

Reclaiming Newsletter



58

Spring 95

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

When requesting information from Reclaiming, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Newsletter Submissions: The Newsletter encourages people to submit articles, letters, or graphics related to political, pagan or spiritual issues and happenings. Submissions on 3-1/2" diskettes, created in Wordperfect or Microsoft Word, make the job of the Newsletter staff much easier. Please always include a hard copy of your submission, just in case something funny happens during layout. **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.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 1995

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.

NEW

Reclaiming Events Line – (415) 929-9249

This recording 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. Please allow plenty of time, and remember to say where we can reach you with questions.

–The New Recording Faerie

Reclaiming is a member of the Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance.

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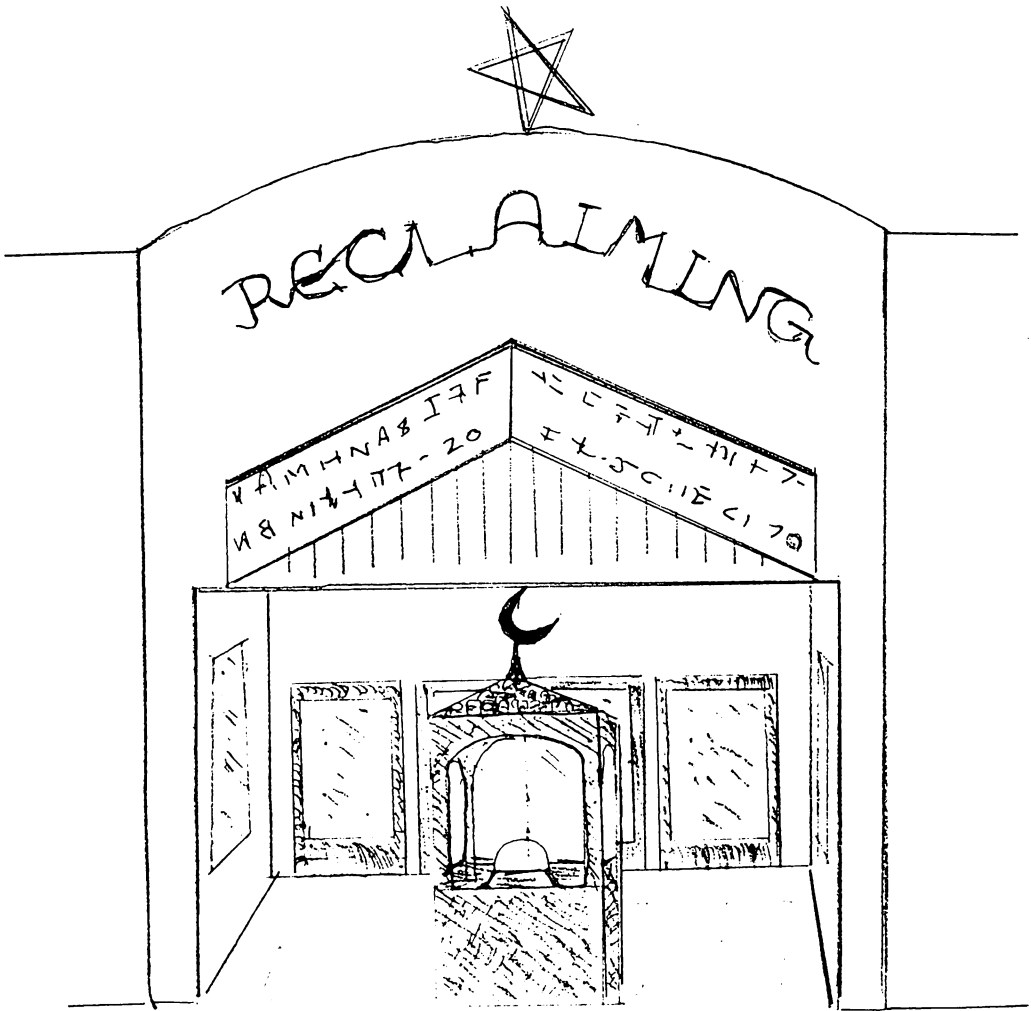


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Cover by Rose May Dance

Reya, Patti, Julie and Calla did it this time. We're sorry Robin Weaver couldn't put together enough time to write his column. We look forward to the return of *Passages* in the Summer issue of the Newsletter.

Printed on Recycled Paper





BRIDGET HELP US

by *Patti Martin*

There has been a slow growing movement within the Reclaiming Collective and Community to find ourselves a space. We are now truly a band of gypsies. The gathering for our rituals resembles the circus coming to town and an empty lot or empty hall is, within hours, turned into a Temple of the Goddess. We now make our sacred space each time we gather, both structurally and metaphysically.

This has worked. It is a truly wonderful sight to see as the altars go up and the space is prepared and the energy forms and the work of the ritual begins. More and more people arrive, each with a task or role, and they add to and take part in the energy of the temple as it forms. As the participants come in they also add to the energy, and we proceed to do the work of the ritual together in the space we made together.

And then each time, as we ground the energy of the ritual and open our circle, we chat a little bit and then scurry to dissemble what we have made. Lately, there has been a lot of help with this and all the finery is packed and toted to cars and driven away in a twinkle. (The cars are sometimes left loaded at their destination, but that is another story.) Sometimes, though, a few are left to clear away and the night proceeds and backs and tempers give way, and the energy gained from the ritual is used up in getting home.

Perhaps a more ascetic tradition could sustain this for a long time. But we are

witches, and our work is of this earth and of the things of matter. Our space is defined energetically, but it is also very much defined by the stuff around us. We come in spirit, but we also come in body and those bodies are as important to our work as witches as the spirit we bring. They must be delighted and comfortable and involved, else we risk losing our primary task of integrating the spirit and body; the eternal and that which will pass.

There are many advantages to sustaining our own space. The energy of each of our rituals would remain in the place to be built upon. The altars could grow and certain things, like our Bridget dolly and the May Pole, would have a home available to all the community. We would have space to socialize and meet one another in various contexts, and our teachers could have a place to use for classes and meetings. Rituals could be planned in the space in which they were to be enacted, thus incorporating the magic that happens as a group creates and executes an idea. Our administrative functions could be centralized and become less mysterious. The mystery of our religion should not be incorporated into the tasks of bookkeeping or newsletter production, etc.

There are things we might lose. That very magic of the circus coming to town, setting up and taking down, could be lost entirely. We would have to watch for that, and occasionally take it all apart or put it back together again, an institu-



tional revolutionary party. (Maybe spring cleaning, or winter cleaning, is what is called for.)

At the ritual for Bridget this year, I found myself gathering the energy of the flame. There was some fear that the fuel would run out, so I went to the balcony space and gathered some of the energy and the flame kept going. When it was clear that the flame would last throughout the ritual, I kept gathering energy. As the spiral was danced I came down and stood near the dolly and the water and the flame, running energy and setting a spell. As the cone of the ritual peaked, I aloud asked Bridget for help in gathering us into a group with a place; a place for ritual and community, teaching and meditation.

If you are moved in any way to contribute to this effort, please join in. We

are looking for ideas for funding, a suitable space, partnerships which might be formed, any and all ideas our very creative community may come up with. Kim Jack is starting to pull things together administratively. She is a dynamic coordinator for Reclaiming and is open to ideas that arise from within our community, as well as seeking possibilities in the "mainstream" world of grants and nonprofit funding. You can reach her at our new Events Line number (415) 929-9249.

It will be great if the rather esoteric head work we did to become a 501(c)(3) corporation (a religious nonprofit organization) can translate into a real and living temple to the Goddess in all her forms (us).

Bridget, please help us.

WAKE UP CALL!

by Cheryl Dunlap

February 2, 1995

It was no accident that my first pledge to Brighid the evening before was “to take better care of my body,” and the next afternoon I found myself in the Emergency Room at Kaiser Oakland concerned about rapid heart palpitations, chest pain and light headedness. No, I don’t do drugs—illegal ones, that is; I do caffeine (coffee and chocolate) and alcohol, drugs just the same.

