

RECLAIMING

NEWSLETTER

Number 18

SPRING 1985





The Events Line is back!

It's 849-0877, listed under Reclaiming in Berkeley. This phone recording carries announcements which come up too late to be put in the newsletter; it's also a phone number to contact us (but be aware we can't always reply quickly). We'd like your comments on what should (or should not) be recorded, now that we're starting afresh after 6 months. Should we attempt to carry notices outside of the usual public rituals and Reclaiming classes? If you have news of interest, please pass it on. Messages can be left on the machine or sent to the P.O. box; remember to say where we can reach you with questions and allow plenty of time.

-- The Recording Faerie

The opinions expressed in the articles and advertisements in this Newsletter belong to the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the attitudes or opinions of the newsletter staff or other Reclaiming members.



SUBMISSIONS

The Newsletter staff encourages more non-Reclaiming people to submit articles, paragraphs, or graphics related to political, pagan, or spiritual issues and happenings.

Submissions, whether we print them or not, eventually find their way into our cauldron, so please keep copies for yourself.

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 3 3/4 " column). We will not take responsibility for chasing down late material. (Ha!)

The Summer Newsletter deadline is May 15. Send material to RECLAIMING, PO Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114, marked, "Newsletter".

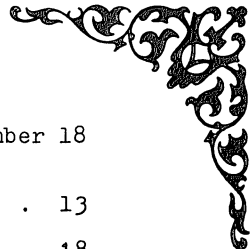


HELP! WE NEED YOUR BLOOD! If you can donate blood into Reclaiming's account (#1913) at Irwin Memorial Blood Bank (567-6400 for information/appointment), please do so. If you or a loved one need blood for surgery, etc., contact Rose at 641-5836 for transfer. If the Goddess blesses you with good health, please share and give the gift of life. And many thanks to our donors.



This issue was put together by Irene, Rick, Rose, and Roy. Four sweeter individuals have never existed. Including Mother Theresa, Damuzi, Jesus, and Beth March.





Schedule 13

Letters 18

Articles

Trance Them Plants by Rose May Dance 3

Religion and Revolution in Nicaragua by Starhawk 4

Holy Well and Sacred Flame by Kelly Quirke 9

Witches and Abortion by Ann Forfreedom 11

Abortion: Exploring Spiritual Alternatives --
An Invitation by Julia and Irene 12

Designer Genes and the New Technology
by David Kubrin 17

Speculations on the Possibility of Magical Community
by Roy King 19

Dear Mr. President by Amy Miller 22

The Eight Great Habits by Cerridwen Fallingstar 23

Book Review

Working Inside Out: Tools for Change, Margot Adair,
reviewed by Feather Singing 15

Poetry

Terminus Minor by George Hersh 3

Why the Women Came to the Grove
by Roberta Werdinger 7

Poems by Roy King 8

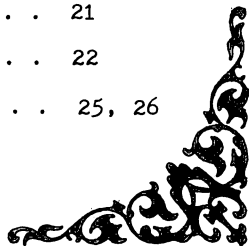
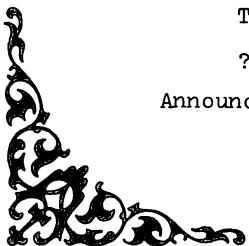
Brigid by Patti Levey 10

New Moon Invocation by MadKat 10

The Darkest Jewel by Roy King 21

? Is This the End of Time? by Amy Miller 22

Announcements/Ads 25, 26





Trance them Plants --by Rose May Dance

For this project you need a plant (preferably outdoors), or a candle, or a very relaxed chihuahua. Ok. Loosen any constricting clothing. Arrange yourself before the subject, which we are going to call a plant for simplicity's sake. Try to get as good and free and solid a posture as you can. A posture where your bones are stacked nice and straight on top of each other, and the breath moves freely in and out, up and down. Breathe deeply and feel how your breath can go straight down into the ground. Breathe in and out, up and down, until you can get a gentle column of fire, of electricity coming up from the earth, up the column of your spine, up and down and around your whole body.

Feel how there is a spiral of your own energy whirling and whirling down into the ground as you breathe, and there is another spiral whirling the other way up from the earth into your body, your breath, and the two spirals move together, filling you and making you vibrate, tingle, expand, contract, in and out, up and down.

Feel the part of you, Deep Self, that is connected to All-That-Is, to God/dess, expressed, contained in this double spiral. Breathe in and out, up and down, round and round. Be aware, with your eyes, hands, womb, heart, spine, mind, with every part of you, aware of the plant. How its motion, essence is in and out, up and down, round and round in spiraling life, streaming, living. (If you are working with a candle, check it out--the fire and candle have this motion also.)

Be aware of the plant's connection to All-That-Is, to God/dess. Once again keep aware of your roots, the column of fire that spirals in and out and up and down from the ground, to the ground. Slowly and gently find the way in which the plant connects to the ground, to the place it stands. When you are ready let a part of your being travel down your spine and into the ground and up into the plant.

Rest here and breathe, in and out, up and down, round and round. Feel. Know. Love. Be aware. Breathing up and down, in and out, round and round. Notice what comes in and out of your awareness. Breathing. Share healing, share knowledge, share/be God/dess.

When you are ready, gently come back into your body, breathing, in and out, up and down, round and round, look at the plant, thank it, ask for blessing, send blessing, and slowly come back to your normal state, dialing down your third eye and your other centers of awareness to a commonplace level. Bend over and touch the ground and let any extra energy seep into the earth. Know how you are connected to All-that-Is. Blessed be.



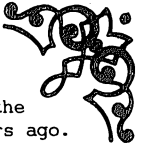


TERMINUS MINOR

The salt marsh harvest mouse is dying out;
Her belly brown where other mice wear white.
They seek to kill their shadows on the ground.
She climbs the weeds above the tide in light.

The salt marsh harvest mouse has done no wrong.
No hunter spreads her pelt in pride of chase.
Only the place she lives is valued ground.
Asphalt, not atoms, serves to end her race.

George Hersh





RELIGION AND REVOLUTION--NOTES FROM NICARAGUA
by Starhawk

In December of '84, I spent two weeks in Nicaragua as part of a special delegation of Witness for Peace which is a primarily Christian church-based group that maintains fifteen long-term volunteers in Nicaragua who collect first-hand accounts of conditions, attacks, and developments there, and aid short-term delegations in visiting the country, especially the border regions, as nonviolent witnesses of the people's struggle. I went on Witness's first Jewish delegation. Although I am devoutly pagan in my spiritual practice, I am Jewish by birth, culture and upbringing and welcomed a chance to reconnect with some of my roots as well as to participate in the Witness with a group for whom I could feel more spiritually connected than I could with Christians. The following are some of my reflections on the trip.

War

In Nicaragua, we are always hearing the sounds of mortars and fireworks. The mortars rumble in the battles off in the rugged hills, where the "compas"--companeros, the Sandinista troops and local militia, straggle off crammed pickup trucks, to search out the nests of the U.S. backed and trained contras.

The contras come in from Honduras, or up from their secret bases in Costa Rica. They have given up their attempts to gain and hold actual territories--now they simply pursue a policy of terror and destruction. They attack health care workers, teachers, the workers who repair telephone lines and handle the mail, the workers who go out to pick cotton or cut coffee. In the five years since the revolution, 8000 Nicaraguans have lost their lives in the continual war. Here, in this border region of vulnerable small towns and settlements up dirt roads in the rugged mountains that back on Honduras, there is not a family that hasn't lost something--a son, a daughter a friend, the freedom to walk in the hills,--in the revolution or the raids that continue.

A few days before we arrive, twenty workers for Telcor--the telephone and postal service--are ambushed and shot on the road from San Juan de Limay to Estelli. A young girl is kidnapped from a private car, and the battered old truck that serves as the only transport from town of Limay--nicknamed "El Thermo" because people ride in it as if packed into a thermos--is attacked, burned, the townspeople shot or kidnapped. One of the young men who disappears is the third son of his family to

fall victim to the war--one dead in the revolution, the second kidnapped years ago. Now his family sets up a vigil on the road outside Limay, waiting, with placards and faith, praying for his return out of the green surrounding hills.




Mortars sound in the hills beyond Achuapa. There is fighting near Limay. Days ago the contras cut the telephone wires--now Telcor workers are afraid to go into the area to repair them. They are targets, as they string their wires to weave the fabric of communication the revolution must have to survive. Targets, as is the doctor who orients us to the clinic in Somotillo, leaning, relaxed, on his desk while his rifle reposes, end-up, in an empty box of medical supplies. Targets, like Maria Hernandez, a thin woman with a sweet, tired smile in the orange dress in the co-operative of los Ornos, tucked away in a green meadow an hour up a dirt road that is mostly ruts and pits. Maria is twenty-nine--she has five children, she lives on land that before the revolution belonged to one wealthy supporter of Somoza and now is worked by twelve families--8 of whom are the families of the grown sons of one father. Before the revolution, she says, "I knew nothing--nothing." She learned to read in the literacy campaign. Now at nights after a day of field work and child care, she learns from the adult teachers who come to the co-operative to teach ongoing education, agriculture, techniques.

