LAG in another way: how can we get more low-income and third-world people to blockade and participate in our process? I would like to turn this question on its head and ask "Why aren't we participating in their process?"

Sick of paying rent? So are many of us. We are pooling our resources and planning to occupy abandoned properties. These run-down, socially useless buildings serve only to perpetuate the scam of high rents and tight housing. Doesn't rent control guarantee spiralling rents? We won't resign ourselves to an intolerable situation. We have realized our collective power versus state power. Are we a single-issue movement? The Machine is having problems. Everywhere."

A working affinity group is forming. Call Jim at 540-7977. Mon., Tues., Wed., days.

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## APPRENTICESHIP

Reclaiming held their first Apprenticeship Program the week of August 7-13. Twelve to fifteen people attended from all over North America. An intensive week of classes, workshops, and special events kept everyone very busy. People were in two different sequences - one fashioned after the Elements of Magic, the other on the Rites of Passage. Some people did parts of both. Many different special events and workshops also happened: African-Caribbean traditions with Luisah Teish, voice with Bonnie Barnett, goddess slide show by Ariadne, geomancy with Feather Singing, chakras with Anodea Judith, past lives with Cerridwen Falling Star, community building, group conflict and political magic. The week culminated in a public waxing moon ritual planned and facilitated by the apprentices. Following are reflections by some apprentices.

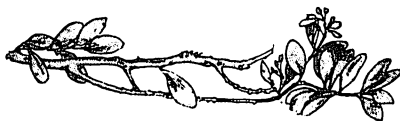
I wish there had been more time for relaxing together - the program was very tightly scheduled. I wanted more time spent one on one or in small groups getting to know people more intimately.

Andraste

Science is one interpretation of reality. And it often "works." Myth and magic is another form of reality that I, as a scientist now also know "works." The two are not opposed. Discovering my psychic capabilities, journeying into myself, and claiming my power are the major accomplishments from the course. Of all the organic farming conferences, radical psychiatry workshops, and just plain fun times I have had with people, I have never before felt so much trust and love so fast with any group. The excitement lies not only in my hopes and dreams for my personal freedom as a woman, but also for the political potential. My hopes for an egalitarian community engaging in "effective" political action to transform our social relations and our whole society is now no longer a source of despair for me. It is an inspiration and a reason to keep going. It will be accomplished. So mote it be.

Linda N.

The main objective I had from this program was to connect with other pagans, get to see friends in Reclaiming and get new ideas and support. I feel I have gotten this over lunch and dinner and by quick conversations. I enjoyed seeing people's altars and seeing the different personalities and how they work their magic.



The Rites of Passage tract gave me a chance to work on my own personal issues. I would like to have seen a women's circle and personal support groups. And the program has felt full and rich. I feel I learned more from models than from specific information and by watching Reclaiming work - both from places of strength and weaknesses - has given me insights for my own teaching and coven group in Atlanta.

Maya Smith

The diversity of the group felt exciting. I appreciate the connections I made. I would have loved for the program to have been at least 2 weeks long. I found myself wanting more in-depth focus on many issues, and more intense rituals. My personal challenges and inner work took me deep...to new vision and resolve.

Kate

Many gifts have come to me this week. With much struggle I dealt with my personal challenge - I feel stronger, calmer, clearer. The lessons came to me in unexpected ways, including experiencing how Reclaiming teachers dealt with various issues that came up and the whole organization in general. I would have liked more in-depth intense stuff which I think was difficult to supply within the format used. Altogether, the week was great, not long enough and wonderfully stimulating and cleansing. Many thanks to Reclaiming for their efforts. Bright blessings.

Ayisha

## ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN

Iris May, Pandora, Deadly

With the art of magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world.

In this class we begin the practice of magic and Goddess spirituality by working with the elements of magic: earth, air, fire, water, and spirit. Techniques will include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, and structuring rituals. Beginning 6-week course, starting Monday, Sept. 12, 7:30 p.m. Call Pandora or Deadly at 641-5836 for registration and location. \$35-90 sliding scale.

