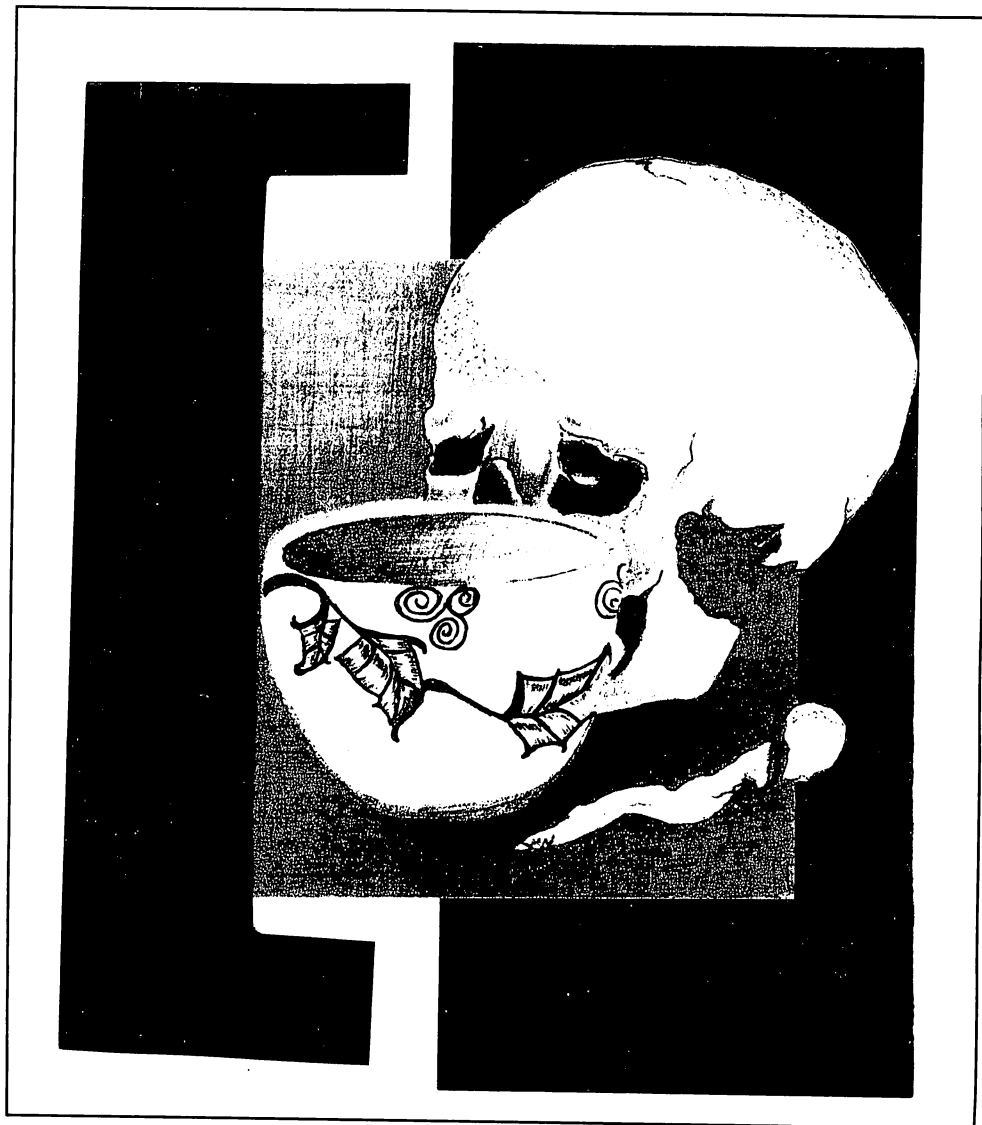


RECLAIMING

Newsletter



#60

AUTUMN 1995

\$2

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 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.

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 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.

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 Recording Faerie

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

RECLAIMING NEWSLETTER

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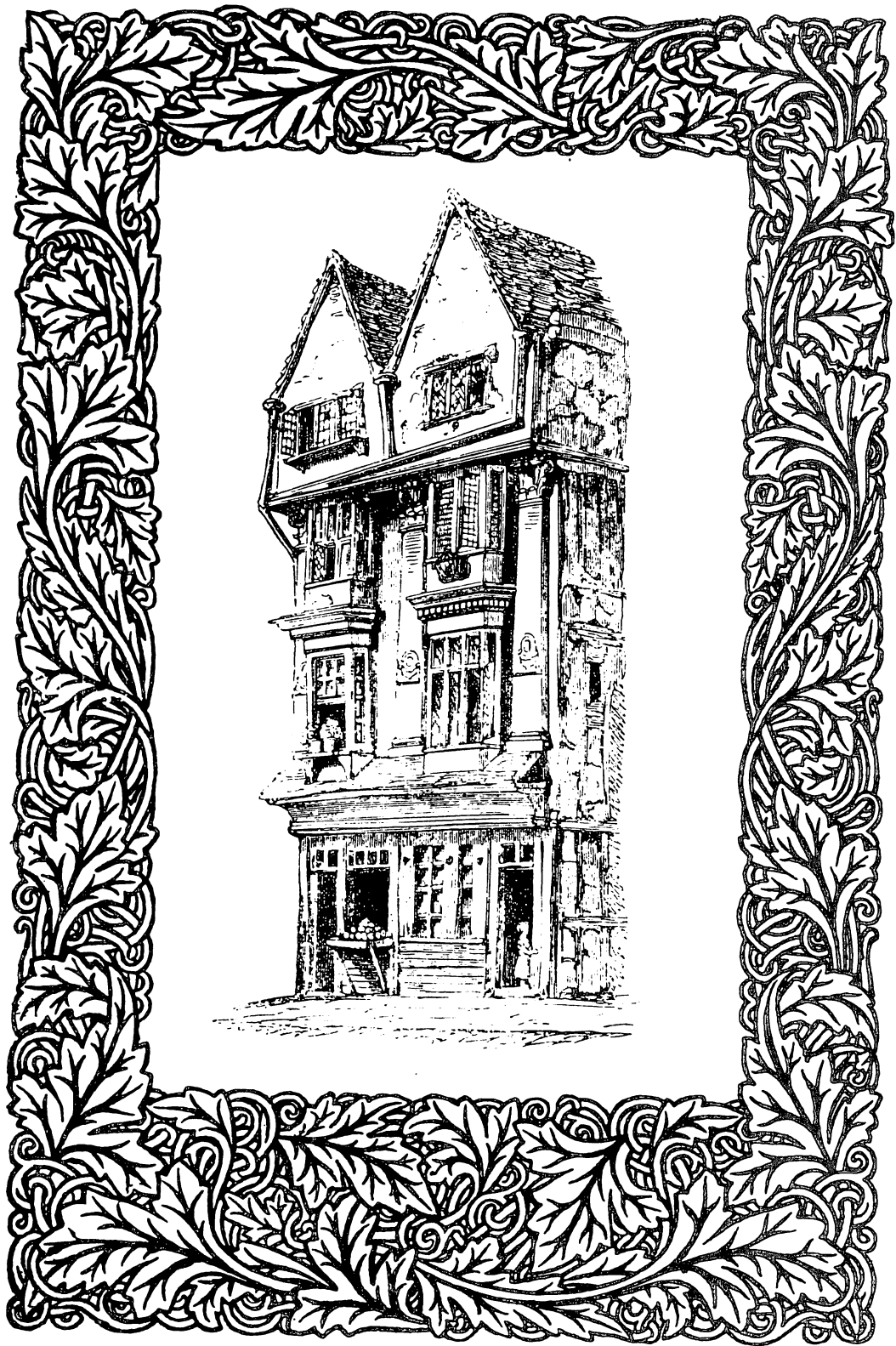
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Cover by Vicki Pometta