It was my first Brighid ritual. I was transformed easily between the worlds and I was open to wherever deep self would guide me. When Brighid was called forth, I was captivated by her beauty and wanted to walk over and touch her graceful, elegant gown. I felt her energy flow into and charge my body and I knew this was going to be a powerful evening!

As I wandered and sang, “So many memories of Winter,” I sorted through my own personal challenges, past and present. Singing, “Spring will arrive,” it became increasingly clear what I must do. For my life and for Her work, I must take better care of my body. It was both painful and uncomfortable for me to admit this truth.

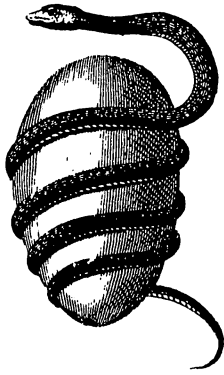
I left the moving circle and walked toward the South altar. I pulled the strength of the flames into my being, asking the Goddess for the will and determination to honor this pledge. Then, on to the West, where my tears flowed quite easily. I reminded myself

to be open to and accept any emotions that might arise as a result of this admission. In the North, I asked for the strength and nurturance of Mother Earth, and finally to the East to honor the first step, the beginning.

One by one people spoke their pledges before Brighid. I was so nervous, but managed to utter the promise, I pledged to take better care of my body, and then I heard it loudly sealed with the Smith’s hammer.

The Spiral Dance moved me happily amongst new and familiar friendly faces and the cone of power we raised affirmed my fate with the Powers of the Universe.

The next day started out quite ordinary, but in the afternoon as I was walking a group of children from school back to my child care site, I felt my heart racing, then pain in my chest, and finally, I felt as if I was going to pass out. I calmly forced myself to breathe deeply and told the eight children to hurry, that I wasn’t feeling well. We made it to the site all in one piece and I told my co-workers what was happening. They took charge of the children while I called the Kaiser Advice Nurse. It became evident that I needed to see a doctor right away and the best way to do that was by going to Emergency. What does that mean? Where do I go? What can I expect? I have never been to the hospital for anything related to myself: no



broken bones, no tonsils taken out, nothing! I have always been as healthy as a horse and I do not go to traditional doctors very easily (except my gynecologist). My acupuncturist and my masseuse help to keep me in good, healthy shape.

My intuition and my body were telling me that I needed help, so a co-worker drove me to Kaiser Emergency in Oakland and dropped me off; I told her to return to work. I meditated in the waiting room and asked for Brigid's blessing. I was sacred. At 42, I was too young for a heart attack. Finally, I saw a nurse who took my blood pressure, temperature and pulse. Everything was normal, but she still wanted me to see a doctor. Half an hour later, another nurse led me to a small, cloth-partitioned room. I was told to disrobe, put my clothes in a plastic bag, and put on a hospital gown and that she would do an EKG. All pretenses of calmness and adult control left me in that instant. Do you mean I'm going to have to spend the night? What's an EKG? What's wrong with me? I began to cry. This was serious. The nurse was wonderful and assured me that I would not be spending the night

and explained about the heart monitoring machine. (Oh, yes, now I remember, my adult self said).

My EKG was normal. My heart sounded normal. The doctor wanted a blood test. If everything was normal, why then is this happening? There are many reasons why this might occur, the doctor explained. Stress, emotions, diet ... He talked. He answered all my questions. He was actually quite helpful. He advised that I avoid caffeine and alcohol and that I wear an EKG halter as an outpatient to monitor my heart for 12-24 hours. The nurse returned, bringing me something to eat. We talked. She spent the next 15 minutes describing how she had changed her eating habits from eating Snickers bars daily, to eventually going macrobiotic. As she spoke, it became clearer and clearer to me that there was a message for me inside the day's strange events: the Powers that Be (and my body) have given me an amazing and powerful wake-up call to pay better attention to (and to take better care of) my precious, my one and only, body. Call it what you will: power of suggestion, an unconscious wish manifest on the physical plane, stress, premenopausal symptom; this experience jolted me to be more fully conscious of how I feed and nurture my body. Thank you, Brigid!

*We will never,
never lose our way to the Well,
of Her memory.
And the power of Her Living Flame,
It will rise, It will rise again.*

Blessed be.

I AM SO unhappy
with all this 'HARE OF
SPRINGTIME' POOP!
IT'S ONLY THAT DUMB
WITHOUT HIS CLOTHES
ON WHEN RABBIT
KNOWS EVERYBODY
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
BUNNY AND MONKEY
ME THE MONKEY
IN ALWAYS WITH THE
RABBIT, AND
SOMEONE
IS
giving
HIM
IDEAS



KIDS!
MONKEY
NEEDS A
BATH! IF YOU
HAVE ANY
IDEAS HOW
WE CAN
PERSUADE
HIM TO
CLEAN
UP, WRITE
BUNNY'S
CARE OF
THIS
NEWS-
LETTER.

That
he'd be
COVER-BOY MATERIAL
IF HE'D JUST TAKE
HIS CLOTHES OFF
AND DANCE TRALA
IN THE SPRING
SO I DENOUNCE
THIS NEWSLETTER AND
ALL THOSE OLD
WITCHES, BECAUSE
EVERYONE KNOWS
MONKIES ARE THE
MOST APPROPRIATE
SYMBOL OF
RENEWAL

AND
I
AM A
MONKEY



PROMISE OF SPRING

Odd, how paradox is the only thing that makes sense
Seasonal cycles override chronos
and I find myself a Maiden once again

Alone I face initiation,
Work that only I can do
Stripped of all and more
I am Innana

Thought I'd done this work already
But lower I descend
Diving deep into the Darkness
Embrace and drink it

Release and Let Go

Dark Mother,
there are times when only you can hold me
in the Winter of my soul

Thaw this Maiden
Warm my soul
Birth this Maiden
let my sap flow

May Spring Come for Me



—*Judy Shook*

The Intuitive Body, Aikido as a Clairsentient Practice

by Wendy Palmer (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley)

reviewed by Cybele a.k.a. Suzette Rochat

As a body worker and teacher of the Craft, I've long been interested in the body as the literal ground of Mystery, and concerned about our need to develop and use daily practices. As the Craft is in many ways an ecstatic tradition, this can cast a shadow of dissolution, leaving our energies to dribble out between the big crescendos of seasonal Sabbats or full moon rituals.

The Intuitive Body speaks to our relationship to Mystery, moving us through the doorways of breath, sensation of gravity, and awareness of our field. This work is about the necessity of daily attention to that which is alive—the cultivation of the garden of the spirit.

One of the quandaries we face as teachers in the Reclaiming tradition is the issue of daily practice and spiritual development. Other than the long solar rhythms of the Sabbats and the 28-day lunar cycles, the rhythmic patterns of this path are not so clearly signposted. This may be a situation like that of the Bay Area coastal town of Bolinas, where locals regularly remove the sign to Bolinas from the main road, in order to protect their privacy. We may not exactly be taking down the sign, but we are not putting it up. I sometimes feel our Anarchist principles and steadfast reverence for Mystery masks a fear of resistance to structure, leading us to obstruct our students more than is necessary for the development of their characters.

In the teaching we do locally and in the sister communities we have found/formed/joined at witch camps in Vancouver and elsewhere over the last decade, our most articulated rhythm is solar. In time, we move to the beat of the solstices, equinoxes and cross-quarter days when we gather in rituals to participate in the turning of the wheel of the year. Our attention to the shorter measures of lunar cycles has been generally more private and inward, moon rituals being the domain of people's solitary practice, home circles or covens. This may well be as it should; but I am interested in, and this book speaks to, the days and nights of every day, the time between big rituals, moment-to-moment centering.

The Intuitive Body, Aikido as a Clairsentient Practice spells out ways of working with ourselves now—anytime. It gives a well-defined map of the terrain of daily practice through the body. Wendy's spiritual ground is Buddhist and Taoist. Her work grew out of the martial art Aikido, but it isn't necessary to be familiar with Aikido to use and enjoy this book.