## DREAM, TRANCE, AND FAIRY TALES

Feather Singing and Dragon's Tongue

These are interrelated pathways into our inner, mythic realms. Dreams remind us what we need to work on. Working with fairy tales enlarges our symbolic vocabulary and increases understanding of dream messages. With guidance from these stories, we will use trance journeys to intentionally re-enter troublesome dream-scenes, to cross thresholds and reclaim the creative-fantastical and other neglected parts of ourselves. We will play with dreams, act out parts of fairy tales, and mingle archetypal and personal symbols to shape and give meaning to our own life stories. We will return from the mythic realm in a group ritual or trance. Advanced. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic. This is a water class in our four-elements series. A 6-week course beginning Wednesday, October 26, 7:30 p.m. Call Feather 548-3342 or Dragon's Tongue 5668716 for registration and location. \$35-90 sliding scale.

## MUNDANE MAGIC

Raven Moonshadow and Tansy Willow

The art of wonder-working. In this hands-on class, we will discover how herbs, stones, sounds, scents, natural and man-made objects correspond to ourselves and the world around us. Learn how to use natural laws for personal empowerment and apply this knowledge to bend, shape, weave and change reality. Prerequisites: Elements of Magic or instructors' approval. Seven Wednesdays, October 19 - November 28. Call Tansy 282-2659. \$35-90 sliding scale.

## RITES OF PASSAGE for WOMEN AND MEN

Sophia Moondragon and Ariadne

Our ancestors had tribe and shaman to support them through life's crises. Today's culture provides little such support for personal transitions. Yet we can learn to let go of outgrown habits and be free to steer the course of our own lives. In this 6-week class, we will use the power of our group bond to support each other's growth in personal power and vitality. We will learn to ritualize our changes using skills of magic and guided by our dreams and visions. Culminates in a ritual of emergency created by the students. Advanced. Call Ariadne 444-8998 for registration and location. A 6-week course beginning Monday, October 17. \$35-90 sliding scale.

# WORKSHOPS

## THE PENTACLE FOR MEN

Feather Singing and Raven Moonshadow

An exploration of the five points of our inner pentacle: Sex (primal energy), Self, Passion, Pride (self esteem), and Power (effectiveness in the world). Deepening our skills in moving and shaping energy, transforming ourselves in trance, building trust and caring for each other. Understanding the stages of men's lives and transforming male energy. Intermediate. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic. 6 Mondays beginning Oct. 17, 7:30 p.m., ends Nov. 28. Call Feather 548-3342 for registration and location. \$35-90 sliding scale.

## THE PENTACLE FOR WOMEN

Rose May Dance and Deadly.

An exploration of the five points of our inner pentacle: Sex (primal energy), Self, Passion, Pride, and Power (effectiveness in the world). We deepen our skills of channeling and shaping energy, transforming ourselves in trance, storytelling, sound making, and hands-on magic. Also work on group dynamics and group bonding. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic. A 6-week course beginning Monday, Nov. 7, 7:30 p.m. in San Francisco. Call Rose or Deadly, 641-5836. \$35-90 sliding scale.

## TRANCY FACE PAINTING FOR POWER ANIMALS

Feather Singing

I want to share a technique I've developed of painting my face while in a light trance, to evoke power animals or other aspects of my self. It's a doorway into deeper states in ritual, and useful in healing (by strengthening weakened parts of ourselves). Good preparation for Samhain. 1-day playshop, Saturday, Oct. 15, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Call Feather 548-3342 for cost and location. Bring mirror.

MARXISM & WITCHCRAFT: A FORUM. David Kubrin. Using witchcraft and shamanism, Kubrin will present an analysis of the cultural and political role of religion that is more inclusive than Marx's. In contrast to Marx's belief that a revolution in the 19th century had to begin with a critique of religion, Kubrin will suggest that in the 20th century a critique of science and technology--laying bare their colonization of human consciousness--will provide a basis for the re-creation of the revolutionary movement.