Patti, Julie, Jody, Mary, Reya and Calla did the work in the visible world on this issue. Rose, Patti, Deborah, Karl and Reya talked about working on it. We talked about it a lot. Does that count?

Printed on Recycled Paper



Men, Feminism & Reclaiming (Part 2)

by Jody Logan

"Feminism is the radical notion that women are people, too."

At the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, I learned two things. The first was about why women need space to be together as women. But whereas this first revelation enlightened me, the second sent me running, pushing the walls up around me as I ran. I learned that homophobia runs so deep in this society that straight men are afraid to be close to other straight men (let alone gay or bisexual men) merely because they are afraid others will think that they are queer. Suddenly, I understood why there was so little men's space (and I'm not talking elitist crap excuses for men's space like the Bohemian Grove) let alone men's space which includes men of all sexual persuasions.

But homophobia doesn't just keep straight men from being intimate with other straight and queer men. Homophobia ultimately acts as a double negative preventing many gay and bisexual men from allowing themselves to become intimate with straight men and let down their guards. Instead, it acts to reinforce those guards, making the walls thicker and taller. And thus we have the great rift between straight and queer men where few are willing to build bridges across that rift.

But why does homophobia create this double negative effect with queer men? It operates on two levels. The first is fear for physical safety. Homophobia is fear and unfortunately fear sometimes is expressed as hate. And so

homophobia creates a situation where queer men and women become targets of physical attacks (we call bashings) solely because the victim is queer. As a result, queer men and women live with the awareness that bashing is always a potential.

The second level is a fear of being hurt in a different way. That is one of allowing yourself to open up to straight people only to have your psyche punctured by an unsuspected "innocently made" homophobic comment. This happened to me fairly recently at work. But it wasn't the comment which hurt the most-I know how to filter those out. rather, it was my coworker's inability to understand how his comment could be offensive to me. Unfortunately, the whole incident left me feeling like why should I bother to keep putting myself out there-reaching my hand across the rift? I didn't ask to be a martyr! Why should I keep subjecting myself to this kind of torture? After all, it makes it difficult to reach your hand across the rift if it has been cut off.

So how do men come together from all walks of life to create men's space? In my opinion, it can't be done without a conscious effort to extend our hands across the rift-from both sides-in an attempt to heal our homophobia. This means first naming it and acknowledging that it exists. But more importantly, it means that men must commit to the process of healing, for the wounds of

homophobia and racism and the other issues that will need to be named and worked through will not heal overnight. And this means a lot of hard work.

I realize this is all old news to the veterans of the women's movement, the issues of homophobia, racism and the commitment to the process of healing. But these things are difficult to teach and more valuable when learned experientially. And so the healing maybe begin only when men are willing to commit to this process. For it is only when men are willing to commit to the process that not only the rifts between

straight men and queer men may begin healing, but the rifts between men of all colors and the rifts between women and men may begin healing as well.

This is the area that lies between men and feminism, between men and Reclaiming. And every time I look out at Reclaiming events and see so few men active in this community, I pray. I pray that more men will make the commitment to the healing process and that the healing will continue. For I know that the healing men are out there. I just keep praying that our numbers will multiply.



Pagan Political Action

or

Report from the Convention

by Starhawk

Given the current sorry state of national politics, in counterpoint to the thriving and growing state of the Pagan community across the country, one question keeps recurring to me: how do we turn our skills at empowerment and our growing numbers into actual political power? From discussions at the Missouri and California Witch Camps, a few important points emerged:

twenty years ago, right-wing Fundamentalists were a weird, fringe group that no one took seriously.

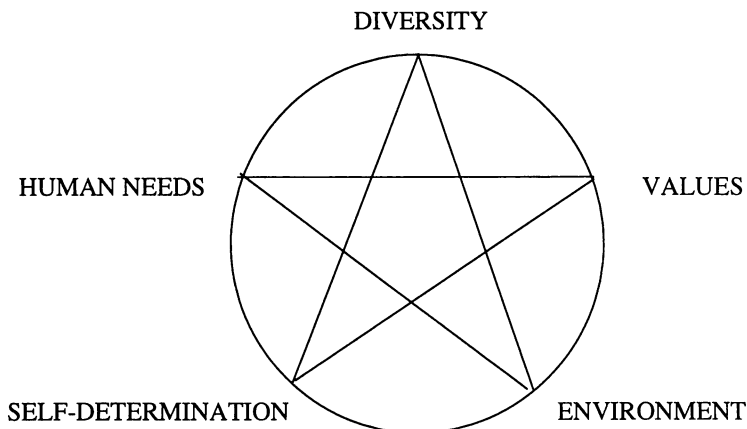
—one reason for the Fundamentalists' political success (leaving aside money and access to power) is that they are able to mobilize people around a comprehensive political agenda.

We started to ask ourselves what such an agenda would look like for us. The idea came up of having a National Organizing Meeting to decide our platform, bring together Pagans from around the country if not the world. After a momentary flush of enthusiasm, we started to consider the cost, the stress, and the inevitable arguments—the vegan walkout over making animal rights a key point, the complaints that the organizers hadn't arranged to compost leftover food, etc., and decided that we could save thousands of dollars, hundreds of person hours, and a lot of tempers by simply pretending we'd had the

convention and issuing the report: our five-point pentacular political agenda. I volunteered to write it up—and here it is.

