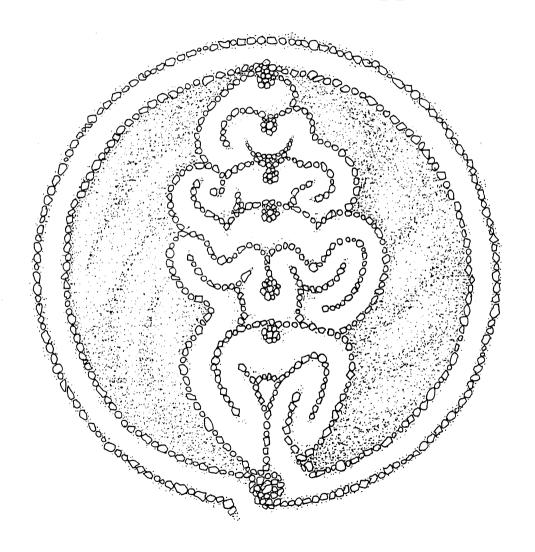
RECLAIMING

NEWSLETTER



#61

WINTER 1995

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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 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.

SPRING NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1, 1996

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

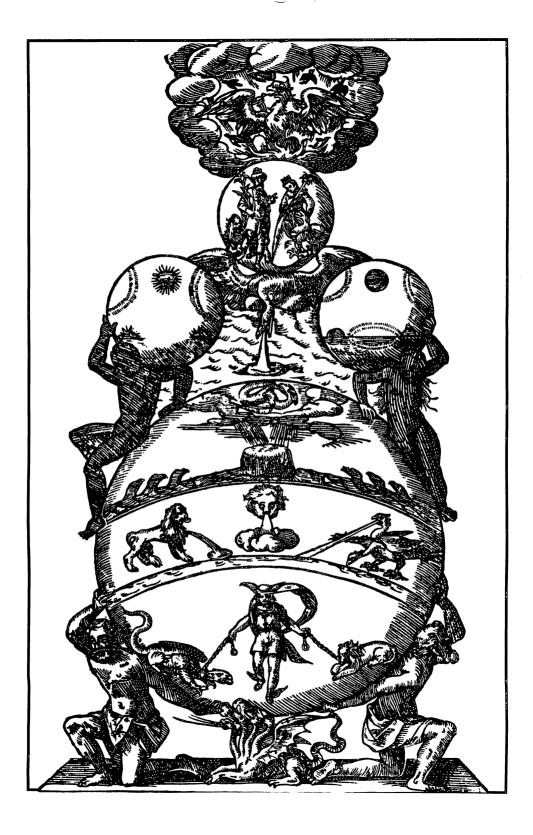
Reclaiming is a member of the Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance.

Reclaiming Newsletter

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Cover revealed to and then drawn by Calla

Amy, David, Calla, Patti, Jody and Reya put this issue together. Happy Solstice!



SOME THOUGHTS ON INITIATION

by Oak

As it is several weeks until my second initiation, I thought I would jot down some thoughts on Reclaiming and initiation. Most Reclaiming initiates consider themselves Faery (or Feri) initiates. I think it would be fair to say that Reclaiming is an offshoot of Faery. There are two initiations. For me, the first initiation is about dedicating yourself to the craft and being given the power to work between the worlds. In my first initiation there was a focus on death and rebirth and exploring the place between the two. The focus of my second initiation has been owning my power as a priestess and working with the life force. It does seem that every initiation is different and will mean different things to the initiate. The Craft is a mystery tradition. Our initiation rituals are kept secret. Starhawk has described in The Spiral Dance some parts of the first initiation and you may be able to glean aspects of it from other writers, but there definitely is a Craft prohibition against giving out to the uninitiated all the specifics. I do think this is important as it deepens the feeling of mystery and imbues the ritual with power it would otherwise not have. Reclaiming as a community has a commitment to be nonhierarchical but this does not mean that all secrets of the Craft are given to everyone. Although initiation is not discussed (as far as I know) in Reclaiming classes, it is an important aspect of the community. Guidelines are vague

and have been known to vary according to initiator. There is some wisdom to this, as magic is a shifting thing and what each person needs may be radically different. However, I do think that as our community expands we do need some basic guidelines as to what initiation entails and what initiates can expect from their initiators. The following is a mixture of what has been traditionally done and what I think should be done. Dialog about this is welcomed and knowing this community as I do, almost inevitable.