One of the basic practices from this book is that of "dropping the attention." This is a process of gathering the attention and sinking the focus from the center of the head through the body down into the Hara, a place between the low belly and the low back—the physical center of gravity. This affords us a

different point of view and better physical balance and readiness. Enhanced physical balance will influence our emotional and mental balance as well. Practicing dropping the attention will create a space within us that we have affinity for. This gives us somewhere to come back to when we get out there. This process stabilizes our attention in sensation, which is always in the present. As we return to ourselves again and again in our practice, we create a place from which we can discern boundaries—what is self and what is other. Then we have more hope of (and clarity for) taking responsibility for ourselves.

From this place of dropped attention we learn to open our attention to include others in our field. Being able to open our attention and include others without losing our center is the basis for skillful relating or facilitating, be it teaching, priestessing at a ritual, or parenting.

Wendy writes: “Open attention is very powerful—we have accepted others completely and made space for their entire range of behavior without trying to change them. This is what the Buddhists mean by compassion. In order to do this, we must have a tremendous amount of ground. We not only ground ourselves, but we hold the space for others inside our fields so we can tolerate their energy without losing our center. Our field becomes a foundation or root system that can hold their emotional and psychic weight.”

Opening to the sacred in everything alive is one of the principles that unites the many branches of the Craft. Most of us who identify as pagans or witches will recognize these words from the Charge of the Goddess: “... for if that



which you seek you find not within yourself, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.” Devoting time to a daily practice that includes dropping the attention, opening the attention, returning to dropped attention, is a study of the self. It is also a cultivation of steadiness, centering and awareness of just where your attention is at any given moment.

The other side of this self-study that will most certainly come up is the energetic patterns that underlie or orchestrate our conditioned tendencies—those fixed, reactive aspects of ourselves that we wish we could simply jettison into the Outer Darkness. Doing these basic practices allow us to work with these tendencies in an abstracted form, neutralizing some of their charge. It takes us outside of the content of our story, helping us to acknowledge and work with our patterns without being swept up in them. We can become more skillful with ourselves through applying these practices.

The fallen aspect of open attention is ellipted attention, where we put part of our center outside us. Usually, part of

our center is projected out onto another person. The resulting split creates resentment, misery and general havoc. (Codependency is another name for ellipted attention.) Returning to dropped attention from ellipted attention, returning to a state where all of our energy is centered inside us, helps us to detach from The Other in a healthy way. The process of unifying our attention strengthens us and helps us thrive.

Practicing dropped attention is different than focusing our awareness at our solar plexus to activate the will for spellwork, different than the heart-and-hand focus of healing work, or the third eye focus of trance work and divination. It brings us into the realm of “gut feeling,” and into the realm of skillful action. Wendy’s book addresses the “spirit of inquiry”: “The practice of asking ourselves a question and waiting for a response is my approach to conscious embodiment. Asking questions shifts our attention to the state of wonder, the place where our creativity and intuition arise.” This “fine art of Questioning” is manifested throughout the practice of working with a Quality over a long period of time—six months to a year. A Quality is something you have a little bit of in yourself that you want more of—something like tenderness or ground or creativity. It must be something that interests you and is timely, not ten steps down the road where you “should” be. This practice of asking for a Quality on a daily basis and opening to whatever arises has a lunar feel to me, quite different than the feeling of working with affirmations. Since this practice is sensate, it brings us into our bodies—the bodies that we hold sacred.

“By finding a way to stabilize and return to the present, just here and now, we set the stage for not-knowing, a place in which intuition may arise. We develop a simple and straightforward sense of self through basic practice by using the elements of breath, awareness of our field, and sensation of gravity. This sense of self is our base, our reference point or platform from which we can leap into the pool of not-knowing.”

In writing about this book, I’ve pondered the question of what is so compelling about intuition for me. When we sense and know what we cannot know, we descend and open into our Deep Self, approach The Goddess, The God, Source—our deepest interconnection with all of life. Whatever helps me to spend more of my time standing on—and acting from—that threshold is of immense value to me. The teachings that Wendy Palmer has developed are a precious reservoir, a route to the groundwater that connects us all.

If you are interested in cultivating physical grounding, learning daily centering practices or deepening your intuition, I wholeheartedly recommend this book or the video that preceded it. If you have trouble finding the book, try asking for it by its subtitle, *Aikido as a Clairsentient Practice*. Wendy Palmer is local to the Bay Area, and also travels to teach her work.

For information regarding Wendy Palmer’s classes, workshops or the *Intuitive Body* videotape, please contact:

Wendy Palmer
809 Vendola Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

The return of Persphone

is not easy

green

life

come green life

new life

renewed

life

come

fire

deep

in unmoved

earth

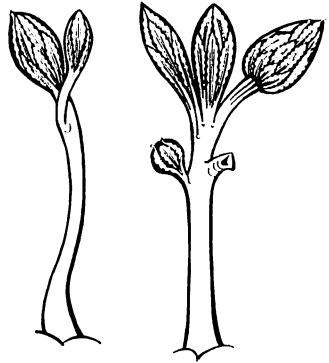
force through

resistant

soil

my daughters turn

and return



—*Judy Foster*

FLOWER TRANCE

by Calla

This is a nice trance to do with friends, gathered around a bouquet, or by yourself.

Find a flower which is particularly beautiful to you (and make sure you're not allergic to it ...). Find a quiet place where you can be undisturbed. If it is evening, candlelight is best. Stretch, relax and ground your energy. Create a circle of protection around yourself.

Take a moment to be aware of your own body, the space it occupies. Notice the light around you, and the air on your skin. Let your breath take you deeper.

Now begin to focus your awareness on the flower. Examine the flower, smell it, touch it, feel it on your skin. Look at it intently and notice its colors and textures. Notice its structure, its stem, petals and leaves.

Let your gaze be drawn into the flower ...

Now, slowly, feel yourself begin to enter the flower. Let the flower become like a temple for you to explore. Let yourself focus on a petal. Notice its texture. Is it smooth? Feathery? Prickly? Feel its fragrance surround you. Let yourself be bathed in its color. Is it cool? Warm? Can you sense the juices inside the petal?

What part of your life is beautiful? In what ways does the beauty in your life emerge, unhidden?

Now slowly move toward the center of the flower. Find the protruding sexual parts, the stamen. Are they coated with pollen? Notice the colors, texture and smell of the stamen.

What parts of yourself do you communicate to others? What gifts do you give to others? What gifts do you accept?

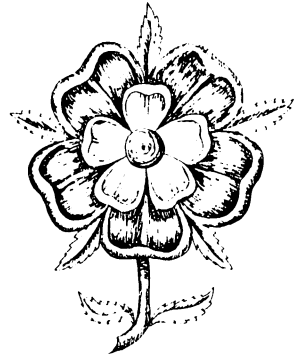
Now find an entrance into the womb of the flower, and begin to move inside. Let yourself breathe in the fragrance here. Notice the colors and patterns around you. As you move deeper, does the fragrance intensify? Is there nectar here? If so, drink it in.

What is your heart calling for?

Finally, let yourself enter the innermost chamber of the flower, the heart of its mystery. Pause and look around you. Before you lies the ovum, the seed unfertilized. What does it look like? Is it shining or dark? This is the center of yearning. Always half-complete, mysterious even to itself. Feel it call to you and draw you forward.

Look to your heart, and find a gift to give. (pause ...)

Move forward and gently penetrate the ovum, leaving your gift inside it. And feel the ovum begin to quicken and change beneath your hands.



What is being born in you?

Take a few moments to feel the energy within the flower. Each part is filled with purpose that will bear forth fruit and seeds. And each seed will carry within it yearning and mystery.

What is your heart's purpose? What seeds will you sow?

When you are ready, slowly begin to move back from the center of the flower. Take another drink of nectar, if you like. Take your time. Swing back down onto the petals, and feel their texture. Bounce around on them, if you want. Play in their curves.

