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# Reclaiming Newsletter

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***Reclaiming***  
**A Center for Feminist Spirituality**  
**P.O. Box 14404**  
**San Francisco, CA 94114**

**Newsletter Submissions:** The Newsletter encourages people to submit articles, letters, or graphics related to political, pagan or spiritual issues and happenings. **Graphics are ALWAYS welcome!**

We may edit for length, spelling, punctuation and grammar; we do not alter poetry.

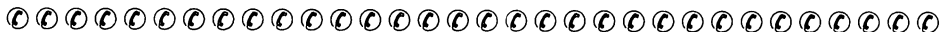
While we are pleased to print letters or articles on ethics, we will not print personal charges or countercharges.

All submissions, whether we print them or not, eventually find their way into our cauldron, so keep copies for yourself. Please do not ask us to return them.

Submissions are due on or before the deadline. The Newsletter staff has sworn off its lamentable co-behavior and will not chase down late submissions. We really mean it this time.

The views expressed in articles and advertisements in this Newsletter belong to the authors and advertisers . . . not to the Reclaiming Community or the Newsletter Staff. Some of us don't even like some of the stuff we print.

**Spring Deadline is Monday, February 4, 1991**



**Reclaiming Events Line ☎ (415) 849-0877**

This recording (listed under "Reclaiming" in Berkeley) carries announcements (and updates) of events organized by Reclaiming and others. Often, these come up too late to be put in the newsletter. Call us with events and announcements to add to the message. They can also be mailed to the Events Line at the P.O. box, but this is slower. Please allow plenty of time, and remember to say where we can reach you with questions.

—The Recording Faerie

**TTY ONLY** Reclaiming information and inquiries: (415) 237-6207

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**Cover design: C. Moore (and thank you for the lovely bunch of graphics!)**

**Heartfelt thanks to the following entities for helping to keep our stuff together: Peter Norton & the Utilities, Stanley, the Black Cat Proofreaders, Anne, Cherie, Janette, Jody, Karen, Laura, Macha, Pleiades & Rose.**

**Printed on Recycled Paper**

# THREE SISTERS

by Kitty Costello

for Macha and Sophia

*We begin at the chimneys, mouth of the lava flow,  
and stare down holes to where the first of the Earth  
poured out a thousand years ago.  
This is Modoc land, where calvary horses could not tread  
across the treacherous spread  
of jagged black rock grown cold.*

*I wander off from my sisters through the silvery sage  
that is everywhere rooted in lava.  
A song comes to me, one I knew would come, a picking song,  
and I hum it softly as I sever with my knife  
a modest sprig here, another there, until  
my hand is full of its green sweetness.*

*Back in the car, rolling down the road,  
I try to recall the song, but it will not come  
out here on the asphalt where it is not needed.*

*We drive past the stronghold of warriors  
who held at bay an army twenty times their size,  
past where lake water once lapped  
the edges of lava flow, sizzling;  
where tule reeds once swayed like dancers in wind;  
drained now for another race of people to grow  
their malt barley and winter potatoes.*

*We roll along, three great strong women.  
Sophia stops to appease her spirit ally—  
Vulture, Buzzard, the Carrion-Eaters, with talons too weak  
to carry their meal away with them up into the sky.  
She picks each clump of fresh-killed meat  
up off the roadway—a chipmunk, a mouse,  
then a jackrabbit still warm,  
its head severed almost clean by speeding wheels.  
She flings them with her mighty arm  
off into the bunch grasses  
where her birds can dine in safety now,  
no cars to roll over them at their last meal.*



*We are searching for a cave, the right cave,  
where our sister who has called us on this journey  
can travel beyond the boundaries of this life and back,  
asking Those Who Sent Her Here which way to go now.*

*Down the lava pits we climb,  
the jagged stones rocking under our shoes.  
A Great Horned Owl flaps out  
from a mouth in the Earth, then another.  
We stumble into the hollows and back to the furthest depths,  
our footsteps swallowed in the silence of the Mother,  
here in Her womb.  
But this cave deadends in an avalanche of stone  
and light penetrates its deepest corners.  
It will not do.*

*Up and down, in and out of lava pits we climb,  
startling black lizards who scurry away  
into dark caves of their own. I find swarms of red ants  
that won't shake loose from my boots.  
Macha stretches out on the surface of the Earth,  
waiting, lapsing already into the inner world  
up there in the daylight, no butterflies in sight,  
as we press on through the jumble of rock,  
no entryways to be found.  
This is harder than we thought.*

*We go back, following our steps, and descend together  
into the ice cave where the ceremony will soon begin,  
going down into the underworld,  
leaving the light of day behind.  
We begin to see our breath, hear the drips of water  
turning into ice, here in Skull Cave  
where the bones of animals and humans were found  
a hundred years back, and no one still living  
can tell us how they got there.*

*We nestle our sister on her shelf of rock at the back of the cave.  
 Rosemary is offered; chants are sung;  
 we speak the words of travel to the other side.  
 A candle is lit and soon put out.  
 She screams her wild cry out into the hollow stone,  
 and we leave her there in the cold of the dead lava tube,  
 leave her with only the echo of our footsteps  
 and the shadow of a man perched lotus-style  
 on another shelf of rock, as we walk up  
 up the winding way into the light,  
 the warmth of the air now a miracle  
 against our cheeks, our fingertips.*

*We wander through the underbrush thick with animal droppings –  
 Antelope, Deer, Rabbit, Owl, and countless tiny critters  
 who have disappeared into the shelter of porous rock,  
 safe from the myriad birds of prey  
 that swoop and glide in the sky –  
 and everywhere we feel the presence of other creatures  
 who moments ago passed here and now are gone.  
 This is our vigil, here above the hollow place  
 where Macha now breathes alone, wrestling  
 the darkness, the unknown sounds.*

*I set off again through the sage with my knife.  
 The picking song comes back to me,  
 and I hum it out into moist wind, gathering sprigs  
 from this land my sister is just now nestled inside.  
 A storm gathers and passes, gathers and passes,  
 far on the horizon where sharp-edged buttes  
 rise up holy through the distant mist.*

*At the appointed time we descend again,  
 ringing bells to announce our coming.  
 She is perched there alone,  
 wrapped in the cold, the dark,  
 the wild call she bellowed out still singing in the rock.  
 She has pierced herself,  
 but the blood knows not to flow in this air too cold.  
 She leaves behind a gift for the Earth,  
 nestled in a niche,  
 and we turn to lead her back from the underworld,  
 out from the ice, past the shadow of the lotus man –  
 no Euridyce, no Orpheus – just three sisters  
 emerging from the Earth all new.*



*In the blessing of light, Macha holds a glass  
of red juices of many fruits,  
pours the first sip out upon the thirsty ground,  
and we drink, celebrate her return  
to this world of flesh, of sun.*

*Back at camp I build a fire so big  
it almost scares us, the sparks scattering  
in the rising wind, the setting sun.  
I tell my long-ago dream of the She-Wolf,  
myself as the She-Wolf, and when Macha says,  
"I can see that in you. I can see that in you now,"  
the gift of the dream returns to me,  
to my hands, my teeth.*

*Later in the dark, the fierce wind turns  
our tent into a kite, and we scream and laugh  
as we throw our sleeping bags,  
our backpacks, out into the storming night to make  
our getaway from a voyage up into the sky.  
Safe inside the car, our laughter flows in mighty waves  
we cannot hold back, erupting from all our deepest places.*

*I curl up tight in the back seat,  
pressed up against sleeping gear  
as we wind and turn through the stormy Sierra night,  
rocking in and out of a sleep I cannot shake,  
the pressure bursting in my ears,  
cradled there in the backseat night,  
a dreamer transported across jagged stormy mountain miles,  
twisting through the twisted night.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Now far away on another continental plate,  
I nestle in the fog of my coastal city,  
a land newly formed by the endless push  
of sea floor under coastline, birthing new mountains.*

*I am cradled back, back to a sky darkened  
with the wings of countless birds  
when migrant flocks arrive, the water teeming  
with an unthinkable bounty of fish,  
the wetlands returned—a world to be reborn,  
a knowledge conceived in the silence of caves,  
here within the darkness of my womb.*

5/90

# Witch Camp Now and Then

by Sue Westwind

Five years ago I did something which seemed, for me, rather daring. I got myself to the coast of California to check out other witches at a "Reclaiming Apprenticeship Program." This put the cap on a period of practicing as a solitary—awkwardly, self-consciously, top-secretly—in the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas.