In putting together these five points, we were looking for something unifying—not necessarily comprehensive. In other words, we don't claim that this expresses everything Pagans should or do work towards—but that it serve as a common denominator. For example, many Pagans are vegans—but many eat meat. We could not reach consensus on pushing a vegan agenda for the country—but we probably could around pushing to preserve diversity of habitat. Many Pagans are committed to non-violence, but many also serve in the Armed Forces. We might not be able to agree on a pacifist agenda, but again, probably could agree that war is not our preferred way to solve conflicts. Not all Pagans are pro-choice, but few if any would want to see legislation that interferes with a woman's control of her own body.

I'm sure there's a broad range of Pagans not represented by this agenda—there are Pagans who are Libertarians, Republicans, Marxists, and far more pure anarchists than I—but I think this expresses a program that most of us could go along with. This is not an anarchist agenda: it talks about the role



of government. It is not a utopian agenda—it's meant as something to organize around now, in this current political climate. I'm putting it out for feedback, particularly around these points:

- what's wrong? what's missing?
- what kind of strategies could we develop around it? What issues could we best focus on?
- what other groups might be our allies? What coalitions could we build? (And should we specifically call it Pagan—or something broader?)

As I was working on the agenda, I realized that it formed into a natural Pentacle, which seemed to illustrate how the points interconnect and reinforce each other. I start with Diversity because in our discussions that seemed one area where we as Pagans might make a particular contribution—but none of the points are more or less important than the others.

The Five-Point (Pentacle) Pagan Political Agenda

Diversity

We embrace diversity as a positive good—we see a multiplicity of genders, races, cultures, languages, sexual orientations and lifestyles as integral to our country's strength and central to our common heritage.

We understand the vital importance of biological diversity and the need for preservation of species and habitats.

We support education that includes many viewpoints and heritages and teaches respect for differences.

We oppose prejudice in all its forms and the whole list of 'isms': sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, etc.

(Some relevant issues might be: support for multicultural education, Lesbian and Gay rights, access for the disabled, affirmative action programs that increase diversity within organizations, habitat preservation laws, laws

protecting endangered species, etc.)

Self-Determination

We stand for the right of all people to have a voice in decisions that affect them, the right of individuals to make free and informed choices regarding their bodies, their sexuality, their powers of reproduction, and their manner of life. We recognize violence, sexual violence, abuse and incest as systemic violations of these rights.

We support the right of all peoples to preserve their cultures, lands, heritage, and dignity, and to secure conditions which make possible sustainable and long-lasting communities.

Human beings have a right to free expression and free exchange of information. We oppose censorship. We support the right of individuals and peoples to challenge authority and engage in political struggle to gain their rights.

We oppose coercion, force, threats, and torture, and refuse to subsidize or support institutions that function by instilling fear.

We recognize that individuals' goals may conflict. The right to self-determination does not include the right to harm others. We favor negotiation and mediation whenever possible as ways to resolve conflict.

We oppose war as a means of settling differences, resolving conflicts, or furthering our ends as individuals or as nations.

(Issues: abortion, human rights issues, indigenous people's land rights, prisoner's rights, anti-violence campaigns, anti-intervention, etc.)

Environment

We recognize that the interconnected life-systems of the earth, in all their diversity, have a right to be and an inherent value that goes beyond their usefulness for human ends.

We also recognize that human life and culture depends on the health of the ecosystems that sustain all life on earth, and that our understanding of their complex interrelationships is still embryonic.

Therefore, our prime concern must be the health of the environment, of the earth, the air, and the waters, and the diverse matrices of biological life.

Any government that allows the despoiling of its own lands has failed in its primary responsibility to its people and forfeited its legitimacy.

We support laws and programs that further environmental preservation, conservation, habitat restoration and healing. We oppose laws that allow the exploitation of the environment for the ends of individuals or small groups of people. We oppose programs that work toward the loss of biological diversity, or that allow individuals to claim ownership of a universal genetic and biological heritage.

We support the absolute right of indigenous people to protect their sacred lands from despoiling and development.

We recognize that human beings have a right to live and to draw on the resources of the environment to create our livelihood. We believe that this can and must be done in ways that are compassionate, sustainable and that fur-

ther the overall quality of life. We favor solution-oriented responses to environmental problems.

(Issues—environmental issues: clean air, clean water, endangered species, humane and sustainable agriculture, forestry, wilderness preservation, anti-nuclear issues, etc. opposition to gene-licensing and the patenting of life forms.)



Human Needs and Social Justice

Human beings have a right to those things that make possible a fulfilling life: food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and the opportunity for meaningful work, intimate relationships, and connection with future generations. A fulfilling life is not just a life of survival, but includes participation in the making of culture, of art, music, dance, and poetry, the freedom and time for spiritual development, and time for nourishing recreation and fun.

Government has a responsibility to use its power and resources to assure that each person has the means and opportunity to pursue a fulfilling life. Because great disparities of wealth and power exist, government has the right to redress inequalities. Citizens have a responsibility to care for each other, to assure the health of the whole community rather than protect the privilege of the few.

Misfortune comes to everyone in life. The cost of illness, disability, or natural disasters should not be borne by individuals alone but be shared among many.

Because children are the next generation, and because they are vulnerable physically, emotionally and economi-

cally, government has a special responsibility to assure the well-being of children regardless of the economic status of their parents. We favor programs that support families in all the diverse forms they take and that strengthens communities.

(Issues: job creation, public education, health care, AIDS funding, arts funding, taxation—we would support taxes for education, health care, etc.—)

Sacred Values

We recognize that political decisions are made out of our deep sense of what we most value, our sense of the sacred. We also recognize that many different value systems confront each other in the political arena. We do not want to legislate our values or impose them on those whose spiritual traditions differ from ours—but we do uphold our right to have our values considered on an equal footing with those of other traditions.

Freedom of religion is an inherent right of all people. We strongly support the separation of church and state, but also recognize that political discussion necessarily contains an element of the sacred.

For us, the sacred is embodied in the living systems of the earth and the human community. We see all things as interconnected and interrelated, and these values inform all our political stands.

We place a high value on human ingenuity, creativity, intelligence and intuition.

We see mutually pleasurable erotic expression in all its diverse forms as a sacred act. We believe all people, including and especially young people, have the right to information about sexuality, health, and sexual responsibility.

(Issues: Religious freedom, sex education in schools, AIDS education, anti-censorship, no prayer in school, etc.)



WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PAGANS

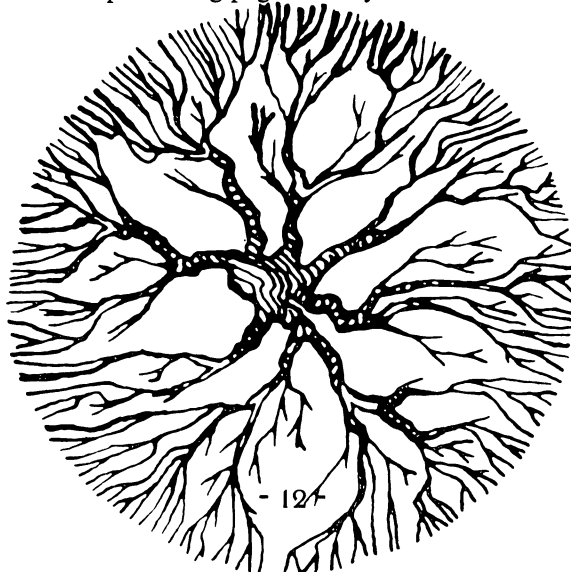
by Judy Shook

At the California Witch Camp, a group of us sat down to discuss Pagan Political Action. It's hard enough to get a group so filled with anarchist spirit to sit down together. We even went so far as to agree upon a Pagan Political Party Platform ("PPPPf"—to be pronounced out loud with lots of spit and tongue). See page 7 for Starhawk's article on this topic.

In this age of networking and resourcing, we realized that it may take more than a few good spells to deal with some of the political pollution going on as we near the Millennium. Organizing is challenging for pagans and goes against the anarchist grains. And oddly enough, in a movement that embraces empowerment, we have a hard time listing and offering our resources. So a few brave spirits took the challenge and stepped across the line to offer the following gifts for the Goddess and God:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Judy Shook | work Pagan camp with kids |
| Francene Carlo | work Pagan camp with kids |
| Chole Watts | work Pagan camp with kids |
| Heather Vichinich | work Pagan camp with kids or pagan school for children |
| Chris Rubacky | pagan work in schools in general |
| Pam Otsuka | computer/Internet learning HTML/web page |
| Corina Abouaf | Arts in Education Agency called Young Imaginations in San Rafael and Sonoma |

We invite and challenge you to join us. Bring your gifts to the altar by contacting other pagans interested in promoting pagan family values and manifesting PPPPf.



Pineapple Weed

In the strange unbalanced moments
Between heart and dawning reason
I plummet.
The cracks that receive me,
Slithering, unfolding into light,
Are She.
Divinity lies between things,
Fissures in the Universal stuff,
Waiting, always present.
I forget.
In my grasping for control,
I forget the fecund cracks
In concrete walks
Where pineapple weed blossoms,
Fragrant and yellow.
Divinity again,
Poking up Her sacred head.
Between the stiff unyielding
Breaks the softness.
There is heart,
And there is reason.
There are spaces in between.
In the cusps of dawn and sunset,
She grows.

T. Thorn Coyle

An Open Letter to Reclaiming Covens

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Craft,

This letter was published before several years ago, but many of you who are newer to the Craft mostly likely haven't read it, so here goes again. It's to recommend, advise you, extol the virtues and benefits of the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG).

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

Requirements for coven membership are that it be practicing Craft for at least six months and have at least three members, at least one of whom is an initiate. The coven must be recommended for

membership by a known and respected Witch. Membership dues are modest when one considers it to be a professional organization.

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

CoG has a national and many local Public Information Officers (PIO's). These officers provide a CoG-produced press packet about what the Craft is and what it is not to local and national media (that's the Witch anti-defamation part of the organization), liaison and law enforcement agencies investigating strange crimes which some ignorant folks seek to link to our religion, thereby reducing the circulation of misinformation about the Craft.

They also do interfaith networking (for instance, NCLC- CoG is a member of the Berkeley Area Interfaith Council (BAIC), which includes Hindus, Methodists, Buddhists, Friends, Roman Catholics and many other religious groups among its membership.) This sometimes gives Witches opportunities to co-create rituals with those of other faiths to the greater good of all. For instance, both Boston and Bay Area Witches have co-created Earth Day rituals for the public at large. NCLC- CoG, through its membership in BAIC, par-

ticipates in an annual interfaith Thanksgiving Day service, and plants native oaks as habitat restoration in East Bay parks.

CoG, as well as several other Goddess-oriented religious groups, had a very positive and visible presence at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1993. One of the results of PWR was a Declaration of a Global Ethic* which was signed on CoG's and other Witch organizations' behalf by a Reclaiming Witch, Deborah Ann Light. One of the outcomes of PWR was the formation of Celebrating the Spirit (CTS), an ongoing international interfaith group which seeks permanent housing in the Presidio, and which was a participant (with CoG Witches on panels and delivering addresses) in a recent 50th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco, and in the June interfaith service at Grace Cathedral.

CoG has also been a great support to the Church of Iron Oak in Florida in its legal dealing with Palm Bay local government and the preservation of its-and all of our-civil rights.

CoG has a Disaster Relief Committee to help folks who have been victims of such things as earthquakes, floods and fires. It also is just now implementing a religion badge in the Girl Scouts called the Hart and Crescent Award. (So far, the Boy Scouts USA has proven to be a tougher nut to crack, so to speak.)

To quote my dear friend and brother CoG member, Russell Williams, "I'm always amazed by t way in which CoG's influence and reputation vastly exceed that which might be expected of an organization of our size. Almost every

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

Perhaps you feel you don't need CoG (and perhaps you don't), but our vows include the promise to protect and defend our sisters and brothers of the Craft. Many followers of the olds live in places where tolerance and acceptance of differences are not as broad as they are in the Bay Area. These daughters and sons of the Lady often need our combined strength in order to continue their practices unharrassed, whether they belong to CoG or not. Besides, who knows when any of us might find ourselves threatened in some way because of our spiritual beliefs and practices-in our places of employment, in our children's schools, in our neighborhoods? Especially during this perilous time of the rise of the Christian right, as well as intolerant, fearful, narrow-minded militarist zealots.

For all these reasons and more, I urge all Reclaiming tradition covens to consider seeking membership in CoG. For further information on joining, or for information about the next NCLC- CoG meeting, write to CoG at PO Box 1226, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Bright Blessings,

M. Macha NightMare, P&W

**The Declaration was published in full in the Reclaiming Newsletter, Winter 1993 issue.*

The Spiral Dance Ritual Performance, 1995

by Kim Jack

Well, we're off to a good start this year with our annual Samhain celebration, The Spiral Dance. The location will again be Fort Mason, at the Herbst Pavilion in San Francisco, Saturday, October 28. The ritual will start promptly at 7:00 pm. For information on how to get tickets, please turn to page 22.

Obviously, we've come to a place where so many people are interested in Goddess Spirituality, that the humble walls of the Women's Building just cannot hold us all. This year we are advertising the Spiral Dance as a Ritual Performance, really giving space to the fact that the Spiral Dance is the coming together of many people from various walks of life and spiritual practices, all of whom want to share community on our New Year. With so many people (1,300 last year), it becomes difficult to have an intimate experience, or a powerful experience, although I do believe this can happen, even with 1,300 other people. Most of Reclaiming's public rituals are much smaller and more intimate, and are free for all who wish to come. Once a year we want to really live it up, with the powerful weaving of ritual, music, performance, and visuals which makes up the Spiral Dance.