November 4, Friday, 8:00 pm at Modern Times. \$2.00.

Cosponsored by Reclaiming and S.F. Socialist School

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THE RESOURCE POOL: Reclaiming teachers are available to teach or to advise ongoing or newly formed groups. Your group can make a contract with one or several of our teachers for a class series or for specific sessions that meet your particular needs. Contact Rose at 641-5836. We will travel.

CLASS COSTS: We ask anyone who takes Reclaiming classes to put some work into our collective (i.e., helping cleanup at rituals, helping to do bulk mailings, gardening, blood bank donations, etc.). We have revised our sliding scale: the 6-week series classes, unless otherwise noted, will be from \$35 to \$90.

IF YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT THE COVER ...

We decided, after much creative cackling, to remove the Reclaiming statement to express a perception of the stress and confusion Reclaiming is going through. Following are our more personal feelings:

I love it, the group creative process was a thrill and a little trickster prodding at dispelling our illusion of consensus is necessary. - Shawn

I'm Scared. - Dragon's Tongue

For the first time in a long time I left a meeting energized instead of drained, very charged with the creative process, glad to be putting out a true reflection of where we are instead of presenting the phony idea that we always have it together. I like the idea of our process being more open and public and think we've plugged into a useful archetypal image. - Iris May

The editorial meeting was fun. We had such a laugh! And look what came out of it--at least a little wickedness. Fairies are not angels. I am relieved we are putting a cover on here that comments directly on our 'current affairs' instead of one that is beautiful but so what. I delight in the letters and articles we're getting and look forward to responses on this too. - Gaby



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#### NOTES ON TEACHERS/FACILITATORS

RAVEN MOONSHADOW is a gentle faerie, scentmaker, and active participant in reclaiming the mysteries.

FEATHER SINGING is a teacher, travelling community worker, and reclaiming of men's myths and mysteries, Celtic seasonal customs and rituals, and geomancy.

SOPHIA MOONDRAGON is a batik artist, teacher, and mother.

ARIADNE is a Holy Terror with a Ph.D. in History of Religion from the University of Chicago.

ROSE MAY DANCE is a teacher, healer, and witch who reads tarot and is committed to doing political magic for the earth, her mother; she also writes.

DRAGON'S TONGUE (Rick Wagner) comes to Reclaiming from pagan practice in Peru and years of verbal and nonverbal group improvisations, study of symbolism, solitary walks, and I-Ching readings in central Illinois.

IRIS MAY MCGINNIS is a feminist working class witch whose main interest is political magic.

PANDORA MINERVA O'MALLORY is a white middle class feminist anti-nuclear activist, a dress maker, and a doll maker, half the time; the rest of the time she is Hannah Clancy, who is merely obnoxious.

TANSY - a sculptor and silkscreen artist whose art has always had magical and symbolic inclinations.

## MORE COMMENTS FROM APPRENTICES

I was led here by the goddess knowing nothing about Reclaiming. After my initial shock to discover that you were all witches, it began to dawn on me that all my life experiences, the things that I knew I had no memory of learning, were being confirmed and expanded in the classes. I hated choosing between classes (I wanted them all) and totally needed a nurturing place to die and be reborn. I let go of my life up to now and feel that I have totally chosen my process and the rest of my life. Thankyou.

Andrea

The apprenticeship program was everything I hoped it would be and more. I experienced cleansing, healing, nurturing, empowerment, death and rebirth. I received training and tools which will take my magical work to higher levels. I came out of the closet. I bonded with kindred who will be close to my heart forever. My head is spinning from doing all that in 6 days.