We ask--in this place of green serene beauty treacherous in its isolation, if the people are afraid. Constantino Mejias, the "responsable"--the responsible one, coordinator for the co-op, tells us, "We were afraid before, because we had no weapons. Now the Sandinistas have given us 8 guns--and with these we feel disposed to win or die."

Targets. "The earth is our mother" says the responsible in the new co-operative of Santa Theresa with its swarms of children with lice in their hair and worm-swollen bellies, its bad water from the river, its brave, new brick houses and its unending work in the hot sun. "The earth is our mother, and we will defend her with our lives."

We hear the mortars in the hills, like thunder. We see the young men crowd into the trucks to go fight, singing. A young boy is with them--11 year-olds can join the militia although they do not carry arms.





We ask the women of the town how they feel to see the children going off to war. "We are proud of their spirit and their courage," the women say.

A cross by a roadside. Here fell Donaso Zeledon Ubeda, April 8, 1979. Three months and eleven days before the victory. "Presente" --He is still present with us. "El sacrificio su vida por nosotros y en esto conocido el amor." "He gave his life for us and in this we have known love."

The mortars are the background sound, the ominous undercurrent of daily life. Pigs and chickens scratch in the dust of border towns, circling endless round through the dry streets, wandering into yards, browsing through the tall double doors that open each home to the streets and the breezes. An oxcart rumbles by--I have seen its shaft and solid wheels engraved on the cylinder seals of ancient Sumer. Men ride into town on horseback wearing cowboy hats--this is the Wild West with Aka submachine guns instead of Winchester rifles slung across men's backs.

This is a land that could have come straight out of our American fantasies, where there are outlaws in the hills, bandits on the roads, shoot-outs between the good guys and the bad guys. How the boys would love a war here! Is this our true interest in this place--the last opportunity for a generation of Americans raised on TV and Ronald Reagan movies to play out the game of cowboys and Indians?

Spirit

The war, omnipresent, is background. In the foreground are the sharp reports of fireworks, exploding with exuberance to celebrate the festival of the Virgin, La Purisima. For Nicaragua is a fervent country, a devout country where religion is much more than pious prayers in a dusty church. The spirit here, like the land, is volcanic, alive with a hidden, molten fire that bursts forth in fiestas, explosions, in the sparks that lit the revolution.

Over and over again, people insist on making clear to us that Nicaragua is a Christian country. They are incensed at Reagan's propaganda that the Sandinistas are anti-church.

"There are two churches here," says Ernestina Reyes de Luis, one of the Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs. Her son Rudolpho Reyes Toruno fell on the day of victory in the attack on Matagalpa. "There is the

the church of the poor, and the church of the capitalist."

The church of the capitalists, of the bishops, of Obanda Y Brava, critic of the Sandinistas, of the Pope who refused to bless the Sandinista government, still holds the buildings, the land, the official authority. It has not been molested, dispossessed, its buildings have not been expropriated. But it is losing, to a great extent, the allegiance of the people. for the people are turning to the church they perceive has their own interests at heart.

"We are Christians," they tell us again, but the Christ they invoke in the Church of the poor is an imminent Christ, a Christ who like the other fallen heroes and martyrs is still "present", who walks among us and within us, the Christ of the Misa Campesino, the peasants' mass, "Jesus is a truck driver changing the wheel on a truck. Jesus is a man in a park buying a snow cone and complaining that he didn't get enough ice."

The church of the poor is the church of the Delegates of the Word, lay preachers, campesinos themselves who teach and preach and above all encourage the people to read the gospels for themselves, in their own language, to interpret the stories themselves. Here, in these slow and dusty villages, the life of Jesus seems contemporary--he too lived in sunbaked shacks, with the animals wandering in and out, with the people trudging off to the fields behind the oxen. And what the people read in the gospels becomes the concrete practice of revolution--to serve the poor, to work for justice, to share what people have. "The revolution," says Constantino Mejias, "reminds us of when Christ walked on the earth."

This is the truth Reagan does not want the Christians of the U.S. to know--that this is a religious revolution, that as much as it might be sparked from the doctrines of Marx, it is fired more strongly by the teaching of Jesus--interpreted in a spirit so open, so alive, that even I, inveterate Jew and pagan as I am, find myself inspired.

We attend a mass in Somotillo for the murdered Telcor workers. The priest, Father Angel, calls on a God who is "Our father, our mother--whatever we say, however we conceive God, we know that God is not separate, not far from us."





"Entre Christianismo y revolucion, no hay contradiccion!" Between Christianity and revolution, there is no contradiccion!

Religion is not separate from the revolution, not separate from Comandante Thomas Borge, only one of the original Sandinistas to survive the revolution, who survived nine months of torture in Somoza's jails, who is targeted by the Reagan Administration as the most Marxist of the Sandinista leadership. After the victory of the revolution, Borge, it is told, confronted the man who jailed and tortured him. "I swore to you before," Borge said, "that I would take revenge on you. Now--this is how I will revenge myself--I am going to forgive you." He let the man go.

The Mother

But alongside the church of the poor and the church of the rich exists another church --a religion not much spoken of, the religion that lives with fireworks and fiestas, with processions and marches and rituals and that is above all the religion of the Virgin, the mother.

"Que causa tanto alegria--la concepcion de Maria!" is the cry of the night of Gritando, the Shouting, part of the festival of La Purisima celebrating the conception and fertility of the Virgin Mary. What causes so much joy? The Conception of Maria! Early in December, people set up altars in their doorways, with statues of the Virgin and white flowered branches, with fruits and candles and whatever else catches the eye--Sandinista flags, perhaps. They invite their neighbors to their houses for special foods and ritualized giving of gifts, and they wander through the streets, shouting their joy to Mary, singing songs and partying through the night.

In Corinto, the port town whose harbor was mined by the U.S., fireworks explode on the Eve of the Winter Solstice in honor of the local miraculous Virgin, the Virgin of Acta, who visits Corinto for ten days of wild fiesta in the depths of winter. Here, at the very time of year when we northern pagans sit vigil with the Mother, awaiting the year's birth, the whole town is alive with the celebration of female spiritual power. The Virgin is carried in procession on the backs of women, with floats, noise and a small brass band, and installed in the front room of a house on one of

Corinto's dirt streets. We join a crowd of people cramming their way into the open room, who generously open a path to let the Gringos in. Up front is a small, carved wood statue of a woman, with beatific face, long black ringlets, and a blue cloak draped over her black sombrero. She is dressed in white satin and lace and elevated on a pedestal. Below, a blond angel points rapturously to her face, and draped at their feet are scrolls that say in Spanish "Do not fear, God is with you."

The people are silent in devotion, or murmur prayers. A woman starts a hymn and the voices take it up, wailing in unison and raising power in that small bare room, power that collects in the outstretched hands of the Virgin, in her blessing. I stand motionless, the enraptured outsider. Here, where I had expected to feel spiritually alien, I feel that I have come home to a people who are worshipping my religion.




At midnight, new explosions call us out. A man dashes up and down the street, his head and upper body encased in a structure of wooden slats with a stylized bull's head on the front. Fireworks are affixed to the wood, and they explode in showers of sparklers, roman candles, and shooting blazes as he chases the laughing crowd up the street and around the corner, while the brass band plays. It is the Solstice, light and fire chase away the darkness, and the Virgin and the bull are linked in counterpoint, the twin pillars of a living spirit here and now as they were linked in the caves of prehistory and the first towns of the ancient mother-right.

The vigil goes on all night. At sunrise, the band plays, the fireworks in undiminished supply explode again through the streets, and the Virgin is carried to another house--this one directly across from the Baptist Church, where again the people, led by a woman, pray and sing until the sun is well up. Then the Virgin is strapped again to an old woman's back, three other crones help support her glass case, and she is carried off, with the people following and singing, "Adios!"

Questions

The trip to Nicaragua has left me with much to ponder. I was inspired by the integration of spirituality and politics as part of a living force working to transform society. I felt the work many of us have





been doing for years was validated by the living reality of the Sandinista revolution--and at the same time I felt deeply challenged. I wonder if we will ever be able to create something so vibrant, so far-reaching, so real. I found myself in some way deeply shaken by seeing so much of what I have talked about, written about, preached about, in practice. Maybe deep in my heart there has been for years a little voice whispering --"It can't really happen--not in your lifetime--not real transformation." That voice is one of despair--but also of comfort. It is the ultimate excuse, the way out of facing the hard questions of what we really need to do to bring change about. Maybe without awareness I depend on that voice to cushion the defeats, the failures, the frustrations. How scary to take that cushion away, to face the potentials, and the failures, raw. But where there's fear, there's power.