When you are ready, thank the flower for allowing you to visit. Tell it how beautiful its shape and colors are, and how fragrant it is. Take a moment to tell the flower anything else you need to say. (pause ...)

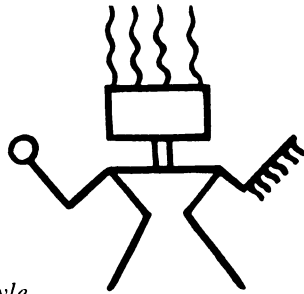
Then begin to draw your attention away from the flower, and back to your own body. Notice the structure of your own body, the softness of your skin. Notice where you are moist, and where you are dry. Notice the texture of your hair and clothing (if any). Wiggle your toes. Wrinkle your nose. Make funny noises.

Welcome back.

SPRING

To write a poem
Today of Spring—
First day.
How else to say it?
Bursting love.

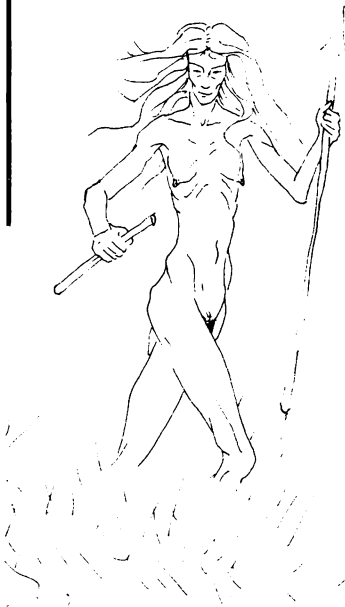
—T. Thorn Coyle



CHARGE OF THE CRONE

I am the beauty of the dark moon and the dark earth beneath your feet. I am rest in the evening of your life. I am the skin and bones of your existence. I am She who is weathered by time, aged to perfection. I am the midwife to the dying, promise of life everlasting. All acts of birthing and dying are my rituals. I am Hecate, Erishkegal, Baba Yaga, Menat. I am Sedna, Sheilg-na-gig, Sibyl, Edda, Weisse Frauen. I am the darkness you fear and welcome. I am the freedom to express your essence. I am the courage to cast aside the opinions of others, as you live life according to your own plan. I am the wisdom that can guide the world. I am the energy of the old, the knowledge of when to end, of when to cut the cord. I was with you at your birthing and will be with you to ease the transition of your dying into yet another rebirth.

—Antiga



ACTION ALERT

National Endowment for the Arts in Danger

The "Contract with America" calls for elimination or drastic funding cuts for the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Smithsonian Institute, Institute of Museum Studies and the Kennedy Center.

The San Francisco Bay Area receives the highest amount of NEA funding in the country. Music in Schools Today (MUST) received \$15,000 a year for the last three years from them. Arts advocates across the country must act **NOW** if these agencies are to be saved.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The Emergency Committee to Save Culture and the Arts, a project of the American Arts Alliance, has set up a phone number (**1-900-370-9000**) so you can easily register your support for continued funding for the arts and culture with your Congress person. You're invited to use this number immediately. The call costs \$1.99 per minute, and you must be 18 years of age or older to call.

OR

Call **1-800-651-1575**. For a flat cost of \$9.50 a message of support will be sent to your elected officials.

OR

Call or write Nancy Kassebaum and Newt Gingrich and ask them to support our national cultural institutions. Call or write your senators and congress people.

Nancy Kassebaum: (202) 224-4774 FAX: (202) 224-3514
write c/o U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510

Newt Gingrich: (202) 225-4501
write c/o U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515



Starhawk's Schedule 1995

April 7-9, 1995: Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Evening presentation and weekend workshop

Contact: Pat Hogan (604) 253-7189

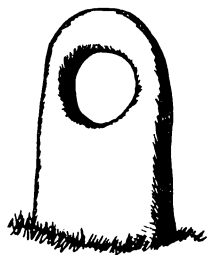
PO Box 21510, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2W5

April 21-23, 1995: Toronto, Canada

Weekend workshop for women

Contact: Judy Rumak (415) 253-1241

23 3rd St. Apt. 1, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M8V 2X5



**To confirm dates, or for more information, contact: Harmony Network,
PO Box 582
Sebastopol, CA 95473
(707) 823-9377**

The fires, the floods, the quakes, oh my ...

California has been experiencing weather and acts of nature, and in the process some of us have experienced great changes. The office of Harmony Network Booking and Productions (Starhawk's booking agent and the producer of the California Witch Camp) was destroyed in the flood that swept through Guerneville, CA in early January. All records, inventory and office equipment were ruined.

This means that if you signed a mailing list to be informed about Starhawk's schedule or the California Witch Camp, you will need to send your information to the new PO Box (see above). It also means delays in responses to many of you who have requested information while I reorganize and attempt to work out of my small living room.

I want to thank all of the wonderfully supportive people who have sent donations and cards and letters of loving encouragement. This helps more than I can express. I am so grateful to be a part of this community of caring folks ... you are the force of Spirit that keeps me going!!

There is no longer a fax machine, just the phone number and PO Box listed above.

Blessed be,
Jodi Sager

Reclaiming

Classes & Events & Witch Camps

BREAKING THROUGH TO DEEPER MAGIC—A SPRING EQUINOX RETREAT

Join us as we sing by the fire, walk in the redwoods, soak in the hot tub, laugh, drum, trance, dance and challenge ourselves to break through our barriers to a deeper magical life. From **7:00 pm, Friday, March 24 to Sunday afternoon, March 26**, we will retreat to a secluded camp in the redwoods of the Santa Cruz mountains. Vegetarian meals provided. **\$150-\$300 sliding scale**. Some work exchange available. Call **Beverly (415) 927-2044** or **Laura Wyrd (408) 425-3317** for registration and information. Space is limited so register early!

THE IRON PENTACLE for women by Hilary Valentine and Reya

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 six classes. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic class. Six **Tuesdays**, beginning **April 4**. \$60 - \$120 Sliding scale. Call **Reya (415) 826-2342**, for location, information, and registration.

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC for women by Patti and Reya

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 in May. Call the Events Line **(415) 929-9249** for information, registration, and location. Sliding scale \$60-120.

THE EVENTS LINE HAS CHANGED. The new number is: (415) 929-9249.

We're sorry we had to change this phone number again, but it's a big job and we think it's only fair not to stick one person with that much work indefinitely. If we get our own space (see Patti's article on page 5), we can keep the same number no matter who's on Phone Faery duty. So, call and find out what's happening, or just call to listen to Kim's Australian accent, and thank you for bearing with us.

Witch Camps 1995

March 11-18, 1995: Austin, Texas

Contact: Sylvia Adame, 8702 Appaloosa Run, Austin, TX 78737, (512) 288-6615

June 3-10: Missouri

Contact: Diana's Grove, PO Box 159, Salem, MO 65560, (314) 689-2400

June 17-24: California

Contact: Jodi @ Harmony Network

July 23-30: Vancouver, B.C.

Contact: Pat Hogan, PO Box 21510, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5L 2W5 (604) 253-7189

August 5-12: West Virginia

Contact: Lynn Grosz, Summer Intensive, PO Box 1303, Fairfax, VA 22030-1303, (703) 532-3874

August 23-30: Vermont

Contact: Raven, RR. 1 Box 1753, Charlotte, VT 05445 (802) 425-2984

All camps are taught collectively. Starhawk will teach at all except for the Vancouver camp. Fees vary according to location and accommodations. Some scholarships are available, so apply early.

RECLAIMING RECOMMENDS: INTUITIVE PRACTICE THROUGH THE BODY with Cybele (a.k.a. Suzette Rochat)

Join an ongoing practice group working with sensate intuitive practices. We will practice dropping and opening the attention while sitting in stillness, moving alone, and moving with another person. We will explore the relationship between our inner and outer senses as channels for information and intuition. The basic practices are focussed on our relationship to our boundaries. The primary focus will be on learning to stabilize the attention, developing physical ground and center. Recommended reading: *The Intuitive Body, Aikido as a Clairsentient Practice* by Wendy Palmer (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley).

