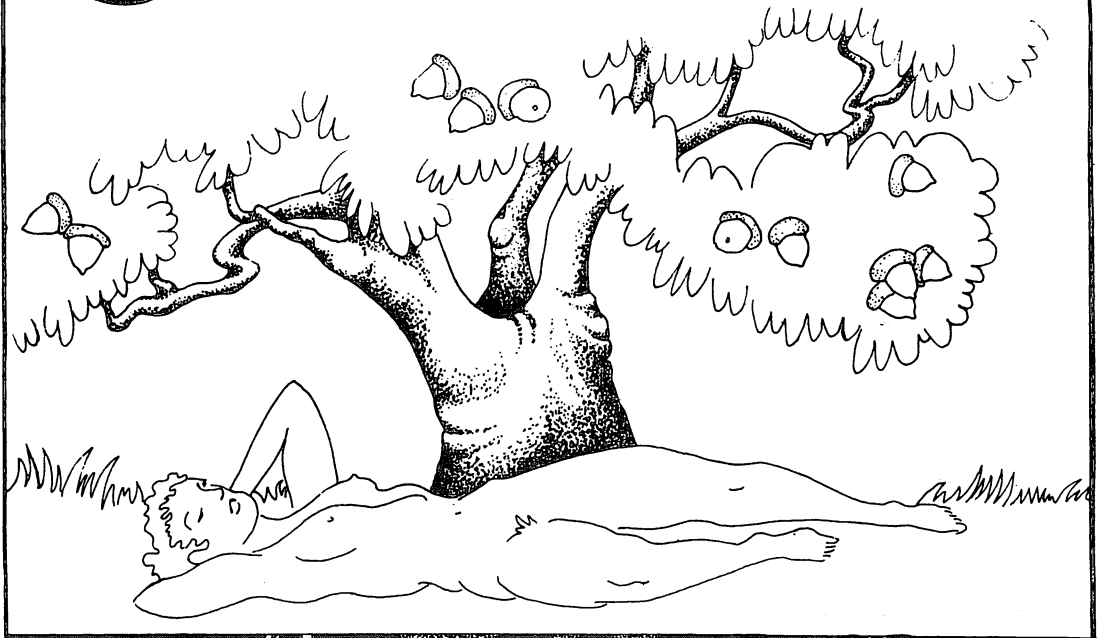


RECLAIMING

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 20

AUTUMN 1985



September 1985

We are each other's fruit, we dream across the line: Earth to flesh, flesh to Earth, to the end of time.

Events Line - 849-0877

This phone recording, listed under Reclaiming in Berkeley, 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). If you have news of interest, please pass it on. We appreciate comments. 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

RECLAIMING: A Center for Feminist Spirituality
P.O. Box 14404
San Francisco, CA 94114

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. Please understand that due to limited space we cannot print (and anyway might not want to print) everything submitted.

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, justified preferred). We will not take responsibility for chasing down late material.

The Winter newsletter deadline is November 15. Send material to RECLAIMING, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114.

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 Newsletter serves as an abundance spell for Irene, Rick, Robin, Rose, Roy, Sophia, and whoever helps with collating and mailing.

RECLAIMING

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A WEEK AT WITCH CAMP*

- Vibra

(*AKA Reclaiming Apprenticeship Program)

Q: So how was your week at witch camp?

A: Oh wow. It was really intense. It was incredible.

Q: Yeah. Great. Like, what did you do?

A: It was so incredible. It was really intense.

Q: Yeah. (What the hell is she talking about?)

Here's a straight report about my experience at the Apprenticeship Program, offered in a spirit of demystification. I was there the first week, August 11-17, in the so-called "advanced" group.

Place: Jughandle Farm and Nature Center is a farmhouse and some small outbuildings on several acres a stone's throw from Hiway 1 and near a hamlet called Caspar, which is between Ft. Bragg and Mendocino. The property also borders on state-owned park land and is within walking distance of the Pygmy Forest, a sort of natural bonsai environment. Jughandle has a vegetable garden, a flower garden, and an orchard. Some of the land has been cleared for crops in the past and there are now meadows of long grasses in those places. Some beautiful big old trees near the house have swings hanging from their branches. Much of the property is wooded with both natives and transplants: pine, fir, cedar, and oak. There is a boardwalk and gravel path suitable for wheelchairs that makes a loop through the woods.

Everyone coming to Jughandle is expected to appreciate and contribute to the restoration of the natural ecological balance of the environment. The year-round caretakers at Jughandle work to encourage all forms of plant and animal life that occur naturally in the area and to discourage those introduced by people. They are also trying to minimize the impact of the presence of people today.

The dark-red, shingled farmhouse has a kitchen with an eating area (picnic tables and a small deck) just outside, which was a central gathering place. a large living room warmed by a wood-burning stove, and a library room, were used for meetings and classes. Upstairs rooms were shared as bedrooms--foam pads provided; bring your own bag. Two bathrooms with flush toilets, a water shortage, and no showers.

Many of us pitched tents in the "campground", an area in the woods a 3-minute walk from the house.

A 10-minute trek from the house through meadows and woods and across Hiway 1 takes you to the headlands where you can sit on the edge of the land nearly surrounded by sea. A few minutes more takes you down to the beach. A 10-minute walk in a different direction takes you to Caspar Tubbs, a Mendocino-style commercial hot tubs/sauna establishment (\$4/hour; we booked in groups). A short drive up the coast is McKerricker Beach, a splendid tidepool area and also a hangout for





a colony of apparently placid, light beige seals who bask on the rocks just off shore.

People: Ed and Erica live at Jughandle all year round. They and a few other workers are friendly and full of information about every rock, bug, pine needle, bird, tree, etc. on the property. I was impressed at how easily they shared with us the responsibility of caring for this place that is clearly so precious to them. They offered a choice of tasks during the two 3-hour work sessions during the week (part of the "price" of staying at Jughandle), e.g. stacking firewood, weeding the wheelchair path, tending to baby trees. They explained the work and let go, trusting us to do it efficiently and lovingly, with supervision when requested.

Reclaiming staff included Raven and Arachne in the kitchen, preparing vegetarian (dairy, fish and eggs) meals and other treats -- popcorn, peanut butter cookies. Diane and Janey cared for the children: Maurice, 4, Corian, 14 mos.; Shannon, 6 mos; Delaney, 7 years; and Zachary, 3 yrs.

Cerridwen was the "tracking teacher" for the "advanced" group. That meant she met with us every session. Starhawk was also with our group for most classes. We had one or two sessions each with Cybele and Pandora, and a brief visit from Rose. Rose was the tracking teacher for the "Beginners" and Pandora and Dragonstongue were with them most of the time. Rose and Dragonstongue also handled administrative details, collecting money, making lists.

Campers came from all over the United States (Washington, Georgia, New York) and from Canada and Germany. Three were men, all in the "beginners" group the first week. In my group of 13 women, the youngest was 23 and the oldest -- maybe 55? One woman was Black, one

partly Native-American -- the rest of us were apparently middle-class White. We never got into the details of what Craft or Pagan tradition we each identified with, though people discussed this outside class.

Program: There were morning, afternoon, and evening sessions every day, from 2-4 hours per session. Our group had one "free" session Wednesday afternoon. Many of our classes were trance work, and I was surprised at how quickly we were able to do powerful magic together. I believe the key to this was that the women, although coming from different traditions, all had well-developed skills of focusing and concentration.

A new experience for me was doing individual and group trance "combos". For example: gathered in the meadow under grey skies, induced by words and drumming, we set out on individual journeys in the familiar Reclaiming style, encountering in the depths various people, obstacles, and experiences. Some of us were standing up, moving around, even dancing; others lay on the ground. Cued by words, we eventually moved (physically and psychically) to come together into small circles of 4 or 5 previously chosen women taking with us something or someone from our individual trance. Each circle tranced together, still guided by words and drumming, created a group place of power, and worked together there, helping each other with what we had brought from our separate journeys. We were given a "key" to facilitate moving in and out of our group places, as we worked with/in these places all week.

By the end of the week we were able to trance together very deeply, to change levels, and to move in and out of group and individual journeys while staying in trance, and without any "guidance" at all, beyond a few





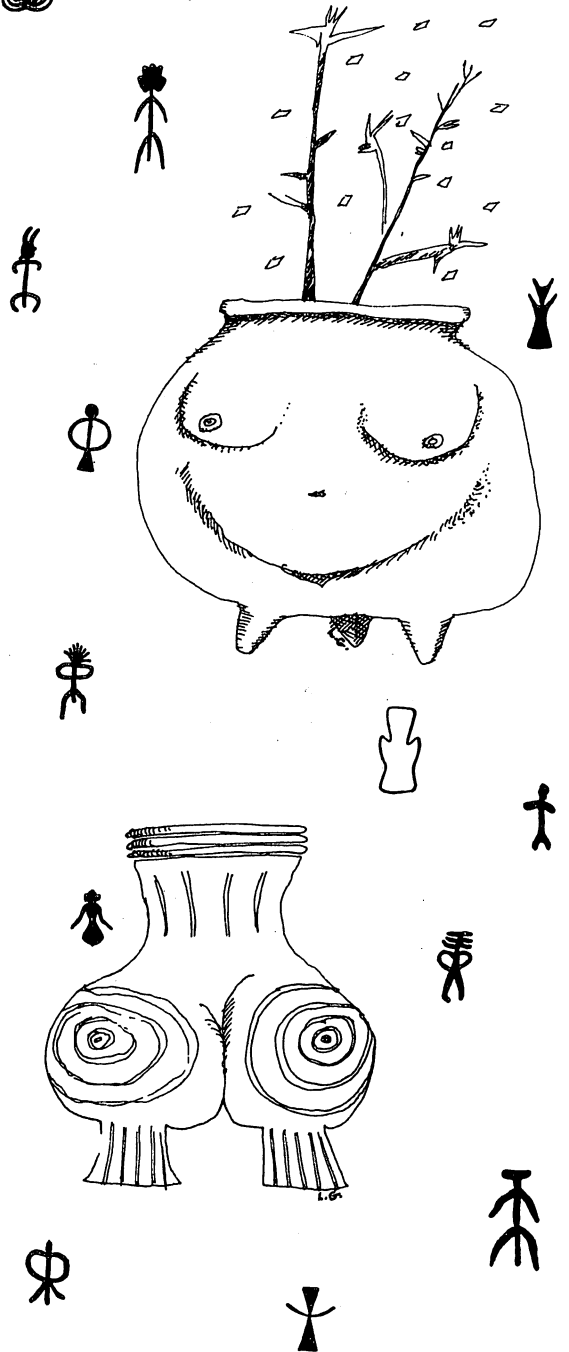
spoken suggestions before we embarked.

Does it all sound solemn? Wrong! Changing energies flowed through us as always: raucous laughter; brilliant, terrible puns; erotic moods; tears of alienation, sympathy, frustration, despair; healing touch; loneliness; vibrant community.

Our class work included: "Head-stacking" (direct, physical, one-on-one 3rd-eye contact); trancing into animals, trees, and the dark outside at night; confronting each other and ourselves in group process; rocking each other; asking for, offering and receiving healing; experiencing a Give-Away Ceremonial; celebrating ourselves through power-dances; creating a ritual.

So when people say it was "intense," we refer to all this and more, because of course we learned outside class, too. As we explored the tidepools and sang to the seals; as we watched the osprey and its catch. As we wailed with the woman who received word that her ailing mother had died; as lovers found each other. And as we shared meals, flashlights, and hot tubs.