When a person feels they are ready to embark on initiation they ask for it. They ask who they feel they can learn from, who they feel they wan t to be karmically tied to, and who feels right to them. This in itself is a magical challenge, and should be respected. This is a sacred relationship and as such should not be undertaken lightly. Do not ask someone because you are afraid that not asking them will hurt their feelings. Do not tell someone who has asked others and not yourself that your feelings are hurt. Initiation should lay outside the boundaries of social politics. We have to trust each other and trust the Goddess that sometimes it is not clear why we do or don't want someone. As time goes on , I trust more and more in magic. If someone is meant to be at an initiation. they will be. If they are not, they won't. Pay attention to why you are asking who you are asking, there is much to be learned in this process. The same goes for who you agree to initiate and who you deny. As priestesses of the Craft I do think we need to be responsible in giving a timely and respectful response, and if there are explainable reasons we can not initiate someone, giving these reasons.

Initiators are responsible for giving a challenge or challenges for the first initiation. Some priestesses give a standard challenge, something they feel all initiates should do, such as learning the tarot, or learning about other traditions of the Craft. Others give challenges specific to the initiate. One of my hardest challenges of my first initiation was doing 15 minutes of physical exercise a day for at least a month. This was a great challenge for me and taught me a lot about the element of fire. Challenges should not be a hazing and should not entail any self interest. It is not appropriate to give housemates challenges of doing all the housework or sister collective members the challenge of bringing up topics for you at the next collective meeting. Challenges should be given in the spirit of enhancing the initiates spiritual growth. If you do not understand why you are given a specific challenge. it is appropriate to question the challenge and to even refuse the challenge if you feel it is not given in the spirit of enhancing your spiritual growth. Your initiator can then decide if they want to give another challenge or withdraw from the initiation. A withdrawal does not mean you can not be initiated, although it is good form to explain what happened to your other initiators and get their feedback. Sometimes a challenge can not be well explained, it is truly

channeled and worth meeting to find out why. I personally feel that finding the right challenge for initiates is an art in the priestesshood. Some of us are better at this than others, and there is room for difference. The main thing is that challenges should be given with respect and in the service of creating a skilled priestess, not for personal gain or even to point out in a roundabout ways little personal habits that have irritated. The concepts of "power over" and "power with" come in handy in the consideration of challenges. Power over challenges are bad magic. Question any that feel that way. The very best challenges of all come from the Goddess and most of us have many of these before we go through the gates and become priestess and witch. One of the most important parts of both initiation processes for me has been in recognizing and understanding these very personal challenges. They are usually the hardest and the most enriching.

It is tradition to be initiated a year and a day from the time you ask. Some people manage to actually do this, while lots of us take much longer. I think my first took over two years, my partner's has taken seven years and counting, and my second initiation has taken a year and a half. And of course scheduling the actual initiation with all the initiators is the surprise challenge of the initiatory process. I felt it was important in both initiations to have everyone I asked be there. Hence it took several months to come up with a date; at least two of my initiators are next to impossible to schedule with, as they both tend to be booked into the next millennium. Thank the Goddess this time we finally found a

date and it looks like I will get initiated. This is not a time that meant anything to me in particular, but I do trust that it is the perfect time for me. Others I know have strong feelings about when their initiation should take place. Two priestesses I know who consider themselves priestesses of the dark felt they needed to be first initiated during the increasing light, before summer solstice. This felt important in balancing priestesshood. Others feel strongly about the waning or waxing moon. These feelings should be honored. I think good process is to give your initiators plenty of advance warning of when you want the date to be, then let it be in the hands of the Goddess (and your initiators) who makes it on that date. It is good etiquette to make it a priority if you are the initiator and are given enough warning. Enough warning should be two months at the minimum, although I think a quarter of the year and a day is just about perfect. I think any priestess who is given that kind of warning and can not make it, either wasn't meant to be there, or there is some challenge being given as to the importance for the initiate of that particular person being there. If a priestess does not want to initiate someone, making it difficult to schedule the date instead of stating the reasons is very bad form and possibly an offense to the Goddess.