Six Tuesday MORNINGS, 9:00-11:00 a.m., \$120-\$160 sliding scale. Call Cybele (415) 541-5650 for information/registration.

(See Cybele's book review and article on this subject on page 11.)

THE CALIFORNIA WITCH CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUND

'94 was the first California witch camp in 8 years. It was a great success, a warm and wacky week devoted to personal healing and building of community. Surrounded by Her elements, we came together, a cool swim, a fiery dance, sacred rituals and the best of talent shows, each giving us rich memories to carry with us. The energy grows and the connections continue to strengthen, covens are springing up and friendships have sprouted ... the crossing of paths at public rituals is a delight.

We left camp committed to build scholarship funds and with visions of people gathering at future camps—diverse, strong, beautiful. If you want to join our efforts (by sharing ideas, volunteering, donating or the soon to be popular "Sponsor a Witch Program", call Holly at (415) 474-8949 or Helen at (415) 642-1799.

UPCOMING FUND RAISERS FOR CALIFORNIA WITCH CAMP

Pagan Flea Market

Garage Sale

March 25, 1995

10:00 till ?

Location to be announced.

Accepting donations now.



To donate goods or peddle your wares, call Helen at (415) 642-1799



Pagan Dance

April 30, 1995

Capturing that Beltaine energy, an event NOT to be missed!

Location to be announced.

Sliding scale.

For more information or to volunteer, call Helen at (415) 642-1799

Hail Brigid!

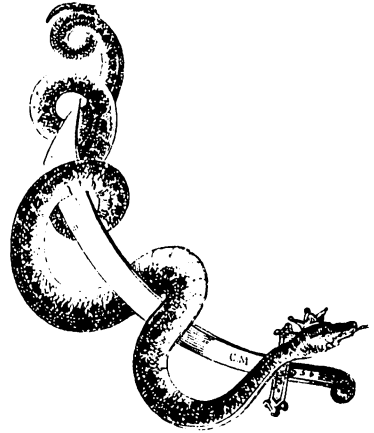
Deep, Deep Beneath the Surface
Down, Dark within the Earth
Far below She has been hidden
That lost part of my true self
Buried Safe within her resting place.

Takes the Power of earthquake
to shatter stone encasement
created to protect her
but burying her alive

Sleeping Beauty I have sought you
thru bones and thorns, blood and tears
Battled Death to win your life

You, my Maiden, Wake and Free me
Thaw and Breathe that I may Live
Lost forgotten treasure,
Missing Link to my Full Life

Though forzen Blue
a china beauty
Spring Will Come
and with it Thaw
Life Can Flow
and Love Can be Full



Now, I, the Maiden on my journey
Seek my Quest, my Heart's Desire

Miles of Rock cannot stop me
Thru the Waterfall I plunge
Mists cannot stop me
I will step into the Nothing
Creating Future as I go

Dancing only on faith
I dance the Dance of Creation
Into the Unseen I whirl and spin
Leap and circle, on I go

Pledging to honor pain and gifts
Cleanse me Waters of the World
Sacred Flame burn within me
Fire my Passions
Forge and Fuel me
By Your Light guide my way

—Judy Shook

SPRING READING RECOMMENDATIONS

by David Spinner

During this rainy winter, I reached a reading saturation point and decided not to absorb any more words. I thought it would be fun to find out what books held the attention of some other interesting people in and around the community. Here are some titles that might arouse your interest.

Among the books mentioned most enthusiastically was *Black Elk Speaks*, by John Nierhardt (University of Nebraska Press, \$9.95). I was told that the book is a “brilliant rendering of a Sioux medicine man’s vision” and a wonderful introduction to one version of Native American spirituality.

Another book described as a “must for Queer pagans” is *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming Connections between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*, by Randy P. Conner (HarperSF, \$18). The subtitle says a lot—not least of which is that the book sometimes reads like a master’s thesis. But *Blossom of Bone* is filled with so much information, someone reading it must either act up or act out.

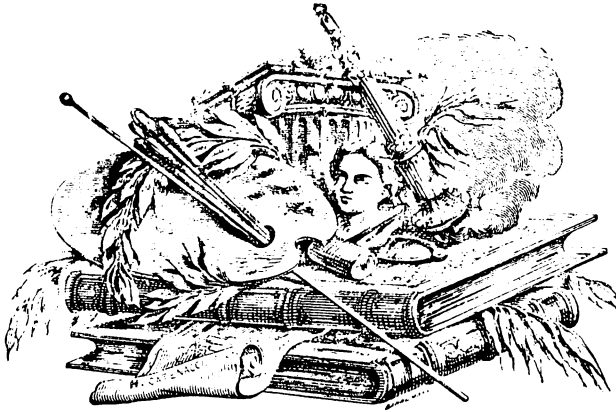
If you’re looking for new ways to use the body below your head for sex, have a look at *Safer Sexy: A guide to Gay Sex Safety* (edited by Peter Tatchell). The editor aims at the cool, the young, and the gay, but the book, which also has high production values, arty color photos, and a witty text, has important information for those into many flavors. (The book may soon be available at Good Vibrations.)

For those looking for resources and

ideas to bring spiritual practice into daily life, have a look at *Living Presence: The Sufi Way to Mindfulness and the Unfolding of the Essential Self*, by Kabir Helminski (J.P. Tarcher, \$11.95). The book offers insight about ways to breathe in air of divine presence around us and replace the daily chatter that our mediaphilic society inundates us with. For those in need of something inspiring and portable, try *The Little Book of Women Mystics*, by Carol L. Flinders. It contains the words of some “cool, cool people, mostly Christian, mostly medieval ... most inspiring,” I was told.

Less conventionally associated with the Craft, but deeply rooted in love for the Earth, are the books of magic and consciousness by Carlos Castaneda: The first four books in his series (*The Teachings of Don Juan*, *A Separate Reality*, *Journey to Ixtlan*, and *Tales of Power*) have been around for about twenty years and were many people’s first excursion into the mystical. They still retain their power.

It’s an article of truth that the classic stories, myths and legends contain much of the deep wisdom and hidden history that enlighten us and deepen our practice of the Craft. And of course, practice in actually telling and tracing to these stories—rather than simply reading them—can take you where you have never gone before. For insight into both telling stories and in crafting them, a storyteller and writer among us suggests any collection of the Grimm Brothers fairy tales, *Earth Light* by R.J. Stewart, *The Celtic*



Reader: Selections from Celtic Legend, Scholarship and Story, edited by John Matthews (Thorsons SF, \$16) and *A Fairy Tale Reader: A Collection of Story, Lore and Vision* by John and Caitlin Matthews (Thorsons SF \$16).

Or if you just want to forget the rain for awhile, lay around and read a good story, here are some noted novels: *The Mists of Avalon*, by Marion Zimmer Bradley (Ballantine Books, \$14). Oh yes, this book appears on every recommended reading list; but if you've read it already, why not read it again? Bradley's most recent novel *The Forest House* (Viking, \$21.95) comes less highly praised, but *The Mists of Avalon* is a hard act to follow, after all. Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (Ban-

tam, \$12.95) will capture your imagination and it will spook you if you read it as political prophecy. A surprise for one reader was *The Eight*, by Katherine Neville (Ballantine, \$5.99). An adventure of the type often found on the bestseller list, this well researched, imaginative page-turner takes the heroine deeply into alchemy and magic in both the present and revolutionary France.

This list has been put together in a completely arbitrary manner, of course. It is based on hearsay, unsystematic interviews, and arbitrary criteria. However, anyone having other suggestions or things worth noting, please feel free to pass on titles and descriptions.

Dear Men of the Reclaiming Community,

On Friday, October 28 I attended the Samhain men's ritual that you organized. I recently moved to San Francisco from the state of Washington, where I have participated in lots of ritual over the past ten years, including Wicca rituals and shamanic drumming/vision questing. Through the ritual grapevine and Starhawk's books, I had heard of the Reclaiming Community, and was quite excited that I was going to have an opportunity to connect with you all, particularly during Samhain.