And I am still left with unanswered questions. As a woman, as a Witch, as a Jew, I know intimately a history of two thousand years in which Christianity has far more often been an oppressive force than a liberating force. Why is it different in Nicaragua? I can't answer that after only several weeks stay, but I suspect the question will be a highly fruitful one for our own understanding of where we want to go in our own movements.

Meanwhile, the war goes on. What becomes of the revolution depends greatly on whether it can resist the economic and military pressures on it that stem, directly or indirectly, from the policies of the U.S. government, and on how much the ideals of the revolution must be warped to withstand those pressures.

The Challenge

There is much that we can do. Congress will vote this Spring on whether to resume funding of the contras. We can write our own Congresspersons, lobby, march, demonstrate. In many cities, the Emergency Response Network is receiving pledges by thousands of people to do or support civil disobedience should the U.S. directly invade Nicaragua--that's an important strategy to deter an invasion, but we also need to make people aware that the war is already going on. Solidarity groups need money (I've listed two below). If it is possible, I urge you to go to Nicaragua, to see for yourselves what is going on there, to learn from the Nicaraguan people.



Ultimately, we need to look more deeply at how we can transform ourselves and this society, so that we can devote our energies to something more creative than dragging our feet against the onrush of destruction --necessary as that work is--and become true partners in the work of bringing to life the alegria--the joy--of this living, feeling being who is our mother earth.

Addresses

Madre, 5825 Telegraph Ave., Ste. 55, Oakland, CA 94609. Supports women's projects, hospitals, day-care centers, and food distribution in Nicaragua.

Witness for Peace, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 94609.

Witness for Peace Hotline, (eyewitness news and updates on the current situation--changes every Tuesday) 202-332-9230.



Why the Women Came to the Grove on the Cold Winter Night



There were certain wicks to be lit,
Certain herbs to be picked,
Certain clouds to be kissed.

There were certain hollows to be smoothed,
Certain shadows to listen to,
Certain currents to sing through.

Yes, and there were certain pine-cones to crush
Certain tree-tops to love,
Certain small deer to hunt.

And there were certain steps to be danced,
And certain robes to fly open and
catch certain winds.

And there were certain
Moons to be swallowed whole,
leaving certain silver paths throughout
the spine's length,
& others to be sipped
slowly like certain nectar,
& certain moons to put
back into the black sky-saucer
as gently as a bone-white china tea cup
is returned to its certain round place.

Now these are the certain circles they will make.



I am the sperm of the sun
 I enter in the dark phase of the moon
 To rain upon the tossing ocean swells
 And sink into the deepness of her womb

Into the wet belly of life
 I smuggle the burning secret of the stars



Long live the wolf
 Long live the hawk
 Long may the winds shake seeds from the pines
 Long may the rivers cut canyons
 through this living land.

Soon may the blind hearts wake
 to this splendid, shining world

Return from the grip of greed to humble honor
 in awe of this creation
 Or else fall like empty husks under winter rain.

Long live the blacksnake
 Long live the cricket
 Long live the dolphin
 Long live the mother who suckles the beast of change.



the Magician

i am the Animal
 my hackles rise
 at the rock moon
 falling through hollow skies
 i am the Seer
 of wild cryptic places
 whispering secret breath
 with serpents
 i am the Witch
 i worship the dirt
 i worship the elusive flesh
 tinder of the spark
 i am the Healer
 half man half woman
 i am whole
 i am the Spirit
 growing with slow growing stone
 rising with the body of air
 i follow the spinning stars
 turning into night
 i am the Shaper
 within the heart of mystery i sing
 my love
 the murderous joy of change





Eds.' note: On Feb. 2, Matrix Affinity Group offered a ritual, attended by over 200 people, for Brigid. The purpose of the ritual was to transform political despair into healing power and to forge renewal. The ritual had a script, poems, songs, chants, and litanies. It happened at The Farm, and was a benefit for Livermore Action Group.

HOLY WELL AND SACRED FLAME

--Kelly Quirke

Elated, exhausted, renewed, proud, joyous and hoarse--by the time the circle had been opened and the feasting had begun at the L.A.G. Benefit Brigid Ritual, I felt all these. As I wandered and chatted my way through the grins and sighs and hugs of the feasting crowd I felt myself glowing and saw the glow reflected on all the shining faces illuminating the room. Many "wows" were expressed. We had done good, and done it well.

In the hour before the ritual, as, I'm told, the anxiety mounted for some, the fascination and excitement grew for me. Brigid was a holiday of renewal, and hours before the ritual I was already feeling rejuvenated. So many people about--so many familiar, so many recognized but unseen for so long. And so many new filled with verdant energy. Everyone blessed by the crossed tapers as they entered the room, a room full of connections, connections old and new and growing.

All the participants amazed me. The pre-ritual briefing appeared unnecessary, as people seemed to know what to expect in the ritual, how to ground, how to find and raise the energy, and how to emote. For this I believe Matrix and Reclaiming deserve great praise. For the participants had learned their magical skills and gained this confidence since learning and practicing them in the jails with Matrix and the classes of Reclaiming. And since Diablo '81 we have all become a force for change, dedicated and tempered.

The skills and confidence seemed never more in evidence than during the recital of the Litany of Defeat, when Roddy and I tried to recite some of the losses of the year past as everyone mourned in their separate groups. The mourning and rage expressed were astounding. No script seemed necessary, since any defeats we could conceive were already or soon to be called out. The centeredness and knowledge of ritual were again evident in the shared beauty and rejoicing of the Victory Litany and the placing of the candles on the stage. I remember standing then, and looking to the West at the view over all the heads to the ocean of individual flames on stage. The power and gladness I felt then and the beauty I saw stay with me.

It was important for me at that point to feel re-connected because several times earlier I had slipped in and out of the web of energy. Having a role in a great public ritual like this has a price, for it is often difficult to feel and become part of the energy. I especially felt apart while drumming. The drums were outside the circle and it was hard to remain focused while alternately moving in and out of the circle. The center became scattered for me, too, during the last lengthy round of dancing. Even though it amazed me at the time, I found myself wondering later, "Can there be too much dancing?" It left a phenomenal amount of energy in the air, and it was diffuse and scattered energy after a time. Again, I felt apart. I need to do some more work to feel the connection with the circle while having responsibilities within the circle. My energy at times strayed.

Slowly, the power returned to the center. My awe remained, and all around me grins were setting in. I again felt the enormous power of our web, and felt it strengthened, forged, and vital. The swaying bodies and shining faces around renewed me. As I rose to thank and disinvoke the North, the momentous-



ness of what had transpired washed over me and I laughed. The power and amazement and pride encircled and danced about me. My voice was history, my body nearly limp, and my spirit aglow. The feast of waxing light, of renewal, of the Holy Well and Sacred Flame, had inspired me and prepared me for the explosion of Spring. The connections grow on.

MATRIX BRIGID CHANT

We are alive, as the earth is alive.
We have the power to fight for our freedom.
(Descant:)
If we have courage we can be healers
(clap) Like the sun we shall rise!

(Eds. Note: this poem was inspired by Matrix's Feb. 2 Brigid Ritual.)

Brigid

Goddess, midwife at the opening deliver us openhanded, screaming the sorrows of another life as the waxing moon emerges headfirst from the darkness, bathed in the saltwater seive of renewal. Like trees rooted at the center of the earth, drawing up her molten energy, bleeding through each other's veins we stand, connected in the bloody ritual of rebirth, worshipping the sun that rises each day reborn and the vagrant moon, defined not so much by the light it reflects like a precocious child, but by the dark mother that bears it each night, spinning silently in her cold embrace. We who love her must defend her, seeds planted like stars in the fermented bed of night, invoking the dream of another world we have come so far to share.

Patti Levey

New Moon Invocation -- by MadKat

We are new, fresh from the still dark and bye,
The deep distant unknown cold stone sky.
We are new, again to gleam the energy arc.
We are slender, growing, bright.
We are the Huntress, the Holy Maiden.
We shall become --
See how we dance up air,
Stepper and Stair!
How we prance and chant our dreams of shapes to come,
Of love's full-circled beam.
Yes, how we dream and glow,
First through the sun's setting pink,
Then through the night's deepening blue.
Great Queen of the Heavens and all that is,
We move to the very tune of you.