I wish to thank all the people who took the time to write to the Collective with great information about their experiences at last year's Spiral Dance. We give careful consideration to complaints

and have tried each year to accommodate different people's needs. We are well aware that last year we had a sound problem, especially during the trance. Things will be much improved this year. Also, many people felt that the ritual was too long. This year we are revising the content, which may solve that problem-however, it may not. But I also wish to say that the Spiral Dance is not a small, intimate ritual and we cannot possibly hope to please everyone. Lots of volunteers work very hard to bring it all together. We hope there will again be many amazing people, some of whom will be moved to tears, others to laughter, some probably to boredom. This seems to be the nature of very large ritual. In magic we create an energy and then it's our duty to follow that energy, which sometimes takes longer than we planned. We ask that you come and be open to what happens and know that much love goes into it.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all. Blessed be.





PLEASE HELP US LOOK INTO RECLAIMING'S FUTURE

Reclaiming is in transition—we're now officially a religious organization. The collective is beginning to work on what that means, and what we should do next. We invite you to attend a Town Meeting to discuss the possibilities ahead.

**Friday, October 6,
in the Audrey Lord room at the Women's Building
18th Street between Valencia and Guerrero
8:00 p.m.**



CALIFORNIA WITCH CAMP 1996 Merry Meet and Merry Part

Hi to all California campers. Next year's camp will be held at Mendocino Woodlands, 15 minutes deep into the redwoods of Mendocino, a beautiful and very rustic, private camp. The date is not yet set, but we are hoping for July 6-13, 1996. (We had to schedule camp for a later date than this year's because the Missouri camp had to change their dates.)

At Mendocino Woodlands, everyone will have access to a cabin. There are doubles, triples and foursomes available, but the option to camp in a tent anywhere you want is also a possibility. We will have a healing cabin, a place to go in case of illness or the need of a massage or some tender loving care. These are all the details for now. You can reserve your spot at next year's camp by sending a \$100, non-refundable deposit to **Kim Jack, 1394 McAllister St., San Francisco, CA 94114, or call (415) 923-1458** for more information.

Starhawk's Schedule

Fall, 1995

September 28: Buffalo, NY

Rhythm & Ritual with Layne Redmond

Contact: Stephanie Allegra (716) 886-5869

September 29-October 1: Rowe, MA

Women's Workshop

Contact: Rowe Conference Center, Box 273, Rowe, MA 01367

October 7-8: Santa Rosa, CA

Women's and Men's Mysteries, with David Miller

Contact: Harmony Network, Box 582, Sebastopol, CA 95473

October 28: San Francisco, CA

The Spiral Dance

Contact: Reclaiming Events Line, (415) 929-9249

November 17-18: Miami, FL

Ritual and Workshop

Contact: Luigi Ferrer, 6835 SW 45th Lane, Miami, FL 33155

November 19: St. Augustine, FL

Workshop for Women

Contact: Christina Di Eno, 103 Third St., St. Augustine, FL 32095

December 1-3: Louisville, KY

Weekend Workshop

Contact: Center for Women & Family, Box 2048, Louisville, KY 40201

December 17: Sebastopol, CA

Winter Solstice Ritual with Luisah Teish

Contact: Harmony Network, Box 582, Sebastopol, CA 95473

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT HARMONY NETWORK (707) 823-9377**

RECLAIMING *classes & events*

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC for women with Reya and Patti

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 **Wednesday** evenings, starting **October 11**. Call **Patti at (415) 647-9675** for location, information and registration . **\$60-\$120 sliding scale.**

rites of passage with Rose and Reya

The Rites of Passage focuses on dreams, myths and language, using traditional and non-traditional tales and techniques to create a personal rite of passage. Through storytelling, trance, release work and dreams we receive our challenge(s), meet our helpers, work through our blocks and emerge renewed, reborn. This class culminates with a ritual created by the students. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic class. **Six Mondays, beginning November 6. Sliding scale \$60-120. Call Rose (415) 821-3336** for information and registration.

PENTACLE OF IRON with Beverly & Doug

Join us as we explore, through trance, movement and sound, the five points of your inner Iron Pentacle. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic. **Six Mondays, beginning November 6, \$60-\$120 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

MAGICAL BODY with Beverly & Doug

This class focuses on our main magical tool—our body; how to know them more deeply and heal them more fully, unleashing ecstatic transformative power! **Six Mondays beginning January 8, \$60-\$120 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC with Beverly & Doug

(for description see above) **Six Thursdays, beginning January 12, \$60-\$120 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SAMHAIN WEEKEND,
please turn to page 22.**

LOOKING AT YOUR ASTROLOGICAL BIRTH CHART with Judy Foster

Do you have a chart but no clue what it means? In this class I will show you how to structure your own interpretation for continuous self-exploration. After all, who knows you as well as yourself? I take a basic, self-empowering approach to the intricacies of astrology as a metaphoric language to describe what is unnameable. Prerequisite: some familiarity with the Western esoteric symbolic system and your birth chart or a computer print-out of the data. **Six Thursday evenings beginning January 4, 1996, 7:00-9:30 pm, \$75-\$125 sliding scale.** For information and registration, call **Judy Foster, (510) 653-5616.**

TOWN MEETING

Reclaiming is in transition—we're now officially a religious organization. The collective is beginning to work on what that means, and what we should do next. We invite you to attend a Town Meeting to discuss the possibilities ahead. **Friday, October 6, in the Audrey Lord room at the Women's Building, 18th Street between Valencia and Guerrero, 8:00 p.m.**

Reclaiming Recommends:

INTUITIVE PRACTICE THROUGH THE BODY

with Cybele (AKA 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 or as a group. We will explore the relationship between our inner and outer senses as channels for information and intuition. The primary focus will be on developing a daily practice, learning to stabilize the attention & develop 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, beginning November 7th. \$120- to \$160-sliding scale. Call Cybele at **(415) 541-5650** for info/registration.

