

RECLAIMING NEWSLETTER

SPRING '87

NO. 26

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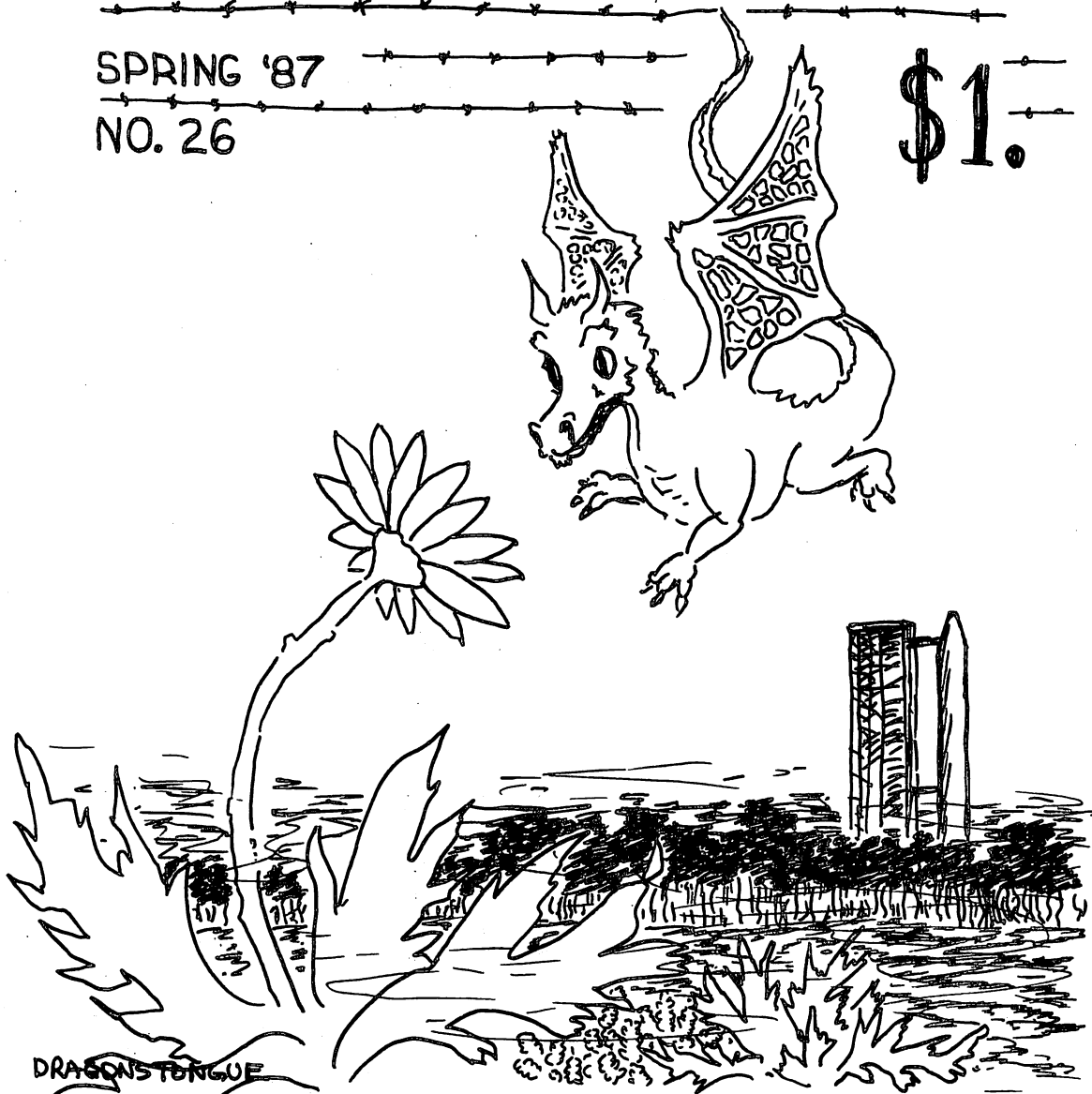
DRAGONSTONGUE

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DRAGONSTONGUE

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 **RECLAIMING** Newsletter now costs a dollar if you get it at a store or an event. The Newsletter runs at a deficit, and we're trying to cover a higher percentage of our expenses. Additional contributions are welcome.

SUBMISSIONS

PLEASE SEND US YOUR GRAPHICS!

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 Summer newsletter deadline is May 9. Send material to RECLAIMING Newsletter, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114.

While we are pleased to print letters or articles on ethics issues in general, we will not print personal charges and countercharges.

Help! Help! Help! Help! Help!

We need help getting the newsletter out -- layout, collating, administration. If you would like to help, please call Rick Dragonstongue at 731-2159.

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 821-3336 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 was massaged into shape by Roy, Rick DT, Leslie O'B, with help from Robin K and Rose. Help them. Volunteer. Call Rick, 731-2159.

THE

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Number 26

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The opinions expressed in the articles and advertisements in this Newsletter belong to the individual authors and advertisers and do not necessarily reflect the attitudes or opinions of the newsletter staff or other Reclaiming members. (Some of us actually dislike some of the stuff we print.)



MORGAN'S JOURNEY



-- Gwydion Tanafon

I hold Rowan
in the shower,
we run warm water
on her belly:
to you the sound
of rain falling
on a roof
that has always
kept out the weather.
Then she chooses
to go back to the bed,
leaning on the arm
of a midwife;
and soon your head
slides out,
at first just a bulge
of wrinkled skin,
a groundswell;
then with dreamlike swiftness
a full face,
like a young plant
pushing from the earth,
days squeezed
into minutes.
One shoulder follows,
the other still inside
is freed with
a deft twist
by the midwife;
she and I together
lift you past
the belly of your mother,
landed at last.

I hold you
for the afterbirth;
your eyes are straying,
confused by
this foreground
of bright images:
comings and goings,
the play of sun
and shadow,
a midwife's colorful scarf.
Floating in the womb
you saw further,
the depth of darkness
and red light
through the body
like snow blindness

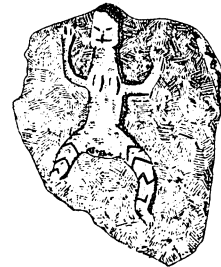
giving visions,
space quilted with patterns,
pieces of the web
The Goddess weaves.
Wet and warm
you cling to me,
feeling the same life
pulse in a different skin;
and expecting your mother,
you close one eye
and root for my breast.

The third day now,
Rowan has drawn
your chart,
fit you with the crown
of stars you'll wear
for this life;
Libra your sun,
your moon and rising
the fiery archer.
Air and fire
already have tried you;
you choked the first day,
face darkening
for lack of breath;
later I lit a candle
while you slept
in the bedroom,
that tipped and nearly
began a blaze
that would have eaten
your pink new skin.

To enter life you must pass
a river, not the dark one,
but a river of milk.
No coin wins the crossing,
you must drink the river
and learn to walk;
but first the river of tears
where life's warders
hold their lessons.
Just yesterday we took you
to the hospital,
they spiked your heel
for the test--five circles
to fill with blood;
the white-coated woman
painted your life

while we stood helpless,
ninety-nine chances
it's not for your own good:
a risk we won't take,
we are on the side
of the warders.

There's a purpose
in your birth
that isn't plain--
it is your own,
hidden now
in the mists
of other lives.
When I hold you,
it seems
not to matter.
Your delicate fingers
weave in mine;
aren't we one flesh?
Aren't you the answer
to my question?
Better not to ask.
It's enough for now,
the life we have,
to love you and know
we have a while
together on the path:
that for this time
I am your father.





WHY WE CAN'T JUST BALANCE THE GODDESS AND THE GOD



-- Rick Dragonstongue

Fairly frequently I come across the idea that we Pagans need to balance our worship of the God and the Goddess, most recently in "A Space for the Gods" by Rowan, in the last issue of this newsletter. The idea seems to have great intellectual appeal: it seems fair and somehow reasonable to honor the feminine and masculine equally. And both women and men notice that there aren't as many men as women in the Craft, and some conclude that we must be doing something wrong.

I have a somewhat unique perspective on this matter. In my earliest remembered dreams I was both a boy and a girl, and I've always been a "boy who plays with girls." I've been very comfortable as a man in avowedly feminist Reclaiming -- more comfortable, at least, than I've been in any other group--and emphasizing the Goddess feels good to me. I have had limited contact with pagan groups that don't somehow place greater importance on the Goddess than the God. I do feel close to some other men and I've made it a point to work with all-male groups, but I certainly don't seem to have an average male point of view.

I think there are good reasons for deemphasizing the role of the God and of men in general in the Craft. Truly balancing respect for male and female, for instance, is close to impossible in contemporary Western culture. Imagine, for a moment, your normal, generic, ordinary nondescript human being . . .

Most likely, you imagined a male. In our culture, the generic is male, and women are abnormal. We're mostly too sophisticated to admit to believing this, but it means that whenever there are differences between women and men, the women's side is discounted.

To make matters worse, despite the renewed emphasis on the Goddess, our culture has fewer images of important (or strong, intelligent, successful, or brave) women than

men. Through television we worship Johnny Carson, Joe Montana, and Alan Alda. In most homes and schools, we honor the successful career-oriented bread-winner (who might be a woman, but the generic type is male). People who stay home to raise children are patronized. If they're women, at least the stay-at-homes are considered normal (though maybe a bit slow); if they're men, we worry that something's not quite right with them. (Yes, these are gross, even disgusting generalizations . . . but I feel them operating within me, and I constantly see them in other people too.)