But it hadn't been so very long since I'd lived in parts of that coastal mecca before, wide-eyed Midwesterner slithering among various feminist/political/alternative groups—stifling a longing for home. Finally in the late '70's I cashed it in to go "back to the land." Just before I left, a lover gave me a copy of Anne Kent Rush's *Moon Moon*, which I carted around for years before reading. When finally I did, with only acres of tallgrass, an old farmhouse, and the s k y for company, I had no one to talk to about it, about Her. I don't think I'd have known how to, anyway.

Pretty soon the moon, *The Spiral Dance*, and Circle Network News weren't quite enough. Somehow I wrote to Reclaiming and found out about the Apprenticeship. I was scared to tears when I got on the plane, threw up on a dark roadside a few miles from the site, and arrived just in time for my first group ritual ever. You guessed it—we had to individually sing our names to the group. I thought I'd die.

Five years later it's Wiccan Summer Intensive, but I remember the birth of the name that has stuck: Witch Camp. Five years later and I bless the day I made it home again mostly sane. Five years gone by and at another Witch Camp I think I dreamed even darker this time, got closer to the harrowing core.

Yet in so many ways it was easier. Held in Michigan, a climate and flora that were familiar (yes, there are tress in Kansas), yet pines and blueberries made it feel like a vacation place too. We also laughed a great deal, played at times, and the food was mighty good.

I often say that when I went to the first Witch Camp something inside of me was ready to break apart. I knew it and I let it, and what came out was magic, love, community—then those things crushed and rebirthed over and again. The first Camp made me a Witch who could say so, and to the amazement of us all I found others even in Kansas and Missouri who also claimed the word. This year I came to Camp thinking I was Pretty Hot Shit, and got hung up on a meat-hook instead (to use an ever-popular metaphor). And now I feel stuck with the job of translating the bad news. For in my neck of the prairie, Wicca often has to be all smiles or swashbuckles, lest it become not religion but "therapy." Death-knell which sends 'em on the run.

Some may want damsels and dragons, but it looks like we've got addiction, sexual trauma, bad memories and endless comparisons of ourselves to other people. Or so it seemed at Witch Camp. And it was equally obvious that this is the stuff of real magic. All you urban-anarcho Pagans may take this for granted. Yet some of us in the styx still struggle with how to interface with what I call "fear of magic." We/I question what is to be our relationship to Pagans and Witches who practice our Earth Religion, even shed tears and gnash teeth over the plight of our despoiled Mother, yet will not touch their own "stuff" with a



ten foot pole. Let alone our interpersonal, community “stuff”—and so what good are suspicious, solitary “earth-healers” who cannot heal themselves and each other? For as someone so articulately cried around the fire at Witch Camp when we were doing a political working about the Mid-East situation: it’s all **the same thing**.

The twist is that actually, Witch Camp helps me understand fear of magic a little better. For through the long middle of the week I was often pissed that I was so tearful, so un-together, so frightfully alone. I often wondered if these people knew what they were doing to me, to all of us. Maybe because Reclaiming were the first Witches I’d ever met, I just had to wait and see. Can I really recommend anyone get so depressed as I did, or was I just being weird, self-pitying, ad-

dicted to suffering? So many contacts from all over the world, so much to discuss, and yet I was so mired in my Stuff (capital-letter dimensions now!) it was as if there was a lock on my throat. Was the whole experience truly initiation-transformation, or did radiance finally break through on the last night from relief at the prospect of going home? Fear of magic may be a fine survival tactic indeed. I think I can be a little easier now on those infected with it.

But any way you cut it, there’s nothing like Witch Camp. It’s clear that Reclaiming thought of everything possible to offer support along the bumpy way—affinity groups, Twelve-Step meeting, chakra dial-down, and more. So don’t blame them if it’s scary. You pay your money, you take your chances.

## Cosmic Spirals



Blessed Be!

I don’t know what your policy is on printing recipes in your newsletter, but I was positively compelled to share this particular one with you. Dubbed “Cosmic Spirals,” these cookies are a Winter Solstice tradition in my family and have proved to be a great way to honor the grain Goddess.

- 1 c. shortening
- 2 c. brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 4 c. flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. cinnamon

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs, well beaten. Add flour and spices to creamed ingredients. Chill at least 4 hours.

### Filling

- 2 lb. dates, cut fine
- 1 c. white sugar
- 1 c. water
- 1 c. chopped walnuts

Cook filling on low heat until thick and allow to cool. Roll dough ¼” to ½” thick. Spread filling evenly over dough and roll up. Wrap in foil and place in freezer overnight. Slice and bake at 425° for 10–12 minutes.

In Friendship,  
Cait Hutnik

# Faggot Witch Camp: A Review

*Greg Johnson*

Equinox found ten Faggot Witches gathered to celebrate the first annual FAGGOT WITCH CAMP. Formed by a group of gay witches in the Midwest, FWC (FAGGOT WITCH CAMP aka Fun With Candles) was a culmination of a year's hard work. FWC was a focussed gathering, specific in its intent, "audience" and format. Because of that, I believe its presence stirred the gay/fairie network.

Gay men's festivals and fairie gatherings have in the past had a rather "anything goes" quality about them—a direct reaction to the patriarchal system that has a choke-hold on our society. FAGGOT WITCH CAMP was created as an alternative—a mid ground between these two extremes. FWC incorporated a number of strong boundaries: no drugs or alcohol, limited size, a specific spiritual focus, specific definition of terms and philosophy, an application process for entry (some accepted, some rejected), and a specific structure, format and process.

Boundary issues are always difficult and FWC's proved no different—that's where a lot of the hard work came in. Planners were challenged to create bold boundaries that included room for spontaneity and group involvement and consensus during the event.

Through that work came a very wonderful event. The four days were intense, emotional, loud, fun, scary, beautiful, hot, sad, ecstatic, informative, challenging. Many rituals were based on a loose framework and theme developed by the FWC planners. Thematically the event revolved around the Fag Witch experience: coming out as gay, body image, coming out as a witch, fag ancestry and history, the Equinox as high holiday, the special sight/insight/gifts of Fags before us and thru us now.

The framework of each ritual varied but usually included basic elements developed by the planners while incorporating new elements, imagery and details reached through consensus by the entire group. This joining brought wonderful ritual with a sense of shared control and surprise. The pre-planning provided a base for intense work. Music both free-form and organized enhanced most rituals as did inspired drumming/percussion and dance. Being Fags, our altars and space decoration changed frequently and played integral parts in ritual-making.

The "successes" of the gathering were manifold. A challenge was met in simply working toward the event, wonderful Fag ritual was created, a specific community was defined, and a new annual event for Faggot Witches was created. Thanks to all that were involved in making FWC happen.

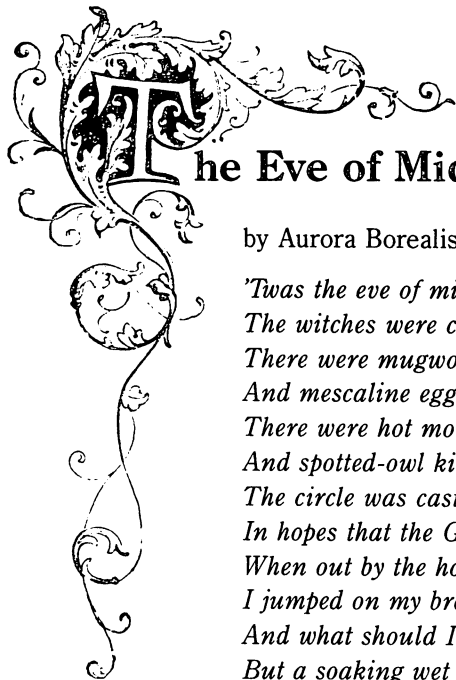
FOR INFO on FWC II, write to:

FWC

PO BOX 45107

KMCO 64111.