DEVOTIONAL DANCE with T. Thorn Coyle

A 3 hour workshop in early October exploring the use of movement as a meditational tool. A time to slow down, breathe and re-connect with She who flows through us. Listening to sacred music from around the world, we will use gentle motions to clear away some of our daily stress and chatter, leaving us more open to the Divine. This class is open to all, regardless of physical ability. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Call **Thorn for exact time and place: 415/587-8699**

RECLAIMING *classes & events, cont.*

SATURDAYS WITH BEVERLY & DOUG

RITUAL DRUMMING & CHANTING

Learn and share invigorating visceral ways to deepen and energize ritual. If you have a drum, bring it; if you don't use one of ours. All levels of experience are welcome. **First Saturday of each month, starting September 9. Preregistrations required. Call (415) 927-2044.**

TAROT BASICS

Learn to interpret tarot cards by doing. This is definitely a hands-on class. Bring your favorite deck, or use one of ours. **October 21, \$30-\$60 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

SPELLCRAFTING

Whether you choose to make a grounding herb pouch, talisman, amulet, mask or doll, come prepared to play—letting Younger Self lead the way is the key to spells that allow personal transformation. **November 18, \$30-\$60 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

CHAKRAS: A MAINTENANCE MANUAL

Learn to ground, sound, read and cleanse your personal energy centers. Access their mystery with the demystifying Lisa Simpson Chakra Chum. **December 16, \$30-\$60 sliding scale, call (415) 927-2044 for information/registration.**

SAMHAIN WEEKEND

THE SPIRAL DANCE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 7:00 p.m., Herbst Pavilion at Fort Mason

It's time again to celebrate and honor the Dead with music, dance, and a journey to the Shining Isle of Apples, and to dance the Spiral Dance together. Tickets are \$10-\$25, and will be available by mail order and at the door. Tickets will not be available at stores this year, but we will open our "box office" at Fort Mason at 6:00 p.m. for advanced purchase.

Reclaiming rituals are clean and sober. No drugs or alcohol, please.

The floor of this huge space is uncomfortable, so bring a pillow to sit on. Children

are welcome in the ritual. There will also be an area set up for children and adults who need a "time out" from the ritual, however, there will not be a child care person available, so please plan accordingly. Call the Events Line for information about parking.

Call **Macha (415) 454-4411** with the names of your loved ones who have died in the past year. Call **Patti (415) 647-9675** with the names of babies born this year. Please spell and pronounce names.

To volunteer, call **Judy at (510) 653-5616**. We will need many volunteers for Gracing, Dragoning, Clean-up, and a few other jobs.

What is a Grace? Graces function as "sideline priestesses"—while they don't have any official speaking parts in the ritual, they are responsible for helping move the energy. As a Grace you will be asked to attend the dress rehearsal and become familiar with the flow of the ritual so you can model for the participants what's coming up next. A few of you will be assigned to special jobs—making sure the aisles are clear, directing people to the resting area, etc.

What is a Dragon? Dragons act as liaison with the physical world. As a Dragon, it's up to you to keep an eye out for what's happening to people's bodies, and what's happening within the physical space of the ritual. Dragons are the guardians of the perimeter, watching the door, the altars, the light poles, etc., making sure everyone is safe.

Set-up and Cleanup people help get the space ready for the ritual, and stay after the ritual until the space is returned to its original condition.

We will also need a few people to help with tech, the coat room, and other miscellaneous jobs. If you know what you want to do, please say so when you call Judy.

And **THANK YOU**. Without volunteers, the Spiral Dance could not happen.

TO ORDER TICKETS FOR THE SPIRAL DANCE, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, a check made out to Reclaiming,, and a note that explains how many tickets you want to purchase, to **RECLAIMING, PO Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114**. Please mark your envelope "**TICKETS**." Mail orders must be postmarked by Friday, October 13. Tickets will be not be sold at local stores this year, but will be available at the door, beginning at 6:00 p.m. the night of the ritual.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEN'S and/or WOMEN'S RITUALS, please call the Events Line.

THERE WILL BE A SAMHAIN RITUAL FOR WOMEN AND MEN at the **Sebastopol Community Center, Sun. Oct 29, 7-9:30**, Child care/children's program, Please pre-register if interested. Sliding scale \$6-13. Contact **Pam at (707) 526-2577** for more information.

MAGICAL TOOLBOX

Are you working with any interesting or odd-ball tools? Would you like to share any favorite spells? We'd love to hear about them. —eds.

THE POTATO

by Calla

I started using potatoes as magical tools several years ago. I had just returned from a friend's Model Mugging graduation, and had spent the evening watching very realistically staged attacks on women. Each time, the woman was victorious. But when I got home, I was still carrying a lot of fear and adrenaline in my body.

I went straight to the kitchen, grabbed a potato, and held it to my stomach. Its coolness and solidity made me feel calmer right away. It was as if it was drawing the fear right out of my body.

Since then, I've used potatoes many times, to draw out any kind of unwanted energy. It makes sense, in a way. A potato is grounded by its nature and its job as a root is to absorb and store energy. I hold the potato to whatever part of my body feels the most affected. It may be a good idea to ask the potato's permission first, and tell it specifically what you would like it to absorb. (I haven't always remembered to do this, and it seems to have worked anyway.)

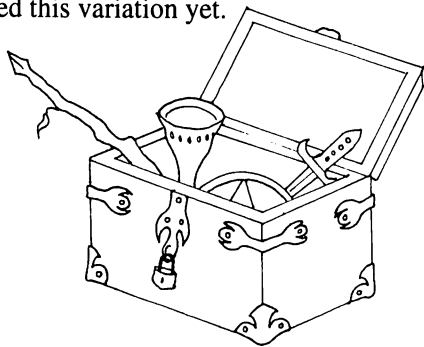
The tiny red and yellow boiling potatoes are good for carrying in a pocket or can be worn tied into a scarf. At times I fall asleep with one, so my partner has gotten used to finding potatoes rolling around in the bed.

So, of course, the next question is what to do with the potato once it's done its job. If I look at the potato and immediately feel the energy that I was

shedding before, I know that the potato is "full." At that point, I usually return the potato to the earth. Mostly, I like to bury them. I once thought that I could purify them in salt water and eat them, but that's never felt right to me. Occasionally when I don't have tools to bury them, I'll just find a pretty shady spot outside and leave them covered with leaves. In my garden, there's a ceramic goddess who can sometimes cleanse potatoes for me over a period of days, so I can re-use them.

Children seem to really get the hang of potato magic. When they're upset, it seems to be really helpful to have a place to PUT the uncomfortable feeling. The act of using and then burying the potato seems to help build skills of moving and cleansing energy.

A friend suggested a neat twist, that I leave a potato on something that had energy I WANTED, and then later eat it to absorb the beneficial energy. I haven't tried this variation yet.



FROM RECLAIMING'S ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: We who are now working the Newsletter feel a great indebtedness to those who came before. We want to acknowledge the work of people in the past who contributed not just to this Newsletter, but to our whole community. We have begun to glean pieces from past editions, and thought that to mark the recent death of Elizabeth Montgomery we would run this piece by Raven from the Spring 1988 Newsletter.