If we give men equal time in our spiritual lives, we will still have a huge deficit of positive images of women in our lives as a whole. The situation is analogous to those faced by teachers in Reclaiming mixed-sex classes. In many mixed classes, if all students are given equal encouragement to talk, the men will dominate the class. A teacher must make a special effort, paying increased attention to the women or asking the men to restrain themselves, to achieve something approaching "balance." Similarly, we must all -- men and women -- learn to pay more attention and give more honor to the Goddess before we can hope for a Goddess-God balance.

An added factor to consider is that for many women the feminist Craft is a primary route to self-respect and power, and these women are the heart of our movement. Many of them have suffered from the power of men. It seems to me important to maintain the feminist Craft as a place where as many women as possible can feel comfortable. I think it is also important that as many men as possible be comfortable in those feminist circles where they are welcome. Personally, I feel very much empowered by my work with Reclaiming; there have been few times when I felt called upon to defer to women simply because they were women. And I think the women's comfort should come first. At very least, it's important not to judge a feminist





project's success by whether or not men want to lend a hand.

What's most important to me is that it feels to me that our society as a whole as well as most individuals **need the Goddess more than they need the God** right now. For many of us, the Goddess is associated with the Earth, ecology, and natural cycles; with nurturance; with access to emotions, intuition, and psychic power; with knowledge of the mysteries of birth and death; with the concerns of the repressed half of the human population. We need a spiritual emphasis on the Goddess and on these concerns because She has been neglected for so long that most people aren't aware of missing Her.

I do think it's important to begin to find new images of male energy that help men to find a positive role in relationship to a more Goddess-oriented culture. We shouldn't underestimate the difficulties of doing this. Centuries of patriarchy have turned God the Father into a hated tyrant and the Son into an excuse for suffering and repression. The image of God most accessible to neo-Pagans is the Horned God, who seems somewhat ill-defined and limited; while women are learning new models of power, men are learning to be animals and children. While it's good for men to come down off the pedestal on which they have set themselves, clearly we need new Gods, or a radical reclamation of old ones.

It won't be easy. There are pagan men out there. Some of them are gay, some of them are straight. Many have attended workshops given by Robert Bly and are trying to redefine masculinity for themselves. (Many of them would say they are learning psychological tools rather than taking part in a new religion.) They place a praiseworthy emphasis on men's need for closer relationships with their fathers, sons, brothers, and co-workers. They speak to me about learning what masculine vulnerability is, learning what it is to share feelings with other men, learning how men can be nurturers.

I've learned a lot from these men. But I often get disapproval because I say I practice feminist spirituality. I get lectures about how men ought to learn to identify with all the



aspects of the God; that for men to identify with the Goddess or women with the God is neurotic; that it's demeaning for men to be in any kind of situation where they are spiritually subordinate to women. Particularly at issue is the question of women initiating men. I have a great deal of respect and affection for some of the men who raise these issues; they are speaking from both vulnerability and self respect.

With other men who are finding a new relationship with the God, I detect a subtle but strong anti-feminism, even though they may claim to be generally supportive of the women's movement. The anti-feminist streak is occasionally very clear in Bly's writings, where emphasis is placed on a basic male paradigm in which the little boy must either obey his mother (be a wimp) or rebel (become a man). This paradigm encourages resentment toward women and division of men into "good" (wimpy) and bad (masculine) boys. Feminists and strong women become threatening, alien creatures who don't really like men and want to turn them into something awful . . . sissies, maybe.

While we must face and absorb these deep-seated resentments and fears, mutual respect rather than resentment will be needed if women and men are to work together. And **for men to truly respect women, they must keep in mind that women have been forced into the role of second-class citizens for thousands of years.** Setting aside individual cases, women in general have more reason to resent men than men have to resent women. Certainly, men must learn to call up and cope with their fear and anger toward women, but if we are careless the anger can lead to uneasy concern with "men's rights" and defense of the status quo instead of real progress.

When I envision an ideal society, I see Goddess temples where all the priestesses are women, and which only women attend. I also see temples devoted to the God that are only for men. And there are mixed temples, some balanced in their sexual mixture, but others where a man with a particular affinity for a Goddess can find help in growing close to Her, or where a woman can invoke the God.





And there is a gentle humor toward all the Gods and Goddesses, because behind them all there is a Mystery none can ever explain, and meanwhile people will always call on the deities they find most useful or handiest, and will forget the others. Above all, my ideal is a world of tolerance, where the range of respected religious and psychological types is so wide that everyone knows that "normal" is a useless and perhaps pernicious concept.

I don't think we'll live in this nice world any time soon. Meanwhile, there is danger in wanting that world so badly that we begin to pretend it already exists. When men are truly ready to share power with women, they will become equals in the Craft. To encourage them to join in large numbers before they are ready to share will only create problems and delays.

Until then, why shouldn't women, at least for a while (a few centuries?), take over a large part of the spiritual realm as their own? Why shouldn't they choose to do much of their spiritual work without men? I would hope, and probably even demand, that spiritually inclined men have some respected role in the larger spiritual culture. But I see no reason why men should feel slighted if they don't get to have an equal (which tends to become lead) role in everything. For now the only way to approach a balance of spiritual power between the sexes is for women to assume a greater ritual importance; and I'm afraid that balance cannot be fully achieved until women have developed a strong, independent, and mostly separate base of power.



LETTER

(On the Lateness of Newsletters Etc.)

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

I just listened to the Events Line and there are announcements -- **as usual** -- of past events. Two weeks past Brigid, you are announcing Brigid rituals. I always hear about Reclaiming rituals after the fact. The newsletter always arrives late if at all. As I subscribe primarily to hear of upcoming events, I wish you will do better. Mark the times and seasons. Thank you.

Blessed be!

Susie O'Shea

P.S.: I received the winter newsletter (on Brigid, first day of spring) but have not received Spring. So please do not send Winter, send Spring.



Editors' Reply:

The newsletter is put out on the quarter days: Winter Solstice, Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, and Fall Equinox. The newsletter reached the bulk mail facility two weeks behind schedule last time due to over-committed staff. Most newsletters reached the San Francisco addresses of people we are in frequent contact with in early January.

At present, we need help with newsletter layout, collating, and administration (handling readers' letters, paid ads and exchanges, etc.). We'd appreciate help from Susie or anyone else (and acknowledge we've been hard to reach in the past). If you'd like to help, please call Rick Dragonstongue, 731-2159.



MORE'S SAFER SEX



For those of you who weren't able to make the January coffee house, I would like to share my act with you: In the Age of Aids one must know how to put a rubber either over one's head or on a zucchini without the zucchini knowing it. Now there are a lot of misconceptions around about rubbers (excuse me, condoms), eg. "why isn't it just in a guy's wallet where it belongs"? or "why do I need to put a rubber over my head?" or "why can't the zucchini know it's being 'condonimized'"? Good questions!

Well, each month, More, moi, would like to help you answer questions like these. So just send them right on over to the Suburban Palace (More Sex, P.O. Box 31088, SF 94131). In the Age of Aids I would like to help our community deal with the rigid and turgid answers to the prickly issues of std's (sexually transmitted diseases), like chlamydia (which is not a flower) and AIDS. Lest females who like to prone-eat with other females feel left out when we speak of turgidity and other pointed topics, please stay tuned to the ever ongoing discussions about rubber dams(els).

#1 Rule of Thumb--only those people who have had only one sex partner since 1978 don't have to follow the safe sex guidelines as long as they are still with the same person for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. How many people in our community come under this "category"?

#2--For those of us who have found it fun to share body fluids with our friends and circle-mates, the goddess would like us to discover or invent other ways of sharing pleasure. Hannah Clancy might help us find good substitutes for

that yummy love juice. But in the meantime, Foreplay, Probe, and other water-based lubricants will do the trick. Throw away your treasured Vaseline and Baby Oil. Otherwise, you'll be writing me hate mail about your New Age extra thin condoms breaking when you oil them up. Oil-based lubricants love to eat away at the precious layer of protection. Baby Oil may be good enough for our babies, but it's not good enough for AIDS.

#3--Lay-layer-layers--there's no one way to have safer sex. Like the goddess, sex in the late 80's has many manifestations. Some of these may be activities your mother never heard of, but things like mutual masturbation, voyeurism, those "S and M" words (that don't draw blood, only oohs), and other activities that require the channeling and grounding of energy will definitely enlighten you and your lucky partner.

#4--Condoms--never leave home with only one. What a burden on that poor lonely package tucked away in your wallet or your backpack. Remember this about condoms: "Out of your drawers and into your sheets". Always have lots of them around to play with, put on your head, blow up, or for your feet, for those of you who are into really being grounded, but are worried about all those athletes who like to hang around your feet. The hardest part (no puns, please) about using condoms is remembering to open it before you start to play.

#5--I heard about these ancient Greek women who did this play about war and sex. Lysistrata, something. Anyway, when the men wouldn't stop making war, they said "Fine, we'll stop making sex until you get your act together."



Well; this is a very fine old tradition, I think. For those of you who have a hard time convincing your partner about the joys of rubbers and lubricants, try a strike or even the old "slip the rubber over the zucchini without it even knowing it trick", which is sort of how we started off here and really you'll have to come to the next Coffee House, which is conveniently located at the Suburban Palace--February 28,

8:00 P.M.--to find out how it's done.

P.S. Remember we do have the peoples' vaccine against AIDS: Prevention through Education.

The Goddess says "All Acts of Love and Pleasure are my Rituals" and then She said "Make sure they are More Fun and More Safer".

More for Now



BRIGID RITUAL, January 30, 1987

-- Kelly Q.

Two years ago Matrix and friends offered a public ritual on the waxing light of Brigid at The Farm. The focus of Brigid in 1985 was defeat -- acknowledging our anguish and venting our rage. It was a ritual where we pounded the anvil with our despair and sparked the cauldron with our hope. Now, two years later, many of us have felt a surge of momentum, both in events occurring in the political domain and positive change in the realm of magic and the unconscious. It again became time for an open celebration of the waxing light, but this time a celebration to re-plant the seedlings of hope sown two years ago; a time to pound the anvil with the ringing surge of power, commitment, and change.