## The Eve of Midwinter

by Aurora Borealis Medicine Turkey

*'Twas the eve of midwinter, and all through the coven  
The witches were cooking strange things in the oven.  
There were mugwort frittatas and dragon's-blood stew  
And mescaline eggnog and mandrake fondue.  
There were hot mountain oysters and road-kill pâté  
And spotted-owl kidneys, and wombat flambé.  
The circle was cast and the herbs had been smoked  
In hopes that the Goddess would soon be invoked.  
When out by the hot tub arose such a clatter  
I jumped on my broom to see what was the matter.  
And what should I see in the blackberry thorns  
But a soaking wet Goddess and eight unicorns!  
"I was just sitting down with my vibrating phallus  
And a good book," she said, "Christ, you bitches are callous.  
I came when you called, over all my objections,  
And got lost in the woods—you give lousy directions.  
You turkeys invoked me, now look at my dress  
My period's late and I've got PMS."  
She cursed and she muttered, she looked like a wreck  
The unicorns whimpered and shat on the deck.  
We gave her some weed and we got her some grub  
We brought her clean towels and she soaked in the tub.  
Then she rose, hot and dripping, and gave us her blessing  
And jumped in her chariot, without even dressing!  
"On Isis! On Eris! Oya and Astarte!  
On Ishtar! Inanna! Kali and Hecate!"  
We heard her exclaim as she climbed through the air  
"Thank Goddess there's only eight sabbats a year!"*



(Aurora Borealis Medicine Turkey is Chairperson of the Department of Anomalistic Phenomenology at the College of the Pygmies in Mendonesia, California.)

# THE BALLAD OF J. EDGAR HOOVER

Words: Holly Tannen, copyright 1990

Tune: "Joe Hill" by Earl Robinson, copyright 1938

For Judi Bari

*I dreamed I saw J. Edgar Hoover*

*'Live as you or me*

*"But J.," I said, "You're ten years dead."*

*"I never died," said he.*

*"I never died," said he.*

*"For forty years, by fear and greed*

*You ruled the FBI*

*But now we've taken back our rights!"*

*Says he, "I did not die."*

*Says he, "I did not die."*

*Where phones are tapped and lists are kept*

*And documents are shred*

*Where statesmen and reporters lie*

*It's there you'll find J. Ed.*

*It's there you'll find J. Ed.*

*Where poor folks fear to speak their minds*

*And live apart in dread*

*Where crimes are blamed on innocents*

*It's there you'll find J. Ed.*

*It's there you'll find J. Ed.*

*And standing there as fat as life*

*With beady little eyes*

*"So if you think I'm dead," says he*

*"Just try to organize*

*Just try to organize."*

*I dreamed I saw J. Edgar Hoover 'Live as you or me*

*"But J.," I said, "You're ten years dead."*

*"I never died," said he.*

*"I never died," said he.*





## Letters



October 13, 1990

Dear Reclaiming,

I got your Fall issue tonight and started in right away on Starhawk's "Reflections on the State of the Craft." She says she'd like to open up a few issues for debate, so here goes...

Starhawk:

There are some great advantages in not having physical centers... But maybe there should be, somewhere, someday, ritual spaces designed for our type of ritual and maintained with a reverent spirit...

Our tradition has not supported paid clergy for centuries or perhaps millenia, but we need their equivalent now...

James Frazer: (from *The Golden Bough*)

Amongst the marks of a primitive ritual we may note the following:

1. No special class of persons is set apart for the performance of the rites; in other words, there are no priests. The rites may be performed by any one, as occasion demands.
2. No special places are set apart for the performance of the rites; in other words, there are no temples.



Frazer here is speaking specifically of the spring and harvest rituals of European customs: the worship of Demeter and Ceres. I may be terribly traditional, but I think that we ought not to abandon the practices of our pagan ancestresses as cavalierly as Starhawk suggests. After all, isn't that how we got into this mess in the first place? With churches, priests, organizations, and leaders? Let's stick to the way they've done it for thousands of years, with rituals that "may be performed by any one, master or man, mistress or maid, boy or girl; they are practised, not in temples or churches, but in the woods and meadows, beside brooks, in barns, on harvest fields and cottage floors." (James Frazer).

Love,  
Cookie



*Gratitude must be the  
dear sister of joy.  
I feel her presence today  
as wind and magnetic pull  
draw white wave after white wave  
toward me on this beach.  
In winter the ocean  
looks like curly snowdrifts  
moving and sounding  
at the same time.*

Zoe Becker  
February, 1990

# Why a Temple is Not a Church

by Steven W. Posch

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

I'll admit it. I wince when I hear Pagan organizations call themselves "churches." Contrary to popular usage, "church" is not a general term of religious organization, just as Pagan is not a synonym for "irreligious." "Church" is a term specific to a particular religion, to wit, Christianity. And face it, folks, we aren't Christians.

The English word for a Jewish house of worship is a "synagogue." In practice, one also finds "temple," "congregation," etc., but only "synagogue" is Judaism specific, so to speak. Muslims worship in mosques, Shinto has shrines, the Sikhs gurudwaras. English-speaking Hindus and Buddhists usually worship in temples. In the linguistic realm of religion, only Christians have churches. It's only the cultural imperialism of the West that makes "church" a synonym for "house of worship." A synagogue is not a "Jewish mosque." A mosque is not a "Muslim gurudwara." Why then would "Pagan church" sound like anything other than a contradiction in terms?

Even within Christianity there are groups which reject the use of the word "church." Near my home is the First Unitarian Society, and the Friends' Meeting House. Even Jehovah's Witnesses meet in "Kingdom Halls."

Look at the organizations that call themselves churches. At a cursory glance, I see two broad groupings. Firstly, the mainstream Christian churches that have a hereditary right to the term: Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Methodist, Presbyterians, etc. My feeling is that it is disrespectful for us to group ourselves with these organizations by using their term. Secondly, the "wannabe," the fringe groups, who crave acceptance by terminological association with the mainstreamers: the Church of Scientology, the Unification Church, Church Universal and Triumphant, etc. Since Pagan groups obviously do not fall into the first category, when we call ourselves churches, we are, in effect, putting

ourselves in the second category and stigmatizing ourselves as "fringe." It is unacceptable to me that Paganism—the original religion of humankind—should present itself as a fringe phenomenon.

Historically, the use of the word "church" by non-Christians has tended to be part and parcel of the Americanization process. The first major Buddhist organization here called itself the "Buddhist Church of America." It did not flourish. Subsequent Buddhist organizations have drawn on their own traditions of naming. The Buddhists don't have to use Christian terminology to fit into American culture, or to prove that their religion is valid. Neither do we.

I've been told that "church" is a legal term required by the IRS. I doubt it. Do you think that Beth Israel Synagogue's legal papers refer to it as a church? I assure you they do not. As long as we make it clear to the government that our organizations are religious ones, we have the freedom under the First Amendment to name ourselves.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the word church does double duty, signifying both a building (house of worship) and a group of people (congregation). As for a Pagan house of worship, the wisdom of the English language, for better or worse, has already chosen a name: temple. It's a fine old Pagan word, without negative connotations, readily comprehensible without further definition. If we share the term with Hindus, Buddhists and liberal Jews, that's okay by me. Organizationally speaking, these are people with whom we have certain things in common. As for the proper term for a Pagan congregation, we have many other possibilities: circle, grove, coven, shrine, fane, assembly, meeting, society, hove (from Old English, *hof*, a Pagan sanctuary or temple). We can afford to be creative, and we have plenty of experience. After all, we invented language. We built the first temples, too.

## An Open Letter to Reclaiming Covens

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Craft,

This letter is to recommend, advise you, extol the virtues and benefits of The Covenant of the Goddess.

For those of you who are unaware, the Covenant of the Goddess is the legal arm of the Craft. It was formed in 1976 in Northern California. One of its founders was Starhawk. It seeks to unite Witches of various traditions into one viable legal entity. It is a California non-profit corporation which, among other things, grants ministerial credentials and elder credentials to members. It is not a body comprised of individual members, but is comprised primarily of member covens, each with a vote on issues. CoG has a Grand Council and festival/gathering called Merrymeet late every Summer, each year in a different part of the country. Membership is from all over the United States and there are even a few members from Canada, Australia and Britain. In areas in which there are three or more member covens, local councils are formed. We, as you would expect, are the Northern California Local Council.

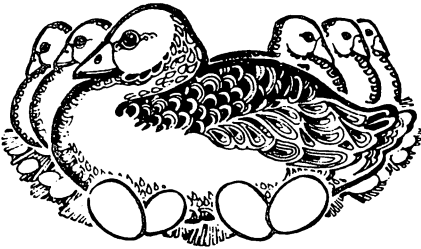
Requirements of a coven for membership are that it be practicing Craft for at least six months and have at least three members, at least one of whom is an initiate. Membership dues are modest when one considers it to be a professional organization.