This report leaves out a lot. Still, I want to share with you why our voices have a special quality when we speak about our weeks at Jughandle, and why there is an extra charge in the energy we exchange with our glances, remembering -- through the words pale next to the experience. Certainly something magical happened at Witch Camp, something elusively simple. It is that, for a time, we lived connected.





THANKS

- Rose May Dance



I would like to add to Vibra's report that the second week was also a great success. Pandora tracked the beginners this time, Rick Dragonstongue tracked the Mens Mysteries, and I tracked the advanced. Starhawk, Cerridwen, and Raven and Kat travelled around to each group. The evaluations we received from the students gave the Collective validation about our process -- students said the most important things they learned were about community building and working together, and that the collective was a good model for that.

I want to thank Iris and Kat who came up the second week to split the child-care, kitchen helper, and administrative functions. And I can't thank Ed and Erica enough -- I am thrilled that they are interested in having us back. I am in love with the Reclaiming members I worked with up there, and it was so good to work! And I am really impressed by Raven's energy in the kitchen and around the camp -- he provided a real center and nurturing for us. And thanks to Carol for oversight.

And most of all thanks to the wonderful students who had the rain to come and work with us. Your help in keeping the program together, your loving attention and criticism, your enthusiasm, and your voices and smiles will stay with us for a long time.

The last night of camp, each group -- Beginners, Men's, and Women's Mysteries were to each plan a ritual. I was thrilled to find that they all wanted to have a ritual together. The planning and execution were marvelous. We gathered together around the fire circle, costumed and with painted faces. The Beginners' track called in the elements with great skill and imagination, and were a great credit to Pandora. Then they stood in a circle, holding white


chrysanthymums, and called the Maiden to us and I know that Pandora and I weren't the only ones in the circle touched to tears. Next the Women's Mysteries brought in the Mother, and the women staff called Kali, who came running. The men then started a chant, in German -- thanks to Henri, one of our German students-- to bring in the Horned One and he danced in in a Wolf Mask and really raised up our juices.

Next we all called out what strengths we brought to share with the group, what our gifts were to each other, and then we all danced these together.

The next part of the ritual was my very favorite, planned by my Women's Mysteries track. They had gathered bindweed from off the farm, which was one of the weeds that could be picked as it is flourishing and crowding other plants out. This was rolled up on spindles so that as we stood in a circle, singing "And like the rolling world, the wheel of life is turning..." they wrapped the bindweed around each person, weaving in and out, and then we all began to dance the Spiral, looking so earthly gorgeous and grinning from ear to ear, green and leafy and spinning.

Then the Men helped facilitate a good-bye hugging song and dance (which I missed because Raven lurched a little too far during the Spiral Dance and hurt his bad knee, so I worked on him until he was feeling better -- he's fine now.) When I returned to the circle everyone repeated the song and hug for me, which was nice, and sent some healing to Raven. Then we opened the circle and floated around before the fire, eating truffles and talking, again, long into the night.

So I, too had a great time at Witch Camp and would, will do it again. Thanks to everyone.





TO THE STAFF OF THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM,

Writing an evaluation of Witch Camp is very difficult for me because my experience was extreme--positive in the extreme. It was very much like a rebirth (I wonder, does that qualify me as a Born Again Pagan?), and I can tell that I'm not even aware of all the levels in which change has occurred. I guess the difficult part of writing this evaluation for me is that I'm only learning how to give praise--no one ever taught me as a kid--it comes hard for me. And I have only praise for each of the Reclaiming people who was involved in the Apprenticeship Program. So I'll give it a try.

First, the whole atmosphere up at Jughandle Farm seemed charged with warmth and care. After two weeks back here in the cold world I especially appreciate how much more real and open I felt I was allowed and encouraged to be at camp. I attribute this air/mood directly to everyone there who was involved in Reclaiming. Certainly the planning they did had a part in the smoothness with which the week unfolded; but also each person's own openness and "sending" contributed to the general warmth. Most impressive was the quiet, dynamic way you all worked/"worked it out" with each other. You were so good at it I (almost) didn't notice, but I think the framework of your love, caring, and understanding of each other was the support for all that happened that week. It was too good to be true under Patriarchy, but, then, we were in another world at Witch Camp. Even time moved differently.

Thanks and appreciation to Raven, who sent love and caring in the very tangible (and tasty!) form of food. There were a few rough spots while you were learning to cook for a crowd, but I always had a warm, full belly and satisfied taste buds. Especially good were the pea soup and the lasagna (although I had a hand in the making of the lasagna and therefore might be prejudiced). Thanks for your effort (and the deliciousness of your successes).

I was also happy that there were children around. In all honesty, they did distract

me, but when I reflected on it I was glad for the distraction. I feel that, in this culture anyway, we can often benefit from the particular type of chaos children bring to a situation. Keeps us from being too serious or self-important. Corian's happiness (the entire time) was always a delight.

Similarly, Jughandle was the perfect location for the week. The diverse but compact fields and forests were an appropriate backdrop for reconnecting with the Earth. Ed and Erica shared their knowledge freely and were fun to envy (what a life they have!). I have an ongoing love affair with the Sitka spruce, perhaps the oldest tree on the property, whom I climbed as my goodbye to Jughandle.

I want to give special appreciation to the people who directly gave of themselves and taught me. I remember giving many thanks to the Goddess when Rose told us in that first class that she would be with us most of the week. I feel odd because I cannot come up with one specific piece of knowledge (fact?) that she "taught" me, but I feel she was my greatest teacher. I feel like she gave the frame of warm, grounded, humor-sprinkled power that held all the learning we did that week. (I know Rose also gave me much linear knowledge, but I sent my linear brain on a long hike that week, so I can't access the memory right now.) Rose gave an incredible amount of herself to us beginners the week I was there.

I'd also like to specially thank Pandora. I wanted to answer back to your self-hater Wednesday morning: "Too late. You've already taught me something very powerful!" The day before we were playing with fire (learning to move energy, open and close chakras, etc.). And with a pendant you helped me to physically feel what it's like to close a chakra. You picked exactly the right chakra and used just the right words (no intervening imagery, so I had only the physical feeling to go on--and it worked!). That's something I'll never manage to forget.





I also appreciated Dragonstongue for his presence and tremendous warmth. He added much to the whole atmosphere. He also did great invocations of the God. Thanks also to Cybele, though what she taught me wasn't very verbal so I don't have much to say about it here. Thanks to Rick and Cybele for a wonder-filled hike to the pygmy forest, full of many magical spots. Finally, thanks to whoever (was it Cerridwen?) asked the three questions in the opening ritual. The answers I received to them gave me powerful guidance the entire week.

Okay. Now that I've got all that praise out of the way I can start on the bad stuff. I've wracked and wracked my brains and I found one thing to criticize: my group had some of its precious free time on the very first night when we didn't know each other. So there. Shape up next year. Of course, looking back now, we got to know each other during the free time! Seriously, I can think of very few improvements. One would be to have the two tracks have free time together so they could intermix a little more (although that happened some "between the cracks" but it could happen more). I realize, however, that sharing free time is nothing like sharing a ritual. Also, someone brought up the idea of designating/creating some quiet space where people could go to be alone. That sounds like a good idea. I found myself really overextending/putting out

too much, so that in the second half of the week I tried to find more niches of time to pull in and be with myself. Finally, how about some kind of song sheet? I'm glad I didn't have one to read from as the week went along (although the people who had to listen to me sing might not have been so glad) but one at the end of the week would have been great. I think by now I've remembered most of the songs and chants and I quickly write them down, but I bet I've lost quite a few.

So, to tie this all together, I had been looking for a long time for exactly the kind of learning that I was given at Witch Camp. It was wonderful to do it in a space removed from the world ("normal" people) where I felt comfortable opening up and experiencing the "weirdness" that has been with me for a long time. I'm sure my appetite enhanced and added to the joy of my whole experience. At the same time, I had very high expectations, and Witch Camp blasted me so far beyond my expectations I run out of words to praise with. I think I'm still trying to process it all and figure out how this "transformed" me is going to fit back into this cold world.

- Robin Kreger

P.S.: Now, Hanna -- how do you get sacred, holy tree sap off the seat of your only decent pair of pants???





HANNAH'S HOUSEHOLD HINTS

- Hannah Clancy



Well here I am back again to tell you all the best ways to keep your houses clean that I have thought up. I have been Very Busy. As you know, I am always Very Busy, but I was Very Busier because I was over to the witch camp, where I had to help all those nice people try to explain about where is the east and why does the sun get up so early. So I was there except when it was Terrible Boring and I had to leave.

Just so you will know, I will tell you that the Terrible Boring part is when everybody goes over to watch the holy sacred seals take a nap.

Because the holy sacred seals are very decorative, but mostly what they do is sleep, which is Not exciting. And all the junior cadets were supposed to be learning about repose by pretending to be seals, but I will tell you right now that what is best for repose is a lazyboy rocker, and if the seals could afford them, which in the Infinite Wisdom of the Great Mother Seal Creator they cannot, they would be showing us the real meaning of true repose, which you do not get by laying around on wicked sharp pieces of the Great Mother Rock Goddess and making permanent indentations in your butt.

So what I think is, if we were going to learn about repose we could have laid down and took a nap in our beds, but we had to go see the seals because they had so much Atmosphere. So I am very tired now because there was so much Atmosphere at witch camp that people were running around with gorse on their heads.

But there you are, if you go over to witch camp like I did you can hear about all the elements in two languages which don't either of them make sense, and you can get up

very early to see if the sun will get up, which it will, anyway, and you can eat beans and rice until you are ready to go over to the next field with your holy sacred athame and spear a cow, but what you will not hear about is Moderation until you get home and your friends say Jesus Calm Down.

So I have been thinking about this a great deal, and I have decided that next time at witch camp those of you who are Extremely Advanced can take classes from me, and what we will do is rent out lazyboy rockers for a slight extra charge and watch the holy television while everybody else is out catching colds.

But here I am telling you all about witch camp when what you want to know is Hannah, how do I clean my house. Because now it is summer and I have figured out in my head what is the terrible worst problem of all that you have to cope with while you are laying around on sharp rocks with gorse on your heads and trying to look neat too, in case your mother comes over, and that is sand.

Because what you do is you go down to the holy sacred ocean with three dogs and most of your dishes and then get in the car and drive home, taking with you a great deal of holy sacred sand, and now I know that this is not Ecologically Correct, because everything comes from somewhere, and the Great Mother put sand on the beach and she did not intend for you to go decorating your kitchen with it, so what you are going to have to do is, take your feather duster to the beach, and dust off every single grain of sand before you get in the car, and clean the dogs, too, though actually they probably came from Europe so maybe you can just send them back.

Love, Hannah.