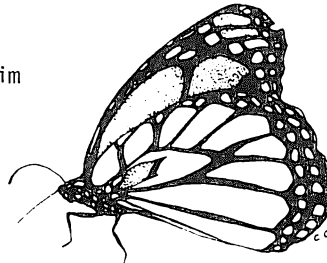
Gloria

I'm a tattoo artist working out of my home in the woods in West Seattle. I very much like being a channel for other people's dreams, fantasies and visions... interpreting abstract concepts as well so they blend with the muscle and bone structure. This form of expression to me is a very primal, instinctual way of bringing out the subconscious realities. The Reclaiming intensive apprenticeship program was a very good thing for me. It opened my head, my heart, my inner psyche, beyond any explanation. This program has restored new hope that people can come together and work together in a positive way to help the evolution of us all. I am very grateful to Reclaiming and to all of the people who came from all over the country.

Vyvyn Lazonga

Journey to the south.  
Fear of my inadequacy.  
Training with Reclaiming.  
Fight the purple octopus  
Who constricts my passage  
With sedative cloudy ink.  
I turn him heartside out  
And bind his legs around -  
Then slit the chords to free him  
With Bee's athame gift.

Susan



## RITUAL SELF CONSCIOUSNESS

A dear friend, an advocate of Jungian psychology, explained to me her discomfort with pagan rituals: "I always feel self-conscious."

A day later, I said, "About self-consciousness: that's part of the point of witchcraft. We don't want to be unconscious, we want to be fully aware of our selves, including those parts we've been taught are childish, silly, and irrational. The only way to be comfortable with and integrate our selves is to invoke them. Since it can't be done rationally, the way we've been brought up, sometimes it's bound to seem silly."

A day later, she said she'd thought some more: she complimented me on my clever play with words.

I wasn't sure she'd gotten the point and I didn't pursue it - she's not that dear a friend - but I've become increasingly aware of how self-consciousness can help and hinder magic, and I'm convinced the matter needs discussing.

The center of the problem is that "I feel self-conscious" often means "I feel silly" or "I feel out of place." An example of uncomfortable self-consciousness: at this year's Beltane ritual, everybody was tired by the time we started dancing around the Maypole, and many seemed impatient or bored or worried about doing it right. People would stop and fuss and the whole dance would seem uncomfortable and pretty silly. In such circumstances it's even sillier to dance with enthusiasm, or to try to build a sexual charge in a crowd including many strangers, or to think dancers weaving in different directions can invoke the year's growing warmth by meeting each other's eyes and dancing with awareness of each other's bodies, bending and turning as we weave around the pole.

When I could muster such silliness, I found it very rewarding, and I send special love to all the sillies of May.

My point is that if we simply wait for the magical powers deep within us to overwhelm our consciousness and drown us in ecstasy, we will wait forever. As witches, we have conscious techniques for evoking the unconscious. We use ritual to cut through the walls, the boxes and justifications, so we can act effectively. Whether we give what we evoke magical or scientific names, we are witches because we know our home-made rituals work, at least sometimes.

The self-consciousness that bothers us in rituals is really fear of judgment. In stead of remaining truly conscious of the earth, our intent, and our selves - our immediate feelings, our histories and herstories, our connections - we focus on what bystanders may think or on whether we think we're being silly. It's tempting to let our own deeply ingrained judgments inhibit us, especially when we're tired and nothing seems to be working very well anyway. I have seen even experienced witches fall short of their aspirations because they skipped "silly details." Why bother grounding this energy . . . won't we do okay anyway? Why bother drawing pentagrams in the air as we invoke the elementals? Why all the mumbo-jumbo? If the power's there, let's use it; if it's not, isn't it silly to pretend?

This is where the science of psychology can help us, where magic and science merge. I draw a pentagram in the air because, having meditated on the pentagram as a symbol of magical wholeness, I can thus re-invoke the power and wisdom of my meditations. I self-consciously use the pentagram as a symbol for complexities I don't wish to delineate further

in the middle of my ritual. Of course, I'm not fully conscious of the associations, and I've never been conscious of many of them - especially the true archetypes - but I know they're there. I use other symbols - words, objects, and gestures - to build a powerful webwork which connects me with my past, with the earth, with other witches, with my hopes and fears. When the power is built, I bend the web to my will. That's magic. It's based on myriad details, any and all of which can be dismissed as silly.