Samantha Complex

by Raven Moonshadow

As we begin to move into the season of Spring, of love and relationships beginning anew, I find myself faced with a problem that I wonder if any others out there are faced with. This problem I call the Samantha complex.

Samantha (the Witch with the twitch) from the popular television series *Bewitched*, found herself in love and married to a mortal, Darrin. Throughout the series these characters had the problem of blending their two worlds, the worlds of Magic and the mundane, and keeping alive the love they felt for each other.

Being a Witch myself and in search of love I find myself meeting mortals (people who don't live by magic) and trying to make something work.

Now, imagine this scene if you will. I've just met the most handsome man and after exchanging names, talking about the weather, and asking, "Do you come to this bar often?", I ask, "what do you do for a living?" The reply is, "I'm a bank teller for BofA." He in turn asks me what I do for a living? Now the problem. Do I say I'm an out-of-work cook—which I am—(not very exciting), or that I'm between jobs (true but

not very revealing), or do I own up to what I really do. Being a straightforward person, I reply, "I am a teacher." "A teacher. What do you teach?" Now the ball is back in my court. Do I say: (a) "I teach classes in meditation, visualization and actualization" (a very white light approach); or (b) I teach classes in feminist spirituality" (close but not entirely true); or (c) do I own up to what I am and say "I teach classes in Witchcraft and Magic." Now if I answer truthfully I have opened myself up to a barrage of questions about what a Witch is and does. Do I want this? No. I want to make love with this beautiful man (safely, of course). I reply with (a): "I teach classes in meditation, visualization, and actualization." Possible cop-out, but safe.

So, the evening has progressed well and we decide to go home together. The next problem is where. He doesn't have a place (roommates or something), so I offer my place. Now my place is a Witch's home. Alters all over the place, candles burning, herbs hung to dry and books that state what I am into plainly and simply. So after a wonderful tumble

together lying in bed, he asks about the decor in my apartment. I then decide that it is no use evading the truth and I say, "I'm a Witch." After a little explaining he takes it well and the next thing I know we have forgotten about making love and are in a deep discussion of spirituality (something I like to talk about but am not into talking about now). We talk into the wee hours of the morning and fall asleep in each other's arms. The next morning after breakfast we exchange phone numbers and he leaves, saying he will keep in touch. Will he or won't he? Time will tell, as she tells on all.

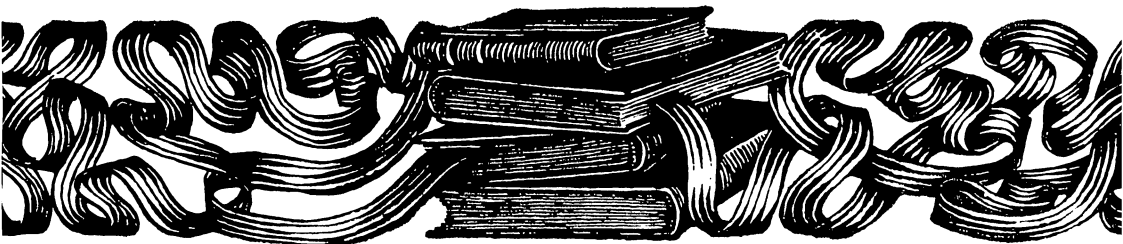
The next problem is he does call. He invites me as his date to a party with some of his close personal friends. I accept and when I arrive I'm announced, "Everybody, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine, Raven. Raven is a Witch." (This is something Darrin would never do—he always kept Samantha's secret to himself.) Now I find myself faced with weird looks and more questions. "Ooh, a Witch, how interesting. Aren't men called warlocks?" Well my secret is out and I deal with it effectively, but I wonder if I were a Christian would my date have said, "Everybody, I'd like you

to met a friend of mine, Raven. Raven is a Christian." See my point?

So this relationship develops and intensifies and there are times throughout the year when we Pagans have rituals. Rituals that I would like him to come to. Not to proselytize or turn him into a Witch, but just to come and enjoy himself with my friends. He comes and isn't really turned on by what I do and decides he's not into it. That's OK, but it would be nice to leap over a cauldron together or weave in and out together around the Maypole, but I find myself alone here and not with the man I am starting to love. Problem. What can I do?

I love what I do and I don't want it to interfere with my love life. But being a Witch (a minority) among a world of mortals (the majority), chances are I will meet more mortals than Witches, unless I divorce myself from the world and associate with my kind (Endora's solution). But I choose not to. I will suffer along the complex path and hope that I'm not alone out here. If there are others experiencing this complex in their lives I would like to hear from you.

Love, Raven



We are approaching the time of year when the wheel turns again, the old year wanes and a new year begins. It is a time when we remember our dead and honor our ancestors. Many of us, in this land, can claim common ancestors; those who came here, either by force, choice or necessity and whose lives were forever changed. Let us remember our European ancestors and celebrate our common heritage. In doing so, we must also apologize on our ancestor's behalf to the native peoples of this land for the acts of violence that were committed against them in the name of progress. We must also remember that acts of violence and injustice against native peoples and their ancestral lands are still happening to this day. We owe them an apology and need to pledge to strive for justice for all native peoples and healing for the earth that we know as sacred.

Since many of us share the heritage of the immigrant why is it that some of us have chosen to ignore the plight of the recent immigrant? It seems that our society encourages us to become desensitized to other people's suffering and struggle. Last year saw the implementation of Prop. 187, a policy that openly seeks to deny basic services, like education and health care, to so-called "illegal" immigrants. You cannot learn to drive and obtain a driver's license without a social security number. Let us meditate on what it means to be an immigrant in this country. When we remember our ancestors, let us walk their path of struggle, hope and pain, let us claim their and our acts of violence against others even if they were committed from a place of complacency. Perhaps by doing so we can become more sensitive to the struggle of the new immigrants of this decade and find an understanding; a common thread that we can weave into a web of compassion, healing, balance and hope for our future as a culture of diversity. Let us celebrate our differences and remember our shared past.

I realize that this is an issue fraught with complexities that I cannot cover in this short letter. I would invite discussion on the complex issue of immigration and its effect on our ever-changing society.

—Laura Kemp

(SAMHAIN 1993)

I cannot call you by name
for it is unknown to me
So I shall call you by my own
and by smoke and rock and bone.

I shall call you drum
when my heart beat echoes in the space of you
and salt on my tongue through the dark journey.

Beloved ancestor
I bring my offerings
my flesh, my blood
my ability to remember
even that which I have never known.