Of Ancient Names

The ancient names
are lost along the roads
Silent stone the song
of ancients sings

The masks of humankind
obscure the shore
Though waves of sea and time
ring in the core

Only darkness sees
the roots of grass
dance beneath the rain

The wind alone sings true

In childrens' sleep
the mysteries return
Wind howls through the ruins
of ancient journeys
Secret rhymes that linger
'til the turning

The ancient love
is undestroyed by swords
The ancient sight
though beaten down
remains
nourished by the rhythm
of the corn

Her hearth
by fire and breathe
it is restored

The old ones
hold the borderland of time
Certain in the smell of soil
the sight of birth
the wierdness of the moon

We turn away
and yet they follow on
Ancient queens
who hold the hidden law

Beneath the roads
forgotten ways are woven
Deeper than death
their pattern is unbroken

The waters of old seas
our blood contains
My blood
the child
of living stars
sustains



Recognizing Limits

by Rick Dragonstongue

"Manifesting is the wild theory that you can create your own universe; or, to put it another way, that faith can move mountains. . . . What you believe not only comes true; what you believe already is true. Everything around you is there because you believe in it. . . . - Change your beliefs, and you can change your universe."

- Strange de Jim, *Visioning*, Ash-Kar Press, San Francisco, 1979

Recent discussions about the role of money in the teaching of witchcraft have once again invoked the human potential movement's belief that we are all "unlimited" -- that if we will just accept or "own" our personal power we can do whatever we want, including coming up with whatever money is asked for training in the Craft. I have experienced the power of positive thinking in my own life, most notably after taking the "Direct Centering" course in New York over three years ago. My formerly wimpy willpower has been transformed; now nobody laughs at my newly-discovered abilities to speak my mind, quit jobs, and work with men in a feminist context. I've learned, through that course and through training and practice in the Craft, to place greater faith in my own abilities and in the possibility of genuine changes in my world.

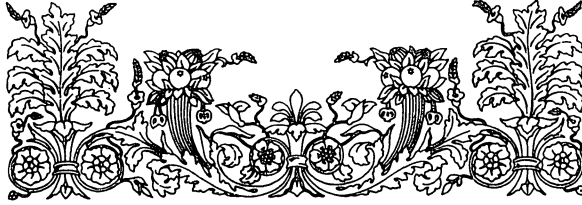
Nevertheless, the new-age belief that we can change everything simply by changing our minds seems to me a dangerous diversion from one of the basic principles of magical and political work: the need to ground oneself. To work effectively, we must weave a web that connects with all the complex powers that affect a situation. When we change the web we pay attention to the actual and complex results of our actions, including unexpected results. This emphasis on accepting and working with complexity is what makes contemporary witchcraft so compatible with ecological awareness, emotional honesty, feminism, self-transforming psychology, and anarchistic politics. Instead of relying on simplistic, reductive formulas, we use our intuitive faculties to embrace a complete situation. We use

visions and spells, objects and names, to reconnect with the earth, with ourselves, and with each other.

Embracing complexity means accepting dark and unpleasant realities. We cannot be ecologists without acknowledging that there is a natural balance between life and death, a balance which can be tipped toward death by human actions. We cannot be emotionally honest and self-transforming until we acknowledge the anger, jealousy, and fear we carry within us. We cannot hope to be in touch with ourselves and the world around us until we recognize that mass culture encourages denial of our feelings and alienation from economic and political realities.

The claim that we are unlimited in our ability to create our own reality can work directly counter to witchcraft's acceptance of complexity. I remember painfully a lover who insisted that time and love are unlimited and that there's always room for another lover. Her belief that she could manifest anything led to denial of the limits to her time and energy, and also helped her to avoid the fact that she was in love with someone else, out of love with me, and unwilling to deal with the resulting pain. With considerable ritual work, we were finally able to look at our feelings and reach a satisfactory resolution; once the true situation was clear, I could work on my own dependency, which had contributed to our problems.

In general, effective work begins when limitations are acknowledged and taken into



account. And it seems to me that one of the limitations we must work with in Reclaiming is that the people who are most likely to agree with our approaches to the world are also very likely to have made choices which in some way remove them from consumer society. They are people who have rejected corporate careerism, who feel that saving time and energy for creative work is better than saving money. They are less likely than the average North American to have cash readily available. And while it may sometimes seem convenient to say that such people could have all the money they need to pay us if they would only accept their own supposedly unlimited power, I personally think it is more productive to pay attention to current reality and acknowledge that choosing some alternative to having money is often a positive step on a difficult and admirable path. Perhaps each single person can achieve prosperity if they really want to, and perhaps individuals can do so without harming themselves or others, but the truth is that in aggregate we will have many poor people with us for a very long time. I think we should teach those who are interested.

People frequently must choose between two apparently desirable alternatives, and groups such as ours must decide which choices we will actively support. It would be nice to have a lot of money, but to get it most of us would have to give up a great part of our lives to the corporate state. I'd rather spend some of my time and energy on projects of my own choosing. Likewise, many women choose to bear and raise children although they know they will then have less time for earning money or learning or teaching the craft. In general, we've tried to support mothers with child care and people who refuse to work for the corporate state with low prices for our classes and workshops and newsletter.

Personally, I have tended to favor substantial raises in the high end of our sliding

scale along with small increases in the lower end. I have no objection to collecting consumer-society rates from people who have decided to join consumer society or have come into money by other means. But I suspect that relatively few such people are currently ready for a complex integration of spirituality, feminism, ecological awareness, and practical action. While many of our techniques would be of use even to an ardent capitalist, I think we should avoid catering to heavy-duty capitalists just as we should avoid catering to people who really believe that an experience is only worth as much as you pay for it. Money as a measure of value necessarily takes on the value-system of society at large; I hope we are developing **alternative values.**

Effective witchcraft can be seen as the opposite of alienation. Our current mass culture removes us further and further from direct experience, to the point where studies have shown many people find events on television more "real" and important than events at which they are "present." If we hope to effect cultural change, we must reconfirm the expectation that reality is best experienced directly and that valuations based on dollars or on mass propaganda should be questioned. We must experience and acknowledge our own strengths and limitations. Insisting we are unlimited throws us back into the old Horatio Alger fallacy: Anyone can make it big in America, and if anyone doesn't it's their own damn fault. We live in a world where many people worthy of our support **won't** make it big; I want to welcome them to our classes and work with them to improve **this** world rather than making them feel guilty for their poverty or promising them they'll feel better in another life (another way of claiming we're unlimited).

Let's settle in and live in the world we're in, and leave guilt-trips and personal immortality to the Christians.



Dear folks,

I see the discussion about money's function for Craft priestesses and priests and the attempt to define the parameters of pagan community as parts of the same issue.

It strikes me that the people who charge \$3/hour for classes, who struggle with group members about donations to buy the candles, are the ones who sit down and search their souls when someone (like myself) says "The Craft shouldn't be sold," while the people who charge \$50/hour for the same lecture on the circuit year after year laugh and book the next stop.

It also strikes me that when we think of right pagan livelihood, we think of teaching and setting up occult shops, as if those are the only truly pagan occupations.

First, I am disturbed to think we might be evolving a value that manual labor is not spiritual. I grant you I was miserable as a typist, but I do find in cleaning house, cutting wood, and picking apples a very intimate relationship with Deity--and still I have time to write. Second, only a few of us can teach (even part time) and sell occult supplies. What about the rest of us?

Perhaps there are simply not enough of us to support one another. What I come down to, however, over and over, is that pagan culture and community depends on pagan business. Deva is a good example--a mail order company which makes and sells cotton clothing, supporting several families who share certain values as well as an economic base.

Business is, in fact, the central power base for almost every other religion I can think of. Someone, after all, supplies us with our clothes, prints our books, bakes our bread, builds our houses, owns our land. Were we to begin to do some of those things for ourselves--and support one another's efforts by patronizing the businesses--we would have the foundation for community.

Despite our use of the word we don't have one now. A community shares more than a common religion; it evolves a culture--a history, a

type of music, a dialect, a set of foods . . . when we talk about creating a culture we tend to focus on politics and lifestyle, and community doesn't necessarily require conformity on those points.

It does, as Taniga eloquently points out, require some conformity. I value pagan diversity, our willingness to experiment with belief systems, relationships, and lifestyles. I wonder if the support and security community offers isn't a direct trade-off for personal freedom.

We don't seem willing to make the trade-off in either direction. At this moment, having left a small agricultural town for the city's openness, missing the intimacy I have therefore given up, it's the central dilemma of my life.

We seem to be reaching for a form of group network that has never existed before--as the necessities of our lives in a human-constructed world that has never existed before dictate. We seem to be moving toward sharing something more than a set of Sabbats and the occasional festival, to require more from paganism than a name for Deity.

That movement pushes us away from the interchangeable-parts culture. I need to be more to other pagans than a writer; I need to be coworker, neighbor, and friend. I need more from my work than appreciation for my typing speed. I need to know I am working to build a world which is more comfortable for me to live in, more respectful of our planet, more nurturing to humans.

It remains to be seen whether a group of people can consciously construct a working relationship, with the further difficulty that the relationship must be fluid enough to accommodate the iconoclast and solid enough to provide support. Perhaps such a thing will only exist for our grandchildren--community does take the long view. It doesn't have to happen all at once. We can move closer to each other one slow step at a time.

in light,

Brandy Williams



DUMPSTER TRUFFLES:

PROSPERITY, SCARCITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Starhawk

This article is written partly in response to the dialogues about money in the last newsletter--in particular Cerridwen's article "Talking Dirty: Sex, Money, Earth", and partly to distill some of the thinking I've been doing about money and economics as I've been travelling.

In the past year, I've spent about three months in Europe, close to a month in Canada, and two weeks in Nicaragua. It is true that travel is broadening. Being out of the country has made me see the whole debate about prosperity in very different ways.

One of the main tenets of the prosperity consciousness folks--and one which seems to be the underlying theme of Cerridwen's article, could be stated perhaps somewhat simply as "It's only our attitude that keeps us from being prosperous. If we change the way we think about money, if we get rid of guilt, we can have all the money we want."

By and large, this statement holds true for many U.S. citizens, especially those of us who are urban, childless and highly educated, particularly but not exclusively if we also look white and can pass for middle class and heterosexual and not too generally weird. It is true that many of us could be more prosperous if we let go of fears and blocks that hold us back. However, the idea that only our attitude holds us back belongs to a large class of New Age beliefs that can be empowering when applied to oneself and deadly if applied to others. It very easily transmutes into victim-blaming: "The poor are poor because of their bad attitude" an Aquarian revision of "the poor are lazy and shiftless". It seems to me to be another version of the old Yanqui*

myth that anyone can make it here in the land of opportunity. The myth is perpetuated because this is a land of opportunity for many--but not for all, and if we forget or ignore or blame those who don't make it, then we are not building a new culture, we're perpetuating the same old bullshit.

Outside the borders of the U.S., the idea that poverty is a result of attitude becomes simply ludicrous. In Canada, it is still somewhat tenable, but U.S. pressures on the Canadian dollar are hurting everyone regardless of the state of their consciousness. In England, with 30% unemployment, survival rather than abundance seems uppermost in consciousness. Germany is relatively prosperous, but Reagan's fiscal manipulations with the rate-of-exchange are also hurting the Germans. German professionals make approximately one-third of their U.S. counterparts.

In the Third World, of course, the very meaning of poverty and abundance changes. In Nicaragua, I would enter people's houses and wonder if they were inhabited, they were so empty of goods. In the States, I associate poverty with shoddiness and cast-off goods, in Nicaragua shoddy goods are a mark of the middle class and the poor have nothing--maybe a few hammocks and a couple of beat-up chairs, perhaps one change of clothes carefully kept for best. Prosperity is measured in beans and rice, in basic health care and schooling, which since the Revolution have been available if not abundant. And even the poverty of Nicaragua seems like immense wealth compared to the starvation of Africa, where life itself is the issue.