The initiation process is the one place in our community that could be perceived as hierarchical. There are those in the community who have not been initiated for this reason. Personally, initiation has been an extremely empowering and moving experience for me. I would not be the priestess/witch/

woman that I am today if not for this process. Like any ritual, it can be vastly transforming or done by rote. For most I know, it was transforming. It is an important part of Craft tradition, in which those you ask are just stand-ins for the old Goddess herself. From such a stand point they do deserve respect, but since the initiate is also the Goddess, she deserves the same respect. It is a process in which there have been abuses of power, and if you ask around there are plenty of terrible examples of this abuse. I write this as I head for my second initiation in the service of the priestesshood and in the hope that with more discussion amongst ourselves we will come to recognize guidelines which rob us of none of the mystery, but create a circle of safety for this sacred tradition.

As time goes on I notice the magic in this community deepening. We have fed the Goddess by our belief in her and her power increases. It may be just my imagination, but initiations seem to get more powerful as the years go by, and tougher too. No one seems to get through the gates until they are more than ready. Let those of us who are willing to make this assay be treated with the respect that the journey deserves and given a minimum of a road map to help us on the journey.

Blessed be.



Reclaiming: History, Structure and the Future

by Jody Logan and Patti Martin for the Reclaiming Collective

On October 8, 1995, the Reclaiming Collective held an open meeting to discuss with the community of people associated with it the possibility of raising funds to rent and operate a community space. The members of the Collective had been thinking and talking about the idea for some time and had taken various legal steps to make this possible. The meeting brought up several questions, some of which we will attempt to answer here. There will be another Community Meeting on Sunday, January 21, 1996, beginning at 3:00 p.m. in the Audrey Lourde room of the Women's Building in San Francisco.

Reclaiming began in San Francisco in 1980 when Diane Baker and Starhawk offered a class that would give people the tools they needed to do their own ritual work. They decided that the class would be co-taught by them to model a different approach to power. The students of that class wanted to go on, so a second, and then a third class were constructed. New teachers were recruited from these classes, and the "bud" of Reclaiming's teaching cell was begun.

In 1982, while a Spiral Dance ritual was being planned by several of these same people, a blockade was called at Diablo Canyon. [Pacific Gas and Electric, the California energy monopoly, was beginning operation of a nuclear power plant near an earthquake fault line.] Many of the planners of the ritual

went off to the blockade, and others stepped in to finish the planning. When those who had gone to the blockade returned, they brought with them more experience with collective process and the use of consensus decision making, as well as models of non-hierarchical group structure. After Diablo Canyon and the Spiral Dance ritual, many of these folks formed a loose-knit community and started meeting under the name Reclaiming Collective. Thus Reclaiming was born.

At this point the Collective consisted of anyone who knew someone to tell them when the next meeting was, and was willing to sit through that meeting. The business of the Collective was to provide public rituals for the eight Sabbaths of the Witches' Year; to teach Elements of Magic and other classes to any who sought such; and to sustain and morally support the political direct actions of the members and community.

"We had a lot of interesting struggles those first years as we evolved our structure of cells and projects clustered around a central core collective," recalls Starhawk.

Reclaiming kept teaching classes and putting on rituals and, within a year or so, began publishing a newsletter (which is now at issue number 60).

The number of people attending rituals grew, and it became unfeasible to continue the community as the Collective. A small number of very active

people who were teaching and planning and implementing rituals formed The Reclaiming Collective and closed membership to only those who had been working closely together. It is from here that the Collective's current structure has evolved. New members are proposed by current members and the collective must then consense on admitting the proposed member in a subsequent meeting. There does not exist a formal list of criteria for proposed members; however, these have generally been. people who have been extremely active in the community. Currently there are 14 active members of the collective and six members on leave of absence. The number of members seems to hover at around twenty, which keeps consensusprocess meetings somewhat manageable. Additionally, there are two formal cells, the teaching cell and the newsletter cell, each ultimately accountable to the Collective though for the most part they function autonomously. Membership of the newsletter cell is open, and membership of the teaching cell consists of persons teaching Reclaiming classes.

The first summer intensive was taught



by the Collectives' teaching cell in San Francisco in 1985. Reclaiming taught two additional camps in Mendocino the following year, and in 1987 one in Vancouver and one in Ben Lomond. Currently, we teach six or seven witch camps a year and have trained teachers across the US and Canada. As a result, these camps have brought many people who were not in the Bay Area into the realm of community around the Collective, with shared spiritual and political values.

At the same time that these things were happening, a new tradition of witch-craft was emerging known as Reclaiming. Many who are Collective members are initiates of this tradition, but some initiates are not Collective members. This tradition continues to grow and define itself as a niche in the greater Craft history and community. The Reclaiming tradition is eclectic and based on personal empowerment, structurally non-hierarchical, and it engenders in most of its initiates a strong commitment to the work of the Goddess in the world.

The Collective, the Community, the Craft Tradition: this is the triple face of Reclaiming. Each functions in relation to the others, but is self-defined by members of each part. Many people are in more than one part of this three-fold way. If we all together are to carry the work of the Goddess into the future and into the world, we must further define these three parts, their relationship to each other, and, for each of us, our relationship to them.

As Reclaiming began producing and selling music tapes, and as our work expanded, we eventually had to deal with things like accounts and taxes. In 1991, Reclaiming filed to incorporate as a non-profit organization in the state of California. The state's requirements for corporations are that the Collective keep minutes of its meetings and include those in a Corporate Book which has a copy of the By Laws and Articles of Incorporation. The Collective's by-laws describe an organization [Reclaiming] whose objective and purposes "shall be to worship the Goddess and the Old Gods; to celebrate the ancient sacred holidays of the Wheel of the Year and the cycles of nature; to provide religious education"; with a consensus-based process for decision making; and with a "prohibition against sharing corporate profits and assets."

However, incorporation was but the first step of a dream for Reclaiming: to receive tax-exempt status as a religious organization. So in 1993, the Collective applied to the Internal Revenue Service for 501(c)(3) status: that is, a non-profit religious corporation. In 1994, after a sea of forms and some very hard work and persistence by a few people, this dream was made manifest and Reclaiming became a tax-exempt, non-profit religious organization. Perhaps the two greatest benefits of this status are that 1) Reclaiming does not have to pay taxes on what little money we take in to support our work and 2) Reclaiming may now accept tax deductible donations in order to further this work.

But what is this work? Aside from maintaining classes, public rituals, the newsletter, summer intensives, offering financial assistance to community members to attend classes and the summer intensives, and other projects such as

the music tapes and the new book on pagan rites for death and dving, many have felt that there is a need to create a home for our community; a place for the community to express itself and to come together. To each person you ask, the vision of this place is different. Perhaps this would be a place where people who want to get involved in Reclaiming could come and find out what projects need help, what kind of help, and who to contact; perhaps this space could have a community bulletin board, and be a place to meet other people in the collective/ community/tradition; perhaps there could be ritual space to reserve or rent affordably for private and/or family events; as well as an office for the administrative aspects of the collective (though to some of us, it all seems administrative). There has also been discussion of housing a library in this space. (Glenn Turner currently holds the Kalvn P. Tranquilíson Memorial Library at Ancient Ways in Oakland and there is the possibility that this collection could be housed in a larger Reclaiming library.)