Feeling silly during a ritual? Great! Act silly: do the ritual passionately, throw yourself into it. The fact that you feel silly means you understand at least some of the ritual's intended significance and you realize the ritual doesn't fit your usual judgment of how people should act. If you go ahead and be silly, you fulfill your ritual intent, despite your judgment. The ritual works. If you try to "save face" by stopping or mocking the ritual, you have given in to judgment, and the magic ends. It's that simple.

Feeling alienated? Fine. In a small circle you can bring up your alienation and have it become part of the group's work. If in a large ritual you feel you must stay silent, acknowledge your alienation to yourself, take a deep breath, remember the ritual's purpose, and go on. Let your alienation remain with you; don't try to deny it even if the ritual is for unification. When you accept your feeling and accept the ritual, the feeling becomes part of the ritual.

There's no reason, though, why a cry of "I feel alienated" should destroy a ritual in progress, unless we're all pretending such feelings don't happen. Don't stop and try to talk it out, don't try to forget, don't try anything. A focussed circle will act appropriately, or maybe no action is needed, and rituals are perfect anyway.

Or think about it this way: imagine that you and I have been friends for a while, hugging and kissing when we meet or say goodbye, but not much more. It's Saturday afternoon, and we're sitting in a corner booth in a moderately bright cafe, talking about old lovers. We name names, we remember the good times. We look at our hands, and talk about what really turns us on, who did what best, and how we miss it. Our eyes meet, we ask each other questions, and we both get a gleam in our eyes. We pause, our eyes meet again, and we wonder aloud if we should go to your place or mine. You nervously fumble with a loose fastener in your hair, and I reach over and remove it, allowing your hair to fall over your shoulders like a dark flame. I drop my hand onto your thigh.

Now, maybe you think of all the people who might see. Maybe you feel violated, maybe you get pissed off, maybe you walk out, maybe I wish I hadn't touched you.

Or maybe you're exquisitely conscious of how it felt when my fingers tangled briefly in your hair, how your hair felt falling loose about you, how I pressed your clothes closer to your flesh; so when I lean close you meet my lips with clear intent, as if we've created our private circle within this cafe, and nothing else matters.

Most likely, though, you're human, and although you're aware of a certain heat generated by my gestures, you're also aware of our surroundings. You blush, stand up, and take my hand, leading me out of this essay and into your life, self-conscious in the most delicious way.

- Dragon's Tongue





## MIDWEST PAGAN GATHERING

The fourth annual Midwest Pagan Gathering was held Summer Solstice week near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Approximately 450 people attended the week-long event, held on private land with a small river and some woods providing very necessary relief to the intense heat. The most persistent sounds were background noises of farm machinery harvesting hay and the persistent hiss of aerosol insect repellents. I soon figured out that for many people this was their annual vacation, and supplies appropriate for a comfortable week were brought. Also, many people had been at all four gatherings and the event has a feel of a family reunion.

I arrived in the middle of the week after staying here for Livermore and quickly decided to truly take a vacation and after a late rising spent most of the day at the river. The evenings were filled with a different large community ritual each night. I enjoyed these immensely. A full moon corn maiden ceremony based on Navaho traditions started solemnly with a procession into the circle, a cleansing by smoke, and a centering by painting stripes or dots on foreheads with flour paste. With invocation of the quarters the energy changed. Those priestessing gathered in the center, menacingly stalked towards the east, and broke into a screaming charge and "assaulted" those in the circle with silly toys--plastic baby hammers, kazoos, party streamers, etc. The Trickster had arrived. The ritual continued with much seriousness and Trickster energy. During the God invocation the Trickster called out insults, the ceremonial corn meal and tea turned into a mild food fight, those appearing bored were goosed by the Trickster accompanied by a call of "Bora Bora" (which turned into a standard greeting between people the rest of the week). After the ceremony a brief explanation of the importance of absurdity as a balancing agent in the world was given. I felt inspired to bring more trickster energy to our rituals.