What does one get for this membership? For one thing, a newsletter which appears on the Sabbats. For another, increased cooperation and communication among different Craft traditions, particularly from other parts of the country, who offer enrichment and cross-fertilization of our magickal practices.

Now, I have nothing against Christianity or Christian terminology. What I do object to is Pagans who try to force Paganism into a Christian mold. I find that the language of western religion—overwhelmingly a Christian language - is often not adequate to describe my religious experience as a Pagan. So I am simply not willing to cut off my Pagan toes to fit into a Christian shoe. I'll make my own footgear, thank you very much. Better yet, I'll go barefoot.

It's a truism in a public discourse that whoever defines the terms has already won the debate. We need to define our own terms, coin our own words. When we make ourselves look derivative in the public eye, as we do when we use someone else's language to define us instead of our own, we belittle ourselves, our traditions, and our Gods. Yes, it will be a lot of hard work to find our own proper language. Learning a new language always is. But in the process, we learn to know ourselves.

So, please, for Goddess' sake, a priestess is not a rabbi. A Book of Shadows is not a Koran. Cakes and wine are not a eucharist. And a temple is not a church.



CoG has a national and many local Public Information Officers (PIOs). These officers provide a CoG-produced press packet about what Craft is and what it is not to local and national media (that's the Witch's anti-defamation part of the organization), liaison with law enforcement agencies investigating strange crimes which some ignorant folks seek to link to our religion, thereby reducing the circulation of misinformation about the Craft. They also do interfaith networking (for instance, the Northern California Local Council (NCLC) is a member of the Bay Area Interfaith Council (BAIC) which includes Hindus, Methodists, Buddhists, Friends, Roman Catholics and many other religious groups among its membership). This sometimes gives Witches opportunities to co-create rituals with those of other faiths to the greater good of all. For instance, recently CoG members in the Boston area participated in a very large Earth Day ritual for the public at large, and the celebrants really took to the Craft chants they learned and performed in the context of that ritual.

To quote my dear friend and brother CoG member, Russell Williams, "I'm always amazed by the way in which CoG's influence and reputation vastly exceed that which might be expected

of an organization our size. Almost every Witch I have ever met is aware of CoG. We have visibility and credibility within the Craft community, and we're in a unique position to help our fellows in the Craft."

Perhaps you feel you don't need CoG—and perhaps you don't, but our vows include the promise to protect and defend our sisters and brothers of the Craft. Many followers of the old ways live in places where tolerance and acceptance of differences are not as broad as they are in the Bay Area. These daughters and sons of the Lady often need our combined strength in order to continue their practices unharassed, whether they belong to CoG or not. Besides, who knows when any of us might find ourselves threatened in some way because of our spiritual beliefs and practices—in our places of employment, in our children's schools, in our neighborhoods?

For all these reasons and more I urge all Reclaiming tradition covens to consider seeking membership in CoG. If you wish to discuss this further, you can call me at 415 454-4411, or write to CoG for membership information and information about the next NCLC meeting at P.O. Box 1226, Berkeley, CA 94704. Brightest Blessings,  
M. Macha NightMare, P&W

## RECLAIMING TRADITION CIRCLE FORMING

in central Marin County

For further information, call Macha  
at 454-4411

All levels of training welcome

Join us and we'll see who we become

*All acts of love and pleasure are my rituals*

# One Witch's Season

## *Rose May Dance*

October 20. I frantically gather my pictures of ancestors, skulls, bones, autumn leaves, make altars in time for Anarchist Coffee House in my home. Dead anarchists reading poetry and blowing saxophones.

October 21–23. Round up as many junkies as possible in the Tenderloin, test their blood for HIV, interview them about their risk behavior, hear their stories, tell them about bleach, condoms, and needle exchange. The dead are shooting dope.

October 25–28. Tacoma, Washington, North American Needle Exchange Conference. We put our heads together about how to cheat the Plague. Watch mortality statistics play in a lantern show on the wall, dance for life to the blues. An old street warrior takes the mike: "Your customers love you very much." The dead are dancing.

October 28. Attend Reclaiming Samhain ritual "Building Our Vision of the Future". I call in the Dead. I sail in trance to Tier na Nog where I see my dear ones. My ancestors promise to help me. The dead greet me with open arms.

October 29. Visit a 90-year-old woman friend who lives in a museum of happy ghosts at the foot of Twin Peaks. As she talks, the apartment buildings on the hill disappear, her home once again becomes a farm house on a dairy ranch, dead cows come home to be milked by dead ranchers.

October 30. I visit "Rooms for the Dead" at Mission Cultural Center, buy Bread of the Dead at La Victoria, fill my room with marigolds. The dead love living in the Mission.

October 31. Needle Exchange night. We have a jack-o-lantern, costumes, give candy to our customers. The line for needles has never seemed so long—steady for 55 minutes, a little break, then steady again. Later I realize this is because the dead have joined the line.

Driving home we pass through Civic Center, to view the Larry Lea spectacle. Dead SWAT team, dead Christians, dead activists, all happy in their work.

I arrive at my circle and we drop like leaves from a tree into trance. Mid-trance I look up without realizing my eyes are open. I see us all, sitting in our rockers, clothed, but with no meat on our bones. The dead are at seance.

Back home, the candle in the pumpkin sputters and talks all night, and the windows rattle. The dead are wakeful.

November 2. Dia de los Muertos. Shawnee, Pandora and Carol's cat—really their dead friend's cat, becomes another dead cat. I buy marigolds and leave them on their doorstep. I dress in black and join hundreds on the street. Muertos march through the Mission, singing, dancing, miming. The dead on parade. We come home to moon bathe in the garden. The dead offer us a beer.

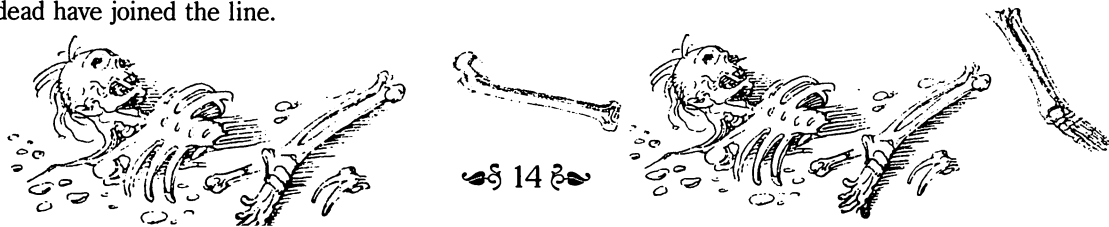
November 3. the Regional Doll Show. The dead are inhabiting the thousands of dolls again. I bring home an ancestor.

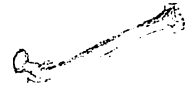
In the evening at Bloodrose's Faery Samhain we work with our fear of AIDS. The dead-from-AIDS are mightily invoked. We dance for them. The dead are living with AIDS.

November 4. My household prepares a feast for our ancestors. I call my mother with questions about our dead, so I can tell stories. She tells me of Evylyn Dance Dance (married to her first cousin), daughter of Fannie Dance. Dining and dancing with dead Dances.

November 6. Pleiades's dog Saba passes through. Dead dogs asking to go out.

November 7. Prevention Point Needle Exchange's second birthday. The Health Department, as usual, does not show up. The dead write letters to the Mayor.

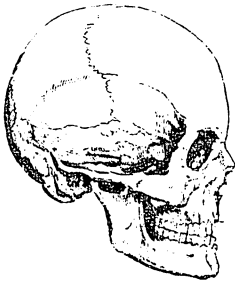




November 9. Sick, sick, sick in bed, my gastrointestinal tract protests a virus. The dead bring flowers and ginger ale.

November 10. Wobbly, nauseous, I rise from my bed to ride to the Pet Cemetery with Pandora, Carol, and Pleiades to inter the cat. We wander among the tombs, enchanted by this most

pagan of graveyards, admiring the toys left on the graves. Engraved on the stones is a joyous litany of names: Spike, Bunny, Mama's Little Poof, Buddy, Yin Yin, Prince. We weep. We laugh. We drive away. This is the end of Samhain. The dead slip back through the crack. The year slips deeper into the dark.