In exploring this dream, many questions have arisen about who and what we are, and how and why we should find and support such a home. We have looked at how some churches and synagogues raise money as a model for how Reclaiming might be able to afford a space. But the more we look at how these institutions function and raise money to support their work, the more we realize that we simply do not function like a regular church; we are creating a structure that we have no models for.

At the community meeting in San

Francisco we took a look at some of these questions and sought input from our community. We received extremely valuable feedback from the approximately fifty people who attended, some of which challenged our perceptions of community and overall accessibility of the Collective, as well as knowledge of its structure. We hope this article addresses some of these questions. A further goal of the Collective for having a central space is that information will be more accessible and our community and structures will feel more inclusive. This then, we hope, will strengthen and further empower our community and its members.

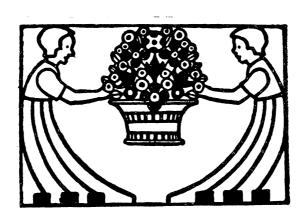
This first community meeting clearly showed the Collective that before a community space can be made manifest, we must have additional community meetings and find other ways for community members who might not be able to attend one of these meetings to provide input.

We need your help; we need people

who have an interest in what happens to this community to complete the survey included here and to attend the next Community Meeting, if you are able. Yes, we realize that distance and other obstacles prevent many people from attending meetings, which is an even greater reason to complete the survey and send it in to us. We need to know what the community needs/wants. And we also need seed money. Please, if you can afford to send money and you support the vision of a community space, send what you can to manifest this dream.

We all need to include this dream in our magic. The energy and vision between the worlds does affect all the worlds, as we say so often. The work we do when we come together at our rituals can be continued through temporal time making that energy available to all of us and to the world. As we feed the magic with our belief, it grows and takes shape in this world. Let us work together to give Reclaiming a permanent presence in the world.

[Thank you to Star and Macha and many others who contributed to this article.]



Reclaiming Community Survey

 $(The\ first\ three\ questions\ are\ strictly\ for\ demographics\ and\ are\ of\ course\ optional.)$

Age: Gender:
Sexual Orientation:
Where do you live (city, state/province, country)?
How did you hear about Reclaiming?
What contact have you had with Reclaiming and for how long?
—Do you receive our newsletter?
—Have you been to our Spiral Dance ritual?
—Have you been to other Reclaiming public rituals?
—Have you been to witch camp?
—Have you taken classes with us?
—Have you done something we didn't think to ask?
What do you like most about Reclaiming?

What things about Reclaiming would you most like to see changed?
Do you think having a space for Reclaiming is an important goal?
Do you think having a space for recomming is an important gour.
—Would you contribute money, time or other assistance toward this endeavor?
—What would you like to see this place be?
What other projects would you like to see initiated in our community?
Do you consider yourself a part of the Reclaiming community? Tradition?
Do you consider yoursen a pare of the recommany community (maracine

Please send your responses to:

Reclaiming Survey
P.O. Box 14404
San Francisco, California 94114

Two Full Moon Poems for Brid

by T. Thorn Coyle

Midnight Dance

My heart encased in flames
There's only dancing.
You and dancing.
No recourse but love, Lady.
You strike my heart
With shifting light
Like the full moon
Strikes my pillow.
I rise up from my bed,
Answer Your call.
Dressed in white, your devotee,
I dance the holy fire,
Perform ablutions at your sacred well.
I love You, all or nothing.
Take my all.

Insomnia

Lady, How could I not know? How could I forget, In all this poetry. . . My purpose is to serve You. Mistress of my heart, My craft adores You. You adorn me with the full face Of the moon. Keep me restless, oh my heart. I wander from my bed In search of you. There is no sleeping. When memory returns, A flooding ocean pulled homeward By Your tide.