Unfortunately, I came away from the ritual greatly disappointed. More than disappointed, I have some strong concerns about what went on during the ritual, and feel a responsibility to communicate my concerns to you.

Before I communicate my concerns, let me say that I appreciate the effort that you made to make the ritual happen. Obviously a lot of thought and planning went into it, on the part of a small group of men, and you coordinated and executed your different parts gracefully. Thank you for caring enough to make the ritual happen.

Here are my concerns:

First of all, to my way of thinking, any time you get forty or so men together, most of us white with two men of color, specifically as men, it's a risky proposition at best. You can be certain that some (many? most? all?) of these men have engaged in sexist, abusive and

violent behavior in the past and perhaps in the near-present. So if we are intending to worship the Goddess, then it seems to me essential that we ground the ritual in some overtly women-positive and non-violent principles and understanding. This would, at the very least, mean some ritualistic acknowledgment of what (we) men have done to women and children, of what women's everyday reality is as the result of too many males' behaviors, and our resolve to change that, to embody a more positive version of masculinity. This to me would be a "woman positive" male ritual space. Yet this never happened.

I realize it is the ritual fashion these days to want to set up what many regard as a "neutral" ritual space. Such a "neutral" ritual space would seem to be opposed to grounding an all-male ritual in a non-violent, women-positive principles.

Yet on deeper reflection, we see that such an argument is an evasion of responsibility as a ritual leader. Clearly rituals that are rooted in Goddess and earth-based ideology are not "neutral" ritual space. To understand how this is so, just think of the ritual of a Roman Catholic mass. It is rooted in a whole 'nother ideology, a whole 'nother practice, from Reclaiming's rituals. So you are clearly choosing to include some things in your rituals, and exclude other things, just as the Catholics do. And these choices are not neutral, they are very ideological.

So choosing to exclude non-violent

or woman-positive principles along with your Goddess/earth-based principles is an ideological choice. Perhaps it is a choice of oversight or omissions, but it is still a choice. Another way of saying this is that not choosing is a choice, whether we wish to admit it or not. It is particularly a choice when men get together in all-male space, because as men-mostly white men-we are the privileged ones in a sexist, racist world. That is not to say that we men, especially gay men, don't have our pain and suffering and things to heal from, because we do. But compared to women, on the whole, we men are in the privileged position.

So your choosing to not ground your ritual in woman-positive and non-violent principles is an ideological preference, whether you acknowledge it or not. The notion of "neutral" ritual space is a myth. We live in a political world, where power dynamics swirl all around us. We men of privilege can choose to ignore and deny this, or we can acknowledge it and choose to work with it. Personally, I believe that any time men get together in all-male groups, there ought to be some sort of recognition of our privileged status as men, and of women's reality compared to men. When we do not do this, when we do not have such a mooring, it has been my experience that all male gatherings tend to spin out of control. The Samhain ritual I attended, I believe, was an illustration of this. Let me give you some specific examples from the ritual of what I mean.

Early in the ritual, we "called in" our male ancestors-our dead fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, etc. etc.-without any acknowledgment of what at least some (many? most?) of these men did to women and children. After all, it was our ancestors that built this sexist, racist, homophobic, economically exploitative society. With forty men, even going back only three or four generations, we were calling in at least a couple hundred male ancestors into the room. Odds are very great that there were more than a few batterers, rapists, wife murderers, molesters, etc. in the lot of them. What could have been a powerful ritual in which we as a group confronted these men for their behavior, and in so doing modeled a more appropriate behavior for we living men, instead-it seemed to me at the time, and still seems to me-turned into a Robert Bly-type of male bonding exercise. It was a missed opportunity. I can envision a powerful ritual in which we acknowledge what our male ancestors did, both the positive and the negative. I submit to you that this would be a safer, and ultimately, a more healing principle around which men could bond.

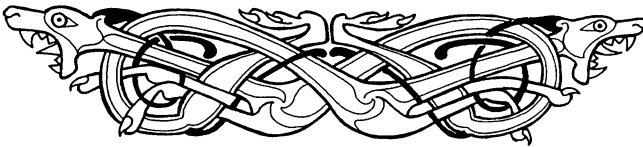
Carving pumpkins was also part of the night's ritual festivities, and each man had a pumpkin and a knife. At one point, you (the facilitators) had all of us guys hold aloft our knives, and then I remember the instructions being that we were all to look across the circle at the other men (our "brothers" I remember the term being used) and to "let what-

ever images come to us that want to come,” as I recall the instructions. This type of instruction was an example of the “neutral” ritual space that you thought you were creating. But let me tell you, for me the sight of forty men holding aloft knives together, in the absence of any grounding in principles of non-violence or pro-feminism, was a frightening spectacle. The images that came to me were something like: KKK, Skinheads, the age-old brotherhood of military rapists and murderers, sleazy male pornographers and snuff film producers. I am not an overly paranoid man, but I am well read enough to know that, throughout history, this is what groups of men with knives and the wrong intentions have done together. I remember also thinking of gangs of priests who conspired to murder and burn witches, which was particularly surprising since our ritual worship of the Goddess was supposed to honor witches. Now some may say, “Well what is it about you, Steven Hill, that you brought such baggage into the ritual with you?” Let me say that my fears are fully owned, and grounded in reality of what far too many men have done—even well meaning liberal hip men, just like some attending

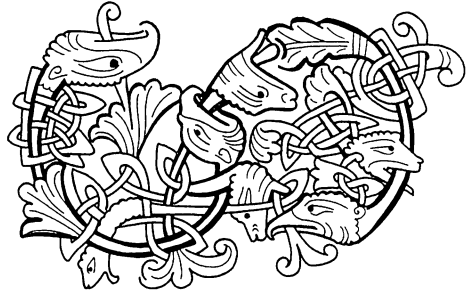
the ritual. As men, we have the luxury to ignore or acknowledge this. Is it too much to ask that we choose the latter, and consistently keep it at the forefront of our agenda?

By not grounding the ritual in any kind of pro-feminist principle, or acknowledging the historical and present day horror of male violence, I feel that you, the facilitators, did not distinguish between those above cited groups of men, and who we were as men. I found myself looking around the room asking myself, who are these guys, all forty of them, holding aloft knives and calling in their male ancestors? I found myself wondering if it was a safe space. But I kept telling myself, relax, it's just the Reclaiming Community, it's bound to get better.

Unfortunately, it didn't. The next part of the ritual had the potential to be profound. You will recall that you had us all walk down some stairs into a dark room, symbolic of descending with the Goddess Inanna into our subconscious. I enjoyed very much the darkness, the light of the candles, my reflections of the moment. I thought this was a very creative part of the ritual, and had real potential. But the silence didn't last, as



it was interrupted by what came next which was perhaps the most appalling part of the whole evening. You, the facilitators, had handed each of us a slip of paper before going down the stairs that said, "What questions fill the dark?" Once we were all in the dark, you invited us to call out whatever questions sprang into our minds and imagination. More "neutral" space instructions. The questions that were asked into the dark were, from my perspective, perfect evidence of what is contained in the male imagination, particularly when not grounded in pro-feminist, woman-positive and non-violent principles. So some men began calling out-into the dark, mind you-things such as "What is it like to kill?" "What would it feel like to kill?" "Why am I afraid to kill?" and other variations of a killing theme. These are the men who held aloft the knives, mind you. I tried to counter this by calling into the dark things like "Why do men cause so much violence?" and "Why are women so afraid of men?" To my latter question, I recall that one man actually responded, "Why are men so afraid of women?" and he got lots of nervous laughs. To which I countered "Why are women so afraid of men's violence?" but the momentum had moved on. Other things called out into the dark were obviously purposefully provocative, while others revealed, sadly, what an abject lot so many of the attendees were-self-pitying, selfish, pseudo-suicidal, apparently completely unaware of their considerable male privilege, in spite of their inner pain and turmoil. I am not unmoved or unsympathetic to the pain and turmoil of men, but I want to tell you that laying in the dark



with these men was gloomy, depressing and at times scary. From my perspective, you, the facilitators, were playing with forces and energies of which you had very little understanding. You gave free rein to our sexist imaginations as well as our male ancestors, and there is nothing liberating about that. Men throughout time have imagined pleasurable rape, and too many men have enacted their fantasies. I fear your ritual may have unintentionally contributed further toward that.