WITCHES AND ABORTION

by Ann Forfreedom

In past ages, pre-patriarchal Pagan cultures viewed abortion as necessary, as an additional means of population control, and as a woman's decision. Believing in reincarnation, they did not view the embryo or fetus as a complete human, and did not consider abortion as a crime or murder.

Witches, who are Pagan, historically have been involved in helping women gain and maintain control of their bodies. In many eras, Witches have been sexuality counselors, midwives, physicians, herbalists and psychic counselors.

During the start of the European witch-hunts, at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century (Common Era), Catholic leaders and their Inquisitions had begun to attack midwives and "wise women" (Witches), in an effort to limit women's reproductive and sexual rights. Jacoba Felicie, tried in 1322 by the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Paris, was a successful healer, literate and effective, but convicted of illegal practice because she was female, had no degree from the male-only university, and actually cured people. Other "wise women" were later tried for causing or curing sterility and impotence. They were not usually charged with performing abortions, because the Church regarded early abortion as permissible, with a sexist qualification: abortion was permitted up to 40 days past conception for a male embryo or fetus, and up to 80 days after conception for a female. (Changes in this position were sporadic until 1869, when Pope Pius IX decreed all abortion, from the moment of conception, to be murder.)

Today, in the midst of the U.S. furor over women's abortion rights, well-meaning people are calling abortion a "tragedy" or considering

it a "necessary evil." Witches and Goddess-oriented Pagans do not use such language. Witches see the human body and human sexuality as sacred, and consider a woman's right to define her own needs and decide whether or when to bear a child as her basic, inviolate right. The woman who is one-in-herself (like Athena or Diana) and the woman who is a mother of children (like Demeter or Kuan Yin) are equally honored. And they, together with the woman who is aged and wise (like Cerridwen or the Crone) are seen as representing the Great Goddess. Witches, like many Goddess-oriented people, rejoice at woman's freely-chosen sensual nature; the attitudes of Aztec women who, in honoring Xochiquetzal, honored the goodness of woman's sensuality, and the ancient Egyptians who, in honoring Hathor, embraced the pleasures of music and dance and the body, are echoed by modern Witches.

Witches see abortion as a real choice, a positive aspect of a woman's human rights. In order to bring forth the Goddess within her, a woman must learn to recognize and respond to her own needs and strengths. Contraception and abortion can aid her to do so. Certainly a woman forced into motherhood is not able to fully develop herself and live a life filled with Goddess-energy and love. And that entity denied a coming-to-Earth by abortion can come to this Earthly existence another time, in the future.

For Witches, Nature favors balance, cycles, and an understanding of how interdependent we all are. When a woman is free to express herself fully, without harming other persons, she finds her own balance and cycles. She then can learn to be in harmony with her own nature and in balance with Mother Nature.

Therefore, to Witches, abortion is a sacred right.



ABORTION: EXPLORING SPIRITUAL
ALTERNATIVES -- AN INVITATION

I would recommend the following reading:

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, Witches, Midwives and Nurses, a History of Women Healers (pam-plet), and For Her Own Good, 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women;

Margot Edwards and Mary Waldorf, Reclaiming Birth: History and Heroines of American Childbirth Reform;

Matilda Joslyn Gage, Woman, Church and State: a Historical Account of the Status of Woman through the Christian Ages: with Reminiscences of the Matriarchate;

Lana Clarke Phelan & Patricia Maginnis, The Abortion Handbook for Responsible Women (1969);

Merlin Stone, Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood, Our Goddess and Heroine Heritage (1979), Vols. I, II;

Nancy van Vuuren, The Subversion of Women as Practiced by Churches, Witch-Hunters, and other Sexists;

Ann Forfreedom and Julie Ann, Eds., Book of the Goddess (1980)

We are two women who have each had abortions in the past. We are uncomfortable with the dichotomy that current abortion politics have set up for women. The message seems to be either: you believe in souls and the miracle of life; you love your fetus; you "want the baby" and therefore you choose to give birth; OR you reject the notion of souls, miracles, and mysteries; you feel nothing more than physical symptoms about your pregnancy, which is only a mass of cells; you don't "want the baby"; and therefore you choose to abort.

Some people have suggested that the turmoil many women experience about their decision to abort is merely the unfortunate result of the modern anti-choice movement's rhetoric -- an irrational guilt engendered by patriarchal religion and culture.

We feel it is important to acknowledge that many women, including ardently pro-choice feminists, have feelings about their own abortions which are connected with spiritual experiences or beliefs.

We would like to meet with other women who have had abortions. We would like to explore and develop an alternative understanding of the spiritual aspects of pregnancy and abortion, born of our own experiences and insights. We want to use magic to work through some of our own unresolved issues and feelings. We also want to at least talk about the personal politics of our abortions, including the role of the men we have been involved with.

We have in mind a mutually-supportive "teacher"-less group. We would like to keep it small (5 - 6 women) because we feel these issues are so charged, and we are all new at exploring this dimension of our womanhood.

If you are a woman who has had one or more abortions in the past and would like to put some energy into such a group, please call Julia (648-6089) or Irene (221-7142) evenings or weekends. We intend to meet Sunday evenings for four weeks, beginning April 14.

Welcome: Shannon Romalie Aine was born Friday, February 15, 9:33 A.M., to Arachne and Robin, to our great joy and inside the sacred circle. Mother and daughter and father and brother, sister, aunts, uncles, guinea pigs, newts, birds, fish and the tarantula are all doing fine! Birth weight 8½ pounds. and about so long. Blessed Be!



RECLA

Classes and Events

The Reclaiming Community Herb Garden made it through the winter in need of weeding, cultivating, composting, and new planting. Healing and magical herbs are especially welcome, as are vegetable seeds or seedlings and manure to feed the Earth. Come and dig and take home a bunch of fresh rosemary or rue.

Call Events Line for date and time.
2752 Harrison St.
San Francisco, CA near 24th Street
824-8566



rites of passage for women and men
Rick Dragonstongue & Rose May Dance
Once upon a time... The Rite of Passage focuses on dreams, myths and language, using traditional and non-traditional tales and techniques to create a personal rite of passage. Through story-telling, trance, release work and dreams we receive our challenge, meet our helpers, work through our blocks and emerge renewed, reborn. We will consider creating some separate womens' space/men's space during classtime. Class ends with ritual created by students. Pre-requisites: Elements or Pentacle. Six Mondays, beginning June 17. Sliding scale \$35-90. Call Rick Dragonstongue, 731-2159, or Rose 641-5836.

PAGANS OF HIGHLAND PERU, slide-talk. Quechua survivors of the Inca empire practice animistic Earth religion under a thin veil of Catholicism. Rick Dragonstongue spent most of 1975 with these people. Benefit for Reclaiming, \$2.00 to \$5.00 sliding scale. May 31, 1985, 8:00 PM, call Events Line for location, 849-0877.



RECLAIMING invites you to come celebrate the full moon of June with ritual, poems and songs by Rick Dragonstongue, Cerridwen Fallingstar, Roy King, Susan Leigh Star and others. Sunday, June 2, 7:30 pm. \$2-5 donation. Call Events Line (849-0877) for location.





IMING

SUMMER APPRENTICESHIP

Celebrate the Goddess amid the redwoods and tidepools of the beautiful Mendocino Coast of California. Study magic and ritual-making in the Wiccan tradition and learn tools and skills to take back to your own community. Our goal is empowerment and our methods are nonhierarchical and experiential.

Two one-week sessions; take either or both.
Beginning and advanced programs. Open to women and men.
The second advanced session will center around separate activities for women and men.

Session 1 - Sunday, August 11 - Saturday, August 17
Session 2 - Sunday, August 18 - Saturday, August 24

At Jughandle Farm Nature Preserve near Caspar, California.

\$225 - \$375 sliding scale, includes food and lodging.
(Costs may vary slightly.)

Limited childcare for ages 3 and up.
Drugs and alcohol discouraged.

Teachers will include Rose May Dance, Rick Dragonstongue,
Cerridwen Fallingstar, Pandora Minerva O'Mallory,
and Starhawk.

For information, write Reclaiming: Apprenticeship
P.O. Box 14404
San Francisco, CA 94114





BOOK REVIEW: by feather singing

WORKING INSIDE OUT: Tools For Change
by Margo Adair



Margo Adair's book on "applied meditation for intuitive problem solving" is finally out after six years of work. I want to give the Reclaiming community a glimpse of Margo's approach to uniting the personal and the political. The premise of her book, entitled Working Inside Out: Tools For Change, is that the outside world has moved in on us, creating all sorts of patterns of distress and stuckness, and that by working in our own inner worlds and moving our reawakened insides outward we can change the outside also. Over and over again Margo shows the connections between inside and outside, and how working on the outside changes us on the inside, and vice versa.