We gathered the night of January 30th at the Women's Building to drink from and to replenish Brigid's Well and to light the cauldron of transition.

The ritual revolved around a collective trance of how we and the world had suffered in the past years and how we remembered . . . how we remembered the healing, regenerative waters of Brigid's Well and how we returned to bathe, drink, and replenish the holy waters

of the Well. We found our way back by virtue of kindness . . . by opening our hearts to each other in trust . . . by witnessing miracles in the cycle of death and birth . . . by putting our bodies on the line for our convictions . . . by taking the unravelling threads of dominance and waste and re-weaving a tapestry of harmony and plenty . . . by pledging at the beatific light of the fire burning from the center of the Well to continue to hope, to fight, to risk, to dare, to change. We found our way through raising our voices in a new song sung to the melody of a South African tribal chant:

We will never, never
lose the way to the Well
of her memory
and the power
of her living flame
it will rise
it will rise again.

And we rose through the beating of the drums, the singing of the song, through a spontaneous spiral dance. We rose to meet the rising tides of change, to forge a world of mutual caring, to sing our own song.



HANNAH'S HOUSEHOLD HINTS
by Hannah Clancy

I am sorry to have to tell you that there will be no household hints for you this issue, as Hannah is in Arizona, trying to regain her health. As you may know, she was the victim last Yule of a terrorist glitter bomb, which frightened the Dogs of Avalon and put poor Hannah into the hospital, suffering from a coma.

We are all grateful that Hannah survived (she came out of the coma on Christmas Eve, a fact which has Not Escaped Our Notice), and hasten to reassure you that there will be many columns forthcoming from Hannah which will help you clean your houses for many years to come. I am not quite sure why, but Hannah has always been very fond of you, and even this last regrettable incident has not convinced her to retire. She says that most of you are merely confused persons who need her help, and the rest she'll see in Purgatory. She notes, however, that you won't see her; she'll be running the projectionist's booth, having gotten a special dispensation for that office from St. Paul.

Which reminds me: we haven't seen the self-appointed Special Persecuter in a while; have you forgotten that we have Tapes of a Confession? Please come and get them soon. We're trying to clean house while Hannah's gone and we can get a chance.

But at any rate, what I am here today to share with you is a little obituary I wrote for Hannah back when we all thought she was going to croak. She didn't, and of course we're all very happy, etc., but here I am with a perfectly good piece of prose on my hands and nowhere to print it. She had asked me to fill in for her, and had even

given me a list of household hints she felt should be shared with you this issue, including one, I think about glitter, but I've lost them all and, anyway, don't believe you use them. My best advice is to forget all the household hints and hire somebody to do the job. That's what I've done for years, and I must say I've been very happy. By the way, if any of you who have been following Hannah's hints would like a job for a few weeks while Hannah's in Arizona, please contact me in care of Reclaiming.

HANNAH MARGARET BRIGID
O'SHAUNESSY CLANCY

Oh, what a black day it was when the pacifist terrorists murdered our Hannah with a bomb! How mournful was the community and how distraught the house! Words can never express the depth of our sorrow or the breadth of our anger upon learning that several members of Reclaiming heretofore considered the closest of friends had planted the wicked bomb as either a cruel act of terrorism or a dumb joke! Even the little dogs mourned, for who would feed them their puppy chow? Indeed, who would help us clean our houses? Who would tell us how to get horrible stains out of the bathtub by using sand? Who would help us convince our mothers that we were all still nice boys and girls? Who, indeed? For now our Hannah is dead and gone, who once was the merriest and kindest of souls and never hurt anybody's feelings except sometimes in the advancement of truth. Farewell Hannah! And may you get your revenge in Purgatory, running particularly unintelligible film strips for the perpetrators.

I thought that was a pretty good obituary, and I'm sorry I didn't get to use it, though of course I'm so glad Hannah'll be back next issue to help you solve your problems. --Pandora of Avalon

Future Past

Caustic clouds obscure the earth.
The gods are done; the sea
A ruin, but for this blood,
The fruit of stars, left burning
In the corpse of time.

Remembering the rhythm of the light,
I search for stone, for air...
My mouth yet seeks the river's tongue,
Despite the zealous dead who war against the night.

I am blind, I see, and without voice.
I hear wild wings beat upon the walls of tombs,
And hope somewhere a lynx runs free.

Plant my heart in a field of grain.
Burn my bones for fuel.
Mine the ore of my nerves.
But drain my blood back into the sea.

The stars still rise when we are dead.
The night gives birth.
The universe explodes.

Leah King

Old earth
Skull of a hag
Cracked in two
Opens
Like a spotted leather egg

Who can see the flowers flame
Year on year
And not believe ?

Earth
Old mama cat
Growls low in my heart and
Licks my dead eyes with piercing wind

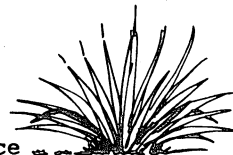
Who could see the dance of stars and
Not shed the mortal fear to enter new so
Free and vast a sea of night ?

From ash
Arise
To haunt the stone
To fly out of the sun's wild seed
And mingle with the wind

SIX OF SWORDS;

GODDESS ESTABLISHES BEACH HEAD AT SPACEPORT

by Rose May Dance



On January 12, I travelled to Florida with 3 other members of my household, Black Cat: Brook, Bill, and Starhawk. We were veterans of actions at Vandenberg Air Force Base where we worked against the MX missile. We were excited to go to Cape Canaveral Air Force Base and the adjoining Kennedy Space Center. This spaceport, which has captured our imaginations and spirit since we were children, has been overshadowed by the threat of the military use of space. We have been frustrated because so much of what is launched into space is chameleon in nature--for example, simultaneously surveying the world's croplands while determining the accuracy needed to knock out Soviet missiles in a surprise attack. And soon our two spaceports may launch Star Wars equipment, most effective as a shield following a first strike launch by the U.S.

We were travelling to Cape Canaveral to the "Cancel the Countdown" action. This was the Martin Luther King Holiday action to prevent and protest the first test launching of the Trident II missile. The extreme accuracy of this submarine-launched missile betrays its purpose--to destroy Soviet missiles before they leave their silos. As a Witch, I deeply desired to be physically present at Cape Canaveral AFB, wanting to make the material link, because so much of my and my cronies' magic involved hexing militarism. I wanted to participate in direct action and magic against Trident II. I also wanted to establish a physical link with the base, as our group of friends had done at Vandenberg, in order to effectively work magic around other weapons and events at the Cape in the future.

According to our sources, the Air Force tried to launch the Trident on 1-10, five days before the official date, in order to jump the gun on the huge protest planned.

Cancel the Countdown was well organized. Marchers from the Peace Pilgrimage (an offshoot of the Great American Peace March) were making their way from King's Bay, GA, planned home of the Trident submarine fleet. They were to arrive at the Cape in time for the M. L. King Birthday Rally on the 17th. Many of them came off the march to infiltrate the base; some were arrested, some walked off free after leaving taunting messages for the Air Force to cancel the countdown. Our sources told us that because of these actions the missile was not launched on Saturday, the 10th, nor on the next "window" the following Tuesday.

When we arrived in Florida, strains of Joe Jackson's "We're the Jetset" humming through our brains, we were coming into an action that was already successful. We were met by Peter, the wonderful First Strike Prevention organizer from Santa Cruz, who had been in Florida for a while preparing the action. He took us to a great hideaway house on the beach, where he spent long hours showing us our way around on the maps, and we reviewed the different ways to get on to the base. Unfortunately, security had tightened a great deal since so many people had infiltrated the base. The base is a peninsula, much smaller than Vandenberg. The Air Force could not launch the missile if anyone was within 2 miles of the launch pad, and they had finally figured out how to choke the land routes. They had also installed enormous searchlights at the main gate and along the Banana River shore boundaries of the base, and were using infrared sensing devices to detect the heat given off by humans on land and in the water. Later we found that the authorities had spent 1612 hours patrolling the Banana River during the action. Protestors in a beautiful black canoe with black paddles



had been fished out of the river by the Coast Guard the night before we arrived. At this writing they may be still in jail, charged with everything in the book including lots of boating violations, because the water route is definitely the most threatening to Air Force security. Unfortunately, Greenpeace, with its fast Zodiac boats capable of landing people on the ocean side by the launch pad, had been intimidated by various police and government agents and had pulled out of the action. So we were glad we had brought our little 2-person inflatable. We began to think about invading the base by water.

We toured the beach by our home base, and looked across the narrow channel of water with our glasses til we found the launchpad. One of the most exciting and useful parts of the action for the four of us was the watch we kept on the launch site and the progress of the launch from this post. The many new species of birds we were able to identify, because we were always ready with our binoculars, was one of the perks of the job. Another was lying on the lovely white beach in this beautiful and strange tropical land.

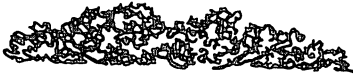
One night we decided to tend to the magical side of our work. Black Cat went out on the beach late at night, watched the dark gantry on the launch pad for a while, and then went into deep trance in the nearly-full moonlight. We asked to be taken to the place where we could affect the missile, and were introduced to some beings of superior intelligence, great shimmering waves of light. We assumed these beings were the geniuses who could help us stop the missile, stop war in space. But they told us no, we were the ones, we of the earthly realm, who could best affect these matters. But these great ones gave us energy, charged us up in the most amazing way as we held hands, their electrical energy coursing through us, as we called on the local spirits and the elementals to aid us in our fight for peace.