All this is not to say that we should be wallowing in guilt, but

that we need to keep a sane perspective when we start talking about abundance. When I arrived home, I was greeted with truffles redeemed by the pagan anarchists from a dumpster outside one of the Bay Area's elite candy stores. Here, we can afford to fill the garbage cans with expensive chocolates tossed out because they've lost the first bloom of freshness. We are surrounded by wealth, and waste--and so even those of us who don't have a lot of personal money have access to resources undreamed of elsewhere. (The pagan anarchists have taken to donating dumpster truffles to a local project that feeds the homeless, creating another surreal scenario brought to us courtesy of Reaganomics.)

If we believe, as Cerridwen states, that "children growing up healthy and strong in Nicaragua and India and Zaire is a prosperity beyond porches and condominiums" then we have to recognize that our access to material abundance is a direct inheritance of many many years of Yanqui and European expropriation of the Third World. So if we want true world-wide abundance we may have to be willing to give up some of our access to material goods. If we are to begin adopting Christian metaphors for pagan theology, as Cerridwen does with the loaves and fishes story, we might also look at the concept from liberation theology of the "option for the poor"--of judging our acts and decisions by how they affect the poorest third of humanity. At the very least, we can give up our willingness to waste.

The recognition that our wealth is, indeed, based on other's poverty is not puritanism. It has nothing to do with seeing money, per se, as 'dirty'. But it does come from a recognition that scarcity is a very real operating condition, not a mere illusion of the unenlightened. Cerridwen states that "the real

belief in our culture is scarcity", but the truth is exactly the opposite. Our entire economic system is based on the illusion that the earth's resources, particularly fossil fuels, are infinite and Her capacity to absorb waste and toxins is inexhaustible. Yet we are coming to the end of the era of cheap fossil fuels. We are rapidly polluting irreplaceable ground-water deposits in the same way we waste the surface air and water. Even our rich North American soil is being squandered--we are losing four billion tons of topsoil a year in the Midwest alone. We need to begin to come to terms with scarcity or we will destroy beyond salvation the air, water, and earth that are the foundations of any abundance.

Cerridwen implies that scarcity-consciousness is the root of all evil. "Scarcity is the big terror behind monetary greed and sexual jealousy, and scarcity is the primal terror... that keeps us stuck, afraid to challenge The-Way-it-is." Yet it is the very cultures that have the most refined attunement to scarcity, tribal cultures attuned to the real limits of their environment, that are characterized by sharing of resources and lack of possession. Among the Bushpeople of Africa or the Eskimos, greed or selfishness is seen as a disease. During our apprenticeship program at Jughandle, dependent on limited well-water in a time of drought, I felt that the efforts we went through to conserve water enriched me with a deeper sense of intimate connection with the preciousness and value of the life-sustaining element.

So how do we challenge The-Way-It-Is? If we are to wallow neither in guilt nor krugerrands, how do we begin to make the decisions that shape our economic lives in a pagan, Goddess-nourishing, revolutionary way?

Perhaps, instead of either prosperity or scarcity, we need to

think about sustainability. A movement is growing around sustainable agriculture, developing new attitudes, practices, and resources that conserve and replenish soil and water, instead of wasting them. We need to develop a sustainable union of spirituality and politics, and sustainable groups and organizations.

For something to be sustainable, we cannot be putting in more energy than we get back. We cannot be using up resources faster than we are replenishing them. If we're planting corn, we can't be using up more energy in the form of fossil fuel than we get back in calories, nor can we lose several bushels of topsoil for every bushel of grain produced.

If we're building anarcha-feminist-pagan-eco-community, the scales of value become more complex.

Reclaiming's Economics

What I hear and respond to in Cerridwen's article is the just cry that Reclaiming's current economics are not sustainable. We have maintained our "option for the poor" in offering low-cost classes, sliding scales, and scholarships--but we have often done so by exploiting ourselves. We don't want to lose our commitment to making our teaching broadly available, but a lot of people in the collective are feeling that we cannot sustain ourselves indefinitely on \$3 hour--even for a primarily volunteer activity. And some collective members are beginning to resent giving their best energies and prime time to unfulfilling work to make a living, and would much prefer to make a right livelihood in some balanced way that would nurture community.

Can we do both? I think so, but the answer is not simply to up our prices or design slicker advertising. We need to start looking at the broad range of things

that we do and find ways that they can support each other. We need to perhaps diversify what we do, so that some activities that bring in more money can support other things that don't.

At present, our teaching more or less supports the entire collective, including publishing the newsletter which is our major expense--although the newsletter does generate some subscription and advertising money. We are committed to pay every member of the collective on an equal scale--so every quarter we count up all the money that has come in, divide it by the total of hours worked, and come up with the rate per hour. (We are also committed to pay for childcare for teachers).

Both publishing and quality teaching are activities that elsewhere are subsidized. They are not expected to be self-supporting. In Reclaiming, we have an enormously high teacher-student ratio (often 1:3) which makes our classes extremely unlucrative. We are committed to teaching in pairs, to model diversity of approach and shared power, which also cuts down the money we take in.

I feel we need to think about doing several kinds of teaching. Besides the small, intimate, long-term classes, we could also do evening events or one-day workshops for larger groups. We could find facilities other than our living rooms for classes, where we could have more students at a time. We don't need to sell the Craft--but usually we are almost secretive about our events and classes. Unless someone is already in our network, they'll never hear about what's going on. We could make a greater effort to publicize what we do--because I know there are many people out there that are hungry for what we offer.

As I travel around doing workshops, I am able to keep my prices low, offer scholarships, and

prosper personally--because I work with larger groups. It doesn't make sense for me to fly off to a strange town and work with ten people when forty more are eager to learn. It's true that a group of thirty or fifty does not offer the same kind of intimacy as a group of five--but what I've found is that it offers something different--not necessarily something less. There's an excitement and another kind of power in a larger group, and while there are processes that only work in small groups, there are others that work well in larger groups. Perhaps we don't always need to build the same kind of intimacy in every group--and perhaps it is even more honest, sometimes, to offer tools and skills and experience but let people know that the real work of building intimacy will have to be done by them, in an ongoing way that integrates into their lives. We don't want to give up teaching in pairs, because it feeds us and sparks our creativity--but we don't always have to teach in pairs. Maybe we need to challenge ourselves to find ways of modeling shared power when we teach alone. I would welcome feedback on these ideas--especially from students.

In the long run, however, we need to develop other sources of income that can subsidize both teaching and the newsletter. There are several projects we've been thinking of as potential 'cash crops'. One is a workbook of class plans and exercises. The other is a tape of chants--or a Spiral Dance tape should we succeed, this year, in getting a good quality recording.

Perhaps we need to directly solicit donations or even monthly pledges, or look for grants to help us develop projects. All this takes time and long-range planning--odd ideas for a bunch of anarchists, but I think the great excitement and joy we all felt in this summer's apprenticeship program showed us that we can successfully work at things in the long term. And after all, building a new world is a long-term endeavor.

One final way in which we move toward sustainability is in the way we live our lives. Over the years, there has been a gradual movement among the Reclaiming community toward collective living, which continues to grow. Perhaps over the years we will be able to join households into neighborhoods, to transform our physical environment so it becomes more ecological and sustainable. That is my personal dream. I am fortunate in being able to sustain myself--and prosper--doing the work of the Goddess, but I want to live in a community that can thrive and prosper in balance with the earth and with all her peoples.

* I am using the term "Yanqui" to substitute for "American" which does not differentiate between the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. I use the Spanish spelling to indicate that it is not the division across the Mason-Dixon line, but across the Rio Grand and the Canadian border that I address here. Anyone who can think of a better term is welcome to write and let me know.





LITTLE DREAMER (song)

-- Rick Dragonstongue

Kerosene and candlelight
from distant windows cross the night
by ridge-top cabins where muledeer pause,
gray ghosts, innocent, free of laws.
Beyond the foothills, cities lie
glimmering in the crystal night
and far out near the edge of sight
freeway headlights climb a ridge
and disappear in the night.

Let go
little dreamer, the stars fly so high,
let go, the Milky Way reaches so far,
the woodpecker laughs and the doves' wings sigh,
let go, little dreamer, let go,
let go, little dreamer, let go.

From cities and suburbs, driving so far
to cling to the earth, to reach for a star,
planting and tending, healing the past
of logged-over hills and living too fast.
Friends and lovers, nothing lasts,
hillsides and trees come down with a crash,
clinging to life, clinging to death,
dust on the surface, fish in the depths . . .
come to the mountains and breathe.

Let go
little dreamer, the stars fly so high,
let go, the Milky Way reaches so far,
the woodpecker laughs and the doves' wings sigh,
let go, little dreamer, let go,
let go, little dreamer, let go.

© Rick Dragonstongue





HEALING - A Review by Diane Stein

The Art of Spiritual Healing by Keith Sherwood is A Practical Guide to Healing Power published by Llewellyn Publications. Written by a foremost practitioner and authority on psychic healing, the book is a fascinating learn-to-do-it guide by a knowledgeable and reverent man.

Aura healing is a craft skill, one of the healing skills lost or nearly lost to earth with the wiping out of witches and the institution of male medicine in the Burning Times. When the Inquisition replaced healing with science and murdered the competition, psychic healing became "faith healing," a feared mystery of charismatic Christianity, something suspicious when used by or for real people. Women and men in the craft know better, and realize that aura work is there for all of us. Information is sought and exchanged, and slowly the skill is being relearned and reclaimed for the good of all.

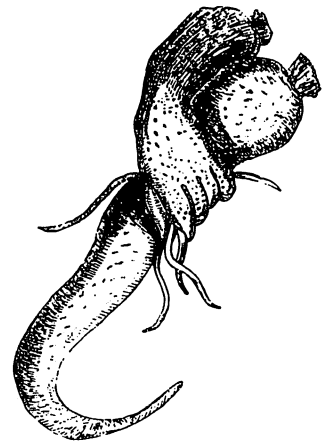
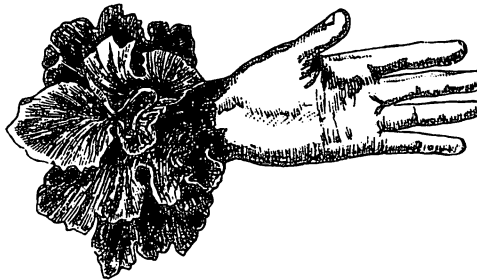
While direct learning is still the best way to gain and refine healing skills, many of us have no access to a teacher. Books are the prime source of disseminating craft information in our isolated lives, and there are only beginning to be such books available. Witches writing in the past have held the mysteries secret--for fear for their own lives, or for fear of the information being used to persecute others or misused. With

the relaxing of the times and the increase in people seeking inner knowledge, books like The Art of Spiritual Healing become possible.

Keith Sherwood's book is material long sought. With individual work, using the book for a teacher and guide, most people can learn aura or psychic healing. There is information from the basics (chakras, breathing, nutrition), to and including color work and laying on of hands, vibrational and altered states, polarization, and absentee healing work.

While the techniques and information are complex and can seem overwhelming at times, Sherwood writes clearly and the material comes together by the book's end. If Sherwood came to speak in my area too, I would surely run not walk to seek him out as a teacher.