I was also greatly appalled that one man brought his 8 or 9 year old son to the ritual. The boy not only had to listen to and see what I've already described, but during the "questions in the dark" sequence he had to sit through such questions as "Why does cum taste so good?" and other sexually explicit and provocative questions. I have worked as a mental health counselor for children and teens for the past seven years, and I fail to see the value of a 9 year old boy sitting through such sexually explicit exclamations. I hope the boy's father processed the damn thing with him. I wonder, did you not consider keeping children away? Since a child was in fact present, did you

not feel any responsibility to consider changing the rules to accommodate him?

I cringed and felt silenced most of the entire evening, which lasted over three hours. I almost left several times, but being new to San Fran I was determined to "check out the scene." Also, since this was the Reclaiming men, and I have heard so much about Reclaiming, I kept waiting for the night to turn itself around. Then I decided that I would write a letter to Reclaiming, outlining my concerns, so that became another incentive for me to stay until the end. I am still wondering what more I could have done to swerve-or disrupt-the momentum of your ritual. But I try to be respectful of ritual space, and I realize it is usually not a space for dialogue or discussion. As a participant in a pre-scripted ritual, it seems I was stuck with the choice of staying or leaving. I chose to stay, but not because I liked what was happening.

I know that earth-based/Goddess ritual, in the wrong hands-like Robert Bly's for instance-is not always feminist based. Perhaps I was naive, but I was surprised to find this to be so with you, the Reclaiming men. Your ritual

was not anti-feminist, like a Bly spectacle tends to be-it was more afeminist-"neutral"-which in a sexist world gives free run to the typical male imagination which has been steeped in a rapist culture.

I strongly believe that bringing a group of men together as men is always a risky proposition, unless that gathering is somehow grounded in feminist/pro-feminist and non-violent principles. I would like to dialogue more with you, the organizers of the event, in order to understand your perspective. I would like to set up a time to discuss the issues I have raised in this letter. I would prefer not to do this one at a time, since that would be quite exhausting, and would rather do this in a larger group setting with any men who are interested, perhaps at one of your regularly scheduled meetings, if you have them.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Steven Hill



Brook Schoenfield responds

Dear Steven Hill:

First, to be accused of many of the things I have worked against for most of my life has been very difficult. For instance, never in any of my imaginings would I ever have seen myself lumped with Robert Bly. I think his work falls short of a pro-feminist men's liberation movement. Indeed, I've needed to take some time to come to grips with these accusations.

Having acknowledged my hurt feelings, let me try to find my truth in what you have written.

When I receive such a strong criticism, I feel I must look at my responsibility. All relationships (and surely, doing ritual requires us to come into relationship) have two parts. Let me see if I can find mine. What I hear you say, very loud and clear, is that you felt no safety from the start of the ritual. It is clear that you are dubious of men gathering in men's space successfully. You brought that fear with you when you came in the door ("anytime you get forty ... men together, ... it's a risky proposition at best."). No one made clear the basic political and spiritual position of those of us facilitating and priesting the ritual. We did not deal well with the possibility that men could come into our space already in fear and anxiety. Since you did not know us, how could you know the depths of our work against the various *isms* of which you accuse us? How could you know the many years spent by each of us coming to a pro-

feminist position, the many years plumbing the depths of our own sexism, racism, homophobia, classism? I have confronted the very roots of the patriarchy with some of these men at non-violent direct actions, in other political work, and in ritual, and have seen others of us working through their own *isms* publicly through drama and storytelling. I do trust the place from where we are coming. I did not think to spell it out—it goes without saying amongst us. But perhaps, it should not have gone without saying to the larger gathering. Clearly, you needed some definite sign that we share your concerns, and that we work to heal and change these things. In any event, I did not communicate this clearly to you, and so you mistrusted my basic position. I take this criticism and shall work to do this better in the future. I don't know how yet, but I'm thinking deeply about this problem.

Now, let me comment upon a deep conviction of mine. In my many years of non-violence preparation and consensus facilitations, I have come to believe that one can never, ever tell another where or how to find a political or moral position. One can only set up a space where the participants come to know what is in their own heart, be it something I approve of or believe in or something to which I feel opposed. It is only through a person's own empowerment and self discovery that she or he can become truly liberated, woman or



man. Telling someone that they are wrong in their beliefs, that they are perpetuating an *ism* is the same as the patriarchy telling us all what we are and what to believe. It is, quite literally, against my religion. So, I come to a ritual to create a space in which each individual must face his or her own self, not mine. This is very challenging, and, each of us gets out of it what we put in.

Let me illustrate: A few years ago, I was giving a non-violence preparation for an American Peace Test political direct action against the Nevada Nuclear Test Site. The group that showed up that day was quite diverse. It was all womyn, save for me and one other man who came to student facilitate. Some of the womyn were very unsure of whether they could even respect the non-violence agreements required of everyone doing civil disobedience at the action—these womyn were angry and felt that they might like to do some kinds of property destruction that some would consider violent acts. Two other womyn came with a very strict interpretation of what non-violence is. They were both shocked that the three preparers conducting the workshop refused to demand that everyone believe as they did. One of these womyn left very angry. She did not want to participate in an action where people would find their own relationship to non-violence. How-

ever, I was adamant (as were my cofacilitators) that no-one can be told to be non-violent; it must come from the heart first. The other woman stayed through the whole preparation. At the end, not only had she come to understand that no one knows, absolutely, what non-violence is or should be, but that she had been very rigid in her thinking about the intentions of people who did not agree with her. But it didn't go just one way! She had a profound effect on the other womyn who were unsure of their position. They came to appreciate the thoughtfulness and respect of her thinking, as well. Indeed, they all shared an experience for which there are no words—the open mind is the one that grows furthest. It was one of the most difficult and most rewarding preparations I have ever facilitated.

I strongly believe that only through acceptance can we find ourselves. Yes, at the ritual some men's questions did seem trivial. I want to be careful about judging others too quickly or harshly, for I cannot truly know what another's internal motivation is without discussion with them. But let us assume that they were being trivial. Those men may now be dealing with their missed opportunity for depth. Some men had scary questions. Each of us must come to grips with our own feelings about such questions. This is not bad. This can lead to growth. Those men may now be asking themselves from where inside them such things came. That process, an open one, is dangerous. But we can only grow when we risk. In fact, Steven Hill, for me to lay down a line which would restrict what can be expressed would not be a feminist act. It would not

be a liberated act. It would, in my eyes, be the same squelching oppression which I have for many years sought to throw off, and with which I continue to struggle both with others and in myself, daily.

I want to address one other matter from your letter. Let me explain why I think it is very important for men to call their male ancestors. I will not deny that my ancestors have been perpetrators. Some have. Some have been the victims. But they all are asking for a place in my heart, because they are all in my veins, in my blood, in my flesh. Victim and perpetrator, going back and back and back to the beginning of human time. What they all lacked was understanding, acceptance and love. That is what made perpetrator and victim, both. In the past, I have wanted to identify only with my ancestors who were victims. That feels very safe. I couldn't be part of all the destruction that has been wrought. But, I didn't have to look far for an ancestor who needed my heart: my father was a very difficult and violent man with his family. I wanted no part of him. I am not him. So I said. But that way leads me to being the victim. Which, of course, leads to being a perpetrator, as I was the righteous finger of moral superiority at those who can and do hurt, like my father. But I am of him. It is his politics (he was very progressive—perhaps radical is not too strong a word.) that I carry forward to this day. He took me to my first civil rights demonstration when I was 15, where the Klan threw bricks at us and hurled insults. I really appreciated his support in taking action against injustice. So, slowly, since his death, I have heard his spirit asking for what he had not in life.