For many years Margo was a member of the Marxist-Spirituality Collective, which later became the S.P.I.R.I.T. Collective, when they felt they had become something other than Marxists. (Reclaimer David Kubrin was also a member of this group.) I learned a lot from their workshops about how to identify the specific contradictions inside myself; my internalized oppressions, the connections inside me between competition, objectification, isolation and burnout. I am pleased that this analysis is now in print. Throughout her book Margo makes connections between these and denial of feelings, powerlessness, apathy, estrangement, consumerism, disrespect of others and the earth, class-, race-, and sex-ism, us & them consciousness, etc. What I appreciate is Margo's way of bringing these big "isms" down home, by pointing out examples from our daily lives that are so basic and simple that they are usually overlooked. These are institutions and ways of thinking and acting that are so obvious that we are oblivious to them. Just the sort of patterns that, unrecognized, make it impossible for us to change. In various circumstances ranging from inner consciousness to interpersonal relationships to the shape and forces of society, she shows how these patterns are established, maintained and can be gotten out of.

The other main thing that I find so valuable here is Margo's way of demystifying magic and innerconsciousness. There's no

candle burning; it doesn't look spooky or like hocus-pocus. These are straightforward explanations of why and how to use the magical, spiritual, non-rational, intuitive parts of ourselves in everyday practical situations. And herein lies the potential for reaching further into the mainstream. By couching "magical" processes in mundane, matter-of-fact terms, she has healed the split between spirit and matter, magic and politics, and made all of this accessible to avowed "non-spiritual" people. What we refer to as "shadows", "demons", and "blocks", she puts in common non-metaphorical language like "transforming defeating messages". She deals with the concepts we are familiar with in fresh ways: deep self, wise self, fear as challenge, inner healer, from coercion to cohesion (power over, power with). She does a great job giving ways to unravel wants from needs, inside from outside, and the patterns that prevent clear communication.

As for the applied meditations, Margo has developed a way to lead visualizations to allow for a vast pluralism of individual imagery. For example, in her version of the tree of life meditation, her phrase "however you imagine this to occur" allows each of us to create our own sense of: calming energy, of energy and tensions sinking down, of the center of the earth, of earth energy "however you imagine earth energy to be". I sometimes find this preferable to my usual fully suggestive guidance of "hot, pulsing, vibrant energy rising up out of the molten center of the earth like a serpent, hissing and spiraling..." With Margo's approach, beginners don't have to feel inept when they don't get the same image as the leader, and adepts don't feel limited by singular guided imagery.

The other thing I find very valuable about Margo's meditations is that they are well fleshed out - worded in enough detail to be used effectively by people with absolutely no experience in leading visualizations. After all Working Inside Out was generated from transcribed tapes of Margo's workshops, and the book still has the feel of listening to Margo lead us through a meditation step by step. It's like being right there in a





ritual or collective meeting, rather than a hint of what it might be like.

This is important, as I discovered when I was traveling and teaching around the country. I found that people felt they needed some direct guidance, in flesh and blood. They said that Spiral Dance was very inspiring, but that the meditations were too sketchy in communicating the feel of how to create their own creative visualizations, trance, ritual, etc. I was shocked, but they said they weren't able to make the leap from these suggestions to direct application in their own situations. They wanted a two way conversation with a guide. We are an oral tradition, after all. Working Inside Out puts some flesh onto the skeletal conceptual framework. And this, plus the demystified language, makes it a tool that anyone can use even at our straight jobs or with our biological families, as well as with our already magically inclined friends.

Insights abound on how defeating messages work their way inside. This one is particularly useful for teachers and ritual facilitators: "In retrospect I can see why in the past my teaching so exhausted me - my ego had been too involved, and I had let it take a front row seat. Most of my energy was engaged with how people were hearing me, and what people thought. The fact is I have no control over how people hear me, or of what they're going to think of what I say - nor should I. All I can do is present the material in as clear a way as possible, respecting people's choices as to how they will respond. It's only natural for me to want both approval and agreement, but it confuses my clarity and drains my energy and it certainly doesn't help people hear me any better; instead, it hinders them."

"Before I started running energy in my classes, if I had information which I knew would help someone with a problem I'd restate it many different ways in order to convince them to follow my suggestions. Now when I run energy it doesn't occur to me to try to convince anybody of anything. Instead, I find myself communicating with much greater clarity than ever before and with a sense of security, knowing that's enough... Running energy causes me to respect people's processes automatically because my ego is no longer separating us." Running energy lets us intuit the most effective thing to do in conflict situations, reduces stress, isolation, and burnout, and shields us from internalizing other's problems. It also connects us psychically so we can "witness each other's growth from the inside out, instead of from the outside in."

The last two chapters are particularly powerful and appropriately useful for those of us working for personal and social change, and who see it as a unified process. Dealing with "The World We Live In" and "Creating the Future" include exercises for people of color (for empowerment), for whites (from racism to respect), for women (reclaiming the self), and for men (nourishing yourself). Learning to let go of limiting belief systems, to be patient and courageous, to be visionaries not victims, and to heal the organizations we belong to are just a few of the meditations here.

Working Inside Out is distributed by Bookpeople and is published by Wingbow Press

See ad section for Margo† Adair's class listings.





Larger and larger across the spectrum of imponderable dilemmas facing the world loom questions of technology, not least for those of us pained by the progressive poisoning of the Earth mother and / or who identify (however murkily these days) with the "left." Yet we have little agreement and scant understanding of what might be an "appropriate technology" for the '80's and '90's, no clear criteria to help us decide, in our era of space shuttles and fiber optic communications, which technologies we can keep and which we must banish-- however those decisions might be reached and presumably carried out. There is no sense of "intermediate" technological goals, lines that could demarcate outrage about nuclear power facilities from alarm or concern about coal-generated power stations.

In the absence of clarity, many of us flounder uneasily between the poles of an "all or nothing" position: i.e. either wanting to revert overnight to a hunter / gathering society or, at the other extreme, demanding no real limits on forms of technology-- since virtually all of them are harmful. And we are left with no reply to those who have silently resigned themselves to the destruction of our species, thinking only in that way can the Earth herself survive our technologies.

This short essay is designed to begin a dialogue and to suggest some answers to these and related questions. For it is certainly not the case that all technology is the same, nor that every machine or process is essentially politically and ecologically neutral, its value determined only by whom and for what ends it is used. That old cliché of the left is especially inappropriate today, when we are surrounded by nuclear technology, insecticide factories, and numerous other poisonous military and industrial technologies. In short a critical line has been crossed. Understanding this line offers us a criterion on which to base judgments about differing kinds of technologies, though, importantly, the line is not only technologically defined, but morally, philosophically-- and, of course, politically as well. Where and how do we find that line?

I believe technology is as old as our species; certainly it began playing a predominant role in human culture from the beginnings of agriculture on. No doubt each technology has its costs, and probably even non-machine techniques such as rice paddy irrigation introduce imbalances which can harm local species. Yet the changes brought about by the beginnings of urbanization (say 3000 BC), large scale mining (16th century AD in Europe), and


the use of power-driven machinery (18th and 19th centuries) were especially costly-- and each step more so than what had gone before-- to the balance of the world. Both short- and long-term non-cyclic processes were introduced which "progressively" threatened the Earth's vitality.

Even so something new has been added to the brew in the past fifty years-- that is, since World War II. In a word the technology being developed today is increasingly mutagenic. The astronomical increase in coal-mining in England in the 16th and 17th centuries, for example was certainly devastating to the streams and air, the woods and fields of England; but the major effects of that kind of earlier violation were local and limited to those who had to actually see the trees felled or the waters fouled, and especially to the (mostly) men who had to go down into the pits to dig the coal. The basis of most technology today, on the other hand, is regional* and mutagenic, that is it undermines the basis of life over a large area and attacks the very genetic material that life depends on. Whether we are considering the radioactive wastes generated by nuclear technology; the herbi- and insecti-cides sprayed by the millions of tons on our fields by agribusiness; the interlacing of our living and working spaces with microwave radiation by telecommunications; the exceedingly powerful solvents used in huge amounts by microelectronic industries; or the gene-altering techniques of biotechnology: we are talking about technologies which inherently (and I would argue essentially) are mutagenic and so undermine the very basis of life. Thus the main victim of the microelectronic factory in Sunnyvale will probably not be so much the 33 year old Latina single mother who has to breathe the solvents and doping agents (derived from World War II nerve gases) used in her lab and so dies in her '40's of liver cancer; it may well be her grandchildren (and theirs ..) who suffer increasingly mysterious and debilitating birth defects-- or the grandchildren of those of us who don't work in such factories but increasingly draw our groundwater out of aquifers hundreds of miles in extent shared with toxic dumps generated by such firms. Besides adversely effecting larger areas, the devastations of today's technologies will be felt for decades or even centuries.