Keith Sherwood's The Art of Spiritual Healing is \$7.95 from bookstores or Llewellyn Publications, (POB 63383, St. Paul, MN, 55164-0383). Include \$1.25 for postage when ordering by mail or call 1-800-THE MOON for credit card orders toll free. This is a very important book for anyone in the craft, with healing interests or not. A milestone in reclaiming information, we need many more books of its type in healing and related craft skills.





DIAL-A-WITCH

by Rose Rants

Reclaiming recently received a letter from "T.", a Pagan man in the Midwest interested in organizing Wiccan community, who stated that he had been calling various pagan groups around the country, using published phone numbers, to obtain information on the Craft. He called one number and the recipient "reacted in a way that both hurt and frightened" him. He says "I introduced myself, but before I could give the reason for my call I was pointedly told that I was not known....I was informed that the person I had called didn't wish to speak with me. I was shocked, the number had been given publicly as a resource number...." The writer states that this greatly upset him for sometime. "Was it my male voice? Does a phone number advertised as an information number actually mean 'only if we know you personally'? Was this merely an isolated case on a bad day?" "T" goes on to state that charlatans and people interested in selling the Craft are probably easy to reach on the phone, and perhaps "legitimate" pagan groups should be more accessible. He fears that by being overly cautious pagans will discourage people from learning about pagan ways.

I think I am the person who fielded this phone call. Even if I am not, I have received many similar calls. I value my time and set limits for it. I place my phone number in the Newsletter and elsewhere when there is a specific event for which I am willing to act as an information source, and to talk to strangers. When people obtain my number published for this purpose and call me for more general information, I may get irritated. I am busy and am not always in the space to stop what I'm doing and talk about the Craft on the phone. I respond to letters, which I can answer at my leisure, and which I can screen for sincerity and sanity. Yes it was a bad day. Yes it was your male voice. Yes you were the lucky 7th caller.

I don't like to talk to strange men on the phone or on the street. It makes me feel too

vulnerable. I would like some of the men in our community to volunteer to field general informational calls from men interested in the Craft. This could help me avoid offending sincere men whom I do not know.

I understand that there is a lot of interest in the Craft today, there is a lot of excitement about what Reclaiming is doing, yet I do not feel compelled to be at the service of the public all the time. I have a healthy dose of paranoia about how open and accessible we are anyway. I make effort, if I can, to talk to women who get our number and call us for general information. I truly wish they would write to us instead. I now have a message machine, and this should help me answer people at my convenience, but I'd like to encourage thoughtfulness and self-restraint in those who want information.

The history of witchcraft and of the left tells me that caution is necessary. It has never been easy to find the Craft, and the process of finding it, I think, helps weed out those who do not belong there. The search for the Craft is a step toward initiation, and I feel that the telephone makes it too easy. A true seeker will recognize the charlatans and seek elsewhere, eventually. It may be painful for "T" to know that just because he's male it's hard for him to connect with an unknown female witch on the phone. But it's true.

If I had endless energy and no need for a private life and no fear of rape, of intrusion, or of thrill seekers, I might be able to yak for hours on the phone. Because Reclaiming is accessible and because I sometimes publish my number, I must rely on my instincts about whom to talk to. In patriarchal society my instincts often automatically screen out unknown males. I need pagan men to be feminist, sensitive to this kind of problem, no matter how personally blameless they may be. Thanks.





Yes, it is happening. A group of 30 or so people have been meeting over the summer to plan and prepare for a Spiral Dance to be held at the Women's Building Friday and Saturday nights, November 1 and 2, 8-11 pm.

This Spiral Dance, while retaining the essential spirit and most of the music of past rituals, will also differ significantly.

*** Portions of the Saturday night ritual will be filmed and will be part of a 35 mm, 2-hour documentary on Goddess religion, Paganism, and Witchcraft that Starhawk is working on in conjunction with the women's studio of the National Film Board of Canada. We intend and expect that the presence of the film crew will be generally unobtrusive and will affect the ritual experience only minimally.

*** Publicity will be by word of mouth and through this Newsletter only. Even so, we expect about 250 people each night. You should order tickets now. See details in box.

*** Child care will be available for people who request it in advance.

*** This will be a somewhat more participatory event than in the past. Come prepared to move, to sing, to dance, to share in creating the evening's experience.

ALL ABOUT TICKETS

THEY WILL GO FAST so order now!

Price: \$7 - \$15 each. We need to average about \$9-\$10 per ticket to cover our costs. The lower end of the price scale is to make this event accessible to people with low incomes. Significant expenses include: space rental for rehearsal and the ritual nights; child care; sound equipment; ritual food for all. All musicians, chorus members, dancers, planners, and technicians are donating their time. If we come out ahead financially, the money will subsidize other events we do during the year on which we usually lose money.

Covens, circles, and groups of friends are encouraged to order blocks of tickets to save everybody time and headaches.

Dance



Barter is possible. If you cannot afford even the lowest price and wish to work for your ticket instead, write Reclaiming and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Few people will be able to do this, but there will be some barter jobs, e.g., helping clean up after the ritual.

Wheelchairs -- the Women's Building is wheelchair accessible.

Sign language -- interpreter available if you request this in advance. See TICKET ORDER FORM.

SPIRAL DANCE TICKET ORDER FORM

IMPORTANT: Send this form with a stamped self-addressed envelope to: SPIRAL DANCE TICKETS, Reclaiming, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114

Friday, Nov. 1---No. tickets _____ @\$ _____ Total \$ _____

Saturday, Nov. 2--No. tickets _____ @\$ _____ Total \$ _____
(*Remember, Sat nite will be filmed.)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Will you accept ticket(s) for the other night if the date you want is sold out? YES _____ NO _____

If you will need sign language interpretation, check here: _____

If you will need child care, please tell us: name, sex, and age of child/ren, & any important information (e.g. disability)

TICKET PRICES: \$7 - \$15 per ticket (We need to average \$9-10 per ticket to break even.)

See next page for RECLAIMING classes

Classes



ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN AND MEN - Rick Dragonstongue and Kat - 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 Sunday, November 10, 1985, 7:30 p.m. Call Dragonstongue (731-2159) or Kat (454-8435) for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

INTRODUCTION TO WICCA (FOR GAY MEN) -- beginning first week of November. Basics covered with emphasis on gay men's needs. Call Sean 771-2303.

OTHER RECLAIMING CLASSES: Check our Events Line -- 849-0877 -- for classes which may be offered this season. As this Newsletter goes to press, Macha is in the Midwest, but we think she may be offering a Women's class in Marin.





GODDESS FILM
by Starhawk

Studio D, the women's studio of the National Film Board of Canada, is beginning production of a feature-length documentary about the history, suppression and current re-emergence of the Goddess religion, Witchcraft and Paganism.

I have been researching and working on developing a shooting script for the past year, together with the film's director, Donna Reed. We shot our first footage at the Pagan Spirit Gathering in Wisconsin in June, and plan to film the second evening of this year's Spiral Dance in November.

The potential of this project is tremendously exciting to me, and I think for the larger Pagan and womenspirit community. The women of Studio D, which produced Not a Love Story and If You Love This Planet (with Helen Caldicott) have a track record of making excellent, controversial, and strongly feminist films. They have the professional skills and vision--and budget! (the Canadian Government finances them) to carry out a project of this scope--and at the same time those who will be on the film crew are personally interested and involved with ritual and sensitive to the difficulties of filming ritual without destroying its energy.

Because the Film Board is a nonprofit institution, the film will be available cheaply (free in Canada) for groups to rent and screen for events and education. We are also hoping for some theatrical distribution and possibly public television showings. I will be writing and reading the narration, so the content of the film will be shaped by Pagans.

The film will move from the Old Stone Age caves through the Goddesses of the early agricultural villages and first cities, through the transition to patriarchy, the remains of Goddess worship in Christianity, and the persecutions of the Burning Times. Much of the movie will show the exuberance and vitality of the current, growing, earth religions. We hope to draw parallels with Native American, Latin American and West African/Caribbean traditions of woman centered spirituality and shamanism, as well as making links between spirit and politics.

The filming of Reclaiming's Spiral Dance will, we hope, convey the power and energy of our own community's vision. It will also serve as a bridge to the Burning Times sequence as we mourn for the beloved dead--the Witches, the slaves, the oppressed of past and present. We also hope for a powerful spiral as we chant the litany that evokes a free and healed world. I hope those of you who join us on the night we film will see the cameras not as intruders, but as a way of extending our magic and vision out far beyond our boundaries to many people who are hungry for it.

STARHAWK'S FALL TRAVELS

10/11-10/13 Women's Mysteries
Esalen, Big Sur CA 93920 408/667-2335

11/16--11/17 women's spirit retreat
Ojai Foundation Box 1620 Ojai CA
93023 805/646-8343



REVIEW - THE DRUIDS' PROGRESS

by Roy King

The Druids' Progress is the approximately quarterly publication of Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF - Our Own Druidism), a promising new neopagan organization birthed by Isaac Bonewits. ADF is to be grounded in sound scholarship of IndoEuropean Paleopaganism from Ireland to India. The first order of work is to translate and coordinate the vast array of published research of recent years into English and thereby to really determine for the first time in recent centuries what the magical and religious practices of our ancestors actually were. Folks literate in all ancient and modern IndoEuropean (IE) languages are sought for this ambitious task.

Scholarship of the quality of Jim Duran, G. Dumezil, M. Eliade, A. Ross, S. Piggott, M-L. Sjoestedt, and P. MacCana, among others, is praised. On the other hand, the scholarship of Merlin Stone, Robert Graves, H.P. Blavatsky, L. Spence, M. Murray, and I. Morganwg is shunned, although their poetic energy is appreciated. "Theories about a Universal Ancient Matriarchy, discussions assuming the supposed antiquity of Neopagan Witchcraft, ravings about 'Aryanism,' colorful tales about 'shamanism' using the word in its currently vague and sloppy meaning" are definitely out. Isaac is being very no-bullshit about this. To me, this feels largely like a breath of fresh air in a hot, stuffy room.

Concerning the role of women in IE clergy - "since most of the mythology we have is 'epic' (i.e. macho) poetry of the warrior castes, how much can we reconstruct the actual IE beliefs about goddesses? Wendy O'Flaherty has written what seems to be a good book on goddesses in ancient India, with references to other IE cultures, but most of the recent writing on goddess worship in ancient Europe has been far more reflective of current sexual politics than of modern

scholarly techniques. Who can we trust as honest in this area?" Further, "IE peoples are known to have had both male and female clergy, and those tribes influenced by shamanistic practices frequently had clergy who were ambiguous in their gender identification. For these historical reasons, as well as the fact that ADF is a Neopagan religion, we will not tolerate sexism or restrict membership or rank on the basis of gender or affectional preferences."

But " . . . I have no intentions of letting extremists of any persuasion use ADF for purposes not in keeping with our original goals."

Another element of focus in ADF goals is the creation of an authentic, "professional" pagan clergy, with verifiable methods of accreditation and qualification. This seems, partly at least, aimed at transcending the present quagmire of squabbling over initiatory authenticity and rank of the various declared and undeclared "leaders" of the neopagan community. Further, "Most Neopagans who become priest/esses do not attain their positions because they have studied, mastered and then demonstrated specific skills relevant to their chosen roles. Rather . . . because (a) they have belonged to the group for a minimum length of time, (b) their house is where everyone meets at, (c) they are so nice that nobody wants to hurt their feelings by denying them a higher rank than they really deserve, and/or (d) they have gotten very close to the High Priest/ess."