Another aspect of some rituals I enjoyed was a complexity of and ease at shifting around to different cultural sources within a ritual. One ritual contained Native American-inspired drumming and chanting, a Diana Ross song, and belly dancing.

Mostly I met many people, renewed some old friendships, and enjoyed myself. I found the strength and dynamic energy of the community there encouraging and refreshing. Practical developments like the IWW--International Weather Workers, a Midwest network developing weather skills and exploring possibilities of working on a regional basis on diverting severe storms around cities--suggest the possibility of coordinated, conscious efforts to deal with earthquakes. There were the usual problems like paranoia and secrecy concerning the locals, and the morning village meetings were boring and a hassle (a chant "Come on people let's be swift, get this meeting over quick" usually started the meeting). I came home inspired and renewed.

--Shawn Usha



## PAGAN ACTIVIST NETWORK

A national pagan activist network formed at the Midwest Pagan gathering. Through a series of meetings--some quite serious, others very funny--the beginnings of what will evolve into a vibrant and sustaining network of politically active pagans were planted. Starting with reporting on ourselves and our communities, we were delighted to find a similarity of concerns. Then we planned and priestessed a political empowerment ritual which we titled Concrete Transformation, planning for both the change of oppressive technologies, often made of concrete, and for tangible change. The ritual had about a hundred participants and we wove a massive web with black, red, and white yarn and sent the energy out to many places.

Finally we figured out some specifics of what we were trying to do. The form of a quarterly newsletter was developed. One person would coordinate it, xeroxing and putting together what was sent in, with a small mailing list of people acting as information gatherers and distributors of the newsletter in their communities. The content, which generated much unresolved discussion, is quite open now, with a focus on political events, civil rights and harassment issues, reports on actions, and political essays of concern to pagans. The first issue is available now. This is an excellent way to hear about kindred spirits in other parts of the country and to contribute your concerns and events to others. Nurturing a network like this into existence is difficult but has much potential for building a stronger movement and a supportive family of friends across the country. If you wish to know more or receive the newsletter contact me.

Shawn Usha 829 56th St. Oakland CA 94608 (415) 547-4832

NOT THE SPIRAL DANCE: As of press time there are no plans for a Spiral Dance. The energies of our community have gone elsewhere. Anyone with energy for planning a Samhain Ritual leave a message on Events Line. Stay tuned to Events Line for any announcements.

## BLOOD SACRIFICE

Reclaiming has received an award for its high level of participation in the Blood Bank account. Many thanks to those who have been donating! But don't sit back. We can always use more people to give. Call Irwen Memorial Blood Bank at 567-6400 to find the blood bank nearest you.



## OTHER CLASSES

GEOMANCY: SACRED ECOLOGY/METAPHYSICAL ARCHITECTURE  
Feather Singing

An ancient art/science once used to maintain the earth spirit's vitality and keep all human activity in harmony with natural patterns. 4-week course exploring principles and history from megaliths to cathedrals to cities, in China, Europe, and North America. Uses of megalithic sites for communication, rituals for attuning with human and earth cycles, and transformations. Sacred Geometry, ley lines, practice dowing and channeling energy. The rebirth of geomancy and possibilities for balancing magic and technology. Four Thursdays, beginning Oct. 27, 7:30 p.m., East Bay. \$36. Call Feather 548-3342 for registration and location.

INTRODUCTORY SLIDE SHOWS on GEOMANCY

Thursday, Oct. 13, 7:30 p.m., San Francisco, \$4-7.

Friday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m., East Bay, \$4-7. Call Events Line 547-4830 for locations.