World War II was a critical technological and political watershed. The first European-generated World War developed the will to kill on a massive scale-- by the hundreds of thou-

* I am ignoring here global effects, such as the greenhouse effect or the degree to which, as some have argued, the drought in No. Africa is connected to the rapid destruction of the Amazon jungle.







sands at a time, civilian as well as soldiers by the war's end-- but as Daniel Ellsberg has argued, it was only by World War II that a concerted effort was made to develop the technologies to carry out that (essentially genocidal) will. The ovens of Buchenwald were genocidal, of course, and so too were the atomic bomb and the nerve gases developed by both the Nazi and the Allied sides. Nor did it stop there. World War II brought a whole range of new technologies to the fore, for the soldiers had to be fed, clothed, and healed of their awesome wounds, and many of the new techniques generated invisibly, and perhaps unconsciously, crossed the same "genocidal line" as atomic weapons. For example, to feed the huge Allied armies, new food technologies were developed, and these in turn can be linked historically with the emergence, after World War II, of supermarkets, packaged foods, and the start of the mammoth monoliths of contemporary agribusiness. Agribusiness as a form of economic and social concentration, in turn, became a possibility only with the widespread deployment of the powerful new herbi-, insecti-, and fungicides that were developed from the nerve gases invented during World War II. The technology prior to World War II was, by and large, of an entirely different nature.


Though I believe we will be forced to re-evaluate and ultimately reject a number of the industrial technologies introduced in the past two hundred years, the struggle to develop a society based on a cyclic interaction with nature will probably be a protracted and painstaking one. In the meantime we are faced today with the generation of still newer technologies-- ever newer!-- whose effects promise to be truly horrifying-- ecologically, economically, culturally, and politically. We badly need an interim basis for evaluating these new technologies and deciding which to fight and which to make our peace with. I believe the degree to which a new technology is mutagenic-- and unfortunately many or most of them, to the best of my knowledge, are today-- offers us not only a useful but an essential criterion if we are going to make it into the next century. Not least it promises a handle for our thinking and our actions which isn't defined exclusively in technological terms, but as well or even more, morally, politically, ideologically, and spiritually-- and of course that is as it should be for any viable late 20th century revolutionary alternative.

David Kubrin
© 1985

In my essay All in All, You're Just Another Brick in the Wall (approx. 50 pages) I have developed some of the above arguments (and others)



in relation to the dangers from microelectronic technology. Anyone interested may borrow the essay from me or buy it (at \$2.00 plus postage). Call or write to 824-8566 or 2752 Harrison St., SF 94110.



Dear Reclaiming:

We know that the issue of \$\$ and how it should and shouldn't be made is one that the Reclaiming Collective has been wrestling with for years. The model that your collective has evolved seems to meet a variety of concerns and needs: sliding scale, barter, and even time to pay off a class if necessary. Reclaiming even occasionally provides some right livelihood for the members of the collective. And more importantly, the community has access to the information, resources, experiences and knowledge of Reclaiming and spiritual health is NOT withheld if you don't have \$\$\$.

We are on several mailing lists and lately have been receiving very slick flyers for spiritual gatherings that are priced soooo high that they make our bloodpressure go even higher. It's bad enough that the "straight world" withholds physical and mental health by charging exorbitant prices, thereby limiting access to only those who can pay or get the government to pay. It's distressing and disturbing that people who supposedly share our values, world view and circles would then go out and commit "capitalism" by mimicking the shenanigans of "people who are definitely not interested in going to the center of the earth. (Isn't that what magic is all about?)

We are magic junkies and if these gatherings were financially accessible we would probably go to some of these things. We love giving good circle with other goddess groupies, cleaning our chakras, working on our issues (both personal and political), protecting our mother and of course all the great gossip. But magic at \$80/day or \$475/week doesn't seem very magical. Is there something we're missing? What is the pricetag for spiritual health and well-being? We can understand and appreciate people's need to make a decent living through teaching magic. We don't appreciate greed and profit in the name of the Goddess. This isn't asking too much, is it? We welcome your feedback and discussion. Reply here in next issue or better yet, talk to us.

MAGIC FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT!

--More Downing & Geoff Yipie
P.S. The Goddess says, "I'm not easy, but I'm cheap."



"Between the idea
and the reality

Between the motion
And the act

Falls the shadow..."

-- T.S. Eliot



Speculations on the Possibility of Magical Community

-- Roy King

I came into the wiccan world via the Reclaiming community after Diablo '81, in the joyful heat of anti-nuclear fervor, with a glowing heart-felt certainty that I had (at last) found my spiritual home, my tribal link with Mother Earth and the acknowledged strength of the female half of humanity (and of myself), even with appropriate roots to my Celtic ancestors. I felt myself in community with serious workers of magical craft, with the benders, the shapers, the changers, genuine seekers of genuine transformation, fellow travelers on the dark, perilous, alluring path into unknown realities, into past and future centuries of an expanding Earth.

During the past year of so, however, my experience of Reclaiming events, values and vision, once so vital and filled with promise and purpose, has become diluted, intangible, often almost stagnant. I have refused to allow the delicate, elusive remnant of our lost spirit of magical tribe, so haunting and so compelling, and at times so present in our midst, to fade away like so much mist. Nonetheless, it is fading. (Or is it only changing?)

I have tried for months to understand why/what/how this is happening, but have been unable to pull it together concisely. This is a paper and ink continuation of these efforts, questions, speculations, probings, rantings, dreamings --tangents.

Tangent I

It is written in our official, consensus-upon statement of purpose that we are "working to unify spirit and politics". And so we are, but I wonder if we are force fitting two diverse realms into a unity that somewhat warps the shape of each, rather than finding their organic inter-relation.

To me, the core of magical/spiritual work is seeking vision, in the inner space of our Self/Earth/Universe--and developing the means and tools thereof. Political work aims to realize and manifest vision in the consciousness and ac-

tivities of humanity -- changing things "out there".

Political work is goal oriented, seeking to achieve definite objectives. Certainty of purpose and commitment is necessary for difficult, often dangerous action. Strength of will must be maintained to face the hired army of the greed machine, the injustice system, the pain, the horror, the stupidity.

Magical work needs psychic space, freedom -- we enter into the unknown, the darkness, and deal with symbols that emerge in dimensions of altered consciousness, forming patterns and logics only perceived from expanded perspectives. Here we run other kinds of risks. We face our deepest fears and psychological distortions, demons of incalculable strength and intent.

Quality magic is spontaneous. We can set up conditions conducive to its occurrence, but we can't make it happen, can't predict it. Not best practiced toward preconceived ends, it comes from somewhere both within and beyond us.

In Reclaiming we don't do a lot of vision questing. Our "vision" is rather taken for granted at this point, and most often "used" as fuel for our political fire, or as a pillar of ideals supporting our political stance.

A more balanced blending of political and magical consciousness might mean more commitment to developing magical powers of vision, an attitude more of finding rather than assuming the inner face with political action. The relationship is dynamic, reciprocal, cyclic. New culture is created not through trading habits, but through breaking through to new vision, not breaking through to "IT", but continually breaking through and breaking through and breaking through.

This level of magical work is tabooed from every angle in this time--as frivolous, indulgent, dreamy, irrelevant, insane, evil, backward, irrational. It





is vital. Necessary. Real. Ask the Native American, the Senoi, any People still in touch with living in harmony with the Earth.

We need to actually trust magical reality as much as we say we do. The magical/political marriage I'm thinking (dreaming) of requires a psychic agility we would have to work to develop, rather than pretending it already exists. Switching from level to level of divergent, even "contradictory" facets of consciousness. Or even holding them at once. Why don't we occupy many spaces at once? We can do anything. But then I've always secretly felt that in the real revolution/evolution we must become something we cannot yet imagine.

Tangent II or more
Increasingly in the Reclaiming community I feel confined, heretical, bored, isolated, restless, critical, perceived as a threat--maybe I am. Rituals feel like church. Dogmatic. Stale. Invocations in Sunday School tones. The fire is gone. We seem to be building another goddamned religion (sorry, "goddess damned", to be in vogue). When spiritual vision hardens into religion, shoot it in the head. Stomp it. Bury it. Start again empty. Haven't we learned that yet?

We're all lost, in pain. We were born into madness, we're all twisted, in need. People wear the Goddess and Elementals on chains around their necks, domesticated, talk of the Goddess as a household item, as if we know Her perfectly well. Some seem to feel She is Ms. Jesus, that She will make our sacrifices for us, that She will save us. I don't think so. I think She is the Great Gambler.