Not as rigid as it might sound, the AFD system of "carefully structured hierarchy, based on actual skills and knowledge obtained and demonstrated, with upward and downward mobility," is projected as a system of circles within circles, all in the same "plane," with responsibility, dedication,



and power (but not necessarily spiritual attainment) increasing toward the center-most circle. It is observed that all organizations, no matter how anarchistic, have, in fact, an inner circle of leadership. ADF seeks to maintain maximum visibility of its leadership. The problems of the spectrum of leadership from rigid hierarchy to anarchy have been carefully considered, and it seems a workable solution is being formed.

Areas of study, work, and explanation (called tracks) include (1) Survival and Physical Health, (2) Therapy and Counseling, (3) Communication, (4) Psi, (5) Social Science, (6) Physical and Biological Sciences, (7) Movement Awareness and Discipline, (8) Art and Music, (9) Drama and Liturgy, (10) Philosophy and Metaphysics, (11) Comparative Religion and Mythology, (12) Mysticism and Altered States of Consciousness, and (13) Interdisciplinary Studies. Thanks for track 13, Isaac! So, for example, on track (1), moving inward through the circles means getting your nutrition and physical exercise together, freeing yourself of drug dependence (areas I've often felt sadly lacking among folks who profess to "worship" their bodies and consider them sacred), becoming aware of your environment and developing survival skill, both physical and economic - through

right livelihood, of course - and eventually teaching and helping others in these areas.

Modern Irish is suggested for liturgical use. "One of the magical goals of AFD is to 'awaken' the Old Goddesses and Gods of our ancestors from their centuries-long sleep. One of the most effective tools we could use to accomplish this would be to do our ceremonies in the old languages - eventually in Proto-Indo-European itself, or at least the major western branch." Any European language can lead back to the old language, but Irish seems to offer the most direct route back through Middle Irish and Old Irish, essentially western Indo-European.

All in all, ADF is a very well thought out (Isaac is clearheaded almost to a fault), comprehensive attempt to provide a solid basis of organization for a serious Neopagan movement.

The Druids' Progress certainly deserves attention, and is provoking a lot of interesting response.

Twenty dollars is asked for a year's subscription. Write to ADF, POB 456, NY, NY 10034.





This article is in reply to Ann Forfreedom's article "Witches and Abortion" in the Spring 1985 issue.

As a feminist who has done some research in the subject of abortion, I am quite disturbed by the almost pro-abortion attitude expressed in Forfreedom's article. I, no less than she, believe that a woman's right to control her body is sacred and inviolate. But Forfreedom's article goes much further than this: she puts across the idea that abortion is in no way an undesirable thing, and that it can even be a good thing. She uses the belief in reincarnation to justify it, and suggests that abortion is a necessary part of women's sensuality. All these ideas I find highly erroneous.

First, abortion is undesirable in that it harms a woman's body. Women who have abortions have an 85% greater risk of later miscarriage, and an increased risk of premature or defective infants when they do decide to bear children. Approximately one-third of all abortions are performed past the first trimester, at such a time when bleeding, complications, sterility, and other health problems are likely to result. Clearly, any woman who views her body as sacred will try in every way to avoid these damages.

In addition to the physical aspects there are also psychological problems. While some of these are due to patriarchal attitudes in our society, I believe it is only natural for a woman to have qualms about destroying what could have become a human being. Especially for unstable women, the experience can be very traumatic.





Also, the system of performing abortions in this country has drawn complaints from women. Many felt exploited and even dehumanized by it; they were not counselled or informed enough to make the right decision. Many deeply regretted their abortions afterwards. Forfreedom says, "Certainly a woman forced into motherhood is not able to fully develop herself and live filled with Goddess energy and love." Neither is a woman who has acted in hasty confusion without proper care and preparation.

For the woman, then, abortion certainly is not a good thing. Now let us look at the fetus.

It seems to me nonsensical to deny that life begins at conception. Developmental psychologists include the prenatal period, beginning at conception, as part of everyone's life-span.¹ An embryo has a functioning brain early in the first trimester, and is constantly learning and growing. While dramatic changes take place at birth, life after birth is in many respects simply a continuation of the development inside the womb. The reason we support abortion and not wanton infanticide is because a fetus is still part of its mother's body: it lives off her resources, inhabits one of her organs, and causes vast physiological changes in her system. No one has the right to dictate to her how her blood and life are to be used; hence, she has the right to rid herself of what is technically a parasite. But after birth, she has no more right over her baby's life than over that of any other separate human being.

However, whether a woman aborts a fetus (which is her right), or kills her infant (which is not her right), one fact remains the same: that entity is deprived of its life. Interestingly enough, Forfreedom does not deny this; she merely asserts that it can return to earth some time "in the future." This is an offensive abuse of the idea of reincarnation. That very argument can and has been used to justify murder in patriarchal societies.² I believe that one incarnation cannot substitute for another, which is why we are each unique and precious. Besides, if a fetus possesses a soul, would it not be monstrous to subject that soul to the agony of abortion? And when we realize that reincarnation is a subjective belief which not all Witches hold literally, would we not be rash to act upon it as though it were established fact?

Forfreedom, in the fourth paragraph, mentions abortion in the same context with



the beauty of women's sexuality. In the fifth paragraph, she calls it "a positive aspect of a woman's human rights." She goes on to say that "to bring forth the Goddess within her, a woman must learn to...respond to her own needs and strengths. Contraception and abortion can aid her to do so." The entire article suggests, albeit obliquely, that abortion is sacred, beautiful, a positive expression for a woman, even a means of approaching goddess consciousness and "harmony with her own nature." For freedom denies that it is either a tragedy or a necessary evil.

The facts, however, are adverse. Abortion is a necessary evil because of its ill effects on the woman; and it is a tragedy for the aborted. Consider: the demand for adoptions greatly exceeds the babies for placement, and most of the aborted fetuses, being caucasian, would probably have been eligible for adoption. Consider: many women have been counselled out of abortion, taught to be good mothers, and were grateful for their decision. Whether you regard an embryo as human or not, the fact remains that everyone began that way. When one looks at the people those embryos turn out to be -- the beautiful, happy children raised by adoptive parents -- one begins to see what a loss abortion is. For had they been aborted, these unique human beings, with all their talents and dreams, would not have been here. Abortion, then, is an individual's total deprivation of all its potential for joy in life. If that isn't a tragedy, what is?

If I am sounding like a "pro-lifer", it is because, in a sense, I am one. For I believe it is possible to be pro-choice and pro-life. When I consider the relationship of a woman to her womb, I conclude that she has the right to control it. And at the very

same time, when I see pictures of the agonized faces of the aborted and their severed little limbs; when I see confused young women getting abortions without counseling, many of whom will later regret it, and when I see couples whose arms have been aching for a child for ten years, I am forced to conclude that abortion should be stopped.

It should be stopped not by force of law, but by social change. By providing counselling services to help women find better alternatives, and most important, by the education in, and promotion of, contraception. In this day and age abortion is no longer necessary either for population control or for the enjoyment of sexuality. For freedom, while celebrating the sensuality of the Goddess, neglects to mention that responsibility goes with it. Those who use contraception carefully have touched upon the greatest solution to the problem of abortion: prevention of unwanted pregnancy.

I, as a lover of life and Mother Nature, look forward to the day when abortion shall be an unquestioned right which very few women need to exercise.

Notes

1. Zimbaro, Phillip G., *Psychology and Life*, (Scott, Foresman and Company, 1985).
2. "Only the material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is subject to destruction; therefore, fight, O descendant of Bharata." This is the wartime counsel of Krishna to Arjuna in The Bhagavad Gita As It Is by Swami Prabhupada, (The Bhakti-vedanta Book Trust, 1972).

April has understood part of the basis of my article on "Witches and Abortion". I believe that Witches, unlike Roman Catholics or fundamentalist Protestants or Moslems or Hindus or Buddhists, consider abortion a positive expression of women's freedom, a sacred and blessed choice. Possibly other Pagans do not feel so strongly (not all Pagans are Witches). Women who helped others get abortions in the not-so-distant past were burned or hanged as "witches". today, being Wiccan or Pagan, of necessity, as far as I can see, means being different from the modern patriarchal, male-dominant religionists, and means favoring the rights of women in spiritual and practical areas.

But April has not accurately researched or described the contemporary basis for my views. In fact, she perpetuates factual errors about abortion.

She is not accurate in describing the physical effects of legal abortion. (Many women who are not able to obtain legal abortions face terrible problems, due primarily to the unsafe conditions under which illegal abortions are performed -- but April doesn't seem to be describing illegal abortions.) The facts I cite here are based on the facts of legally available, medically safe abortions.

Abortion does not usually harm a woman's body, just as any needed and wanted basic medical operation does not cause harm. According to the authors of The New Our Bodies, Ourselves, "The chance of a complication for a first-trimester abortion is about 1 percent. The later the abortion, the more chance of complications. Signs of a complication will generally appear within a few days after the abortion...." (pp. 296-297)

A first-trimester abortion is usually a 5-15 minute operation, usually performed in a doctor's office, an outpatient clinic, or a hospital, with local or no anesthetic. (Menstrual extraction is still experimental.) A first-trimester abortion usually is performed from 4-14 weeks after the last normal menstrual period. (pp. 293-294)

A second-trimester abortion is usually performed 16-28 weeks after the last normal menstrual period. Usually, young, poor, black women are forced into having their abortions in this later time frame, due to economic or political restrictions. (p. 303)

Regarding possible effects on future pregnancies, the authors of this much-acclaimed resource book on women's health specify, "Having an abortion does not decrease the chances of having a healthy baby in the future. There is some indication that having several abortions may slightly increase chances of miscarriage or premature births, but enough good research on this issue has not been done...." (p. 297)

(Source: The New Our Bodies, Ourselves, A Book By and For Women, by the Boston's Women's Health Book Collective, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1984)

A study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute found that 91% of all abortions (of the 1.55 million reported in the U.S. in 1980) occurred within the first 12 weeks of gestation, and less than 1 percent occurred after 20 weeks. (See the latest issue of Family Planning Perspectives -- this and the studies cited below were sent to me by CARAL, the California Abortions rights Action League -- North, 4110 Geary Blvd., Suite 204, San Francisco, CA 94118.)

A study by P. G. Stubblefield et al, covering the years Oct. 1, 1976-Dec. 31, 1979, notes, "No difference in pregnancy rates was found that might be related to previously induced abortion...." And, "With respect to the specific question being considered, does induced abortion lead to reduced fertility? The data strongly support a negative answer." Also, Stubblefield found that studies in Japan, Poland, England, Yugoslavia, Scandinavia, and (one study in) the United States "have found no significant association between legal abortion and sterility." (From "Fertility After Induced Abortion: A Prospective Follow-Up Study," by P. G. Stubblefield, et al -- Harvard Medical School and Harvard

School of Public Health, printed in Ob-
stetrics and Gynecology, Vol. 62, No. 2,
February 1984.)

Furthermore, data cited by Drs. Cates, Gold,
and Selik, writing in the New England
Journal of Medicine, Sept. 27, 1979, "imply
that suction curettage, the procedure used
for over 90% of abortions in the United
States...presents little or no threat to
future pregnancies."

According to CARAL, first-trimester abor-
tions are 12 times safer than childbirth,
and abortions performed in the first eight
weeks are 25 times safer than childbirth.