*The magician plays magician  
in the circle of his soul  
casting spells through the spirit wall  
at his unformed heart within  
where love howls with hurricane force  
breaking down what will not bend  
maiming all that will not yield  
healing wounds that cannot heal*

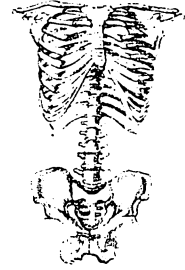
*From the well-worn maze through his garden of fear  
he leaps into the velvet night  
where joy strikes like lightning from the stars  
burning all that clings to form*

*Formless, he sails the waters of creation  
as an effervescent sphere of sight  
moved by the force that forms all worlds  
on rolling waves of silver light*

*A spirit flame is lit within his mind  
spirit strength is born into his heart*

*Awakened, ablaze  
mortality shed like snakeskin  
he turns back to this world of tortured dream  
to mend the shattered strands of hope  
left severed by his father's wars*

*He comes home to a falling house  
to play upon a burning stage  
the secret pattern of the role  
imprinted in the swelling circle of his soul*



Roy King

# Fundamentalists Gather for Halloween?

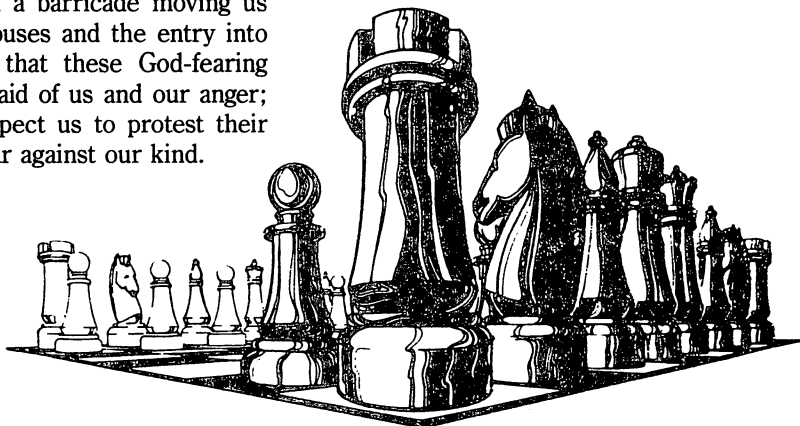
by Jody

It happened on Samhain—that night sacred to both pagans and San Francisco queers. For it was on this night that Texas televangelist and fundamentalist Larry Lea and his “prayer army” descended on San Francisco to launch a “spiritual warfare” on “homosexuality and demonworship” and the “evil of witches, peace activists and sexual perverts” of San Francisco. They gathered at the Civic Center, some reported 6000 of them, but they did not gather without opposition. A large coalition of pagans, queers, artists and activists (and of course those of us who fall into several of these categories) showed up to greet the fundamentalists and send them a message of strong resistance toward their sermons of hate and intolerance.

We came with signs, drums, sage, whistles, stickers and our voices. We were loud, even confrontational, but overall nonviolent. Many came in costume (Jesus was quite the popular character this year—so much for my being original) and several circles conducted ritual in the grove across from the “prayer breakthrough.” There was not a threat of violence to the arriving fundamentalists. However, there was a definite show of our anger—an anger toward their direct condemnation of who we are and our rights to be pagan, queer, maintain reproductive control over our bodies, and express ourselves freely. At one point, the police formed a barricade moving us away from the arriving buses and the entry into Civic Center. It seems that these God-fearing fundamentalists were afraid of us and our anger; perhaps they did not expect us to protest their leader’s declaration of war against our kind.

Some condemned our protest—members of the media, some members of the queer and pagan communities. But such a declaration of warfare by a man who mixes military symbols with religion and justifies the killing of communists and other enemies of God is not to be taken lightly. SFPD, fearing violence and an increase of queer bashings that night, rejected Lea’s application to march on the Castro after the “breakthrough”, threatening mass arrest if they attempted to do so anyway.

As queers trying to make the streets safe for our brothers and sisters to walk without the fear of bashings and/or rape, as pagans fighting for our rights to worship the old gods and goddesses, as artists fighting for free expression without censorship, and as activists working for peace, social and environmental justice and reproductive rights, we *must* show active and of course nonviolent resistance to the Larry Leas and others of his kind. We must show intolerance to messages of hate and violence toward those who are different. We cannot stand idly by hoping that he and his kind will just leave us alone and go away. The Inquisition is over but we cannot let it be revived.





# RECLAIMING



# ELAS

## **ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN AND MEN** by Rose May Dance and Geoff Yippee!

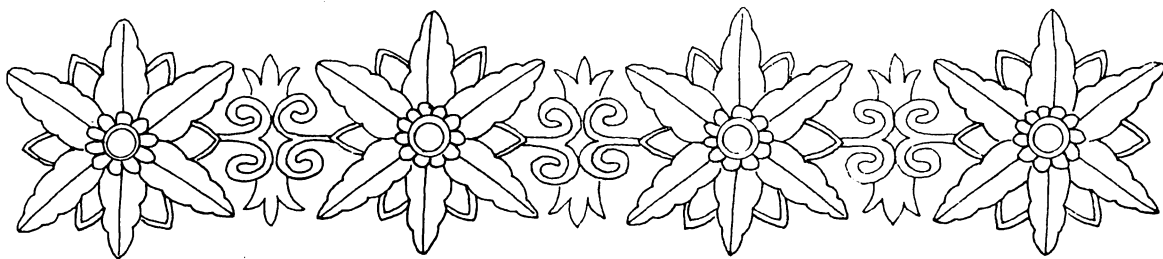
With the art of magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world. In this class we begin the practice of Magic, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality by working with the Elements of Magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Techniques include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, spellcraft, and structuring rituals. Group experience follows feminist consensus process. Half of the class (at least) will be composed of women students. We hope to provide a fair and nurturing environment for all participants. Beginning six-week course. Prerequisite: Reading of the first six chapters of *The Spiral Dance* by Starhawk. We ask that all applicants be committed to attending all six classes, which will be held on **Monday** evenings, starting **January 7, 1991** in the San Francisco Mission District. Call Rose at 821-3336 or Geoff at 386-5386 for information, registration, and location.

## **rites of passage for women** by Carol and Cybele

The rites of Passage focuses on dreams, myths and language, using traditional and nontraditional tales and techniques to create a personal rite of passage. Through storytelling, trance, release work and dreams we receive our challenge(s), meet our helpers, work through our blocks and emerge renewed, reborn. This class culminates with a ritual created by the students. Prerequisites: Elements of Magic or equivalent experience/study. Six **Wednesdays**: starting **January 30**. Call Carol 641-5836 for registration and location. \$60-\$120 sliding scale.

## **ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN AND MEN (Marin)** by Pleiades and Suzanne

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, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality by working with the Elements of Magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Techniques include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, spellcraft, and structuring rituals. Beginning 6-week course, six **Mondays**, starting **January 21**. \$60-\$120 sliding scale. Call Suzanne at 389-1008, or Pleiades at 922-1382 for information, registration, and location.



# SES AND VENTS

## **HEALING FROM ABORTION:** a weekend workshop with Spectra and Vibra

An experiential workshop for women who have had one or more abortions. As feminists and Pagans, we believe that abortion is a responsible exercise of the sacred power of choice. Many women, however, need to heal from the physical, emotional and spiritual consequences of their abortion experiences. We will use feminist process and Wiccan practices to heal ourselves. **March 9 & 10 from 9:00 a.m. Saturday through 1:00 p.m. Sunday. East Bay.** No fee. (\$5-10 materials charge.) Childcare problems? Call us. Overnight accommodation possible. Call Julia or Spectra at 648-6089 or Vibra at 237-6207 voice/TTY.

## **SPELLCRAFT FOR WOMEN AND MEN** by Pleiades and Jody

This is a class about ritual, spells and crafting. Weaving elements, planets, tools, sidhe and familiars, seasons and phases of the moon into our daily magic. For information call Pleiades at 922-1382 or Jody at 282-2161.

## **MOVING BETWEEN THE WORLDS** Exploring Dance ritual with Beverly, Suzanne and Rick Dragonstongue

In this class we will focus on accepting our bodies and empowering them to create physical ritual that is specifically ours. Movement experience welcome but certainly not necessary. Techniques include: creating sacred space, circle improvisation, chanting/sound work, tantric trance dance, and animal work. Prerequisites: Elements of Magic or instructor's approval. Six Thursdays beginning January 10. \$60-\$120 sliding scale. For information call Beverly at 381-8765.

## **RECLAIMING RECOMMENDS**

### **Breath and Body Class for Women Survivors of Incest and Abuse** by Cybele (a.k.a. Suzette Rochat)

Work in sacred space with other survivors to reclaim your body as a place of power and pleasure through grounding, conscious movement and breathwork. Class is open to any woman survivor interested in using ritual and having a bodily, spiritual focus in her healing process. Ongoing support (therapy, bodywork and/or 12-step program) is strongly suggested during this class. **Ten Tuesdays** starting **January 23**. \$120-\$240 sliding scale. Evening class offered. Call Cybele, 648-3908, for info/registration.

# Starhawk's 1990 Fall Schedule

*For more information contact HARMONY NETWORK, PO Box 2550, Guerneville, CA 95446  
(707)869-0909*

**February 9, 1991: Montreal, CANADA \*TENTATIVE**  
Benefit for THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA  
Contact: Donna (514)562-3200

**February 15-17, 1991: Watertown, Massachusetts \*TENTATIVE**  
Urban Magic: Ritual for Challenging Times" at Interface Center  
Contact: Interface (617)924-1100

**March 19-27, 1991: Starhawk and Luisah Teish in Hawaii**  
2nd annual Spring Equinox Retreat for Women  
Contact: Harmony Network (707)869-0989

**April 12-14, 1991: Colorado Springs, Colorado**  
Weekend workshop with Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
Contact: Cathy Kleinsmith (719)574-9674

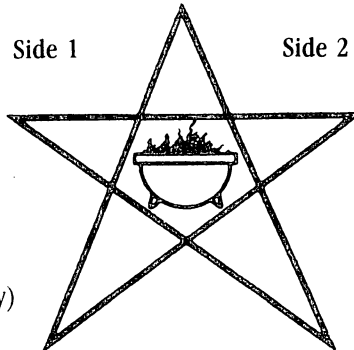
☆☆

## Chants ★ Ritual Music *a cassette tape from the Reclaiming community*

A 40-minute tape of chants and songs from various sources which are frequently used in Reclaiming rituals. The tape is intended as a teaching tool and a worksheet is included. We hope that you will sing these chants and songs, use them in ritual, and teach them to others. Proceeds from the sale of this tape help support the work of the Reclaiming Collective. **To order:** Send check or money order in U.S. currency to **Reclaiming Tape, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114**. Price: \$10.00 each, includes postage (add \$3.00 for each overseas mailing).

The Beginning of the Earth  
Touching Her Deep  
Air I Am  
Rise with the Fire  
Snake Woman  
Isis Astarte  
We are an Old People  
I Am a Strong Woman  
We Are The Flow (orig. melody)  
Silver Shining Wheel  
Where There's Fear There Is Power  
Hecate Ceredwen

Side 1



Side 2

Return to the Mother  
Born of Water  
Air Moves Us  
Water and Stone  
We All Come From The Goddess/  
Hoof and Horn  
Kore Chant  
We Are The Flow  
Sun King  
We Are Alive

# Hannah's Household Hints

It's rather sobering to realize that, in all the years we've been printing out this newsletter, attempting to help politically aware pagans all over the world to communicate with each other, never have we received so much mail on one issue as we have on the Hannah/Pandora controversy.

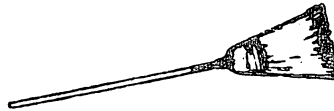
This has gone a long way, actually, towards helping me understand the state of world politics at this time.

Anyway, in recognition of the apparent importance of this issue, I have decided to print a typical letter from a real (as far as I can tell) reader. I know many of you are confused about the boundaries of reality in this column, and that this might even be my fault, but really, I did not write this:

\*\*\*\*\*

Hello Reclaiming!

Your newsletter that I received last time was very good. About that Hannah, though—I'm partly with Pandora and partly with Hannah. In the last issue of the Reclaiming newsletter this guy, "Birute," totally lost me. Not everybody are interested about toys—or Bart Simpson. I think that Hannah is giving us information on how to do things the natural way, the old way, the pagan way. Have we forgotten that many of us witches do not go out and buy drugs for many of our illnesses but use our own remedies? I like Hannah's articles, but why doesn't Hannah write about other things? For instance, like how to make an old-fashioned medieval broom? Or a recipe on how to make your own tea? Or, how ancient Indian tribes made canisters out of dried gourds and how to do it yourself? And what does she mean, that she's catholic "in the true meaning of the word"? She talked about the astral plane. Does she believe in goddesses and gods???



As for Pandora, she's nice and interesting at times, but I don't think that she's giving Hannah much room to talk. Why do they have to work together anyways? I run an ecology newsletter, we just let committee members submit articles or columns every month. Pandora can have her own column entitled, "Pandora's Ways to be Boring." Oh, and by the way, I am 'unot'y a "first-time reader," for your information, Pandora. I have gotten the Reclaiming newsletter for a year now. Also, since you are such a snob, I would like to have my vote switched to "for Hannah," please. Pagan or not, with some more different kinds of helpful information filled with the pagan traditional ways, I feel that Hannah could be more interesting if she tried to be. And besides, I like the picture of the broom at the top of the page.

Sincerely yours, Carina

Willard, Ohio

\*\*\*\*\*

Carina asked that Hannah be allowed to respond to her letter; of course, since I'm not channelling Hannah, she can't. Nor can I respond to it myself, because—well, just because.

Results of the election next time. I'm winning by a landslide.

Love, Pandora

\*\*\*\*\*

*[Here are more, no kidding, real responses we have received from real readers. We can't promise to print all responses, but urge you to vote before it is TOO LATE—eds.]*



Oct. 1990

I didn't vote before cos I suspect Pandora may do exactly what she wants—and why not. However my cats are demanding a vote—they love Pandora dearly and couldn't believe it when I said the Poll may be limited to humans. They think Pagan types should remember their role in history—so...

Tai votes No, age 1, sex female, flavor Tuna

Chi votes No, age 1, sex female, flavor Chicken

Dorothy No, age 2, sex female, flavor Rabbit

They think this will guarantee lots of cuddles and maybe the odd tin of catfood if she comes over to England again.

Ann Flowers

[Ann has marked her ballot No, age ?, sex why not, flavor lemon.]

\*\*\*\*\*

29 Oct. 90      Berkeley

Dear Pandora,

Please count my vote as No. Hannah should be sent onto her Next Step. (I am certainly willing to help do the healing).

Her Charming Style and Grace is really yours, and I would like to see you own it. I believe I knew Hannah in an incarnation as a temple priestess, and I found her overbearing, invasive, and somewhat obtuse when it came to registering the presence, needs, concerns, or desires of Other People. Dump her.

On the question of grounding on BART trains and planes, brought up in your letters section, I've found that a spirit-to-spirit hello to Gaia focussed on the center of the Earth works well. That way the grounding is part of an overall communication space which needn't be affected by wires, concrete, or A's fans. I'd like to know how people handle the smell of beer, though.

Love,    Kat 27, F, Lemonade

Dear Reclaiming comrades and cronies:

Here's my vote. As Pandora's covener, and Hannah's devoted follower, I've been waffling on "Maybe" for months, but the arrogance of Pandora's last paragraph [this issue] has turned the tide for me. I think they are both nuts, I think Pandora can be forced to channel Hannah, and I think the world needs Hannah Clancey. I also am appalled that Pandora has threatened her candidates for initiation into the Holy Sacred Mysteries if they don't vote for her. Yes! Throw Pandora out of Reclaiming. Hannah forever!

Damn the torpedos,

Rose May Dance, P&W

Age 23, Sex safe, flavor marmite

### Readers' Poll

Dear Reclaiming Collective:

(Check one)

☐ YES! Throw that Witch Pandora out of the Reclaiming Collective so that Nice Hannah can keep writing her Lovely Column. Her appeal is catholic, in the True sense of the word.

☐ NO! Pandora is a Victim of Too Much Channelling, and perhaps should have a Nice Vacation, but retain her in the Reclaiming Collective. Banish Hannah Clancey to the Outer Regions of Darkness, or send her to her Greater Good, whichever is Worse, and it's Hard To Tell.

☐ MAYBE! Let's watch 'em mud wrestle and see Who Wins.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Flavor \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to Reclaiming Newsletter,  
ATTN: Hannah/Pandora, PO Box 14404,  
San Francisco, CA 94114.

## Reclaiming's Reporter interviews Starhawk and Mimi about Pandora and Hannah

*Rose May Dance*

**Reclaiming:** Star, are you going to vote for Hannah?

**Starhawk:** I'm sorry you asked me that when I'm in a kind of vulnerable physical and emotional state. I feel fragmented. My conscious adult rational self of course is given to vote for Pandora, who is, after all, my circle sister, my collective buddy, my fellow teacher. But when I look deep within me, when I contact my true inner self, when I ask my inner child for advice, I find Mimi, who is of course one of Hannah's closest friends, not to mention her only friend. Frankly this question makes me feel like my psyche is being shredded like string cheese.

**Rose:** So is that a yes or a no.

**Mimi:** Well it's like I don't know why we have to get into these dualistic binds, man. Why does it really have to be yes or no, black or white. What I say is, like, colors, man. Paisleys. Patterns. All the colors of the rainbow.

**Rose:** Does this mean you want Hannah to stop her column?

**Mimi:** Oh no.

**Rose:** So do you want Pandora to leave the collective?

**Star:** Oh no.

**Rose:** Thank you very much.

Name Starhawk, age 39, sex yes, flavor New York Super Fudge Chunk

Name Mimi, age 17, sex yes! yes!, flavor patchouli

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Heart of the Fire*

by Cerridwen Fallingstar

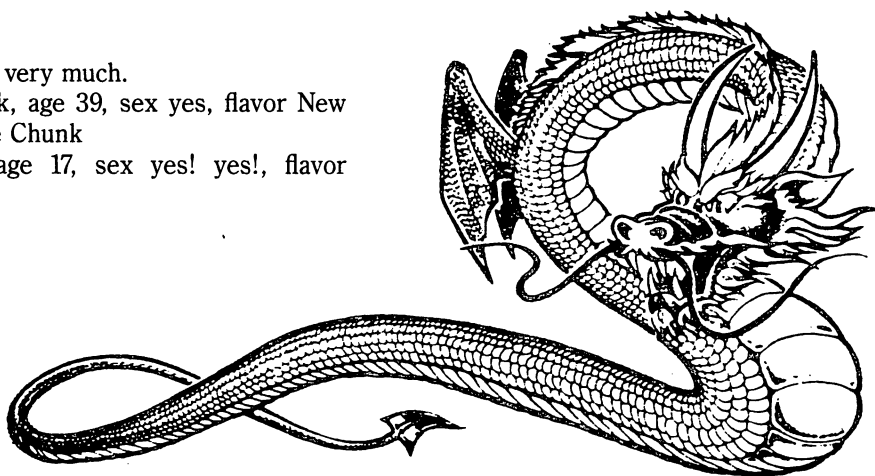
I loved this book, couldn't put it down once I started it. It is a book I will read time and time again, and I recommend it deeply. *The Heart of the Fire* is a story about a young girl's growing into Wiccan knowledge, healing, and power. It takes place in a small Scottish village on the eve of the burning times.

The book is well paced, exciting, and grabbed my attention on the first page. I loved the Scottish and Wiccan lore and teaching, especially about the Black Mares of Cailleach Bhear.

The blending of sex and magic worked very well for me. The way the author handled the conclusion made me sad and angry, but actually left me feeling empowered when I reached the end. A wonderful, powerful work.

Cauldron Publications, San Geronimo, CA, 1990.  
\$12.95. 520 pages.

*Reviewed by Pleiades*



## Dedalus alone

*A wall  
A long wall of stones  
Awkward now with disuse  
But in its ruin elegant  
And birds sing there  
The sky is a bowl for it  
Far from cities, innocent with age*

*Following the line of it  
This fallen house  
A window awry  
Through it I can climb  
Perhaps to paradise  
Funny; there is only the one wall  
And a bit of another;  
Paradise, a clump of grasses  
No greener; the other side.*

*Trees on the far horizon  
Spread their hands  
Avuncular, and older  
To signal the silence  
Between the knobbed fingers  
A silence I can think through  
The sky a beggar's bowl  
Everything I need*

*In a dark wood  
The poet found himself lost  
Now all's been cut  
All built  
Save in a corner of the lost places  
Here nothing is pleasing to me  
I dream the cities  
Gone to grasses  
And ourselves*

Steven Daniel Mentor  
23 October 1990  
Eureka Valley



✍ ✍ ✍ **Letters** ✍ ✍ ✍

August 27, 1990

Dear Reclaiming Collective:

I was glad to see Riva Enteen's discussion of the infamous Beltaine poster in the summer issue [*RECLAIMING* #39]. I have no connection to the Anarchist community, so I was unaware that this poster was under discussion. What I do know is that as a lesbian pagan resident of the Castro, I was insulted beyond words to confront this blatantly anti-woman and HETEROSEXIST poster smeared everywhere in my neighborhood.

There seems to be an idea in the general pagan community that since we look to a largely agricultural tradition for the source of our rituals, that this must mean there is no way around the heterosexual framework of Beltaine in particular. Well, I would like to inform everyone who hadn't noticed that reproduction takes many forms in nature, and sexual reproduction is only one. There is reproduction by seed, by runner, by cross-species fertilization, such as the necessity of bees for the fruiting of many flowers and trees, parthenogenesis, and hermaphroditism, for only a few pastoral examples.

What if we've gotten it all wrong, and what is really required for human reproduction is the presence of the breath of Gaia? What would that mean? It's entirely possible that the unreasoning prejudice within current science toward the necessary presence of both sperm and egg with no outside influence is simply wrong. What if modern recreations of fertility rituals miss the historical point entirely?

Given the reality that same sex love and sex have always been with us, given the centrality within a dominant western religion (Christianity) of a mysterious and non-physical example of holy birth (The Immaculate Conception of Mary), where is the logic for assuming that agricultural fertility rituals are historically an example of male dominated bisexual reproduction?

Personally, I feel that the papering of San Francisco with this historically dubious and currently offensive poster calls the feminist claims of Reclaiming into serious question, and sheds frightening new light on what you as a group might mean by "to bring to birth a vision of a new culture."

With the very public role that Reclaiming has always taken in pagan and political public education, and the high visibility of your most famous member (Starhawk), who is currently also plastered all over the Castro as a movie star for the Goddess, I feel that it is incumbent upon you to respond publicly, and to go beyond excusing this poster as the result of lousy internal group process. Perhaps a poster that addresses the reality of Reclaiming's spiritual and political beliefs should be put up wherever the previous poster was seen, even under the freeway overpasses at Mission and Industrial, but most particularly throughout the Castro and Valencia Corridor areas. I look for a public Reclaiming response, and would be glad to enter into personal correspondence with anyone who writes to me.

Morgaine Aimhirgin  
Wizards Consortium  
PO Box 14317  
San Francisco, 94114

Vancouver, B.C.

August 30, 1990

Dear Friends,

I'm happy to announce the start of a pagan ACOA [Adult Children of Alcoholics] meeting in Vancouver, BC. I attended an ACOA convention August 24-26. With some trepidation I posted a sign-up sheet for people who wanted to do their 12-step program:

1. From a Goddess-centered perspective;
2. Rewriting their 12 (or 13) steps with words which are most healing to them;
3. Researching and sharing self-healing info from a non-Judeo/Christian viewpoint;
4. Sharing food, song and gifting as part of our meetings.

The response was immediate and overwhelming. One man from Oregon who said it was "an experience of the Goddess" five years ago that first sent him to ACOA, gave me \$10 to apply towards our first meeting. People approached me with shining eyes and thanked me for taking a brave step.

Something disturbing happened the second day. One of the sign-up sheets disappeared. I tossed all night, then decided to confront this at the morning meeting. I made the following statement:

"I sincerely hope this is not the case, but since being in ACOA is about confronting bullshit, here goes—I hope that paper was not appropriated by someone who's threatened by the power of the Old Religion to heal.

"I'm not knocking the healing powers of regular ACOA meetings. My year of recovery has been a constant blessing, and I appreciate all of you being there for me. But I became

aware early on that I was vastly uncomfortable with the Judeo/Christian ethic and language that is evident in the 12 steps. Culture is language and language is culture. I'm also offended that if we do not call god 'he', 'god' simply becomes a *genderless* 'Higher Power'. Both Female and Male must be acknowledged for our healing to be balanced.

"It also became evident that much of my comfort at 12 step meetings came from the fact that procedure follows pagan principles:

"1. The power of meeting in a circle, with rotating leadership;

2. The permission to speak my truth without interruption;

3. Ritual introductions and closings; and

4. Honouring the inner child, the part of us which relates to ritual, touch and play.

"This group is not an effort to separate from ACOA unity. It's purpose is to fulfill the needs of ACOA's whose recovery is held back, by problems with Judeo-Christian language, and to honour diversity in our belief systems.

"I honour your religion. I want respect for mine!"

While I was speaking, there was much rustling and whispering. Also some smiles.

I've called the 14 people whose phone numbers I was able to salvage. I've listened to an outpouring of emotion and gratitude from others who were unable, like myself, to experience complete ease at conventional ACOA meetings. People who'd done a lot of reading about Wicca and feminist herstory, but did not know "you are not alone."

Our first meeting will be September 19th, 1990. I'd like to ask for the blessings of all pagan communities. We'd like to hear from others who already attend pagan 12-step. Alternate preambles, 12 (or 13!) steps, closings and meeting procedure would be very welcome.

So—if you're in Vancouver and want to attend 12-step, call me at (604)250-9351.

Blessed Be!  
Reisa

### 13 PAGAN STEPS

—Reisa

1. Admitted I had no control over my oppressors; my spiritually sick family and culture. I had been taught to be Self-hating and powerless.
2. Came to know that the love of the Goddess would restore me to wholeness.
3. Decided to turn each day over to the care of the Goddess, allowing her to heal me and teach me power-from-within.
4. Made a fearless examination of the consequences I had suffered in my struggles with power-over.
5. Told the Goddess, my True Self and a non-judgemental human being what I had learned in this examination.
6. Was entirely ready for the Goddess to reverse my Self-destructive conditioning.
7. Told the Goddess I was ready for my True Self to be revealed.
8. Made a list of all whom I'd offended—humans, other animals, the earth and elementals—in my struggles with power-over and became willing to restore balance to my life.
9. Made direct changes to these relationships, past and present, except when to do so could cause further harm.
10. Continued to review my use of energy and to redirect my unskillful actions.
11. Experienced daily contact with the Goddess through ritual, meditation and loving action, honouring her gifts to me by using my inner power wisely.
12. Having come to know the Goddess in her many forms, I tried to live these steps so there would be apparent positive changes in my personal life and in all my relationships.
13. When I was far enough along in my recovery to be able to direct positive energy outward, I chose and implemented a plan of service work which is healing to my culture and the earth.

SO MOTE IT BE.





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# Announcements

☞ The plunder of Native American lands is nowhere more imminent than at Big Mountain, where traditional Dineh (Navajo) and Hopi have resisted relocation since the 1974 Navajo-Hopi Relocation Act. Bush's recently appointed Commissioner of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation has stated that his first priority is to remove all Navajo from the so-called Hopi Partitioned Lands. Beside the poverty that afflicts all Indian reservations, people of the Big Mountain area are facing increased livestock confiscation, water diversion, police harassment, and visits from "relocation counselors." Nevertheless, hundreds of families are resisting these tactics, determined to remain on their ancestral land. Their resistance has inspired a broad spectrum of support.

When congress reconvenes in January, at least six people will resume an open-ended water-only fast until relocation is halted. In the San Francisco Bay Area, we are planning a tandem support fast at the Federal Bldg., 450 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco. To schedule yourself or your group on the support fast calendar, or for more information, call the Veterans Peace Action Teams at 415-753-2130, or the Big Mountain Support Group/Weaving Project at 415-664-1847.



☞ **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 needs 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.**

☞ **Goddess Gathers A Monthly Community Gathering of Womenspirits!** Come share your journey, connect with sisters, commune with the Earth . . . **Time:** The last Sunday of each month, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Place:** The Barn, 104 S. Park Way, Santa Cruz\* **Donation:** \$5.00 per person (more if you can, less if you can't). **Facilitated by:** Shekhinah, long-time local wise- woman. Also: Presentations from Local Luminaries, Meditations, Healings. For more information call: (408) 423-7639 or (408) 426-7923. (\*Address subject to change—please call)

☞ **Women in Prison** Are you aware of any *good* programs at your institution? I am helping to write a guide book about useful programs for women in prison. The book will be used to develop new programs using the best existing ones as models. Though this guide won't create immediate changes in prison conditions, we think it can *lead* to better programs in the areas that matter to you. If you know of programs in the areas of health care, counseling, education, job-training, pre-release or work-furlough, art and creative writing, family and children, drug treatment, or any other area *you think is important*, please write to: Tatiana Schreiber, Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160. Also, write if you have any questions about the project. Thanks! (This project is funded by the National Institute of Corrections, a government agency.)

☞ **Cambridge** is an international non-profit correspondence organization mostly for teens but also open to adults. Based in America with members from all around the world, Cambridge informs people on how bad the environmental status is and how to change it through the way we live and the respect that we need to show to the earth. Write to Cambridge for more information at: Cambridge, P.O. Box 1926, Casper, WY 82601-2.

☞ A recent Supreme Court Decision opened up Public Schools to meetings by student christian prayer groups. This of course means that a group who wishes to meet to study Witchcraft may do so. The Association of Cymmry Wicca is offering a free active ACW membership to any Pagan religious group who wishes student members of its congregation to meet in a Public School *and* will agree to abide by their Bylaws. For more information, contact Association of Cymmry Wicca, P.O. Box 674884, Marietta, Georgia 30067 (404) 423-9585.

☞ Dear Pagan Parents,  
I am interested in networking with other parents in the pagan community. I feel the need to share with other mothers/parents a basic bond with nature, spirituality and simplistic rituals (i.e. other families to bake solstice cookies with). Should this community already exist, I would love to find out how to be involved. If it does not, maybe those who are interested could call me.

Thank you.

Blessed Be

Bessy (415) 285-3589

☞ **"13th Heaven,"** the first-ever goddess cable TV show starring Zsuzsanna Budapest is playing all over the Bay Area. This entertaining and educational show on the Goddess hosts different guest artists and rituals every month. Call 444-7724 for station listings and times.

☞ **P.I.R. Newsletter** is a new publication for Pagans in twelve-step recovery programs. Contact: **P.I.R. Newsletter, c/o Bekki, 6560 S.R. 356, New Marshfield, OH 45766.**

☞ A group for Pagan women with eating disorders is starting. This is a ritual group, *not* a 12-step program. No fee. For information call Pleiades at 922-1382.



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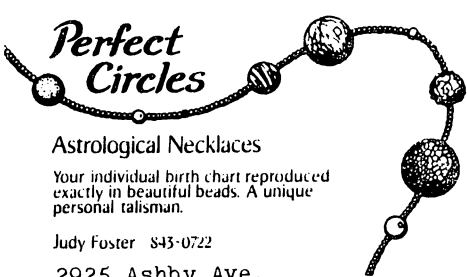
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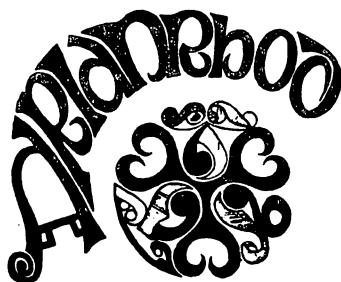
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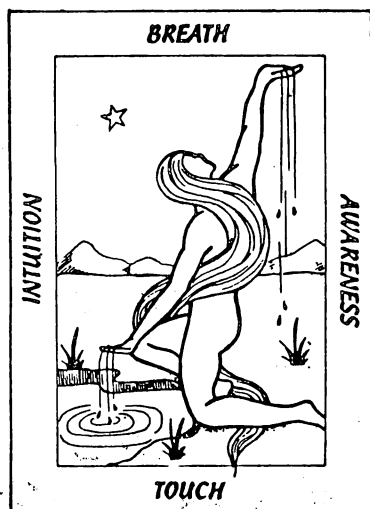
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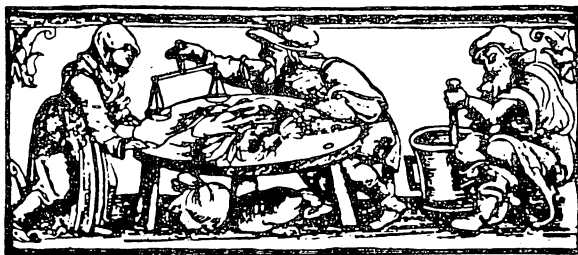


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