—*Sophia Rosenberg*

TREE OF LIFE

(written to a lightning struck tree, standing in a ring of living trees in the forest in Atlin B.C.)

charred marrow of old bones

brittle grandmother
reach your thin arms to me
and I will read lost history
in your black eyes

I have been severed from my roots
the lines of blood and spirit
split
and my sense hollowed by loss

but now I come upon you
standing still
I find that dead can speak
and what we know
survives the burning

—*Sophia Rosenberg*



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
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Boston, MA 02116

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:

PAGAN MODERN POST 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 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**

I AM LOOKING FOR STRAIGHT WOMEN who have had relationships with gay men before they came out. I'm interested in how these relationships affected the women's lives. I would like to interview these women for a possible article or book. All will be strictly confidential with true identifies concealed if desired. I myself had such a relationship and the person recently died of AIDS. I'm doing this with love and compassion as a healing. My premise is that homophobia hurts everyone. Out of these, there is the potential for a support group. Please call **Phyllis Seid evenings and weekends at (415) 282-0219** or leave a message anytime. A donation of any money earned will go towards Reclaiming and AIDS agencies. Thanks.



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LOMI BODYWORK

END THE GENDER WARS



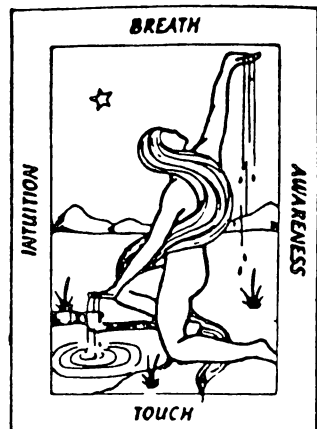
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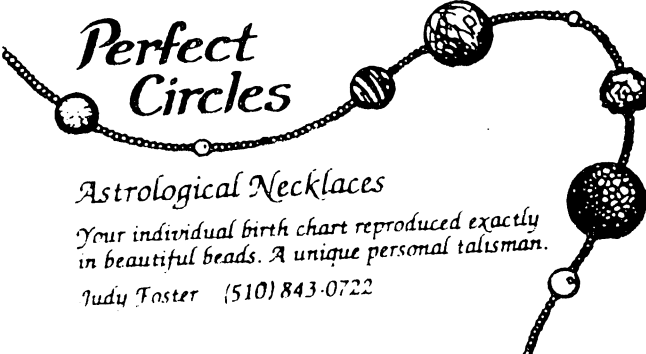
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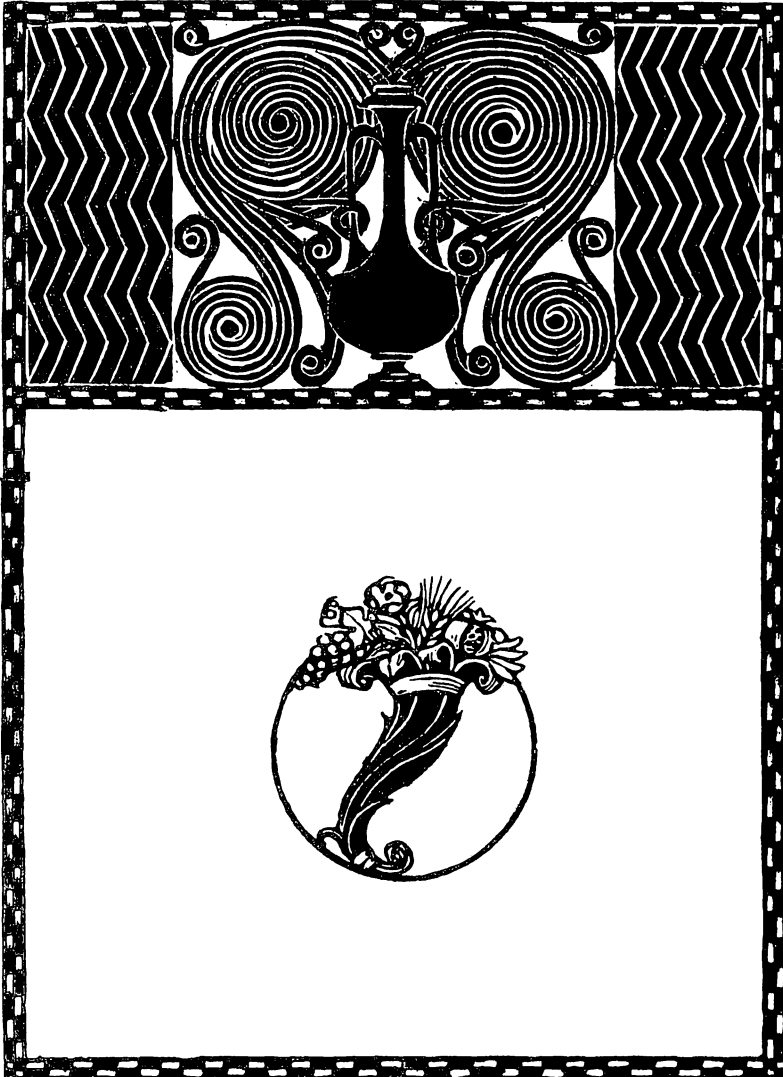
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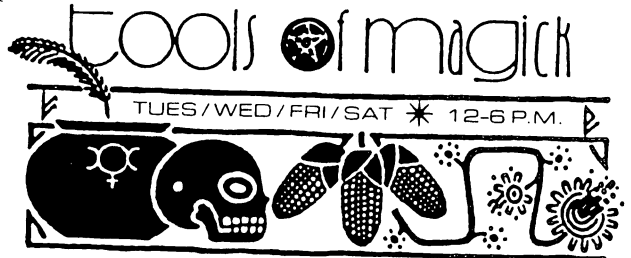
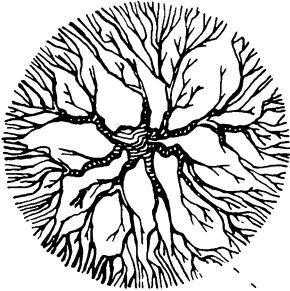
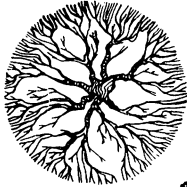
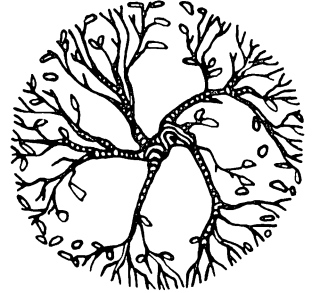


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We request sixty percent (60%) of sales receipts, to be paid with your order for the next issue. Unsold issues may be returned at any time within one (1) year for credit. Merchant pays return shipping costs.

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

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Please send _____ copies of **TO:** _____
 the Reclaiming Newsletter, _____
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 _____, 19_____

 (season) _____

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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