A lot of people seem to be in the craft more for security, for family, for the identity tag--"witch", than for the frightful work of self-realization. A higher value seems to be placed on believing alchemy is being accomplished than on the painful labor of birthing real change. Magical work is full of pitfalls of glamor and illusion. We get caught on the stepping stones, try to take the road with us on the journey. Your only primal magical tool is

yourself, the rest is trappings. Map, not terrain. Who wants to be trapped in a pentagram, an image. There are many layers of shadow.

There's a pervasive attitude that we have found our niche. We have our vision-correcting blinders on, we are oriented in the "proper" direction, don't distract us. I want to scream! Why this refusal to look at what we're doing? Against thinking? Suspending disbelief, skepticism is necessary for entering into magical consciousness. The critical/analytical parts of awareness must be shifted aside to access deeper levels. But do we have to lose it? Bury it forever? We have the magical tools of the four elements to draw on. To survive the magical path they must all be wielded, from the balance point, the center, --including the slicing sword of Air. Mind. Intelligence.

We pagans tend to anthropomorphize nature, the planet, the moon, the sun. To reduce the incomprehensible universe to human scale, divide it into female and male. There's a very real need to offbalance the abuses of Patriarchal vision with some good old-fashioned Matriarchy, for women and for (even) men. The Earth as Great Mother is a primal and appropriate vision. But if we get stuck in this single facet of the seeing stone it becomes narrow, limiting rather than liberating, and we never glimpse the awesome otherness of the universe, the infinite mystery beyond humanness, duality, description, comprehension. This vision also sings its strange song in our spirit, who can deny it?

.....
Last night about 30 or so folks gathered for a ritual farewell for Starhawk, who's going on a long trip. In ritual, our energy flowed skillfully, naturally, liquid among us. Community bonds were visible, tugging. My love for these people is undeniable, precious. We do incredible, magical things together.

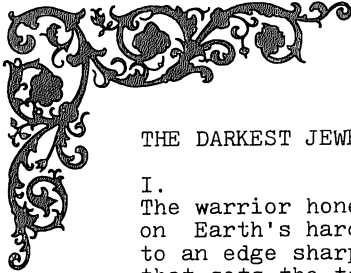
Driving home, I doubted much of what I said in this article. What do I want that isn't here? Why am I always bitching?

I guess it boils down to a matter of level, of depth. I love what we do, what we've developed. It's invaluable. And it runs surprisingly deep, in subtle, unexpected ways.

But somehow, I think, I feel, I dream, we don't go all the way, through the symbols, beyond the vehicle, the forms,

our "selves", into the naked universe, the pure heart of elemental power. Not yet. Blessed Be.

Note: the ideas expressed in the above article are the sole responsibility of some renegade leprechaun spirit guide (little fucker) and in no way reflect the opinions of the author, or the Reclaiming Collective, and are in no way sanctioned by C.O.G.



THE DARKEST JEWEL

I.
The warrior hones his will
on Earth's hard blood of stone
to an edge sharp as Arctic wind
that sets the temper of his seething spell
forged in the hottest and most honest fires of hell

He stalks within the twisted jungle maze
the serpent-god coiled round the silent spring
from where the silver river of vision runs
and the newborn phoenix lifts its ageless wings

He strikes a spark in the turning storm
and feeds it with his life
his heart and mind to fuse into one flame
that leaps beyond the limits of his time
breaks through the wall of reason
out of the cell of shame
out of the bondage of fear
into the face of fire



Reborn on Earth's uncompromising pyre
the hope of death withered in his heart
he yields to the limitless desire
to touch the pulsing silence of the stars

II.
On a slender spire of ice
high above the sky
a sleeping serpent stirs, uncoils, and waits

Its burnished scales reflect the dreams of stars
in its diamond eyes glows the darkest heart of flame
its claws like steel grip the rim of time
its sting reveals the pulse of deathless change

The reptile's silence questions why you came
your frozen mind shatters, and cannot recall its name
the ground beneath is gone
there is no descent
you have come too far





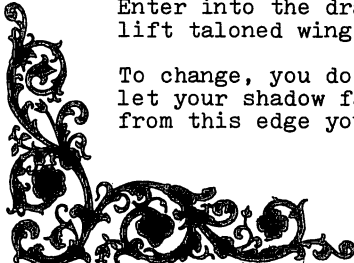


The venom of the dragon vision burns into your mind
where, by some unknown sense, you face a vast expanse of time
that wave on wave breaks upon the ragged shore of Earth
with drumbeats like the roar of dying suns
where, at your end
you must begin
to stand
alone
forced to wake
within Earth's darkest jewel, to scry
that the stars are only mirrors
that the dragon is only I

Enter into the dragon form
lift taloned wings into boundless time

To change, you do not die
let your shadow fall
from this edge you only fly

-Roy King




Dear Mr. President,

My name is Amanda Lee Miller.
I might be just nine years old but
who cares? The people you kill?
Yes of course we must be strong to
have peace baloney! Big fat balo-
ney! Why don't you try to think of
all those thousands of people you
kill. What about their families?
How do you think they feel? Just
think how you would feel if your son
or husband was sent to fight and you
had planned a big coming home party.
Then somebody came and told you your
son or husband was dead. Well that
is how you make other people feel
when you kill all those other men.
Why don't you try to reason with the
other nation. If that doesn't work
well that's another story.

Now remember what I'm saying and
think it out good and then you've
got my permission to send me a let-
ter.

s/Amy




(Eds. Note: the following poem was
enclosed with Amy's letter to the
president.)

?Is This the End of Time?

Stop, look around you
what do you see?
Lots of hungry people
who need your help.
But what do you do?
You push them aside and
then fight the other.
Why do you do this
ask yourself that.
If you are not kind to your neighbor
you will pay.
I will leave you with this:

The rule
of the
gods is
whatever
you do to
the other
will come
back to
you three
times.



THE EIGHT GREAT HABITS
by Cerridwen Fallingstar

Essential to the Witch/Pagan world view is the acknowledgement and celebration of the Eight Great Habits (not to be confused with the Seven Lovely Sins). To counteract misinformation floating about the Reclaiming and greater Pagan community, I offer these explanations of the Eight Great Habits and the rituals which accompany them. Starting at the beginning of the calendar year:

BRITCHES a.k.a. CANDLE-MESS

The sun is waxing and so must we -- in hair, on rugs, over familiars and down heating vents. Occasionally this holiday is referred to as In Bulk, acknowledging the number of candles purchased at Cost Plus Witches' Supply at this time. The custom of forcing small children to leap repeatedly over tall tapers while chanting, "Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candle stick" is the origin of the name 'Britches'. In the more rational, mundane world, this time of year is celebrated by attempting weather divination with small rodents.

BOISTEROUS a.k.a. SPRING ICKYSOCKS

This holiday gains its name by the practice of tramping through the new grasses, blossoms and thorns of spring. Christian allegations that Witches are into "socks and violets" stems from this rite. Witchcraft is no longer a very literal 'fertility' religion, so the copulation rites at Boisterous are generally followed by abortion rites at Ill-Fame. It is traditional to hide many colored eggs and candies around the house where some will be sure to be forgotten, returning to the earth behind the drapes, bookshelves and stereo.

ILL-FAME a.k.a. WALLPAPER NIGHT

As most people know, this night is celebrated by putting up wallpaper, getting drunk and bashing your head against the wall until the paper curls back down. (At this point the faeries usually appear.) By dawn, groans and calls of "M'aidez, M'aidez" herald the morning part of

the rite, in which the celebrants dance about a large phallic symbol until hopelessly entangles in gaudy ribbons, thrashing arms and legs, etc. This rite is thought to represent our willing entrapment in the net of the great spider, as well as the sorrowful entanglements and complications phallus worship generally entails.




LITHIUM a.k.a. SUMMER SOUL-STICK

Lithium is celebrated by taking drugs and dancing around big dangerous fires, a practice frequently leading to Panic (see axiom, "Out of the Pan, into the fire.") The Summer and Winter Soul-Sticks are often referred to as the Grates of the Year." The name of these festivals indicates the spiritual difficulty of squeezing through the grate. (This dilemma is still referred to in English vernacular as a "sticky Wiccan") A sect called the No-Stick Wiccans now celebrates by spraying themselves with teflon while eating waffles, a non-traditional but highly effective way to penetrate the cracks between the worlds. Hot dogs, marshmallows and other "stick" foods are customary for this holiday.