We spent Tuesday and Wednesday preparing for our action and helping other people with theirs. We shopped for all manner of equipment, because we did not know what route we were going to take into the base, nor how many of us were going to be involved. Brook and Star were going to do support for us; time and job constraints meant they could not get arrested. Bill and I hoped to work with our California friends, Peter, John and Val. We did a lot of driving around in our rented car, and soon noticed that we often had a "tail". Somebody was spending a lot of peoples tax dollars on this action.

It became pretty intense after a dinner meeting in a restaurant Wednesday night, when our California friends decided not to take the same route as Bill and I. We began to know that we would try a water route, although I still feared we would opt for the "mud shark" route, wading along the river's edge, and we had in fact bought chest-waders to wear. In fact, thinking about that possibility the night before, after we had done our trance on the beach, I had lost my nerve and told Bill that it seemed too hard to get onto the Air Force base, that I was not physically strong or quick or brave enough to do the swimming, crawling, running or other fast moves, that I would only hold him back, and that he should just do the action with the other men who were interested. I cried, I chickened out. I went to sleep for the night. When I awoke Wednesday morning, the magic had changed me, or Bill had witched me in my sleep, or something, and I knew I could do anything! I was ready to go. We asked the cards which way to go, and they told us to take the boat (six of swords) -- that way magic lay.

So we figured out how to blow up our little boat, took it down to the beach to try it out. It seemed to work just fine, and somehow we got it back to the house without being seen, although there was a car on the street that seemed to be



ground and tried to get dry and warm. But our change of clothes were wet, so we just shivered together until a little after 10, when we looked up and saw the Trident II lighting up the sky in blast off.

At this point I became angry. I cried as I began to do magic, burying the crystal which many witches had charged on the Winter Solstice, telling the ground at Cape Canaveral that it and the skies above belonged to the Goddess who is the continuance and not the interruption of the cycle of life and death. I prayed to Her even as I doubted her existence. Then I fell asleep for many hours. When I awoke, I began to enjoy the tropical beauty of the base again, and to marvel that despite the military loudspeakers we heard all around us, warning personnel to watch for demonstrators, we might be able to get off the base as safely as we had gotten on. Bill surveyed the shore and determined that boats were sweeping the area, looking for the likes of us. But at dusk we shoved off again, trying our luck.

This time the tide was not with us and we both paddled the whole way, although I cried and complained and ached. It felt like we were getting nowhere, but eventually we landed undetected on the opposite shore. Bill hiked to a phone and called our comrades, who picked us up in a flash. Star told us they did not worry about us at all until they realized we were without paddles, but she tracked us with a crystal, and felt we would turn up somewhere, although the Action Office reported no arrests inside the base. They told us that blockaders had backed traffic up for 20 miles the morning of the march, though there were only 8 arrests (including Val and John, our buddies). But no one else had gotten onto the base that night. Even though we had not reached the launchpad, we had achieved success as guides, and would be able to direct others to reach the pad for the tests that would follow every 40 days. We'd

had had a great psychological victory. We had done our magic on the base, and brought back objects to help us link up again.

The next day we rested and took the Kennedy Space Center tour, which was great fun although the security watched us like hawks. Unfortunately I found that I was ill -- I had awoken in the night with a fever. But we decided that we would get arrested at the big demonstration the next day because we had planned to be arrested anyway and it would boost the numbers at the action. So Saturday we joined 7,000 people marching to Cape Canaveral. It was the most inspiring march I've been in since the Washington marches in the 60s. The action was the front page story in the Florida papers for more than a week straight.

With Brook supporting us (Star had had to fly to a teaching job), I climbed a ladder over the fence and trespassed again onto Cape Canaveral AFB. Bill stepped up behind me and we descended into the arms of the law. 138 people were arrested at the demonstration, joining 58 who were arrested back country in the days before. We were taken to Titusville and held in the rain for a while, then put under canopies with wet blankets and no mattresses the first night. I was getting pretty sick and knew I had better get out of there so I told the matron I was sick, she listened to me cough, and processed me out of jail. I eventually got medical care for what had become pneumonia and asthma, and flew home alone. Bill spent 6 days in jail getting to know his fellow demonstrators, and then worked on the legal team a while. I still dream I am in Florida. I'm still entranced. I know where there's a crystal buried at a spaceport, and I'm talking to it, singing to it, dreaming toward it.

10 February '87

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Reclaiming,

This newsletter has evolved from its early days as a flyer to announce Reclaiming classes into something quite special. I have been watching it grow for several years and I can honestly say it is terrific. Its blend of humor, graphics, poetry and some nice, meaty articles and letters which take strong stands is important to our community.

I would like to respond briefly to a letter in the Midwinter issue from Uiliam Math-Ghamhainn, using the numbers he has assigned to each item:

1. **Names:** The point is well taken. However, many of us end up with peculiar or even ridiculous names. They often seem to get chosen for us by the Goddess. I know mine was. So I try to view those names which seem to me to be silly or otherwise unpleasantly strange with some perspective and to consider that I usually cannot know how they came to be carried by the persons who use them.

2. **Music:** There is a bit of Boogie Pagan music around. Not as much as one might wish, but it is there if you look for it. As for the Goddess wailing through a gospel choir, I refer Uiliam to Canticles of Light, by Charlie Murphy, Jami Sieber, Pat Wright, and the Total Experience Gospel Choir (Out Front Music, P. O. Box 12188, Seattle, WA 98102).

3. **Too Civilized?** Again, your point is well taken. But with what Witches have you been hanging out? Kids can definitely not attend all the ritual I attend. I say make rituals in which you can take it as far as it will. This is admittedly not easy with time and familiarity. People one

customarily does magick with, and trust, it can happen and happen good!

4. **Bitch Goddess:** No argument here. I speak as a devotee of Kali Ma.

5. **Hard Choices:** Well put, but I think this paragraph could well be included in item 4 about the Bitch Goddess.

6. **Merchandising:** Another excellent point, but again it depends on perspective. I much prefer to patronize /matronize Pagan merchants and craft-people to non-Pagan, so if some of us are affluent enough to keep Pagan creations flourishing, it's righteous that they should spend their money among their own. Goddess knows, it's hard enough to make a living in this Goddess-ignorant culture!

7. **TV Image:** I have mixed feelings about this one. On the one hand, I feel we should dress as pleases us and if some of us love to trip around in robes, why not carry on the "tradition?" On the other hand, if acceptance and respect from society at large is what one seeks, one does well to dress in a manner in keeping with the cultural norm. There were many clean-shaven, suit-and-tie Witches publicly supporting Z Budapest in San Jose last year.

8. **Universalism:** I was struck by this very thing when I attended the Covenant of the Goddess Grand Council in Michigan last Fall. Before that time I hadn't given it as much thought as Uiliam obviously has done. I encountered chants and geographical images and climatological phenomena and ethnic heritages and deities all blended into such a wonderful, living religion that I was once again thrilled to be a Witch.



looking for us. When we got back to the house I went out for a cigarette, and saw a police car cruise the house several times. We had also heard a walkie talkie in the neighborhood earlier. Then I saw something really amazing--I saw someone hiding in the bushes, in the midst of our quiet suburban neighborhood, in the dark. I thought, "Well at least this time I know I'm not paranoid". It was very gratifying after all these years.

Star and Brook bundled us into the car and we set off at about 2:00 AM. We shook the white truck that tailed us, and were fortunate about our timing because the cops had to get busy at that hour with bars closing -- Florida has no container law. We drove along the Banana River, Bill and I hiding on the floor so no tail could notice that anyone was gone after we got out, and all of a sudden Star pulled over and said "NOW!" We jumped out, grabbed our equipment, and were over the embankment in an instant as Star and Brook peeled away.

That was great! It was so good to have the task in front of us after all that of waiting, and it was so good to not have been apprehended before we started. We didn't even freak when we noticed our paddles were missing. The full moon shone on the river before us as we looked across to the base, and despite the enormous searchlights the river looked so peaceful, stirred here and there by egrets and herons diving into the night waters.

We launched the boat and began to paddle. I had to lie down, my head and feet up over the ends of the boat, my body down in the bottom of the boat -- pretty wet -- and then Bill stretched out on top of me. Then we both used our arms to paddle. The tide was with us and we went at a pretty good clip at first. We kept startling the water birds, and vice versa. I thought, this is nice, this is beautiful, but it sure is hard to do. But that's ok, the Coast Guard will be here any minute to arrest me and then I can go to a



nice dry jail cell. Finally we moved out into the path of the first giant searchlight. We turned our faces away from it and I remember thinking the thoughts and feeling the physical sensations and breathing the breath I associate with making myself invisible or at least unobtrusive. I think I closed my eyes a lot. After a while we realized we were making it through the light without being seen, despite the fact that we could see other boats on the water. They unlike us had proper running lights.

We paddled safely through that marvelous night, in and out of five searchlights. By lying down, our profile was low. This is why we are glad we forgot our paddles. And our silver boat, draped with camouflage duckblind, blended with the moonlight-dappled river. We also think the insulating waders and ponchos we wore prevented the infrared sensors from detecting us. I believe the magic Star, Brook, and all our supporters at home performed helped most of all. Halfway across I had to quit paddling and turn on my back. I hurt and had to save my body for whatever lay ahead. Bill did all the work, and it was a very sexy ride for us. I fed him dried fruit and smooched him and played Cleopatra as he balanced atop me and paddled. Finally he was able to get out of the boat and walk it the last hour.