(Based on data from the Center for Disease
Control.)

I would like a new energy in the world -- an
energy that favors womankind in both word and
deed, in popular and unpopular issues, in
spiritual and mundane matters.

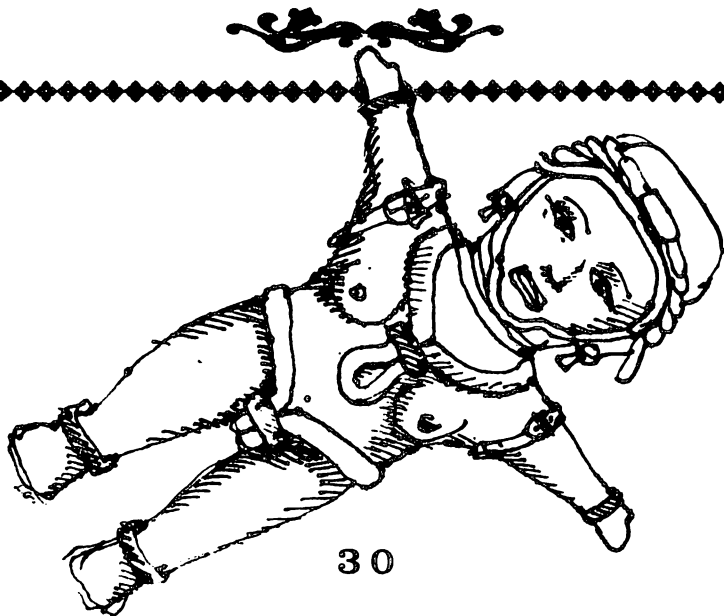
Today, we live in an overpopulated world, in
a time of hatreds and human-against-human

oppression. Let there be a religion that
shows in practice and belief that femaleness
is truly divine, that choosing to be one-in-
herself (the phrase so associated with Athena
and Artemis) is truly valuable, that being a
single person or the mother of another person
is good -- both are good, neither is better,
both are necessary.

We celebrate childbearing. We must learn to
celebrate abortion.

We are part of Mother Nature, we live on
Mother Earth, we are all participants in
these currents of life. Women and men who
are Wiccan or Pagan must grow beyond the
woman-hating atmosphere that surrounds us.

Mother Nature favors balance, not overpopula-
tion. Mother Earth cares for those actually
alive, not those who are potential only.
Both Demeter and Kall, Diana and Nemesis, the
Lady of Light and the Lady of Darkness are
honored by the children of the Goddess
(goddesses) and Her Consort (gods). So, I
believe, Witches see abortion as a sacred
rite.





REVIEW - STORMCLOUDS

Roy King

"**ALERT! ALERT!** Have you seen STORMCLOUDS? Issue 1, c/o Pagansword, St. 432 -- Dept. D, 236 A W. 19th St., NYC 10011. I urge you to get a copy and be aware of what they intend, however you react to them. Myself, they scare me half to death." --from a reader.

Yes, we've seen STORMCLOUDS, the new publication of a group of pagan militants called the Ravenscall Collective. They are calling for all true pagans of pure and authentic tradition to wake up and prepare for the coming war against the right wing monotheist Patriarchs, and they bitterly condemn all Eclectics for ripping off non-European, Native traditions, and being generally full of bullshit;

"...we are helping the other realistically minded Pagans...to learn strength instead of blind submission, and encouraging the desire to learn their own, rightful, heritage, without it being drowned in elements from science fiction and fantasy novels and pieces of other traditions that should not have been removed from their rightful places."

"The popular image of Witches and Pagans ...is further deteriorated by the so-called 'leaders' and 'teachers' of the 'modern' craft, who use their favorite science fiction or fantasy author as the basis for creating something they swear with nauseating zeal is eight thousand or more years old. If the Pagan Community will survive, Traditions must be returned to their original, uncorrupted Tribal forms and the co-opting of other peoples' Traditions must stop."

The Stormclouders seem to be protecting a community they simultaneously are claiming doesn't exist. Or have they actually somehow bridged the chasm of centuries and become true and authentic "worshippers of the Ancient Goddesses and Gods of Tribal Culture", a feat the rest of the Pagan community has so miserably failed at. Fantasy indeed!

STORMCLOUDS' functions include "the declaration of the 'United States' as stolen land, rightfully belonging to its Native People", [agreed] and they demand "return of Native lands", [that's the whole continent, right?] and organization of "no-nonsense requests to American Indian Councils in order to insure that our military movements do not interfere with their own plans for their rightful land" [how considerate].

Shouldn't we just pull out, return to Britain, and try to find some Saxons to fight, oh, except for those of us who are Saxons. Oh well. And where do folks of "mixed blood" fit in the scheme of return to tribal purity?

The tone of STORMCLOUDS sounds much like standard hard line party propaganda with pagan jargon replacing Marxist-Leninist jargon, with "Patriarchy" replacing "Imperialism".

To "The Leaders of the Ravenscall Collective" I can only say, while I share your anger at Patriarchal rule, your respect for Native culture, your frustration with the flakiness of the "pagan community", and your concern for the right wing threat, for me to enact some sort of imaginary return to my ancient Celtic heritage, sharpen my sword and come join you in Central Park for paramilitary maneuvers is just not a realistic response.





Dear Reclaiming,

Thank you for your newsletter, but I had only wanted a sample copy and not a subscription. I find your philosophy rather primitive. It appears to me as if you are confusing interpretation of natural phenomena with those natural phenomena as such. I rather stick to neo-Reichian terminology and my personal amalgam of western and eastern thought.

I cannot see how your philosophy can bring about meaningful change in our society. By isolating yourself from the mainstream you take upon yourself the role of scapegoat, thus allowing the establishmentarians to discharge their negative feelings upon you and thereby maintaining some sort of equilibrium. You will find that predatory philosophies such as prevail in western society have a dire need to attack outsiders in order to survive. If communities with such philosophies are left to themselves, they begin to self destruct, or degenerate. The former can be applied to the Middle East. The latter to Ireland, or parts of Ireland.

If you want to have some beneficial impact on today's (and tomorrow's) society I think you had better find out what makes people and society tick, and take it from there, rather than use a primitive thought structure and a mythical approach to dabble in/natural phenomena in order to satisfy your emotional needs.

I think the approach of the Elysium Institute near L.A. has much to recommend it.

Best Wishes, Yours sincerely, Jacob
Australia

The Marsh

Over the marsh
cutting city off
from sea
The deathly moon
white wraith of earth
drifts in vaporous night
mourned by the mortal fire
of the heathen sun

Neon pyres obscure inconsequential stars
that may yet swarm and burst
in outer realms of death

Along the narrow span
from brazen day to vengeful night
Blind hatred and blind love
war for loins and pulse and sight

With rhythmic toil
A swollen serpent
fed on fledgling owls
circles the sacrificial ground

At naked dawn
The priestess hones her teeth
and sings a curse
for the elder host
of this malignant feast

At this brackish hour
The wreck of human power drains
with languid water through the shallows
wasted
glutted
writhing in the brine
Lurching down the spiral guts of time

Our spirits briefly fly among the reeds
Trembling in the singing winds that
Fling our seeds back across the
Lines of pounding tides onto
This shrinking shore of
Predatory land



Roy King
Flu Season 1985



OUR LADY OF THE WOODS HEALING CENTER, WICCAN SEMINARY

- Amber K

Amber K and Catelaine, High Priestesses of the Church and Coven of Our Lady of the Woods, have announced that O.L.W. plans to create a healing center and Wiccan seminary in Wisconsin. "The seminary will be the first long-term residential training facility for Wiccan priestesses and priests which has existed in more than a thousand years," according to Amber, "and the first to ever exist in the Western hemisphere."

Current plans call for the seminary to offer programs of a week, two weeks, a month, and a summer in length, as well as year-round apprenticeships. Coven leadership skills will be the major emphasis: group process, ritual leadership, counseling, teaching, administration and program design. However, intensive training in various phases of magick (divination, thought forms, tools and talismans, etc.) will also be part of the curriculum. Both basic and advanced study will be offered.

The program will be intertraditional. All positive traditions will be respected. The focus will be on skills rather than theology.

Fees will be kept low through a work-study plan. Though at first facilities will be simple, the important thing is the interaction among students, teachers and Nature. Amber explains "Someday we will have well-equipped indoor classrooms for use in inclement weather, and archives and a library... but we'll begin with the land and the people: the rest is secondary."

Volunteer help is welcomed, and many forms of energy will be needed. anyone who is interested in this project should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a descriptive flyer. For a donation of \$13 or more, you will be placed on the mailing list and receive progress reports via Priest/ess newsletter, which will be launched this year. Write to Our Lady of the Woods, Box 176, Blue Mounds, Wisconsin 53517.

A Poem For Women Who Live In The Open

A woman carved of rock
solid
A woman rain can beat against
who will not wear away
a plain woman
 whose dance bare breasted
 in the great freed stones
is a slow upcurving grace
a swan's neck rising from the river
a swan's head turning to listen to watch
 as the light grows

as an imp child beats the drum
that passes from woman to woman

barbed wire razor wire
cannot keep back this river
 women bring water to the imprisoned stones

this is our time of power in the moon's eclipse
and we will walk where we will to walk
over the chronically shelled Plain
that is sacred land
(all land is sacred land)
step by step we go forward on it

police soldiers
cannot dam this river
women surge through the stones a cleansing
 and the light grows

a woman with shaved head
a woman with a thatch of pink hair
a woman all mouth and shrieking
a bleeding woman
a pregnant woman
an unruly woman
a woman herself two days out of jail eyes steady
when the cell doors close and when they open
knowing they will close again
knowing they cannot lock away this river
sings to the moon from the fallen stones
 and the light grows
women rub moonblood into solid rock
dance and scream in our time of power

here is beauty deep as rock
moon hidden by the earth's shadow
drums living blood river water
here we are free
 and the light grows
a crescent between stone thighs
it has been a long long time since we were free
since we sang the moon here
 and the light grows
and we will not be free for long
 a moment eclipsed out of time
 a hole clipped in barbed wire

tomorrow they will jail us
tomorrow they will repair the fence that surrounds us
 but never completely

for tonight we touch freedom
 and the light grows
a crescent wedded to our own shadow
pulling a rising invincible river

the moon is full and the dark is holy
and we are women who live in the open

Starhawk
Salisbury Plain
May '85





[The following is an article received from a reader -- Ed.]

PAGANS AND POLITICS: Realities Behind the Theories

- Tom Ness

One of the main stated aims of the Reclaiming Collective is to "unify spirit and politics". The spirit side of that equation has much of its outline generally agreed upon among Pagans, who recognize the life force and power of magic. The details of how we worship the Goddess and work our spells may vary with each individual, but this is unimportant to the long-range goal of a humankind in harmony with Nature. Qualifications for ordination are flexible, excommunication is an alien notion, and we spend blessedly little time debating about how many angels dance on the head of a pin.

In order, then, for us to unify this spirit and some political world-view, we need to identify which politics are compatible with our spiritual views and will enhance human harmony with Nature. For this inquiry to have any meaning in the real world, we need to steer clear of theoretical foundations and examine instead the actual history and current affairs brought about by the various philosophies.