CELTIC COLLEGE: Jim Duran will be helping An Claidheamh Soluis, an Irish arts organization based in NYC, to set up a Celtic College at D-Q University near Davis, CA. An exciting curriculum of courses in the life, language, arts and lore of the Celtic peoples is integrated with courses in the traditions of the Native American peoples. For enrollment contact Carlos Cordero, V.P. for Academic Affairs, D-Q University, P.O. Box 409, David CA 95617.

CLASSES by Jim Duran on 'The Druids', 'Spouses of the Earth', 'Women and Power in Celtic Society', 'Brighid', 'The Celtic Triple Goddess of Sovereignty' and 'Samhain' will be ongoing on Saturdays and Sundays in September and October. Call Jim at 535-1086 for more information, or leave a message at 525-4091.



## Announcements

THE INSTITUTE FOR CELTIC STUDIES is looking for members at \$10 a year. For information write to the Institute, P.O. Box 44, Oakland CA 94604.

HARVEST MOON CONCERT: Holly Tannen at Freight & Salvage, 1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley on Thursday, September 22 at 8:30 p.m.

Women and men interested in exploring connections between philosophy of science holistic biology and re-emerging aspects of pre-patriarchal relationships, contact Carol at 526-6543.

ABOUT NOTICES: Notices are for any announcements of concern to the community. For services or classes charging money include \$5.00 for 1-5 lines and \$10.00 for 6-10 lines. Other announcements are free. Thank you.

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAKE YOUR DREAMS REAL. I have been making charms, pouches, clothing, and decorations from my own dreams and trances for years; now I feel ready to do this for others. If there is a magical object that you've met in dreams and you want to make it real call me. I will treat your dreams gently if you will share their inspiration. I work with leather, bone, clay, feathers, wood, metal, fabrics, and will try almost anything. I will want money or barter in exchange for my time and energy. Here's to inspiration! Tansy, 282-2659.

FOREVER FORESTS TREE PLANTING: December 30 - January 1. For further info, write Box 212, Redwood Valley, CA 95470.

WANTED: Solutions to mundane household problems particularly afflicting witches (i.e., wax removal from rugs, etc.). We are compiling a book and credit will be given for each problem solved. Send ideas to STONE CREED COVEN c/o Dorothy A. Mannix, 1905 Fulton Rd., #4, Cleveland, OH 44113.

POMEGRANATE: The pomegranate collective, associated with Reclaiming, offers counseling and bodywork within a spiritual and political framework. For information, call 431-4492.

RITUAL MAGIC MASSAGE: bodywork for relaxation and transformation. Sliding scale. Ariadne, 444-8998.



SUBSCRIPTIONS

To receive issues of the Newsletter at home, send your \$\$ subscriptions to Reclaiming, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco CA 94114.  \$3-\$10 one year;  \$6-\$20 for two years;  minimal income, cannot donate.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

We want to hear from you!

I am  renewing because:

I am  not renewing because:



# CALENDAR

## September

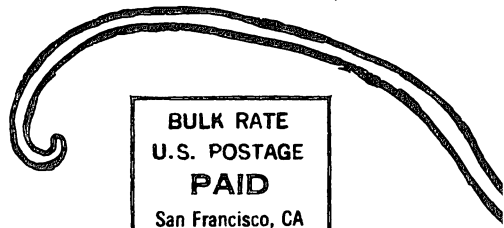
- 10 Druids: An Indo European Priesthood
- 12 Elements for Women
- 17 Spouses of the Earth: Sacred Kings in Old Irish society

## October

- 1 Women and Power in Celtic society
- 8 Brighid: Pagan Goddess and Christian Saint
- 9 Druids: An Indo European Priesthood
- 15 Face Painting for Power Animals
- 15 The Celtic Triple Goddess of Sovereignty: The Great Queen
- 17 Rites of Passage for Women and Men
- 17 Pentacle for Men
- 19 Mundane Magic
- 26 Dream, Trance and Fairytales
- 29 Samhain: The Celtic Feast of the Dead (class)

## November

- 4 Marxism and Witchcraft
- 7 Pentacle for Women



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