And slowly, he has worked his way into my heart. And as my heart opens to him, so it opens from victim and perpetrator to fully human, fully who I am in totality. You see, if I can accept that I carry perpetrator and victim, then I have the greatest tool possible against committing such horrors: myself. I'm in a process of self acceptance and personal inquiry. So, hard as it is, I welcome my male ancestors to my ritual, to my healing—that is what they have for me—one of the most tangible things the dead can give us.

Before I close, I do have something for you to think about. I would suggest to you that you could own some of your fears. Where are they coming from and what do they mean to you? Perhaps, with this kind of reflection, it will turn out to be not such a disastrous ritual? Maybe the ritual will be seen as a thought provoking and challenging one?

I hope this helps you understand the place that I was coming from. I know that I have much to learn about structuring good, safe, but also growth-incubating ritual, and I take your despair to heart. I don't know if it is possible to create a ritual that is both completely safe and in which the kind of free expression necessary for personal empowerment can also take place. I will continue to explore the edges of these two needs with your experience as one of my guideposts. Thank you for caring enough to speak out. Please know that you have been heard, even if I disagree with some and cannot validate others of your criticisms.

Sincerely,

Brook Schoenfield



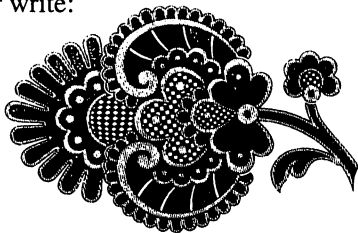
Announcements

The Ancient Religions Society is a student-run, non profit religious organization focusing on the diversity of Earth-based religions. We provide educational information, networking, and social contacts for pagans, neo-pagans, Wiccans, and other non-mainstream religions. We are not a group out to convert people; rather, we want to give interested people a chance to learn more about these ancient traditions, and to dispel misconceptions. Please contact us for more information about meetings, events, rituals or just to say Hi. Call Anna "Scatha" Nelson, Jim "Quicksilver" Keller, Xaevier, or Chantel Camy at (213) 856-2824, or write 1157-1/2 West 30th Street, Box B3, LA CA 90007

PROJECT WISH (Women in Search of Hope)—Women used in prostitution and those who are battered in their homes may find it difficult to escape the violence in their lives. They may not have control of their own money, their actions may be closely watched, and they may not know where to go for help. In addition, women used in prostitution are often viewed as criminals, immoral and bad, and are treated coldly and unfairly, and are sometimes denied services altogether. Project WISH is a community based, non-residential program designed to offer a viable alternative to prostitution and incarceration by providing practical and emotional support. WISH can provide information, referrals and advocacy to help you step out of the life. For more information, call Grace Burke at (617) 426-9800, or write:

Project WISH

c/o Crime & Justice Foundation
95 Berkeley St., Rm. 202
Boston, MA 02116



Desert Spirit Fest '95, April 20-23, 1995

The Temple of the Triple Goddess invites you to celebrate nature with us at Desert Spirit Fest '95. Join us for our second annual spring gathering at Seven Springs campground located in the Tonto National Forest. We will be celebrating Earth Day and Beltaine with ritual and feast with all our old and new friends. For more information, call (602) 997-2498. Registration should take place by April 1.

CALL FOR PAPERS

How has Z Budapest touched your life? We want articles, stories, poems, personal anecdotes, rituals, dreams or letters about how you feel changed through contact with Z's writing, rituals and way of being in the world, for inclusion in an upcoming anthology. Send submissions to Z Stories, PO Box 11363, Oakland, CA 94611. Submission deadline: February 2, 1996.

THE EARTH CONCLAVE, INC. ANNOUNCES:

Spring Conclave: THE POWER OF WORDS AND THE CREATION OF CULTURE, April 21-24, 1995—A conference on the influence of literature, poetry, film/theater and music on the creation of pagan culture an in-depth exploration of how writing influences and is influenced by Pagan Culture.

Ongoing: PAGANMODERNPOST ART—A mail art show for all! Maximum size 5"x7" artwork mailed to the Exhibitions Coordinator of the Earth Conclave, Inc. Any medium, any topic/theme related to the Earth, Magic, or Nature Spirituality. Paint, sketch, collage, etch, carve, assemble, photograph, knit, crayon, or whatever you fancy and send it to us (no envelopes, please). Pieces will become part of a traveling exhibit of Pagan Art. Come see it at a Conclave!

Contact: The Earth Conclave, Inc., PO Box 14377, Madison, WI 53714, phone (608) 244-4488, fax (608) 244-9443, email: conclave@localis.1.lic.wisc.edu

PAGAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, May 13 & 14, 1995

If you have started or led (or are thinking of starting/leading) a Pagan group, class, newsletter, ritual or gathering, you are a Pagan leader. The Conference offers training, trance and ritual work, and networking with your peers on Wiccan-owned land in Missouri. Contact Goddess Studies, c/o Lori DeGayner, 1402 Hill Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

PAGAN RECOVERY PROJECT using the Twelve Steps

Are you in twelve step recovery? Are you wiccan, shaman, or of another nature-based religion? Would you like a safe place to talk about your recovery? Perhaps the Pagan Recover Project can help. **Won't you join us? Call (408) 559-GAIA**

Holy Video!

Zsuzsanna Budapest and Peg Jordon in "Gathering the Goddesses"

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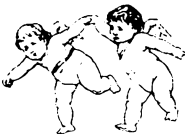
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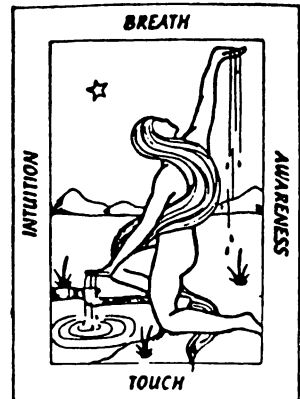
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- Display Advertising has a higher value than Classified or Type-only Ads. *When you send art or logo with your ad, we charge Display Rates.*
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- Include a contact name and phone, in case we have a question.
- *Please do not send dot-matrix printed ad copy. It doesn't print well.*
- Although we do print some free brief community service announcements, *if you're charging money for an event or service, please include us as a part of your advertising budget for helping make it happen.*

Thank you again for your support of Reclaiming work.

WHOLESALE NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

We are now set up to distribute the Reclaiming Newsletter to shops outside the San Francisco Bay Area. Please send us your orders before each Solstice and Equinox for that season's issue. Be sure to order enough for the season; we can only ship once per issue.

Shipping Information

For domestic destinations: We pay outgoing shipping costs. For foreign destinations: We request shipping costs to be paid with each order by check *directly convertible to U.S. currency*. Each newsletter weighs approximately 2.5 ounces.

We request sixty percent (60%) of sales receipts, to be paid with your order for the next issue. Unsold issues may be returned at any time within one (1) year for credit. Merchant pays return shipping costs.

Back issues (prior to Fall 1988) are available for \$2.00 per copy wholesale and are not returnable.

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Reclaiming is a collective of San Francisco Bay Area women and men working to unify spirit and politics. Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess - the Immanent Life Force. We see our work as teaching and making magic - the art of empowering ourselves and each other. In our classes, workshops, and public rituals, we train our voices, bodies, energy, intuition, and minds. We use the skills we learn to deepen our strength, both as individuals and as community, to voice our concerns about the world in which we live, and to bring to birth a vision of a new culture.

The RECLAIMING Newsletter costs \$2.00 if you get it at a store or an event. Additional contributions are welcome.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$6 - \$25 sliding scale for 1 year; \$12 - \$50 for 2 years; \$2 for sample copy by mail. For foreign mailing, please add \$8 per year to cover costs. Free 1 year subscription available for people who cannot afford to pay.

Sliding scale for subscriptions and events: We use a sliding scale to keep costs low for people with minimal income. We hope people with larger incomes will place themselves higher on the scale to help us in this. Please place yourself where you feel comfortable on the scale, or maybe a little higher.

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