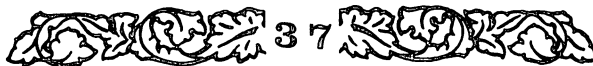
To reverse the question for a moment so we can see what kind of spirituality most political leaders are coming from, let's look at which churches' members control what kinds of governments. Certainly, the U.S. is Christian. Although many of the early colonizers were fleeing religious persecution in Europe, they learned nothing from their experience and promptly enacted a host of laws persecuting almost anyone but their own sect in each locality. For example, in 1626 a gentleman-adventurer named Tomas Morton established a new colony called Merrymount (the sexual pun was intended) and erected a Maypole. Miles Standish promptly organized a raiding party to banish the pagan abomination from the neighborhood.

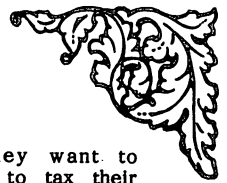
By the time of the American Revolution, Christian domination of the new World went unquestioned. But among the men who led the revolution were many who were explicitly

anti-church. Thomas Jefferson said, "Millions of innocent men, women, and children since the introduction of Christianity, have been burned, tortured, fined, and imprisoned, yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. what has been the effect of coercion? To make one-half the world fools and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth."

Thomas Paine said, "All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit". John Adams said, "This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it". This anti-church attitude was an integral part of the anti-authority position of these men that also made them anti-government. When they penned the constitution, the freedom of religion and separation of church and state clauses were intended equally to create freedom from religion. But these facts have been selectively weeded out by school systems that are universally run by either the state or church. Every child learns the pap about George Washington saying, "I cannot tell a lie", but who has heard that he said, "The government of the United States is in no sense founded upon the Christian religion"? Certainly not John Anderson of Illinois, who just a few years ago introduced legislation in Congress to declare the U.S. a Christian Republic. How unfortunate that reading and understanding the U.S. Constitution is not a requirement for high office.

But there is hardly a need to officialize Christianity in this country. It was a major issue just that JFK was Catholic rather than Protestant. Try to imagine a non-Christian running for president! A Pagan would be assassinated before the primaries were over. So much for religious plurality in the U.S.





In Western European countries, it is safe to generalize that all of the leaders are drawn from Christian ranks, also. Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union have officially abandoned religion, not wanting church authority to interfere or distract from state authority. But these countries were historically Christian until very recently, and one of the most authoritarian wings of Christianity, at that.

South and Central America, like North America, are basically religious clones of their Western European conquerors. Can their Catholic/Latin backgrounds explain the much higher level of historical violence and frequent resort to authoritarian rule? Or is it just the long-term battle set in motion by Spanish land grants creating a deeply entrenched oligarchy? At any rate, there is no hope searching for benign, enlightened leadership there, either.

Authoritarian rule and murderous, intolerant leadership are almost synonymous with Moslem nations. The convulsions of violence in the Middle East today are just the latest episodes in centuries of killing. Equally repulsive, though, to the enlightened Westerner, is the harsh oppression of women by the Moslem patriarchy. They have developed sexual repression into mass neurosis.

As recently as a couple of months ago Indonesia declared itself to be officially an Islamic republic, institutionalizing discriminatory policies against non-Moslems. Ironically, the local brand of Islam is so mixed with earlier Malay religious beliefs that it would probably be discriminated against itself in many other Moslem nations.

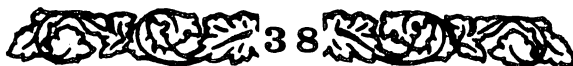
So political leaders all over the globe profess faith in one religion or another. (If there are atheists among them, they keep it to themselves, or in the case of communist nations, attempt to enforce atheism as harshly as any religion is enforced.) Have these pious leaders ever translated their spirituality into making the world a better place for their citizens or neighbor-

ing nations? Hardly. If they want to kill, they kill. If they want to tax their subjects into de facto slavery, they tax. Indeed, spirituality among politicians appears to be universally cynical, to be used for p.r. value only.

It appears that religion serves political leaders best in creating the philosophical framework for authoritarian rule. As Alan Watts said in the essay "Psychedelics and the Religious Experience": "In theory, the existence within our secular society of a group which does not accept conventional values is consistent with our political vision. But one of the great problems of the United States, legally and politically, is that we have never quite had the courage of our convictions. The republic is founded on the marvelously sane principle that a human community can exist and prosper only on the basis of mutual trust. Metaphysically, the American Revolution was a rejection of the dogma of Original Sin, which is the notion that because you cannot trust yourself or other people, there must be some Superior Authority to keep us all in order..."

Yet, vast confusion arises from trying to be republican in politics and monarchist in religion. How can a republic be the best form of government if the universe, heaven and hell are a monarchy? Thus, despite the theory of government by consent, based upon mutual trust, the peoples of the United States retain, from the authoritarian backgrounds of their religions or national origins, an utterly naive faith in law as some sort of supernatural and paternalistic power."

It seems that if a people can swallow an all-powerful God, it makes it easier for them to swallow an all-powerful government. In fact, societies have rarely made wild swings between authoritarianism and freedom; the strength of deep-rooted attitudes about acceptable human interaction and levels of coercion just won't allow it. Unfortunately, history proves that the overwhelming bias in human nature is to move toward authoritarianism. Baser human instincts can be manipulated to accept (and exercise)

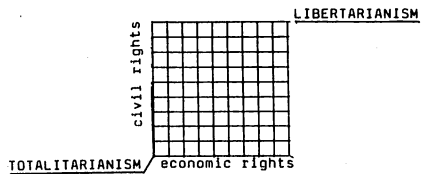




authority relatively quickly, but achieving greater freedom has always been an uphill intellectual battle. The power, privilege, and parasitic wealth of those at the helm of a central authority are extremely difficult to control over the long haul.

None of this augers well for Pagans who only wish to live peacefully among people of similar spirit on an unspoiled Earth. We are a minority so small as to be invisible, walking among a majority that once practiced genocide against us. When we seek to bring about change to create a world safe for our spirituality and to heal our ravaged Mother, who do we turn to for allies? What economic system will allow us to fit in where we choose to belong? What brand of politics would allow us to use the fruits of our honest labor to benefit ourselves and those of our choosing as we see fit? (And not benefit those we strenuously disagree with!) If we have spirit and politics to unify, what are the politics?

The standard political scale is linear with "left" on one end and "right" on the other. A slightly more honest scale recognizes similar degrees of allowable coercion and is circular, with both right and left meeting at the top. A completely different linear scale recognizes that all politics are degrees of coercion and places anarchy at one end and totalitarianism at the other. The most realistic political scale of all, though, is not linear or circular, but a grid:



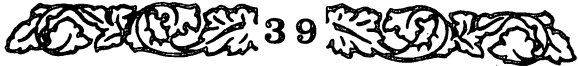
The various terms associated with points on these political scales contain widely different meanings for different people and strong emotional reactions for many. It would be a good idea to look at some dictionary definitions.

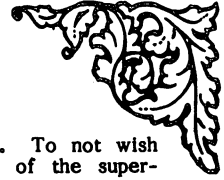
The American Heritage Desk Dictionary says

of "left": "Those who advocate the adoption of sometimes extreme measures in order to achieve the equality, economic freedom, and well-being of the citizens of a state." For "right" they say, "The persons who adhere to traditional attitudes and beliefs and hold conservative political views." Both definitions are sanitized, relative to their real-life manifestations. Including "economic freedom" in a definition of "left" is so misleading as to be a deliberate canard. And the euphemism "conservative political views" hardly hints at mass murder to enforce those views.

The definition of "socialism" states "a doctrine or movement calling for public ownership of factories and other means of production". That "public" usually means "government" in the real world isn't mentioned, nor is the obvious conflict with "economic freedom" in the definition of "left". What wonderful irony that the British industries nationalized by earlier socialist administrations are now being de-nationalized by the Thatcher government with the workers receiving special deals and incentives to buy their own enterprises. What are the political implications of a "right wing" administration working towards worker ownership and control?

A major architect of another political system wrote of his brainchild, "Within the Corporations the interests of producers and consumers and employees, individuals and associations are interlocked and integrated in a unique and univocal way, while all types of interest are brought under the aegis of the state." That was Mario Palmieri, a primary author of Italian fascism. (The root of the word "fascism" is Italian for bundle or group. Hence the symbol of bound sticks. This is a suspiciously familiar attempt to appeal to human herd instincts in the same linguistic fashion as social-ism or commune-ism. this brand is bundle-ism.) The same dictionary defines "fascism" "A political philosophy of the extreme right, marked by strict government control of the economy, nationalism, and suppression of all opposition".





The definition of "communism" is "Any social system characterized by the absence of classes and by common ownership of the means of production and common sharing of labor and products". Marx couldn't have said it better himself. Unfortunately, Marx didn't have the vantage point of 1985 to realize that the definition of fascism above would have fit real-life communism to a "T" merely by substituting "left" for "right".

Anarchy is perhaps the most misunderstood political term of all. It means, "the absence of any form of government authority or law". Anarchism is defined as "the theory that all forms of government are oppressive and should be abolished". That this theory is diametrically opposed to any known leftist government, past or present, should be obvious, yet there have always been people willing to call themselves anarchist and leftist simultaneously.

That error in self-labeling betrays powerful needs in conflict with each other. On the one hand, that person wants freedom from government oppression, regulation, and violence. On the other, they feel a strong sense of community and want justice, security, and basic living needs met for all other humans...and are willing to use wide-ranging government powers to achieve their goals on a national scale.

The common thread to all of the herd-instinct-isms is their shared goal of national aggrandizement. The primary allegiance of the individual is to the nation rather than family, work associates, or kindred spirits. The goal of the modern nation-state is to become a super-tribe whose proud members can strut in unison toward inexorable expansion of population, production, and prestige. To seek something

less becomes a kind of treason. To not wish to be a dues-paying member of the super-tribe and all its doings is a crime guaranteed to bring harsh retribution.

Obviously, a certain level of "development" is necessary for there to be security and well-being for a given population. The problem is controlling the historical penchant of all governments to turn up the economic fires as high as they will go. The power and glory of any government is determined by how much "surplus" wealth it can skim from its workers for paying soldiers, building grand state architecture, and developing "infrastructure". Therefore, the whole genre of "Small is Beautiful" theories and their proponents will be considered enemies of the state--either overtly or covertly.

Understanding the grand designs of governments and the ego-maniac politicians that steer them should make Pagans leery of them all. There is, at this time in history, no state apparatus compatible with Pagan ideals, mainly because Pagan ideals are anathema to state goals. Since Pagans are not close to seizing the helm of any state anytime soon, the best we can do is some hard, realistic thinking about how to quietly live up to our own ideals. At the same time we need to contribute as little as possible to the "surplus" wealth with which the state does its dirty work of promoting mindless development and global militarism.

Politics make strange bedfellows. If Pagans need labels for ourselves or our allies, we had better think twice about which "ism" we lie down with, lest we catch the spiritual equivalent of a "social" disease.



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Brandy and Alex Williams
 (who have no stake in selling pipes, but thought pagans might be interested)

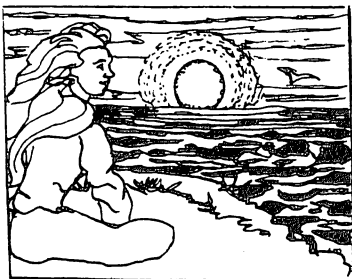


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Reclaiming is a collective of San Francisco Bay Area women and men working to unify spirit and politics. Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess—the Immanent Life Force. We see our work as teaching and making magic—the art of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

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