LUNACY a.k.a. LOAF-MESS

Lunacy is the celebration of the First Fruitcakes. Deranged by toxic pollens, Pagans of old ran amok in fields and gardens flailing away with scythes until the grains and often a few comrades) were harvested. They then held a Pillsbury bake-off (see "Ancient Rites of Pillsbury Hill"), baking as many loaves of bread, cake and cookies as possible. The orgy of gluttony which followed earned this holiday the moniker, Loaf-Mess. Burning a wicker chair at the height of the ceremony is essential. The corn harvest is also honored at this time, usually by telling sickle jokes.





resulting in pumpkin guts under the altar, all over the kitchen, bathroom, back porch and happily melding with the composting eggs and candies left over from Boisterous. (See, "Incense; Why We Need It.") It's disgusting, but when you consider what it was like when we used pigs . . . The custom of rooting for truffles has been largely replaced by bobbing for apples. On Hollow-Mess, the brave or defiant eat pork while the more prudent honor the darkness in the form of chocolate, and, of course, pumpkin-gut soup.

FOOL a.k.a. WINTER SOUL-STICK

This is when we stay up all night with those who did not have abortions at Ill-Fame. (The name of this Habit is self-explanatory.) We also decorate the Fool trees with candles and burn the Fool Log. Often we end up burning the Fool trees as well, although the advent of electricity has made this less common, and some say, compromised the basic foolishness of the rite. If no "Fools" are birthing and getting born, an all night film festival may be

MADMAN a.k.a. AUTUMNAL ICKY-SOCKS²

Coming after Lithium and Lunacy, Madman represents the culmination of Harvest Weirdness, the last chance to celebrate the Hay Fever of summer before the Cabin Fever of winter sets in. Also known as the Autumnal Icky-Socks from the practice of stomping grapes into wine and staggering through the resin-laden marijuana fields. Intoxication is the order of the day. Dedicated shamans hang by their heels from trees, emulating "The Hang-Over One". Pigging out, perhaps in anticipation of Sow-Hunt, is the salient feature of this festival.

SOW-HUNT a.k.a. HOLLOW-MESS

On this night we dress in funny costumes to evade the Sow, who snarfs up her young as casually as you or I would eat a pancake. The name Hollow-Mess derives from the practice of hollowing out pumpkins to carve jack-o-lanterns,

substituted. Around 6 a.m. we attempt to greet the dawn, which may not actually show up for a week or more. Usually after a few nights of sleep deprivation someone swears they see the sun. We then celebrate by opening our stockings, hoping to find more than the remnants of the past year's Spring and Autumn Icky-socks binges. There is a growing Pagan sect which insists this holiday is properly termed "Fuel." They celebrate by driving around all night in search of a gas station.

¹(Once thought to be a recent innovation, excavations at Catal Hyuk Hyuk which discovered rolls of mouldering material in the tombs of individuals with head injuries reveal the rite to be as old as they come.)

²(A question that puzzles anthropologists to this day is, "Why don't Pagans remove their socks for their Spring and Autumn rites?" To which Pagans cryptically reply, "Because magic is a Foot.")



MadKat's TASTY TOFU

Preheat oven to 350°. Slice firm tofu 1/2 to 3/4" thickness. Combine vegetable oil, tamari, & white wine in whatever proportions feel reasonable. Place tofu in baking pan, cover with sauce, & sprinkle with dillweed and fresh rosemary. Bake 45-60 min., turning once. Do not allow to dry. Share with your friends in circle. They will love & compliment you.





STARHAWK'S SCHEDULE--SPRING/SUMMER '85



Dates	City and Country	Contact:	Phone
4/5- 4/9	Landauer, Germany	Maren Kuttner	0421-72300
4/12-4/14	Bremen "	"	"
4/17 4-18	Frieburg "	Michel Harlacher	0761-700265
4/19-4/21	Stuttgart "	Dr. Barbara Gissrau	0711-65-06-67 65-45-50
4/30-5/4	Avebury to Stonehenge, England	Glen	441-464-2712
5/7 or 5/8	London, "	Jane Marshall	01-720-7002
5/11-5/12	Leeds, "	Marion McNaughton	(0)532-670289
5/24-5/26	Vancouver, B.C., Canada	Susan Davidson	604-856-2349
		Linda Ervin	604-254-4116
5/29-5/30	W. Bellingham, WA, US	Laurie Stephan, A.S. Environ- mental Ctr., Viking Union 113, West. Wash. U., Bellingham 98225	
6/1	Seattle " "	Cobra	206-632-3829
6/2- 6/4	Victoria, BC, Canada	Sarah David	604-385-2954
6/7- 6/9	Another Place, NH, US	Bone Blossom	203-346-7917
6/14-6/15	Boston	Nancy Levoy at Interface	617-964-0500
6/16-6/20	Rhinebeck, NY	Sue Espinosa (in Oakland, CA)	415-449-1261 436-1046
6/21-6/23	Wisconsin, US	Selena Fox or Jim Allen, Circle	608-924-2216
? 7/7- 7/11?	Orland, ME, " (tentative)	Margaret Pavel or Rosa Lane	207-469-7112
7/13-7/17	Hollyhock Farm, BC, Canada	Catherine Ingram	604-935-6465
7/21-7/26	Rhinebeck, NY, US	Sue Espinosa	415-449-1261 436-1046
8/4- 8/9	Minneapolis, MN, US	"	"
8/10 - 8/14	Jughandle Farm, Mendicino	Rose Dance or Carol McAnnally	
8/18 - 8/21	California, US	c/o Reclaiming, PO Bx 14404, SF, CA (4114	



Some of these events are for women only. For details write Starhawk c/o Rose, 315 Precita, San Francisco, CA 94110, Attn: Schedule.



****DISPLAY ADS****
Guaranteed to please!

In order to help keep our newsletter financially afloat (and growing) we are now accepting display ads for goods, services, events, etc. We print 900 newsletters, largely distributed in the Bay Area.

1/8 page - only \$9.84
1/4 page - only \$14.95
full page - only \$59.79

1/6 page - only \$11.99
1/2 page - only \$29.98
centerfold - only \$1,000

Politically incorrect advertisers please pay double.

Please send PAYMENT with COPY!

Final full page copy size is 6" x 7". Please provide camera ready copy of correct proportions. We can make reductions.

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



HOLY TERRA

Looking for Tribe? Seeking to ground your magic in the Land? Some members of the Reclaiming Community are engaged in serious land search. Our intention is to settle in West Marin or Sonoma, within commuting distance of San Francisco. We are looking for Pagans committed to feminist politics, growth, community, abundance and magic. Must have \$\$ for down payment and monthly payments. Call Cerridwen at 461-9226 or write to me at 330 Kent Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904.

BEGINNING IRISH GAELIC - Level II by Jim Duran, PhD, Linguistics, Stanford University.

A dynamic exploration of the world of movement: acting out the language. (For students who have completed level one.)
Part I, Sat. Apr. 13, & Sun. Apr. 14, 11A-3P.
Part II, Sat. Apr. 20 & Sun. Apr. 21, 11A-3P.
(Tuition \$100, plus \$10 for cassette and written materials. Pre-registration deadline Apr. 5; \$35 deposit.)
Oakland, Call (415)535-1086 for info.



MARGOT ADAIR -861-6838 - sliding scale.



Tools for Political Thinking: Cutting Through Dogma. Learn how to make your own analysis in an atmosphere of safety, respect and permission to disagree. Potentials and limits of Feminism, Marxism and New Age Politics--exploring how to dovetail them. SAT. APR. 13.

Women's Applied Meditation Retreat, July 4th Weekend.

Individual sessions and support groups available.

HERBAL STUDIES SUMMER PROGRAM w/Paul Beyerl, author of The Master Book of Herbalism and The Holy Books of the Devas will conduct two sessions of a forty-hour journey through the magickal uses of herbs. Residential program, limited space avail. for sleeping, tents, and housing. For info write SASE: Beyerl's School of Healing - Summer Studies, PO Box 8814, Mpls., Minn., 55408, phone 612-871-7287. Costs: \$50 (not including housing/food).



tools of magick

UMA'S OCCULT SHOP 668-3132
1915 PAGE ST. SF, CA. 94117

Classes in Magickal Techniques.
Tarot Readings Tarot Cards, Books,
Incense, Jewelry, Amulets,
Talismans, Herbs, Oils and more!

Occult Arts and Crafts
accepted on consignment.





Reclaiming is a collective of San Francisco Bay Area women and men working to unify spirit and politics. Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess—the Immanent Life Force. We see our work as teaching and making magic—the art of empowering ourselves and each other.

In our classes, workshops, public rituals, and individual counseling, we train our voices, bodies, energy, intuition, and minds. We use the skills we learn to deepen our strength, both as individuals and as community, to voice our concerns about the world in which we live and to bring to birth a vision of a new culture.



FOOD FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS

People with AIDS are in need of canned or packaged goods. Drop off food at
 AIDS Foundation The International David Society
 54 Tenth Street 2340 Market St.

Community Thrift Store
 625 Valencia St.

The MotherLode
 1002 Post St.



The Endup
 401 6th St.

For more information on the food bank, call 864-4376



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:

