



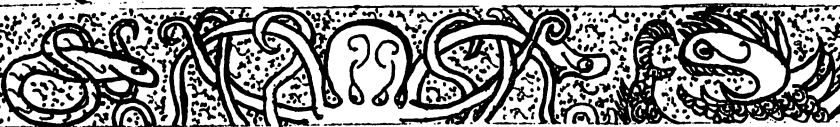
Reclaiming

Newsletter

Fall 1992

Nº 48

\$2.00



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Display Ads	Size & Proportions
1/8 page \$20	Our page size is 8-3/4 x 6-3/16. Divide it however you want, and send us your copy camera-ready and properly sized. Also, we can only accept ads mailed with a check or money order.
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This newsletter was put together by Cherie, Karen, Rose, Rebecca, Patti, Robin, Margaret, Laura, and Anne. Many thanks to our friends who give us stuff on disc.

Printed on Recycled Paper

The Barley Mother

by Rebekah Hill

I watch her carefully now. She is pale and thin, and spends long hours gazing deep into the pool by my dwelling. She is changed, my child, my sweeting, and I miss her laughter.

The shaggy little horses that she tamed and petted no longer come from the mountain. I have seen them watching on the crags, waiting for her to whistle them down to take the sweet fallen pears from her hands.

She does not talk to me, except to ask after the next meal; she is always hungry, and eats my salads, my coarse bread, as if she were hollow.

I have tried to interest her in the garden, always solace to me, but she drifts away. No, she does not dig with joy, and shows no interest in the balance of air and water, blossom and decay, poison and sustenance that is a living garden. Much of mine was desiccated by the heat, but with careful reseeded and a simple irrigation system I have restored its green and bloom. I have planted silver thistle, three scented mints and a heliotrope near the stone where she sits, to draw the butterflies. She loved them as a little one, and I thought to cheer her.

Does she see the pool at all? There are dragonflies, and little speckled fingerlings, and an ancient red-eared turtle that hides among the roots where the willows trail. She trances, looks far deeper than the play of leaf and light, fish and fly upon my pond.

I cannot know her thoughts now. She has seen far more than I, despite my years. Yet I am glad of her company, my mute and dreaming daughter, and I cher-

ish this time, knowing that I must again lose her to the Mystery.

She was a wild barefoot girl, dark mane all a-tangle and eyes like asters. Her legs were always scratched from climbing trees and mountains, her hands square and strong. I could control her no more than a feral cat, but I fed and petted her when she allowed, and taught her at her demand. I watched as she ranged and grew, that I might divine her talent. I knew that it would out eventually, because there is power in my line, and I thought her well-nurtured, full of strength and promise, and yes, beauty. She was not like me, and I did not demand that. I thought myself wise enough to let her discover her own true nature, rather than try to sculpt her character like river clay. She, however, did not match that wisdom, and was often impatient with my slow thoughtful ways, and frustrated with my lack of understanding. Oh, I have not forgotten what it is to be young, but the world was a younger place then, and there was not so much trouble to be found.

Sometimes she would go missing for one night or two, and I would go calling into the hills. She would show, in her own time, stinking of horse or playing a pipe stolen from an unwary goatherd. How would I scold her? As a thrush will feed a fallen fledgling until it finds wing and voice, I fluttered about her. I could not alter the course she had chosen, wit or no.

I did find her once, in a sea-cave some distance from my valley. I followed her narrow footprints into a briny gleaming dark, with sea creatures winking on the

walls. She was drawing patterns in the sand, lines that amazed me, that set images drifting on the inside of my eyelids. When I asked her what she did, she said, "Listening, Mother..." in a voice as hollow as a shell, and I did not query her further.

She spent more time near the sea, responding to some inner tide, and her eyes seemed always focused on a distant thing. She took great whips of kelp and coiled them into leafy spirals centered with jellyfish. She cast starfish discusstyle in a high arc into the surf, calling "Look, Mother, falling stars!" My mad godling. Shells, feathers, stones lashed together with sweetgrass made barnacle-eyed fetishes to mark her sand circles. I would trudge after her, uncomprehending and more than little frightened. She caught the winds in delicate mobiles, and their songs on her whistle, burned my good herbs in aromatic combination, and muttered to herself in the voices of the dead as she painted her face in a mask most strange. I remembered how my body had swelled like a melon to contain her as she grew, and bade my heart do the same; she was still my daughter. I watched her body bud and bloom; she poured menstrual blood blended with sea water upon a sigil of burning driftwood.

When first I missed her I went to the old haunts of goats and horses, the high pastures of the world. I went to the shadowed groves, where laurel grows in sister-circles and they come to dance by moonlight. I went then to the towns of men, but my child was not among them, and none knew me there. For nine days I sought her. With torches I walked by night, calling, but the shadows bound her. My heart became a stone, a weight

I could barely carry.

I went again to the beach where she played. I then saw the chariot tracks, the gouts tossed by the feet of running horses. I found her alter smashed, the flowers crushed, hyacinth, lilies, narcissus, and the sand seamless beyond...

There did I go mad.

The stone in my heart grew crackling cold, and a black frost fell upon my garden. My very breath roared white-hot as I screamed, and all the world withered. I would not be consoled.

Then came the emissary, a winged voice into my desolation, and I heard of her fast among the shades.

She came back to me hanging naked to the neck of a wild brown mare. The juice ran red from her mouth, but crusted dry upon her thighs. As my tears rained down on her white face, she smiled a smile both sweet and wicked, and so forestalled my wrath at her injury.

In this green and peaceful place she is my own child, wounded. I tend her with my calloused hands, with hyssop and dark ale, with the fumes of sweet bay and sage, with pears blushing from the bough and wreaths of summer flowers for her hair. Look, she smiles a little, there, in a coiling drift of butterflies orange and sapphire, gold and black.

In his house she is worshipped as the Queen of Hell, the Red Orb in her hand. The hungry dead gather about her, for her arts are deep and binding. She reads their hearts, and spins each a final justice: rest or rebirth. She dances awe and the fire of life into that dark palace, and even he who answered her strange summons treads warily.

I scythe scarlet poppies down with the grain, bless the spirit that sleeps within the seed, and I grow no pomegranates.

She

**Mute by trial of tortured fire, mute by fear decreed by popes,
After burnings mute by rote, after ashes quiet as smoke.**

**The woman bled within her soul, bled from her heart onto her bed,
Bled blood so rich and true and red, they had to hide it from the sky,
So like the sun, she had to burn, and like the moon, she had to die,
Before she spoke, before her flood, before she told us of our blood.**

**Blood that lives without remorse, that ebbs and flows without lament,
Blood we squander in our wars, blood that bonds us to our source.**

**Now she comes with viper's eyes, a wrathful ghost in dark disguise,
She shrieks now with a piercing voice, she comes to tell us of our choice,
She returns to name the lies, like dark clouds massing for a flood,
She comes to purify her blood.**

**She comes as darkness swirling down, wearing moonlight as her crown,
Walking paths beneath our streets, through cities burning in defeat,
She holds our hope within her heart, like a ship soon to depart.**

**She comes to shake our spirit free, she comes to pluck us from the tree,
To chew us up and take us in, that we may see where we begin,
She is the serpent coiled around, we stand again on sacred ground.**

Roy King

Farewell to Milhouse

by Rose May Dance

Konrad Lorenz says that one of the reasons humans keep pets is to teach them the grieving process, for usually we outlive these good friends, and perhaps experience the death of pets many times in our lives. It has been a most difficult week, filled with illness and death for the people near to me. But the dam broke loose when the phone rang at 4 AM Thursday (8-13-92) — Milhouse was dead. There's a hole in my heart and nothing can fill it. We'll never see his likes again.

Milhouse was found in a flower box in La Jolla, California about 15 years ago by my coven-sister Carol. Upon careful examination it was determined that he was a recently weaned puppy dog, and not, appearances to the contrary, a large rat. His rat-like baby aspect earned him his name, (the middle name of the then-recently deposed US president, for you youthful readers) but he quickly grew into the golden elegant ball of fluff I knew so well. It could be that Milhouse was part Chihuahua and part Pomeranian. Once we saw a picture of a dog breed named Papillion — ears resembling butterfly wings — and we thought perhaps Milhouse, with his bright butterfly ears and spirit, might be one. His ears were large and silky, his face chiseled and fox-like. He had a fluffy curling tail, plumed shoulders and haunches, and a golden boa around his shoulders. He pranced and danced, and lifted his tiny feet high, jumping and skittering about. I doubt he weighed ten pounds.

Milhouse is entwined in the fates that brought my coven together, because I put a roommate ad on the board at Rainbow Store stating that I liked dogs, and had one. Carol saw the ad, covered with flower and animal stickers — my magic to attract a playful roommate — and decided that she and Milhouse would move in. I think this was in 1979. I had at that time a prejudice against small dogs. I thought they had high-pitched yipping voices, and were prone to biting. I was right. I was soon trying to make Milhouse bark at me and chase me, snatching at his muzzle to make him bite me. I adored him. He was fierce and proud and quick. He did not hesitate to start trouble, if necessary, with dogs ten times his size. But his nature was mostly sweet and friendly. If I walked him, everyone would come up and admire him, start conversations, pass pleasantries.

The fact that Milhouse was so good-looking and charming shaped his personality. He expected the very best. He demanded attention. If he wanted a meal, he would chase the legs of your trousers, biting and pulling at them, or nipping at the heels of your slippers. After a walk, he demanded a treat. If you put a rug or cushion on the floor, especially in the middle of the floor, he assumed it was for him and would immediately pose himself in the middle of it. Handsome and arrogant, Milly would not take no for an answer. But he was also kind and sensitive, quick to console

if he sensed your unhappiness, licking away the tears and clowning to bring a smile.

Milhouse was a loyal dog. The first time Carol took a long trip away from him, travelling to Ireland and Indonesia, he spent each day, for several months, waiting for Carol at the top of the stairs, despite all Pandora and I tried to do to amuse him. But Milhouse had other relationships besides the one with his mistress. He knew who his friends were, and remembered who had given him treats. I wooed his friendship by taking him along on the adventures I had with my own dog, Tupelo, even though this meant we could not go so far nor so fast as we used to (Milhouse's energy, in his youth, was prodigious, but his legs were short) and we definitely had to find a shady spot when we rested because Milhouse preferred it. If Milhouse wanted to go home, or to another place, he would bark insistently until we complied.

As Milhouse got older, he would need help climbing onto a bed or sofa. But he was fussy about how he was picked up. Often he would bark at me to lift him, then bite me until I had my hands in the correct position for his comfort. I guess he knew I was not going to do the reasonable thing and ignore a dog who yapped and snapped in order to get affection. When I lived at Avalon, Milhouse would put each of us to bed in turn. Especially after my own dog died, I wanted a cuddle at night. Milhouse could not, out of loyalty to Carol, sleep with me, but he would tell me to lift him onto my bed, and he would snuggle with me until he heard my breathing relax into sleep, and

jump down to seek the next cuddler, eventually settling down for the night with Carol.

Milhouse was Carol's dog, and I guess you could call him her familiar. But he shared his magic with me and with others as well. When our circle began to offer full moon rituals, Milhouse would climb the hill with us and guard the boundaries. He would join us each week for our circle magic, never breaking the energy, being quiet when we were trancing. He would come and cuddle with whichever person was battling in trance. Often we would see him in our trances — he would be there as a magical helper. On several occasions I have had nightmares where I dreamed I was in great danger and Milhouse saved me. In circle, Milhouse's favorite time was cakes and wine, and he always was given his fair share, no matter how precious the delicacies. His magical career was somewhat hampered when his nemesis, Buttons, a female Chihuahua/dachshund, followed Carol and Pandora home from the automatic teller. Buttons is not a Witch — I claim she has the soul of a Scots Presbyterian. She pat-pat-pats all over the room during trance, and chooses the most solemn magical moments to clean herself with loud slurping noises. The only part of the ritual she understands is cakes and wine. So after Buttons came to live at Avalon, Milhouse and she were usually shut up in a bedroom during coven or classes. But many people who have taken Reclaiming classes from Carol, Pandora, or me have seen us call "little dogs, little dogs!" as soon as the circle was opened, and have shared their treats with Milhouse and Buttons. Some students and friends have

learned the Milhouse Power Song which begins "Milhouse loves me this I know" (a song we made up in praise of him when he killed mice for us) and the more arcane "Milhouse bites the little children of the world". Milhouse still shows up in our coven's trances. I think now that he is on the Other Side he'll be able to participate more fully.

After I moved into Black Cat House, I did not get to see Milhouse every day, and for the past five years or so have been surprised at his getting older every time I have seen him. I knew he was slowing down, and just the other day Carol and I were discussing have a birthday party for him and all his human friends, so we could celebrate his great age and show him our appreciation. Alas Milhouse will not be present, in body, at such a party. It's not such a terrible thing when an old dog, who has had a great life, and who is having a hard time getting around, dies. But this dog is a comrade who has shared the halcyon days of my youth. Yet I have only passed to middle age, and he has gone away

forever, just as surely as those days have gone. Grief is a kind of luxury to me, because I work in a field where my clients face death from a fearful epidemic, and over the years I see a lot of them die. I'm often holding my sorrow in check, waiting until a client has left my presence to feel my feelings, in order to make a counselling session serve the client rather than serve me. All too often what happens next is that it is then time to see the next person. And when my sorrow is about someone closer to me, I find it is more comfortable for me to make myself useful and to think of the practical things that need to be done, rather than to feel my feelings.

But now Milhouse has given me the gift of grief. My grief for him opens me to the knowledge that my life and times have changed, and whatever blessings and adventures may await me, there are places to which I will never return. Yet I can remember them, and I can remember Milhouse, and I can make his memory an icon of joy. Shine on, bright spirit, and come back to us soon.



The Thanks Be to Grandmother Winifred Foundation

P.O. Box 1449, Waincott, New York, 11975
(516) 725-0323



[Editors' Note: This is a brochure sent to us by a dear friend and benefactress of Reclaiming, who wants as many people as possible to know about Grandmother Winifred and her project.]

The Thanks Be To Grandmother Winifred Foundation encourages, through individual grants, the creativity of women over fifty-four years of age to develop and implement projects, programs or policies that empower and enrich one or more aspects of the cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, mental, physical, professional, racial, sexual, social, and spiritual well-being of women.

Areas of Interest: The Foundation provides funding so that women over 54 years of age can create, and manifest into reality, ideas and concepts that will improve the lives of women in one or more aspects. Further it instructs women unfamiliar with the process how to work with a 501(c)3 organization in order to receive grants. The request application teaches, by its completion, the mechanics of preparing and submitting a grant proposal that succinctly describes the project to be accomplished. The purpose of limiting the beneficiaries to individuals over 54 is to encourage a segment of the population (older women) -- generally ignored, forgotten, and considered invisible -- to have courage and confidence in their ability to gift the common weal with their knowledge and wisdom.

The grants are given to enable the grantees to achieve a specific objective, produce a report or similar product, improve or enhance a literary, artistic, musical, scientific, teaching, or similar capacity, skill, or talent in order to accomplish the stated objectives of The Foundation.

A grant may be used for study at an educational institution; although grants shall not be limited to such activity. There is no requirement that the grant recipients be degree candidates, nor must the grant be limited to tuition, travel, fees, course-required equipment, books, and/or supplies. A recipient may use grant funds for research, clerical help, room, board, travel, or equipment incidental to the purposes of the specific grant.

Grant awards range from \$500 to \$5,000 and are given for one year only.

Application Procedures: To apply for a grant, an applicant should write a letter of proposal no longer than two pages. Eight (8) copies must be submitted. This material must include:

- a brief autobiography, giving her age, her experience in her proposed field, if any, and her reasons for application
- a description of the project, policy or program for which funding is desired, including a statement of what aspect or aspects of the cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, mental, physical, professional, racial, sexual, social and spiritual well-being of women will be empowered and enriched by the project
- a description of the women to be served by the project
- the estimated time for completion of the project
- the geographical location of the project
- *an estimated budget for the project*

Requests for funding are reviewed twice a year. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than March 21 and September 21. these deadlines will be extended to the first Postal workday after these dates when the deadline falls on a weekend or a Postal holiday.

Requests for further information should be made in writing. Faxing is not possible and queries by telephone are not encouraged.

Grant Limitations: Only female individuals over fifty-four years of age are eligible to apply for funding.

An applicant cannot:....

- *hold elective or public office*
- use the grant funds to carry on propaganda, or otherwise attempt to influence legislation

or

- participate (either directly or indirectly) in, or intervene in (either by publishing or distributing statements or otherwise) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for office.

Six months from the receipt of funds a grant recipient must submit a report of her activities and expenses. Upon completion of the project, a letter of summation is required. this must include, but is not limited to, a complete financial accounting, a statement by the grantee about her sense of achievement regarding her accomplishments, and copies of any publicity engendered by the project, if applicable. Acceptance of a grant award indicates agreement to comply with the above requirements.

Meeting Times: The Board of the Foundation meets in the months of April and October. Grant awards will be postmarked May 1 and October 31 or the following Postal working day when these dates fall on a weekend or a Postal holiday.

Publications: The Foundation publishes a brochure and an annual report which includes a list of past grant recipients and their achievements.

Thoughts On Reading Ginette Paris's The Sacrament of Abortion

by Deborah W. Hag

I was eighteen in 1973 when the Supreme Court established women's "fundamental right" to safe and legal abortion in its decision regarding Roe v. Wade. Feminism was blossoming in and around me. Women demanded control over their bodies and lives. As I sat with other women in consciousness raising sessions, I listened in horror as many recounted how it was when abortion was illegal. Some had lost friends, one was sterile from a bad infection, and all had lived in terror of an unwanted pregnancy. There were so many other battles to wage, we all were thankful this one had been won. It was unimaginable, like the resurgence of footbinding, that this right to choose could ever be rescinded.

However, beginning in 1989 when the Supreme Court allowed Missouri to ban abortions in public hospitals and clinics, our right to safe, legal and accessible abortion has been steadily whittled away. At this point Roe v. Wade is essentially dead. Bowing to the scare tactics of anti-abortion forces, the majority of medical schools no longer teach how to do this simple procedure. Fewer and fewer hospitals and medical practitioners are willing to perform abortions. Those who perform them and the women who seek them out are harassed and threatened. If George Bush is re-elected it is fairly certain that abortion will once again become a criminal act.

Those who would outlaw abortion use religion and morality as their argument against women having control over re-

productive decisions. The Sacrament of Abortion (Spring Publications, Inc., 1992) is an important book in that the author, Ginette Paris, eloquently puts forth a moral and religious counter-argument in favor of abortion. Historically, the pro-choice forces have argued for a woman's right to legal abortion from a somewhat defensive stance. Bill Clinton's statement "I'm not pro-abortion, I'm pro-choice" is typical of this position. Paris makes the case that not only is there nothing shameful or intrinsically bad about abortion, but that abortion is, in fact, most often an expression of maternal responsibility and a sacred act.

The Sacrament of Abortion is translated from the French and as such is not informed by the dire state of affairs regarding abortion rights in the U.S.A. I found it painful to read statements such as: "We are now on the threshold of a liberalization of attitude toward abortion ... comparable to the freeing up of sexual attitudes thirty years ago." I wish. Despite this, it was helpful to read an articulate exploration of the moral and spiritual aspects of abortion from a Pagan world view. Such ideas help sustain those of us who continue to fight to keep abortion accessible to all women.

Paris fed the fire of my rage that those who profess to care so much for the unborn do so very little for the living. She documents this well while making the case that the majority of women choosing abortion have more true regard

for the potential child's future than do those who would force a woman to bear a child against her will. Abortion is a moral decision and often signifies a woman's commitment to not only her own needs, but to the needs of her family and to the continuation of life in general.

The week I was reading The Sacrament of Abortion George Bush stated that not only is he against legal abortion, but that his "welfare reform" includes refusing increased benefits for women who become pregnant while on welfare. This seems profoundly immoral and downright heinous — to force impoverished pregnant women to bear children, and then to refuse both mother and child any help or care. The real issue here is controlling women's sexuality and bodies, not concern for children. With an estimated one hundred million homeless children in the world and a conservative estimate of two hundred thousand women dead each year from clandestine abortions, it is easy to agree with Paris's view that those who are truly pro-life are those who are pro-choice.

What I found most interesting in this fairly short book was the author's perception of abortion as a sacrifice to Artemis, She who is both huntress and protector of the forest. Paris's moving description of Artemis expanded and enriched my understanding of the virgin goddess. she is the one who says "no", who sets firm limits and clear boundaries — an essential skill in mothering. Artemis encompasses the contradictions and complexity of what is needed to nurture and protect the forest, and nature in general. She tends to laboring women and is healer and midwife. She guards and protects the animals in her domain.

She is also the huntress who shoots with unerring aim. To protect life, many women choose to abort a potential life. Such abortion is a sacred act.

We have before us a struggle to retain control over our bodies and lives. Without the power to be in charge of decisions regarding our own reproduction we have absolutely no power. Our bodies are no longer our own. This is an affront to the Goddess and to everything we as Pagans hold sacred. This is time to call on Artemis to aid us in saying "No — we will not go back!" As Witches we have been burned for the knowledge of how to induce abortions. As women we have died or been mutilated when abortion has not been safely available. We must keep the sacrament of abortion safe and legal. Do what you can. Our lives depend on it.

[On Sunday night of the Samhain Cycle Rituals, November 1, there will be a ritual dedicated to women retaining control over our own bodies. The proceeds will go to an abortion clinic under siege. Also, keep your ear to the ground concerning the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), an exciting new-to-the-Bay-Area direct action group focussing on fighting for women's lives, phone (510) 869-2584.]



[We thought our readers might appreciate knowing about what some Christians, working to unify spirit and politics, are up to. -Eds.]

ON THE ANZUS PEACEFORCE PLOWSHARES **As They Complete Their Sentence for Their Acts of Resistance and Hope**

by Moana Cole - The "NZ" of ANZUS

We cannot let the media dictate the perimeters of our beliefs and understanding. A common assumption is that the Gulf War is over. However, to assume such is to assume an untruth. By bombing the Iraqi infrastructure, most notably the water supply and electrical generating facilities, the Allied military waged a "bomb now, die later" military campaign. The continuing sanctions against Iraq have resulted in an estimated 300,000 deaths, three times as many deaths as caused by the bombing. Children have been the war's most vulnerable victims, more susceptible to the plagues of cholera, typhoid, and gastro-enteritis.

Nor is the war over for those still imprisoned for resisting the preparations for war and those military folk who refused deployment to be participants in the killing. The article below is the brief story of one such campaign of resistance to the militarism that produced the Gulf War — the participants, including myself, are still imprisoned.

* * *

Plowshares actions (direct disarmament actions by nonviolent communities) are acts of hope, love, justice, and peace committed to the Christian imperatives "Thou shall not kill!" and "Love your enemies!" Based on the premise that no life is expendable, plowshares actions take their inspiration from the prophet Isaiah whose vision of creation redeemed, justice practiced, and love in action implies disarmament and thus liberation from the weapons of war. (See Is. 2:2-5.)

Subverting the acronym ANZUS, a military pact between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States - a pact abandoned when New Zealand refused to host nuclear armed and powered warships - the ANZUS Plowshares Community was a prophetic act by a Chris-

tian community of four. As Christians, Ciaron O'Reilly (Australia), myself (New Zealand) and Sue and Bill Frankel-Streit (US), realized that to embody a better future for ourselves and our children, we must take up the hammer and begin such work in the present. We realized that our acts of resistance had to be as serious as the military's efforts to go to war.

In the post-cold-war-world, under the guise of a New World Order, the US gives continuing assent to the not-so-new ideological systems that justify exploitation and murder. What this means is that any threat to US hegemony around the world will be threatened with military intervention under the guise of the war on drugs and the war against insur-

gency and terrorism. Thus the US can ensure its continuing pretext for economic and military imperialism.

Saddam Hussein, a bully installed by the US to stem the Muslim influence in the region, provided the US with an enemy, under the guise of the war against terrorism, when he began to show initiative in Middle East affairs. Within a month of Sadaam's invasion of Kuwait, a tiny, rich emirate, with whom Iraq had been in dispute over borders since World War I, 500,000 troops and a vast array of military hardware had been deployed to Saudi Arabia. By November, 1990, B-52's, made infamous for their carpet bombing of Vietnamese villages, loaded with Fuel Air Explosives, cluster bombs, napalm, and gravity bombs were announced as the primary weapons for the strategy of aerial bombardment of Iraq.

In the early hours of New Year's morning, a Griffiss Air Force Base B-52 on alert status was disarmed and grounded for the duration of the war and the runway closed for at least two hours. After cutting through three fences, Bill and Sue Frankel-Streit entered the deadly force area, called such because the military is authorized to "Shoot-to-kill" any "unauthorized intruders"! Walking to a B-52 on alert status, with household hammers in hand, they began the process of disarmament. They poured the community's blood on the plane, exposing its truth as a bloody instrument of death. As there were two guards in a patrol car directly beneath the plane, Bill and Sue were quickly apprehended.

Meanwhile, Ciaron and I had entered the opposite end of the base and made

our way to the other end of the runway. Pouring a cross of blood on the runway, we declared the runway does not end at Griffiss Air Force Base but in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Arab children, women, and men. On the tarmac we spray-painted:

"No More Bombing of Children:
Hiroshima, Vietnam, the Middle
East, or anywhere else."

"Love Your Enemies!"

"And They Shall Beat Their Swords
Into Plowshares."

"Isaiah Returns!"

We placed statements of intent, an indictment against Griffiss AFB for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and pictures of loved ones on the tarmac. Then, sledgehammers in hand, we began to dismantle the runway.

When discovered one and a half hours later, we invited the soldiers to join us. However, we, too, were arrested. After investigation by the FBI, Ciaron, Sue, Bill and I were charged with sabotage, destruction of government property and conspiracy. As the implications for charging us with sabotage require the government to prove that the B-52 is a defensive weapon, the charge was subsequently dropped.

During the trial, held in June, Sue, Bill, Ciaron, and I tried to present a necessity defense, arguing with the help of expert witnesses which were to include Admiral Eugene Carroll, Ramsey Clark, Sr.

Ann Montgomery, and Bill Cross, that we were trying to prevent a crime. We also wanted to bring to light the war crimes perpetrated by the US government against Iraq. Ramsey Clark was the only expert witness allowed to the stand to testify but this was done outside the presence of the jury pending a decision on this testimony's relevancy. Ramsey's moving eye-witness account of the destruction of Iraq was ruled irrelevant. Our defense routed, our own testimony restricted — we were not allowed to explain why we did what we did — we were found guilty of destruction of government property and conspiracy and sentenced to a year in prison.

By using the judicial system to facilitate our conviction and imprison us, the State has legitimized its massacre of the Iraqi people and given sanction to future Third World Wars. Any movement concerned with social justice must begin to orient itself around its political prisoners who have confronted the State, rather than continue to look to the bastions of power for social change. It is with those who have confronted the State that our hope lies. On the wall of my isolation cell is a quote by Thomas Merton which continually reminds me of where I stand in the New World Order as a Christian, as a human being:

"I am on the side of the people being burned, cut to pieces, tortured, held as hostages, gassed, ruined, destroyed. They are the victims of both sides. To take sides with massive power is to take sides against the innocent. The side I take is then the side of the people who are sick of war and want peace in order to rebuild their country."

Moana Cole 91-891, Blair County Jail
Holladaysburg, Pennsylvania



Starhawk's Fall and Winter 1992 Schedule

September 11, 1992: San Francisco, CA:
Benefit Ritual with Luisah Teish
Contact: Natural Resources (415) 550-2611

September 25-27, 1992: Rowe, MA:
Weekend Workshop for Women
Contact: Rowe Conference Center (413) 339-4216

October 30 & 31, 1992: San Francisco, CA:
Annual Spiral Dance
Contact: Reclaiming Collective (415) 849-0877

November 13-15, 1992: Boulder, CO:
Friday night - Public Talk
Weekend - Women's Workshop and "Rites of Passage" for Men and Women
Contact: Maven Productions (303) 443-5858

November 28-December 4, 1992:
WOMEN'S RETREAT TO CANCUN, MEXICO
Contact: Harmony Network (707) 869-0989

Tentative Events:

These workshops and talks will be confirmed by October and will coincide with book signings for Starhawk's new novel, The Fifth Sacred Thing published in January 1993 by Bantam Books.

January 16, 17, 1993: New York Learning Alliance, New York City

January 23, 24, 1993: Interface Conference Center, Cambridge, MA

February 1993: Chicago area/Seattle, WA

For Starhawk's cassette tapes, <u>The Way to the Well</u> or <u>Magic, Vision and Action</u> , send \$11.50 each to Harmony Network. Cost includes shipping.
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To confirm dates, or for more information, contact:
Harmony Network
P.O. Box 2550, Guerneville, CA 95446 (707)869-0989

Passages

"Gossip is the Lifeblood of Society"

by Robin Weaver

As I write it is Weodmonath, the Anglo-Saxon "weed-month," the dog days are over, Old Lammas is done. The quarter past held weddings and births, while this harvest season has taken some of those close to us. Truly Lugnasadh found us "between hope and fear."

Congratulations, newly-weds!

— Like a garden full of flowers, well-wishers filled Marx Meadows for Starhawk and David's wedding. The bride and groom, clothed in splendor, were brought forth by their circles. Mary Ellen Donald played the doumbec as Theresa danced, like some exotic orchid, before the bridal pair. There, beneath the chupa, they made their pledges and were handfasted. There, beneath the open sky, they jumped the broom, crossing into the country of marriage. Then to the Women's Building for music and feasting into the night.

— Picture, if you will, what the invitation promised: In Mill Valley, on the 21st of June, in the greenwood, beneath the redwoods, by a running stream, Beverly and Doug reciting the story of their love, accepting the blessings of family and friends, and jumping the broom. They did as they said. Then dancing and feasting. A fairy love song? Certainly there was magic in the air.

We gathered on the beach for Midsummer, with its Wicker Man, its Bonfire, its drumming, its flaming salute to the glory of the Sun. Thanks to Morgan, Jodi, Rose, Rebecca, Carol, Patti, Carl, and Rabbit for all your efforts and energy.

Farewell, Pandora. Good luck teaching in Pittsburgh. Some of us will miss your wry humor, others your scholarly bent. A gift from our daily lives has been offered to Parnassus. Don't be a stranger.

Welcome babies!

— Hadley Aaron was born in Sebastapol on June 28th to Cathryn and Jeff. I understand that "everyone was all excited" and "it was a great home delivery." Congratulations Mom and Dad.

— Aminatou Kaira, Laura & Charles' second daughter and Florence's new little sister was born at home on the 1st of July. It was a "beautiful, gentle birth" with midwife Kathryn Newburn attending and Bethany, Arachne, and Patti providing comfort and support. Best wishes to the whole family.

— Crossing the boundary at the far end of childhood, Sage was welcomed into the community of women with a gathering on the beach, and then welcomed as a woman into the full community with a gathering at her home. Clad royally in a deep purple cape, she received the blessings of family and friends. In the end,

even the sun attended her, gilding the circle on the cloud-covered Berkeley Hills.

Lammas also brought a beach gathering to remind us that we must set aside our fears and bring in our harvests.

“ A man of words and not of deeds,
Is like a garden full of weeds.”

Thank you Rose, Marian, and Margaret for the dough-boys-and-girls, the hope-cookies, the wonderful sun-bread, and the encouragement to tend our gardens.

“Now is come September,” and Halegmonath, “holy-month,” and Harvest Home. May the season find you with well-tended gardens and rich harvests. Blessed Be.

Bertha Simos passed away on the 10th of August, after a long illness. She was a therapist and a social worker, and an expert on grief and loss. She enjoyed a lively relationship with her daughter. She is survived by Starhawk, her daughter, and Mark, her son.

Milhouse, Carol's canine companion of 15 years, died on August 13th. A fixture at Avalon and a frequent visitor to coven, he was known for his sweet and sensitive disposition. He is survived by the other “little dog”, Buttons.



Reclaiming Classes & Events

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Taught by Carol and Rose May Dance

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. 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 applicants be committed to attending all six classes, which will be held on **Monday** evenings, starting **October 7** in the San Francisco Mission District. Call Rose at (415) 821-3336 for information, registration, and location. Sliding scale \$60-120.

PENTACLE FOR WOMEN IN MARIN

Taught by M. Macha NightMare and Minerva.

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). We ask that all applicants be committed to attending all 6 classes. Six **Wednesday** evenings beginning **September 16** in Marin. \$60-\$120 sliding scale. Call Macha, (415) 454-4411, for information and registration.

ALTAR BUILDING WORKSHOP October 24 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. taught by **Judy, Ceres and Laura**. \$20 (free to a limited number of people who plan to do altar building work trade for the Spiral Dance). For further information, call (510) 843-0722.

RECLAIMING HAS A NEW CHANT TAPE, "Let It Begin Now." Find out how to order it, and the original chant tape, in the article that starts on page 20. Order form on page 22.

THE SAMHAIN CYCLE: Reclaiming's Plans for Halloween '92

We will again be presenting three rituals on the Halloween weekend. At press, we are still firming our plans for where the ritual will be, but that information will soon be available via our events line (510-849-0877). All three rituals will be participatory rather than performance oriented, low-tech, and relatively small in scale. All three will dance the spiral of life.

Friday, October 30: Celebrating the Ancestors of Many Cultures and 500 Years of Resistance. Celebrating our diversity and history, we work to envision a truly multi-racial, multi-cultural community. The Multicultural Ritual Group has been meeting since last Samhain and is pleased to dance the spiral to mark the 500 years of resistance following the landing of Columbus. What is remembered, lives.

Saturday, October 31: Spiral Dance Ritual. This is the thirteenth anniversary of the Spiral Dance Ritual. On this night we are planning a more traditional Witch's sabbat. We will have chorus, dancers, a journey to the Blessed Isle, time to greet our loved ones on the other side, and, of course, a big spiral dance.

Sunday, November 1: Women's Ritual for Choice. A benefit for abortion clinics under siege, organized by Coven Wind Hags. At this time of year the veil between the worlds is thin, and souls pass back and forth with ease, to visit, to be born, to die. We work to empower women and their choices by celebrating all three aspects of the Goddess: the Maiden warrior who belongs to no one but herself, the Mother who loves not only her own children but the whole balance of Nature and that which will make life thrive, and the Crone who keeps the cauldron of unborn souls and who is the midwife of birth and death. We each carry all three of these aspects. We seek to strengthen our own lives, and to have no one control our bodies but our selves. We will honor the souls of children we have chosen not to bear, we will commune with the souls of the unborn, and we will welcome the children born this year, as we empower all our choices. This ritual is for women only, please.

General Information for all three rituals: Childcare will be provided by pre-arrangement, children welcome at rituals. Wheelchair accessible. Drug and Alcohol free, please. Tickets \$7-\$15 sliding scale, \$8-16 at door. Advance purchase strongly advised. Mail orders post-marked ~~no~~ later than **October 13**. Please mark your envelope "TICKETS", including SASE, and make checks payable to Reclaiming, address: P.O Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114. Be sure to specify for which night you want tickets. Tickets also available at selected stores through **October 28**. Call the events line for store locations.

To volunteer for any of the three rituals, call the Events Line: (510) 849-0877.

Reclaiming Newsletter Distribution List

SONOMA COUNTY

ClaireLight Women's Books
1110 Petaluma Hill Road #5
Santa Rosa

Copperfield's Trading Company
138 North Main Street
Sebastapol

EAST BAY

Gaia
Shattuck & Rose Street
Berkeley

Mama Bear
Telegraph & Alcatraz Street
Berkeley

Sound Choices
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Oakland

Mystic Gems
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San Rafael

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San Anselmo

SAN FRANCISCO

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A Different Light
489 Castro

Eye of the Day
250 Fillmore

Sword & Rose
85 Carl Street

Inner Sunset Community Food Store
1319 20th Avenue

Gifts of the Goddess
973 Valencia

Old Wives' Tales
1009 Valencia

Rainbow General Store
1899 Mission

Courtyard Cafe
3913 24th Street

Fields' Bookstore
1419 Polk Street

SOUTH BAY

Two Sisters Books
605 Cambridge
Menlo Park

San Jose Books
1231 East Kentwood

“Let It Begin Now”: Reclaiming’s New Tape

by Anne Hill

There is now a splendid new addition to the world of Pagan music recordings—or at least, there will be by Samhain this year. Over the past thirteen years of more or less annual Spiral Dance rituals, an amazing body of music has been composed by local artists that has helped shape and vitalize the rituals. Some were written expressly for their place in the Samhain ritual, and some were adapted from more generic chants to hold special significance in the journey of renewal undertaken at the Spiral Dance.

The tape was recorded early this Summer, and is currently in post-production, an industry term meaning everything that hasn’t been done yet. “Let It Begin Now” was produced by Starhawk, Brook Schoenfield, and myself, without major turf wars or ego conflicts: Star worked as executive producer, I was the vocal director, and Brook did the instrumental directing. The tape features the fine vocal and instrumental talents of over two dozen Bay Area musicians, many of whom have been heavily involved with past (and present) Spiral Dance rituals.

We have tried to present the music in a way that will be accessible to others who want to learn the songs and use them in their own rituals, and at the same time have a tape that is enjoyable and, at times, thrilling to listen to. The musical arrangements vary significantly throughout the tape, from a capella to full chorus, simple drum or fiddle accompaniments to full band instrumentation. Each song has been done in the style most

suitable to it both musically and by virtue of its place in the ritual itself, which I think adds to the richness of the tape’s overall sound. Even with my hypercritical ear, and after six months of working on the music, I still love listening to it.

For those of you who are familiar with the songs and chants used in the Spiral Dance ritual, here is a listing, in order, of those contained on the tape: “Spirits,” by Susan Falkenrath Wolf; “Lyke-Wake Dirge,” a Traditional; “The Guardian Song,” by Amber Khan-Engel; “No End to the Circle: Goddess Invocation,” by Starhawk; “Honortothe Untamed God,” by Mara June Quicklightning and Starhawk; “The God Song,” by Starhawk and Michael Chames; “Set Sail,” by Mara June Quicklightning and Starhawk; “The Gates,” by Mara June Quicklightning and Starhawk; “Let It Begin Now,” by Star and Amber Khan-Engel; “No End to the Circle: Devocation,” by Starhawk; and “Demeter’s Song,” by Starhawk.

You may notice that a certain producer’s name is conspicuous in the song credits. This may be true, though Brook and I had perhaps a greater hand in the arrangements and performances. For all you Reclaiming trivia buffs, there is a 1,000 point trivia question, however. Upon listening to the tape, can you tell *which* part of *which* song Star sang on? Chorus members and their families are naturally disqualified from this contest.

We fully expect the tape to be out by Samhain, and will be selling them at all three nights of the Samhain Cycle. If

you want to pre-order, there is an order form at the end of this article you can use. Tapes will be shipped out in mid-October, or as soon as they get from the duplication place to my house, whichever comes first. "Let It Begin Now" is a Reclaiming project, and all proceeds will go to the Collective to better support our work.

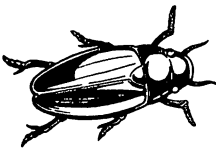
There are many people to thank for their help in bringing the tape to birth, and most of those are mentioned on the tape credits. Here are some notices of appreciation that were either too special or too obscure, or both, to print on the cover: All the members of the chorus not only had to endure marathon recording sessions, but were subjected to numerous rehearsals and managed to remain cheerful and without thought of compensation. The instrumentalists got off a little easier, since they practiced at home, and came in to the studio once to set down their parts. Yet they too must be thanked, since they did such a great job. Greg Freeman, our valiant engineer, didn't flinch no matter how many people we stuffed into his studio. Allison, Bowen and Lyra (all under seven years old) got fairly good at entertaining themselves while Brook and I talked on the phone, trying to iron out musical details without actually rehearsing. Mary Ellen Donald put down some tremendous drum performances, and helped a lot with ideas and enthusiasm during the grueling day spent recording the litany.

Mark Simos flew into town and fiddled us out of some tight corners, giving more time than he actually had so that his sister wouldn't get mad at him.

Thanks to Jess Grant for cutting short a well-deserved nap, driving across town, and patching in a crucial bass line. (All you trivia buffs: *which* six measures of bass line *saved* the litany from disaster?) While we're on the subject of sleep, I don't know whether thanks or apologies are in order for various housemates at Black Cat who were so rudely awakened during those necessary stereo blasting sessions...

Lastly, fervent thanks to Margaret who continues to keep the books; to Laura, Charles, and their associate Florence, for all the childcare; and especially all those various partners, lovers, and co-parents who so generously (though not without compensation of sorts) held down the home forts, so that all us artsy types could work interminably long hours without distraction.

I don't know what sort of honorable mention befits a deity, but for all those of you on tight schedules who need to find parking in the City, Star and I highly recommend calling on Sylvia Kaufman, the Jewish Parking Goddess, who helped make our dinner breaks in the Mission possible. ("Sylvia Kaufman, look out for us here!" will do, with remarkable results. Thanks to Judith Kate for the tip.) To all of you who plan on acquiring a copy of "Let It Begin Now," tell your friends, turn on your neighbors and circle brethren, and let's see this ancient festival of renewal take root and flourish in a thousand different communities. May life thrive, now and always!



Reclaiming Tape Order Form

<u>Tape Name</u>	<u>Quantity</u>		<u>Total</u>
Reclaiming Chants Tape	_____	x \$10.00 =	_____
Let It Begin Now	_____	x \$10.00 =	_____

California residents please add 7.5% sales tax _____

Shipping Charges: \$1.50 per tape, \$1.00 each additional tape
(Add \$3.00 for each overseas mailing, International Postal
Money Orders only *please*) _____

Total Payment Enclosed _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St/Zip: _____

Make check or money order payable to:

Serpentine Music Productions, P.O. Box 1667, Forestville, CA 95436



A Woman's Book of Rituals and Celebrations

by Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D.

(Reviewed by Leah Samul,

Northern California Correspondence Officer,
Covenant of the Goddess)

We who live in the Bay Area are blessed with a wealth of resources for learning about Witchcraft, Paganism and goddess spirituality. We forget that in most of the United States, there are no occult stores, no Goddess-centered communities, certainly no open rituals. The vast majority of seekers are limited to the local bookstore, the library and whatever we can recommend to them in the way of books. Many Witches living in other (more conservative) parts of the country don't have a group to circle with and probably won't for a long time, given the political climate of the country as we head toward the millennium. Along those lines I am delighted to review a new book on the how and why of Goddess rituals for women written by solitary Witch Barbara Ardinger.

Why, you might be asking yourself, do I need to read another ritual book? And it's true there are several on the market, along with the perfunctory chapter on ritual in many books that deal with Goddess spirituality. What makes this one worth getting? Several things.

For starters, all the ritual books/chapters I've read have one glaring omission: a sense of humor. I can't speak for the rest of you, but if I wanted somber thoughts about ritual I could have stayed with the Catholic Church. In point of fact I think one of the biggest mistakes mainstream religions make is their inability to laugh at themselves, both in and out of the ritual experience. Many

native American religious rituals, by comparison, purposely have humor in them. Ardinger's sense of humor throughout the entire book underscores one of our prime directives from the Goddess—all acts of love and pleasure are her rituals. Humor is important because it keeps us from taking ourselves too seriously. In line with that, the author has a priceless invocation to "Gotcha," the Goddess of Murphy's law situations in life (pp. 115-6). Even if you don't buy this book, go to the bookstore and read the invocation to Gotcha; I guarantee it will brighten your day.

Another thing that delighted me was the author's willingness to identify herself as a Witch. Most of us are aware that there's been some hot debate in the community lately about the pros and cons of "the W word." A recent issue of the magazine *Sagewoman* had a point/counterpoint article on this topic. Ardinger comments:

Why use the word "Witch"? It seems to be a scary word, with all its connotations of green skin and spells and evil decrepitude. A less threatening word is "Wicca," which is said to come from Middle English words that mean "wise" and "to bend." A Witch, or Wiccan, is thus a wise person who bends power. Like some other Witchy authors, I prefer the blunter word, "witch." It gets people's attention. As I am a kind, intelligent person, I can demonstrate to the world that "wicked" does not automatically define "Witch" (pp. 23-4).

This stands in sharp contrast to Barbara Walker, whose book on ritual repeatedly sidesteps telling her readers that much of the ceremony she talks about comes directly from Craft tradition. She even manages to mention the Faery tradition without saying that it is one of the traditions of Witchcraft. And in her introduction, Walker flat out states that she wrote a book of Goddess rituals for women because most women might be too nervous about cults to get involved in a Witch's coven. Fine and good, but after I read Walker's book, I felt ripped-off. I felt that much of our (Witchcraft) tradition had been used to create rituals so that nervous suburbanites could get to the Goddess without dealing with a scary word. As you see by Ardinger's quote, she has no such problem with the word Witch. The good thing about her attitude is that after reading what she says about Witches and what we do, even the shyest denizen of the suburbs would begin to think about Witches differently. What Ardinger has done is written exactly the kind of cross-over book we need to show people that Witches and the Goddess go together, and both can bring healing to women.

Ardinger's book has three parts and an introduction. The introduction includes, among other things, an interesting take on the commonly-used self blessing ritual. In part one "Practicing the Presence of the Goddess" the author discusses a crucial concept of ritual that most of us know, but have forgotten: in Goddess spirituality, the mystical experience is not to be had by retreating to some far-away mountain top. No, the mystical is right here in our everyday lives. Commuting to work can be turned

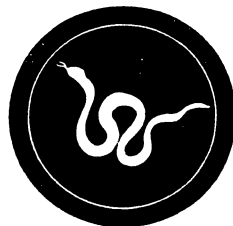
into a ritual if we bring the Goddess into our reality. This is an area I wish more ritual books would explore.

Another thing I liked about this book is that it encourages you to design your own rituals more than most ritual books I've read. There's more analysis here and a lot less propaganda, which I find quite refreshing. Part two is called "Unencumbered Ritual." Here the author shows her readers that while there are set structures for some rituals (the casting of a Witch's circle, for example), the solitary rituals you design for yourself allow a lot of freedom of expression.

Part three, called "Time in the Goddess" takes the reader through the phases of the mood and the wheel of the year with appropriate rituals.

This book is well-written, to the point, non-dogmatic, user friendly and filled with good ideas. It gives you a solid base to expand from, but doesn't overload you with information. I consider it the best general text on Goddess rituals for women published to date. I am happy to include it as one of the recommended books on the Networking Factsheet of Covenant of the Goddess.

(A Woman's Book of Rituals and Celebrations is available from the publishing company: New World Library, 58 Paul Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903; phone (415) 472-2100.)



(Parents and Teachers: Here is a suggestion for a letter to give to teachers and school officials.)

Dear Teacher,

As Halloween approaches, many of you will be planning special theme units. I'd like to offer some information which may help you with your choices.

Wicca is an ancient religion which predates both Christianity and Judaism. It is "earth based" (as are many First Nations spiritual traditions), and so honors all living things. As a result of their beliefs, many Wiccans are active in environmentalism, education, feminism, health care and social justice movements.

As a result of the 15th Century witch hunts, many of us have a confused and distorted view of Wiccans (also known as Witches). In fact, most of the negative things commonly attributed to Wiccans were invented by the accusers during the Witch trials, and had nothing to do with the beliefs or practices of Witches. This process (and many of the accusations themselves) was very similar to the Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda in the 1940s. "Confessions" were extracted through torture. In fact, once a person was accused of Witchcraft it was virtually impossible to prove one's innocence. The possibility of being targeted was an effective means of controlling a population which might otherwise have resisted some of the changes being imposed. Thousands were killed in what some today describe as the "Women's Holocaust." Further information is available in two National Film Board of Canada films, *The Goddess Remembered*, and *The Burning Times*.)

With such a history it isn't surprising that most Wiccans are not public about their religious practice. It is possible that some of your students and their families may identify themselves as Witches. Think how difficult this time of year must be for them. Obviously, no teacher would knowingly denigrate a child or her/his family's faith, yet that is what we are doing when we reinforce the "evil, ugly, vindictive witch" image at Halloween.

Halloween can be a fun time of year for teachers and students, with lots of possibilities for theme development. Let's remember that Witches are real people and ensure that *all* of our students can join in the fun and feel good about themselves, too.

Trick or Treat

By Mariah

you know, i'm really
getting pissed
here it is
three centuries later
and they're still telling
kids that we feed 'em
poison apples and fatten
'em up for a Sabbat's feast

every Halloween its the same
old thing
the press
comes knocking at my door
wanting to know if I'm
boiling any boys tonight
or if I'd fly my broom
across the moon
so they'd get
a photo opportunity

yeah, yeah, i know
its important to maintain
traditions, they're the
glue of civilization
and all that
but what is this with

christians burning minorities?
muslims during crusades
witches during the inquisition,
jews during our fathers' time
now crosses burn
to put the fear
of god
in blacks and gays

and here you are
back in the land
of the crusades

oh, well, fate will
work her tricks
so take your treat
an apple
crisp as the north wind
juicy as a bride
perhaps a bite
will enchant you
with visions
of possibilities
for peace.

© 1992: Jo Von Stein

Letters

Dear Reclaiming:

Starhawk's piece on ritual responsibility was wonderful, but there's one concern the segment on "time" didn't address, and it's important: extreme casualness about when a rite starts and how long it takes can be a difficult to insurmountable access barrier for Witches with disabilities.

I speak from experience, mine and others'. I got caught in the current epidemic of autoimmune diseases (lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, CFIDS, etc., etc.) brought on by what we "developed nations" types are doing to Mother Gaia and each other. I'm also a Witch who cares about the group aspect of her religion—but when I hear, "We don't know (care?) how long the ritual will last, so don't call and ask," I know I'm out of luck. On good days, there may be two to three hours of decent energy and pain control in my whole body; there are never four or five. So it DOES matter how much Earth-time it will take, unless I want to be weeping with pain over Cakes and Wine and unable to get out of bed the next day, or unless I want to have to miss part or all of every ritual.

Then there are my pagan friends in wheelchairs. They aren't usually in pain or exhausted, but they do pay by the hour for vans and drivers/attendants, often out of tiny SSI checks, and must schedule tightly since so many others are wait

ing for the vans. And they damn sure can't make a quiet or unobtrusive exit if the driver shows up a 11 p.m. and everyone is still in trance!

Deaf Witches pay even higher and must schedule even tighter for interpreter services, especially for the few interpreters who don't work for fundamentalist organizations (what's sign language for "You're all Satanists and you're going straight to hell"??). And they, too, are often in a money-vise.

And so forth. And before anyone says, "Gee, then why don't you folks just practice as solitaires?", think. First, solitary practice is very physically taxing for some of us, what with all the solo setup-takedown work and the lack of other human energy in the room. And for many people with mobility or upper-body problems, it's near-impossible anyway. Sometimes a disabled or chronically ill Witch may truly have only two choices: attend rites planned and mounted by others, or never do ritual at all.

Second, this kind of answer runs afoul of some genuine human-rights questions. Despite good new laws, society's real message to disabled people is still, "Well, if you can't make it up our stairs/onto our buses/through our turnstiles or our lengthy events, why don't you just stay

home? SURELY you don't expect us to make any changes in the stairs/buses/turnstiles/events?? How selfish." Well, surprise—we DO want access, and it IS reasonable for the chronically ablebodied to have to compromise with us sometimes.

Note, I said "compromise." I'm not proposing we all become rigid little liturgical Mussolinis who can't luxuriate in a timeless moment or follow an energy shift where it's going. But SOME MEASURE OF CONTROL, ESPECIALLY AS TO STARTUP TIME, WOULD ALLOW A LOT OF CURRENTLY EXCLUDED PEOPLE INTO THE CIRCLE.

I'm not theorizing; I've seen it work, and it's fairly simple. My present group sets a start time, and sticks within 5-10 minutes of it. Those able to foregather and mill around know they can arrive up to an hour early; those who need a reliable start-time can then count on one. In the planning stage, an experienced priest/ess with a good sense of ritual "flow" looks over the plans with reasonable compactness (and physical barrier reduction) in mind; then at the rite itself, someone does a little gently, unobtrusive time management where necessary. The rituals are even more lively and spontaneous than before, and no one has kvetched yet.

In fact, far from it. The circle now has several new members who couldn't previously work with a group. They are Witches of experience and talent, and since they don't have to hold back as much for fear of total exhaustion—and

because they just plain feel less discounted—they (we) can give a lot of power to the group's workings.

I hope all you group leaders out there will think about this. Please don't assume you're not excluding anyone because no one has called you up and said so. A lot of us have simply come to believe no one is listening, or are so weary of and furious with the any-REAL-witch-can-be-perfectly-well-by-visualizing-it brand of manure some people try to feed the sick ones that we're reluctant to speak up. (My immune system may be tearing at my muscles and joints because there's something wrong with my genes, the air, the groundwater, sexism, the food-stamp laws that keep the working poor on beans and macaroni, my '70's level of drug abuse, my workaholism, or even my karma from a previous life. Or it may be because viruses mutate and Ship Happens, who the hell knows. But NO one has the right to assume out of hand that it's because I don't do religion correctly. Judge not, folks...statistically, one in twenty of you will be taking this same ride, and one in three of you will get cancer.)

Having to keep Earth-time in mind may not always feel spiritually optimum, and can certainly be overdone. But is it worse than making it hard to impossible for a whole category of us to practice our religion at all? Or judging us when we can't practice it on your terms?

Sincerely,

Rainlake, Priestess and Witch

Letters

Dear Editor,

My reasons for writing are twofold. First, I wish to announce the formulation of a new Pagan organization: the Contra Costa Pagan Association (CCPA). We are putting together a newsletter that will be published quarterly, containing news, local events, stories, etc. Submissions are always welcome. Our function is one of networking and support, but we find that the political aspect is also a part of our design, which brings me to my next topic.

A great deal of debate was sparked when one of our covens, Oakhaven, challenged the use of the fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" in our public schools, on the grounds of religious intolerance. Many newspaper articles have gone as far to say that we want the story banned.

This, as I have said before, is only a half-truth. While it is true that we do not enjoy seeing false negative images perpetuated about us (no matter how old the source) we also do not enjoy the idea of censorship.

One of the Priestesses of Oakhaven attended a school board meeting in an effort to resolve this problem, causing an explosion of debate throughout the Pagan community.

We do NOT ask that it be banned, simply that positive, more accurate images also be presented to our children.

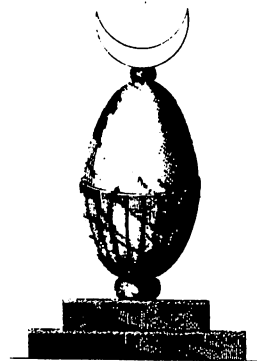
Why should we accept religious intolerance simply because its vessel is hundreds of years old?

We encourage other Witches and Pagans to stand up to this kind of ignorance and discrimination wherever it exists. If we are not heard, it shall surely devour us from within.

If anyone in the Pagan community would like to comment, or would like information on our organization, please send an SASE to: CCPA, P.O. Box 273183, Concord, CA 94527-3183.

Blessed be the God/dess,

Stormwolf
Spokesperson for the CCPA



Announcements

Scleroderma, Anyone?

It is believed that biblical references to people "turning to stone" referred to the autoimmune disease *Scleroderma*. I have been your friendly typographer and a production brownie for the Reclaiming Newsletter for the past two years. I am relinquishing those duties because I have been diagnosed as having *Scleroderma* and I have little energy or resistance to illness.

I am collecting information and resources from the medical world and would love to hear from anyone who has had experience with *Scleroderma* especially regarding alternative healing, magic, history, mythology, etc. I want the stuff that will help my many layers of self integrate and understand so my healing can be as rich and deep as possible. Thank you.

Love and Luck,
Cherie Jones
P.O. Box 782
Middletown, CA 95461

Sleeping with Dionysus, a Crossing Press women's anthology, seeks poetry, stories and essays about addiction and recovery focusing on sexuality and spirituality. Deadline November 30, 1992. SASE for guidelines. Porterfield, P.O. Box 951, Englewood CO 80151.

The Vedic Culture Society organizes seminars, discussions and debates on questions dealing with spiritual perfection, self-realization, and spiritual science. Unfortunately, in [Russia] there is a great scarcity of such materials to instruct and encourage those interested in our program and to promote a spiritual

revival in our country. Therefore, we are pleading with the readers of this publication to send us books, magazines, audio and video cassettes to aid us in this project. Materials may be in English, French or German. May God bless your work! Serguey A Matveyev, Administrator, League of Spiritual Unity, Russia, 195426, St. Petersburg, P.O.Box 182. Ph. (7812) 521-36-97.

Catharine Cookson is a graduate student in religious studies and is researching the Pagan/Wiccan experience of religious freedom in the United States. She seeks first-hand detailed information on the experiences of Pagans with "the government": state, local, and federal agencies or courts; the police; public schools and colleges; etc. This would also include the results of any legal action (whether in the courts, by the police, or letters by attorneys) concerning private discriminations against you because of your beliefs. When writing of your experiences, please include your name (anonymity will be respected if requested), a place where you can be reached, and (if not too lengthy) copies of supporting "official" documentation such as court papers, police reports, etc. If the matter is still not resolved, please get your attorney's OK on any info you send. Send to: Catharine Cookson, c/o Indiana University Religious Studies Dept., Sycamore Hall Rm. 230, Bloomington, IN 47405.

Many thanks to Cherie who has blessed us all by designing and producing the Newsletter for years. And welcome to Rebecca for taking on this courageous task!

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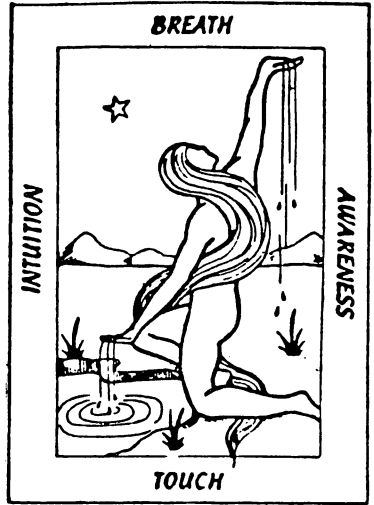
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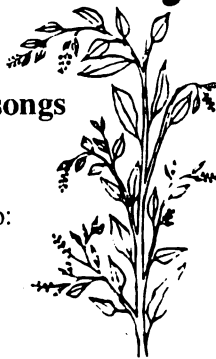
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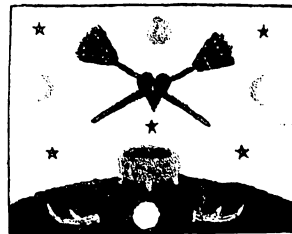
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Gay/Lesbian/Queer Prisoner Anthology. *Cold Iron*, an anthology of writing and art by and about Lesbian, Gay and Queer prisoners, is seeking submissions. Any work that reflects the experiences and concerns of Gay, Lesbian or Queer prisoners, their lovers, families or friends will be considered.

Cold Iron will include fiction, non-fiction, and letters. Submissions should be 3000 words or less. Manuscripts should be typed or legibly handwritten, contain the author's name and complete address and include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please avoid sending your only copy if possible. Artwork should be black and white drawings or photos which can be reproduced in black and white. Drawings can include drafts or sketches of tatoos.

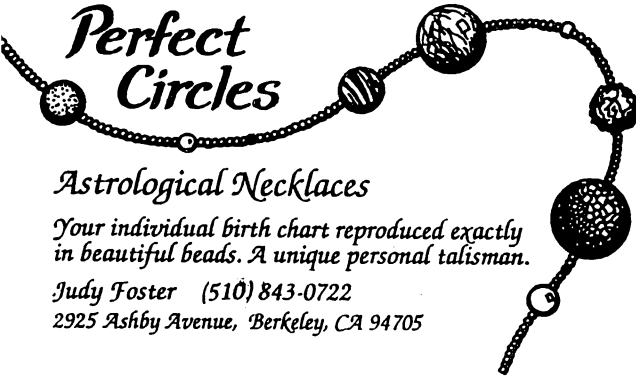
Each submission should be accompanied by a short biography of the author or artist, including how long and where you have been or are incarcerated, or the nature of your experience with Lesbian, Gay or Queer prisoners.

Deadline for submissions is December 31, 1992. Please send all materials to: *Cold Iron*, c/o John Fall, 1457B 22nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98122.

+



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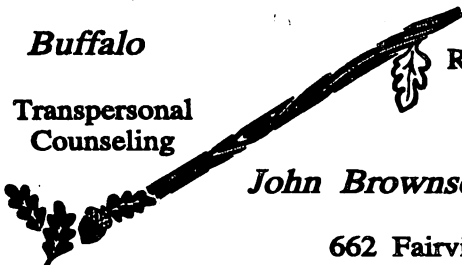
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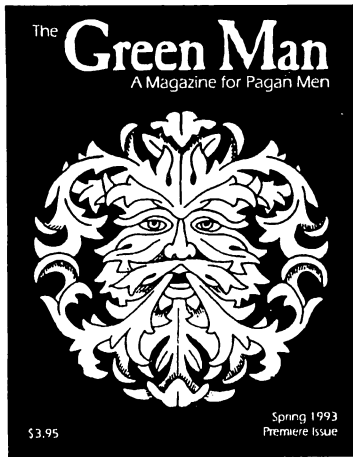
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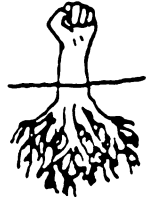
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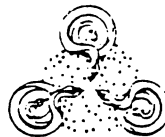
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Be sure to tell us *how many years* the money you send is supposed to cover (sliding scales for 1 year and 2 years overlap). If you don't say, we will assume any amount up to \$15 is for *one* year.

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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.

Winter Deadline is Monday, November 2, 1992

Reclaiming Events Line - (510) 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.

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