Bill said, "Rosie you would not believe the place we're landing right now, it's right out of a Hollywood movie," I looked around, entranced by the palmettos and mangroves on the shore in the moonlight. We stepped out of our boat onto this magic tropical paradise. Cape Canaveral Spaceport! It was 5:45 AM, 15 minutes away from launchtime. We argued about whether to set off our flares. We did not do it because we were 3 miles away from the security zone and did not want to give ourselves up for nothing. We wandered into a swamp, and fearful of the alligators that can slither at 19 mph, we sought high

9. Work: Most of the Witches I know work at straight jobs for a living. I know, as Uiliam suggests, mailmen and doctors. I also know lawyers, nurses, writers, bank officers, medical technicians, proofreaders, secretaries, Muni drivers, carpenters, computer programmers, hairstylists, tattooists, musicians, librarians, OSHA inspectors, architects, and, yes, even accountants. We often tend to keep a low profile about our religion, for obvious reasons. But those of our co-workers who know we're Pagans usually get a good impression of Paganism because they know us personally and know we're just folks, but with a "non-traditional" religion.

10. Politics: Since I'm more or less your ordinary liberal Pagan, I, like Uiliam, would like to hear more from Witches and Pagans of other political persuasions.

Well, so much for brevity. One thing we Witches do indeed seem to have in common is a burning desire to express our opinions. My thanks to Uiliam for griping and giving me the impetus to respond. And my thanks to the Witches who have been working to get this rag out for giving us the forum for our musings.

I can't quit now. I want to say thank you to Rowan for her insightful and beautiful article about the Gods, and I want to tell Jack Trainor, whoever he is, "I love you!"

Blessed Be!

Macha

M. Macha NightMare, P&W



Owls call me from sunlit dreams
Into the blank stupor of night

They enter my bone
All but unseen
Unsung songs from the vacuum of night

Birds of death
Birds of prayer

Do I enter your
Sight do my arms become
Wings do I see in the thick
Dark air of the night ?

Reclaiming Goddesses and Events

PENTACLE FOR MEN by Raven Moonshadow and Rick Dragonstongue

Using our magical skills, moving and shaping energy, transforming ourselves through trance to explore the five points of our inner pentacle: Sex (primal energy), Self, Passion, Pride (self-esteem), and Power (effectiveness in the worlds). Prerequisite: Elements of Magic or equivalent experience/study. **Six Thursdays beginning April 9.** Call Rick, 731-2159, for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

"BURNING TIMES," ISAAC NEWTON, AND THE WAR AGAINST THE EARTH by David Kubrin

A one-evening talk and discussion about events in early modern European history that led to man's decision to wage war on the Earth -- including burning up to nine million witches; the rise of Newtonian, mechanical science; and the growth of mining and other extractive industries during the 16th and 17th centuries. Part of the talk will concern the construction of an ideology, largely shared by industrial cultures, to mask and justify the decisions that caused the ecological disasters we face today. **Friday, April 24, 8:00 p.m., \$3-5 sliding scale.** Call David, 824-8566, or the Events Line, for location.

INTRODUCTION TO TRANCE TECHNIQUE for Women and Men, by Jeremy Broner with Robin Weaver and Arachne

A repeat of the popular new class on the techniques and practice of hypnotic trance. A range of approaches from Shamanistic to Ericksonian Hypnotic (metaphor, styles of invocation, raising power, rapid trance) will be explored in depth, with discussion of ethics and philosophy of the use of hypnosis in the Craft. Self-inductions, mutual induction, and group trance techniques will be covered. There will be exercises to do during the week, and attendance at all sessions is important. **Six Tuesdays beginning May 5, 1987.** In San Francisco, 7:00-10:00 pm, \$45-\$90 sliding scale. Call Jeremy at 431-9520 for details and registration. There will be a \$5 fee for tapes and written materials.

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN AND MEN by Rick Dragonstongue and co-teacher

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 course, **six Wednesdays starting May 20, 1987, 7:30 pm.** Call Rick, 731-2159, for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

IT MAKES CENSE by Raven Moonshadow

A three-session class. This will be a practical, hands-on workshop in the making of incense, oils, bath salts, floor washes, and potpourri. We will explore the historical, magickal, personal and imaginative correspondence aromas, culminating in the making of incense within sacred space. **June 4, 11, 18.** \$30-40 sliding scale. Students keep the incense they make. For details and registration call 751-2668, **weekday mornings only**, and leave a message; Raven will get back to you.

ARCHEOASTRONOMY: ANCIENT SITES AND THE ASTRONOMY OF ANTIQUITY by David Kubrin

On the basis of ancient temple architecture, stone circles, and a reading of some sacred texts, we will attempt to reconstruct the sacred geometry and knowledge underlying the myths of traditional peoples in the world and to sketch in the outlines of a physiology of our planet. This will be a more theoretical and historical course than most of the Reclaiming classes. **Six Tuesday evenings, call Events Line, 849-0877, for dates.** Call David, 824-8566, for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

FIRE by Cybele and Rose

Together we explore our auric bodies and learn to heal and rearrange ourselves, perhaps moving these abilities outward. Learning to sense, project, and dampen energy, opening our awareness and working with healing power. Advanced, 5-week class. Call Events Line (849-0877) in April for dates.



WICCAN SUMMER INTENSIVE: An opportunity to study feminist ritual, magic, and political change with Starhawk and the Reclaiming Collective. Beginning track and advanced topics. Sessions in Vancouver, B.C., Aug. 9-16, and Northern California, Aug. 23-30, 1987. Send SASE to: Reclaiming, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114 for Northern California application, or Patricia Hogan, 1937 W. 2nd Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6J 1J2, Canada, for Vancouver application.

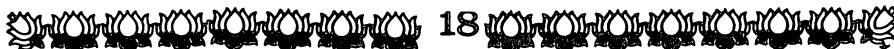


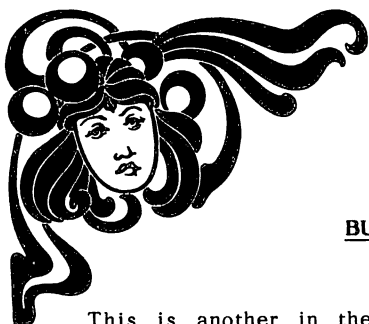
For other classes, events, and updates, call the RECLAIMING Events line, 849-0877.

To receive the RECLAIMING NEWSLETTER at home, fill out the form on the back cover of the newsletter, or send \$4-15 (sliding scale) for one year to Reclaiming, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Help! Help! Help! Help! Help!

We need help getting the newsletter out -- layout, collating, administration. If you would like to help, please call Rick Dragonstongue at 731-2159.





BUCKLAND'S COMPLETE BOOK OF WITCHCRAFT

-- reviewed by Andraste

This is another in the expanding list of Llewellyn's "Practical Magick" series, a set of simple introductions to many areas of occult practice. The large format allows for more aesthetic layout, more diagrams, illustrations, marginal notes and quotes, and tables of correspondence than the earlier volumes in the series, but it also makes for a somewhat unwieldy book roughly the size of a rural phone directory. (I reviewed the book during my commute time and lunch hours, and it was a nuisance to lug around.)

Written mainly for the solitary seeker who lacks much contact with Craft or Pagan community, this book will be overly simple (and perhaps a trifle paternalistic) to anyone who has experienced the give and take of an experimentally open, eclectic training circle, such as exist in the San Francisco Bay Area. There is a world of isolated seekers, who dream of meeting others with similar interests, who devour any information on the witchcult, and remain undercover in their jobs and communities. For these people, this book may be a welcome guide; it is warm and chatty and drops all sorts of nuggets about witch society (how witches dress, greet each other, make their tools, etc.) in a graded series of lessons. There is a strong emphasis on ethics, mostly expressed as an avoidance of interfering in the free will of another. Nothing is said about how this can be applied if the other person is actively doing harm to others.

One gets the idea that the book grew out of an actual or proposed correspondence course -- the chapters are called "lessons" and do not stick to any one topic, but provide a pastiche of information about the Craft. This can make fun reading the first time through, but makes it hard to locate all the information about a specific topic.

There is an awareness of the issues of power-tripping and the abuses of a hierarchical coven structure, said to be contributing reasons behind the democratic structuring of

Seax-Wicca, the tradition founded by Buckland in the early 70's.

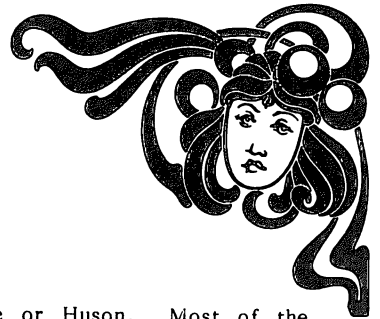
I found interesting his critique of Gardnerian hierarchy and protocol at this time; Buckland's sudden departure from the New York Craft community split the American Gardnerian lineage for most of a decade.

There is little specific focus on how the Craft relates to a focus on wider political/environmental/sexual/social issues (particularly not gay issues or substance abuse problems), though the introduction includes a statement that the Craft is a religion for the future, encompassing feminism, ecology, etc. The term "Wo/Man" is used for humanity as a whole

The book purports to have an eclectic focus, but most examples are drawn from Buckland's two traditions: Gardnerian and Seax-Wicca. There is an air of self-congratulation about references. An overwhelming proportion of the marginalia are quotations from his other books, and there are many instances of ". . . think up your own [invocations], or you may prefer to turn to my book, . . ."

In keeping with the workbook format, there are one to several nearly-blank pages following each chapter with one or two questions per page, relating to the material in the chapter. Some of the questions are so simplistic as to be ludicrous -- "Practice drawing a pentacle," "Record the dates of this year's Esbats and Sabbats," for example -- while some are more thoughtful: "Describe your personal Book of Shadows." I would have suggested the use of an extra sheet of paper for these questions, rather than answering in the book itself. There are additional questions keyed to each lesson in the appendices, together with answers.

The best parts of the book are the practical sections on witchlore, such as symbolism and magickal uses of colors, gems, candles, herbs, divination, talismans, etc. These were short,



thumbnail summations of each of these thaumaturgical arts. The section on solitary witchcraft and how it differs from Coven work was also a good thing to include.

In short, this is an "okay" book, but nothing to get very excited about. It needs more references, more analysis and contrasting points of view, and more depth. The writing is neither as beautiful nor as deep as Starhawk's, Valiente's, or even the Farrars' (still among my first choices for beginners in the Craft). And as far as curious lore, there is

more in Valiente or Huson. Most of the chants and poetry, particularly in the appendices, are **not** positive contributions to the Literature of the Craft. Inclusion of a variety of works by Pagan or Pagan-inspired poets and songwriters would have helped this section immensely.

Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft
 Raymond Buckland Llewellyn, 1986, St. Paul, MN. 252 pp. Meas. 8 1/2 x 11 (large format trade paperback) \$12.95



LETTER

Dear Friends,

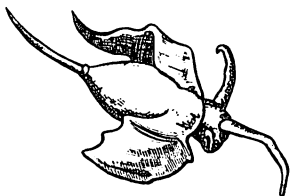
. . . Just wanted to say that the newsletter just keeps getting better. Love Hannah's Hints (I turn there first). Good insightful articles and letters. If I get time I may reply to Uiliam Math-Ghamhainn. Much said is true and gave a good chuckle. If Uiliam is totally serious he has missed large segments of the community.

Sour note, I must confess -- only reason for some of the poetry each issue is because written by editorial collective types. Perhaps stronger group criticism in order? I'll be happy to see more poetic material for use in ritual . . .

Wish some of the classes were more accessible to us South Bay types. Gee Jeremy, Robin, and Arachne, wouldn't you like to do trance technique as a weekend intensive, uh, six Sunday afternoons, uh howabout at my house . . . oh well.

May the Lady's Lord light your paths.

-- Rowan





WEIRDNESS

-- Roy King

Now you don't have to think about how many stars there are out there or how far out there they are or anything like that but just take something simple and commonplace like an egg, like we all eat for breakfast, you know, scrambled or over easy or poached or raw (yuk) or etc. Well it's just this thick yellow glop inside some thin white glop inside a shell, but if instead of cracking it on the stove and throwing it in the pan you sit on it for a while and not for long either well it turns into this little thing that squawks and walks around pecking everything and even has thoughts of some sort I guess. Now if you really think about how this yellow breakfast glop somehow turns into a little chicken almost by itself it's really just too weird for me to be able to say how weird it really is, and the more you think about it the more your mind just gets turned sort of inside out and you see that this ordinary world we live in with streets and gas stations and traffic and everything ordinary is really organized in this really very complicated and completely weird way and weirdest of all is how it ever got this way. And then if you start thinking about us people, you know, and how as natural animals we shouldn't be thinking about ourselves at all. I mean animals they just know with their instincts what's going on and they never think about their selves, you know, like their insides and organs and stuff, or their childhoods, or their brain chemistry or their fucking sexuality. Right? And here we are sitting around all the time thinking and worrying about who and what and how we are and we don't really know any more about it really than a squirrel does, or a toad frog, about the underlying weirdness, and really the more you think and study and do experiments and stuff the more you see just how unimaginably weird it all really is and thinking about it does not make it any cleaner at all but really just weirder and weirder and weirder.

Now we all know of course that we have to have this thing, this survival mechanism, where we impose order and sense on all this weirdness, you know, we sort of make up a

world in our heads and live in it so we know where we think we are. But of course we really know it isn't really real, and that it's just something we do so we can drive our cars around and go to work and do stuff we have to do but that isn't really real stuff. And you can tell it isn't really real stuff because when you get into it a little bit too much like a lot of people who never took you know what back in the 60's are most of the time, then everything gets all grey and numb, like black and white TV or plastic flowers with dust all over them. And then you just have to open up a crack somewhere and let some weirdness back into yourself so you don't suffocate.

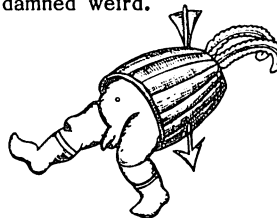
But now you see this weirdness is really very powerful and can be very dangerous to you, you know, self-concept or your world view as they sometimes say, or your sanity. Now sanity is a very serious and real sounding thing, like baseball or chocolate, but we have to realize really that it is just something we made up to make ourselves feel like we're OK and can pass our driver's test and hold down a job and make our mothers proud of us. And of course the opposite of sanity, which is insanity, is what we are the very, very most afraid of, except of course for death, which is just so weird I don't even want to talk about it. But you see the thing is if you sort of get into letting the weirdness seep into your made-up human world a little bit at a time, sort of like allergy medicine, you sort of learn to get used to it -- no, that's not true, you never get used to it -- but you sort of expand someplace in your brain stem or someplace and you develop a tolerance. Now let me say here that control is very, very important and necessary because this weirdness is so big and powerful and weird that it can just -- well I can't even say what it can do to you, but it can be pretty awful. So the thing is to be very careful and use the weirdness as a sort of -- well, stimulant. Now it's not like doing drugs or anything because the weirdness is in the natural order, I mean the natural order is not exactly order, it's weirdness, although it is very, very



natural, so you don't have to worry that you're doing anything unnatural to yourself.

Now as you begin to open up more and more to the weird way things really are, you start to be able to sort of tap into the power of the weirdness. And at first it seems like you're only imagining it or that you're on some weird power trip or you're becoming escapist again or even becoming, you know, insane. But then you see that you are holding together mostly OK and that the weirdness is not only really real but also useful, although it may be hard to say just exactly how. And you may notice that you seem to have grown someplace inside yourself that you didn't even know was there inside yourself before, and probably wasn't, and that you have become sort of outside yourself, or that you are connected to things in a strange way, like you may feel things before they happen, or see things that aren't exactly visible, or control things with your thoughts, but oh my god, you say, this is a bit too weird and isn't this like regressed childish wish fulfillment or maybe a psychotic flashback and hadn't we better cool it a bit with this weirdness stuff. Now it is very, very important not to burst out giggling uncontrollably in public places and not to start thinking of yourself as weirder than other people or things in general, because you are not. You are just sort of settling into your weirdness reality awareness and you are going to be just fine. But control is critical and there are good natural reasons why people need to feel OK and that's why they often live in little black and white box worlds, so they feel in control and can stay alive and feed themselves and go to the bathroom and all. So the thing is the confinement is not necessary but the control is necessary, so as you get more acclimated to the universal weirdness you will have to get your shit together, like maybe stop smoking pot or start jogging or whatever

you need to do to become totally responsible for your own self. This just sort of happens but you have to be very careful because magic as they say is perilous and you can end up just over your eyes in bullshit and maybe never get out. So you don't just don't make up weird things, not at all, but you learn how to attune yourself to the natural order of weirdness, or you can just go right off the deep end Ka-boom, like an H-bomb or something. So I guess that's why there's all these ready made disciplines around like CEREMONIAL MAGIC and FAERIE TRADITION WITCHCRAFT and TANTRIC BUDDHISM and all, to provide some method and containment and glue etc., and they're all good, etc., but they can after a while get to be sort of cramped or maybe a little institutional like high school was and you can just sort of stop at some semi-socially acceptable level of weirdness and just sit there with your friends and play Magician or Witch or Buddha, thinking you know pretty much where it's at. But you don't, because it's just too weird. So these structures tend to get to be brittle and rickety and need propping up and patching up and pretty soon you're working for Spiritual Viewpoint & Co. And you know what's a portal today if you hang onto it too hard can be a prison tomorrow, so there is something to be said for just freelancing and dancing around and finding your own way in the cosmic weirdness. Anyhow I don't know much more to say about it except that we can all learn a lot of weirdness from each other, but nobody can ever be into the weirdness for you. So maybe Mr. Dylan had something when he said "don't follow leaders and watch your parking meters" but then although it's also true "you don't need a weather man to know which way the wind blows" there can come along some tornados and hurricanes and typhoons that can get pretty damned weird.



Okay . . . everybody knows that we pagans think sex is the cat's meow, but I've noticed a surprising amount of misinformation regarding this all-important subject in our community. Therefore, I volunteer my knowledge and expertise to set y'all straight on such matters and to answer any burning or itching questions you just might have. Now . . . the first thing I want to clear up is the matter of sex with machines. I know that one of our well-loved songs ends with a prohibition against such activity and I'm not certain, but I've heard rumours that this has its roots in a certain person's feelings towards tractors and possibly Isaac Newton. Anyways . . . it is definitely time to re-word this charming anthem, as this proscription of sex with machines has too often been taken semi-seriously and that most definitely goes against one of our most important creeds: "ALL ACTS OF LOVE AND PLEASURE ARE MY RITUALS." More importantly, sex with machines can be powerful, transformative magic, and if you have any doubts, get yourself over to your local vibrator store and check out the names of some of the more popular models. What would a witch be without her/his "magic wand" or "black cat"? Magical possibilities are endless . . . I personally prefer the electric models over the battery operated as it has allowed me to focus sexually on not only my pleasure . . . but transforming nuclear power into solar. How? Try this out: Cast a circle. In invoking the Goddess plug your "magic wand" into Her power. As you start to raise a cone of power, imagine yourself making love to the Goddess in the form of electrical energy. When you start to really connect and feel the energy coursing through you, allow yourself to envision where the energy comes from. If it happens to be Diablo . . . well, then, FUCK DIABLO . . . and in the process transform it. Be creative. Just in case you didn't know . . . this isn't just for women. The "magic wand" has a magical attachment called the "g-spotter" that I have been told is very nice to the male prostate. In any case, the great thing about sex with machines is that if we do believe that the earth is alive it of course

follows that machines too have their own energy . . . and plugging into this energy allows us not only to feel good but also to occasionally do a little healing work with sex magic. Can you imagine a massive circle of us surrounding Diablo, all plugged in, raising a vibrating cone of transformative power? Well, maybe I am just a bit warped . . . but it's a nice fantasy. And if you blow a fuse or make too much of a mess with this particular form of spell casting . . . well, don't ask me how to remedy it . . . those questions are better left to Hannah.

So, here's to "sex with flowers,
sex with fruit,
even sex with peanut butter,
and
especially sex with machines."

Happy Beltane!

Blessed be,

Our Lady of the Sex Toys





CHRIST, SATAN, AND WICCA



Part II: Why I Am Not a Satanist

-- April

In "Fundamentalist Definitions," my first article, I showed how Fundamentalist Christianity defines Wicca as devil-worship. In this second article, I shall describe the factors which make Wicca, in actuality, a very different religion from true Satanism. Of course, much of the "Satanic cultism" receiving press coverage would hardly qualify as a religion at all: it involves obscene vandalism, brainless blasphemy, and perverse, death-glorifying "rituals." Such cults--whose psychotic extreme was the Manson group--are mostly a result of the pain and rebelliousness which are ever increasing among youth. In this respect they are related to the drug culture, and to some extent, to the punk-rock and heavy-metal scene. The weird, often drug-oriented cults, both Satanic and non-Satanic, of America's "underground occult world" make for some fascinating reading which I needn't go into here.¹ Instead, I shall focus on the Satanic gospel according to Anton Szandor LaVey.

Anton LaVey, an artistic youth-prodigy with an occult family heritage, has led a very interesting life; and if nothing else, one has to give him credit for being a thinker. While he does make an appeal to the thrill-seeker--"Gather around me, Oh! ye death-defiant, and the earth itself shall be thine, to have and to hold!"--he nonetheless presents a philosophy which is worthy of intelligent debate. Many of his observations about human nature, and the nature of religions, possess a certain earthy wit and wisdom; and here and there he puts forth a tenet which is entirely reasonable and by no means unique to Satanism. Most intellectuals would agree, for example, with his belief in critical thinking and questioning of doctrines. But I find the core tenets of Satanism to be highly objectionable and quite unlike the laws of the Craft.

Before I begin a critique of Satanism, it should be noted that the distinctions LaVey draws between his philosophy and Wicca are not the correct ones. He calls Wicca a "white-light religion" and equates it with

Christianity in much the same way that Fundamentalists equate Wicca with Satanism--what a hilarious demonstration of how dualistic religionists can't comprehend a non-dualistic religion, and must place it in one camp or the other! Actually, Satanism and Wicca have in common the belief in self-celebration, pleasure, and freedom from guilt. LaVey's liberal stance on harmless, non-coercive sexuality, except for his approval of sado-masochistic fetishes, is healthy and very similar to that of the Craft. Most pagans would agree with his idea of dissolving the split between our sensual and spiritual natures, but would disagree that "the carnal" is our only real nature.² LaVey's theory of magical workings is also similar to Witches', contrary to his claim that the latter pretend to use magic only for "altruistic purposes," not for "gaining personal power." Witchcraft encourages enrichment of one's power; but Witches explicitly distinguish between "power over others" and "power from within," which LaVey does not. He writes that "the guilt-ridden philosophy" of "these pseudo-Christian groups" is behind the idea that curses will return to their sender three-fold.³ Actually, the law of karma says that any energy returns to its sender. Witches sometimes do cast hexes, but only in self-defense. Finally, the most interesting paradox about Anton LaVey is the intellectual atheism which underlies his occultic religion. He claims not to worship Satan as a literal, clove-hoofed being, but as a "force of nature," or an archetype in the human psyche. Many pagans will agree with the idea of worshipping the divine manifest in ourselves, not an externalized deity;⁴ and that their rites fulfill the human need for "ritual, fantasy, and enchantment."⁵ I, for one, have appeared similarly paradoxical, being a scientific, rational person on the one hand--even atheistic in the sense of not believing in an external cosmic intelligence--and an emotional magic-worker on the other. Where I and other Pagans will differ with LaVey is in the symbols he chooses. So much for Satanic misrepresentations.



The most important difference between Witchcraft and Satanism is that the latter espouses a tenet of dualism, while the former does not. As Witches, we refuse to acknowledge our designated role in the narrow worldview of traditional Christianity, or to submit to its definition of good and evil. Satanists, by contrast, take the self-contradictory position of declaring themselves opposed to Christian definitions, while also subscribing to and rejoicing in them. Let us examine the psychology of this more closely.

There is one way in which I, and other Pagans, can empathize with Satanist sentiments. It is hard not to identify, to some extent, with an angel who rebelled against the Biblical God--whose demands for unquestioning obedience have oppressed almost all of us at one time or another. I was fortunate to be raised in a liberal Jewish family; but although we weren't very religious, I was sent to a Hebrew school where the portrayal of a fearsome male God had an emotional impact on me. In all fairness, God was often hailed as merciful and loving, but usually just to His faithful children and to penitent sinners--which I was not.* As a teenager I discovered the Craft, and began to reject much of what that God represented. Feminist works, such as Merlin Stone's When God Was a Woman, revealed the sordid, political motives behind the writers of so-called Holy Scripture: their attempts to suppress and deny Goddess worship, to subjugate women, and to use guilt to keep the masses in submission. The Christian God seemed even harsher, and here I needn't reiterate the historical effects of Christian doctrine. My research into the evangelist movement showed me just how alive are the old authoritarian sentiments: suppression of intellectualism, condemnation of various art forms, vilification of sensual pleasures, and the self-hating philosophy of sin, which says that every person deserves eternal agony in Hell unless saved by a blood sacrifice. Yes, the more I thought about the evangelists' God, the more I identified with the free-thinking Great Rebel.

However, the subject of God and Satan brings up the issue of dualism itself. Many cultures have believed in malevolent or potentially malevolent forces, spirits, or deities, who play

the antagonists in myths and legends; but few have approached the Western concept of warring oppositions on a cosmic scale. Witches usually replace this worldview with one of complementary, harmonious polarities. Some even want to do away with polarities and replace them with trinities. I feel that the polarity view has its good points and is probably inevitable when we consider the constructs of the human brain, while the trinity view is valuable in helping us fit polarities into a larger picture of reality. Both can help us avoid the good guys vs. bad guys mentality . . . but herein lies a disturbing thought. Wasn't my condemnation of Fundamentalists a dualistic belief itself? LaVey writes that "to virtually everyone some group represents evil incarnate"⁶--an observation borne out by occasional pieces of radical Wiccan literature which urge us to fight "the patriarchy" as though it were the blackest, most unmitigated source of everything bad. Clearly even Pagans, myself included, are not above "us vs. them" thoughts. Worse, I even caught myself enjoying the feeling of superiority--thus exemplifying what LaVey calls "the need to elevate oneself by defaming others."⁶ Was my rebel spirit, then, something I should strive to avoid?

The answer lay in the recognition of the many aspects of life. Ultimately it is true what Starhawk says, that "Power-over, violence, coercion, domination, hurtful as they are, are not evil in the sense of being part of a force in direct opposition to good. Instead, we can see them as mistakes . . ."⁷ However, in the everyday world of the political arena, those who insist on perpetuating these mistakes do seem to constitute "a force" opposed to those who want to work for change. When members of the New Right make efforts to re-institute school prayer, teach creationism, ban divergent books, eliminate women's studies programs and shelters for battered wives, criminalize homosexuality, outlaw abortion, and restrict access to contraception, they are not allied with some cosmic force, but they do become a human force against the political efforts of others. Especially, when they define all deities as being antithetical to their own--or, more accurately, when they define their God



as being opposed to all others--they create an opposition between religions, and dualism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Hence, to the extent that oppositions actually exist, we can feel justified in responding to them as such. Early Christians categorized many Pagan deities as demons, and sometimes I invoke those very deities to give strength to my spirit of resistance. To boost my sense of power as a woman, I may invoke the aid of Lilith, who according to Jewish legend was banished by God for refusing to submit to Adam's domination. Resistance has its mirthful side as well: the rascally villain or rogue-hero may be a more endearing character than the tritely virtuous hero. Paradox has its own charm, and identifying temporarily with "badness" may ultimately heighten our sense of really being good. When oppressive patriarchal error is hailed as "righteous," the Pagan's naughty delight can approach an exultation in being "wicked;" for when Christians turned Pan into a devil, they literally got our goat.

However, this brings us back to the central question: why am I not a Satanist? To put it in LaVey's terms: "The 'safe' schools of witchcraft, with their horned-god-fertility-symbol syndrome, consider the words Devil and Satan anathema. . . . Even if one recognizes the character inversion employed in changing Pan (the good guy) into Satan (the bad guy), why reject an old friend just because he bears a new name and unjustified stigma?"⁸ Indeed, if Pan and Satan have each been given "an evil role simply because he represents the carnal, earthly . . . aspects of life,"⁹ why not worship Satan?

The answer is, because Satan is more than just a name: he is a symbol, one which is inextricably bound up with dualism. To call our God "Satan" would be to place Him forever within the context of another religion. "Pan" was His name before Christianity even existed; and if Christians want to call him a demon, that's their prerogative. He will be opposed to them only insofar as they are opposed to Him; otherwise, the worship of Pan and the Goddess is an independent religion. But "Satan" means "adversary;" and, though primarily the foe of Christianity, he

"represents opposition to all religions which serve to frustrate and condemn man for his natural instincts."¹⁰ Thus, Satanism is a religion defined in terms of other religions. And if Christians have been wrong to hate other faiths, then to follow a Christ-hating creed would be to commit the same mistake ourselves. Why not focus on what we are, instead of what we are not?

LaVey wants to find a rationale for calling oneself evil without actually doing any harm--at least, to a certain extent--and herein lies his central contradiction. On the one hand, he calls for high self-esteem, and says, "Too long have good and evil been inverted by false prophets!" On the other, he says, "So, if 'evil' they have named us, evil we are--and so what! . . . Why not take advantage of it and LIVE!"¹¹ He equates "evil" with pleasure, and "good" with self-denial, exactly as the patriarchs define it. One wonders: why does he pick certain versions of Christianity, and not some other religion--say, Hinduism--as the standard by which to condemn himself? Or, if religious tenets are arbitrary, why doesn't he simply invent a standard by which he is not condemned? The crux of the contradiction is in this passage: "Why do so many . . . disavow any connection with what might be classed as Satanic, yet increasingly use each and every one of the arts that were for centuries considered Satan's? Why does the scientist . . . mouth platitudes of Christian righteousness . . . when the man of science owes his heritage to what had for hundreds of years been relegated to Devil-dom?" The answer, he says, is because most people are too "self-righteous" to "turn in their good-guy badges."¹² The obvious flaw is his dualistic assumption: either you see yourself as an all-white good guy, and "denigrate others" as bad guys; or you see yourself as a villain by someone else's definition. Non-dualism calls for a balance of self-esteem and humility: we can view ourselves as good, but not perfect; and those who condemn us are not all bad, but simply in error. Self-righteousness refers to a lack of humility, the ability to see that we are fallible, and that we often make the same mistakes for which we criticize others. But if some people call our life's pursuits "evil," taking them up on it is not humility--that's self-deprecation! And



if LaVey believes his pursuits are evil, why doesn't he cease them immediately? The humble person who sees his error responds by trying to correct it, not by exulting in it! The inconsistency is that of having his cake and eating it. Unlike the Pagan's gleeful identification with "naughtiness"--which is temporary, and ultimately a joke--Satanism requires a constant acceptance of Christian dogma and a simultaneous rejection of it.

In addition to his dualistic absurdity, LaVey presents several revoltingly un-humanitarian tenets. His view of the human condition combines the philosophies of Freud, Nietzsche, and Herbert Spencer with the cynicism of Macchiavelli: humans are "predatory animals by instinct" who could not survive without preying upon each other. If true, this would make the Peace Movement sadly futile! It is puzzling that a man should so encourage the perpetuation of cruelty who appears in some passages to denounce it.¹³ Part V of "The Infernal Diatribe" is a list of compassionless, might-makes-right maxims such as "Blessed are the strong, for they shall possess the earth--Cursed are the weak, for they shall inherit the yoke!" "Blessed are the powerful, for they shall be revered among men--Cursed are the feeble, for they shall be blotted out!" and "Cursed are the poor in spirit, for they shall be spat upon!" Perhaps these statements speak truthfully about the status quo; but the brutal struggles we see are a tragic result of capitalist, class-stratified societies--not an inevitable part of the human experience. Our quest as Goddess religionists is to tap into the deeper human instincts of nurturance and cooperation, and to strive toward a world in which each individual works with the others, not against them.

With regard to ritual, modern Satanism differs from the stereotypical Black Masses of the Middle Ages, or of 18th-19th Century Hellfire clubs. Many rites derive from pagan, kabalistic, hermetic, and ceremonial magic sources and are not inherently Satanic. (Enochian, for example, is a language referred to in many branches of occultism.) Of course, to those who feel a pressing need to vent their dislike of Christianity, a Satanic mass may be a theatrical outlet--as well as a means for

achieving the thrill of invoking demonic powers.

Some people have suggested that the main reason for all witchcraft is that thrill: of praying to forbidden deities, holding secret rites in closed chambers, and calling upon potentially dangerous forces to enrich one's power.¹⁴ Admittedly, such "thrills" have played a peripheral part in my attraction to Wicca; it's only natural that they would. But my real reason for choosing the Craft was the deep spirituality of the Goddess and God, whose symbolism goes far beyond that of freedom from oppressive ideologies. They also represent love, beauty, Nature, and the entire cosmos. Divinity is light--of the day, the intellect, sight knowledge, and life. Divinity is also darkness, but not darkness in the sense of evil. In a non-dualistic world, the dark is a beautiful and necessary part of reality--of feeling, intuition, the night, the unseen, death, and the dark womb where new life begins. There is great wonder in invoking the powers of darkness: to approach Hecate, Goddess of the Underworld and the waning cycle of existence, is to overcome fear with understanding. Witchcraft is neither a "white-light religion" nor the opposite of one; it is a religion of balance, of transcending Christ-Satan warfare. The light need not be shunned, nor the darkness feared, in the Craft of the Wise.

*There are a few stories in which God shows mercy to Pagans, such as in the story of Jonah; however, these are rare.

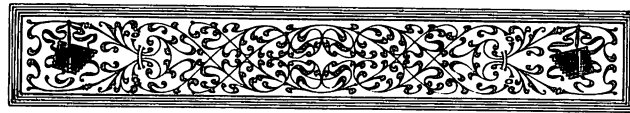
1. Two good resources are Nat Freedland, The Occult Explosion, (New York, 1972), pp. 170-175, and Arlene Fitzgerald, Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sorcery (New York, 1973). Also, Hal Lindsey, in Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth, (Michigan, 1972), pp. 4-8, tells some sensational stories.

2. Anton LaVey, The Satanic Bible, (New York, 1969), p. 45.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 51.



4. Ibid., p. 44.
5. Ibid., p. 53.
6. Anton LaVey, The Satanic Rituals, (New York, 1972), p. 11.
7. Starhawk, Dreaming the Dark, (Massachusetts, 1982), p. 43.
8. The Satanic Rituals, pp. 12-13.
9. The Satanic Bible, p. 55.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 63.
12. The Satanic Rituals, pp. 13-14.
13. The Satanic Bible, Introduction.
14. Owen S. Rachleff, The Occult Concert, (Illinois, 1971), pp. 100, 120-121.



LETTER

(Menstrual Rituals)

Dear Sisters:

I come from a Native American tradition where at present women on their Moon Time are strictly forbidden to attend religious ceremonies. I found through my study of Wicca a whole new world in which menstruation is seen as a Time of Power rather than a curse.

This feeling of empowerment has led me to research menstrual rituals, ancient and modern, and to begin using my own Moon Time as a time of power.

I would like to invite other Pagan women to share with me any suggestions they might have about books to read, or herbs that are helpful. Also any personal experiences they may have had either in personal or group

rituals, as well as any uses they make of their menstrual Blood.

In return for such a sharing I would be more than happy to communicate with women, individually or by magazine articles, the results of my gatherings.

If you wish to share with me and other women, please write to:

Cornwoman
c/o B. Smith,
1355 Vining Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8R 1P5 Canada

Blessed be,

Cornwoman



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<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>
<u>Los Angeles</u> Conference: EcoFeminism University of Southern Ca., Los Angeles, CA	<u>March 27-29</u>	Irene Diamond (213) 743-7722
<u>La Crosse, WI</u> Talk: Keynote speaker, Women's Health Conference University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse	<u>April 3</u>	Kenneth Maly (608) 685-8425, (507) 643-6273
<u>Toronto, Canada</u> Talk or workshop tentatively scheduled, contact Giza Rayzel		(416) 783-6351, (416) 736-5178
<u>Ottawa, Canada</u> Talk: Healing the Disembodied World Dept. of Religion, U. of Ottawa. 177 Waller, Ottawa, Canada K1N 6N5	<u>April 6</u>	Naomi Goldenberg (613) 564-2300
<u>Montreal, Canada</u> Talk, April 9: Goddess slide show Weekend Workshop: Women's Mysteries (women only) Pigeon Hill, St. Armand, Quebec JOJ 1T0	<u>April 9-12</u>	Rosemary (514) 248-2524 Gisa (514) 248-7756
<u>Connecticut</u> Ritual and Personal Power Wesleyan University, Middletown	<u>May 7</u>	Brad Gornstein (203) 344-9683
<u>Massachusetts</u> Workshop: Persephone's Journey (women only) focusing on mother/daughter issues for Mother's Day weekend Rowe Conference Center, Kings Hwy Rd., Rowe, Mass. 01367	<u>May 8-10</u>	Rowe Center (413) 339-4216
<u>Switzerland</u> In Bern, May 14, talk: The Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess Workshop: Ritual and Personal Power Tantra Galerie, Jungfraustr. 29, 2800 Interlaken, Switzerland	<u>May 14-17</u>	Bernhard Schaer 036-22-74-14
<u>W. Germany</u> Fri. Eve., talk: Reclaiming the Goddess (mixed) Workshop: Women's Mysteries (women only) Arkuna Zentrum, Reinburgstrasse 194 D 7000, Stuttgart 1	<u>May 22-24</u>	Barbara Gissrau 0711-65-19-44
<u>W. Germany</u> Workshop: Ritual and Personal Power Zist in Penzburg Zist 3, D8122 Penzburg	<u>May 29-31</u>	ZIST Center 08856/5192



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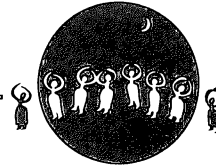
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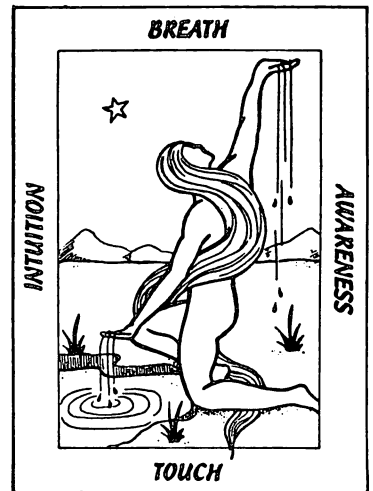


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