UNDER THE WING OF UMUNHUM

by Tall Woman

I have a magenta jacket that I wear on the mountain. It warms me as I go up to the mine for sunrise meditation. The jacket attracts hummingbirds, it makes them hope for nectar.

When I first got it, they were curious. They flew in close, hovered and darted as I walked the path through the chaparral. When I sat, looking over the canyons, the vibrations of their wings began to penetrate my soul. They nudged open a doorway between my heart and life. The passage had gotten stuffed up during my husband's illness and death. The presence of that much concentrated energy provided an anchor to the material. I needed a tangible world correlate for that love.

The attraction to the hummers grew. I became hooked on the vibrations that infused and encompassed body and soul in their company. The dazzle of the rising sun reflected in the iridescent

feathers awed the synapses. That led to strapping a hummingbird feeder around my neck. It rested over my heart. They came to suckle.

For months I trekked up to the mine with the feeder and sugar water. The percussion of their beating wings entrained with my heart. Affection grew between us. For a time I didn't feel like walking up there. They found me in the garden. We went on with our communion.

Watching them work out dominance and territorial issues is a treat. They're brave and insatiably curious. Most importantly, they give glimpses into their humor. Play seems to permeate their serious endeavors.

The tenacity and grace with which they live and come together in community are inspiring. Could it be possible to rise to their example? If we could muster a tiny fraction of the refinement the hummers use to tell folks to back off, the world would get better. They are elegant boundary keepers.

The time of sitting on the mountain with a bird feeder strapped to my neck passed as summer moved into autumn. a piece of conscience came to the surface. Most of the local hummers usually leave these parts about halfway through the fall. Will my feeding them delay a necessary departure? Is my affection posing a threat to their mandate? I don't know.

So, I took off the feeder and attended the sunrise as just me again. Interestingly, the hummers were not put out in the least. They continued their close encounters a long time after the lack of feeding would have extinguished the learned behavior. They have resumed feeding on what nature offers up. There is plenty of sweet nectar.

It seems they come for something

else now. I don't know what, really. Their zooming around my heart brings courage. Whatever their purpose is, that's one effect. Another is that I find myself woven into the web of life with a stronger thread. Frankly, it's nothing I wished for. Since its reality is palpable, I'll see if I can make the best of it.

Hummmm, what's next? They have birdly things to do. I have human stuff to do. When we can do that in each others' presence, it's a good day.

The jacket is tattered and misshapen from long service. I don't wear it in the human world anymore. It's saved just the sunrise now.



Starhawk's Schedule

December 17: Sebastopol, CA

Winter Solstice Ritual, with Luisah Teish Contact: Harmony Network (above)

January 26-27, 1996: San Francisco, CA

California Institute for Integral Studies 415-753-6100, ext.455 765 Ashbury St., S.F., CA 94117

March 8-10: Oxford, Mich.

Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center Contact: Upland Hills. . . 810-693-1021 2575 Indian Lake Rd., Oxford, MI 48370

March 16-23: TEXAS WITCH CAMP

Contact: Sylvia Adame 512-288-6615

March 29-31: New York, NY

Women's and Men's Mysteries with David Miller Contact: New York Learning Alliance 212-226-7171 324 Lafayette, 7th floor, New York, NY 10012

April: Israel TBA

May 3-5: London, England

Workshop for Women and Men with David Miller Contact: Nick Williams, Alternatives 071-287-6711 St. James Church, 197 Picadilly, London W1V 9LF

May 10-13: Neresheim, Germany

Weekend Workshop and Monday day-long workshop for Women Contact: Inge Muff-Bongers

Seminar in Kalkwerk, D-73450 Neresheim, Germany

May 17-24: GERMANY WITCH CAMP

Contact: Anna Beeckmann 4161-54363 Lange Str. 49, 21614 Buxtehude, Germany

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

Reclaiming Public Rituals, 1996

Bridgid (Imbolc)

Friday, February 2, 8:00 p.m., Women's Building, 18th Street between Valencial and Guerrero in San Francisco

Spring Equinox

Sunday, March 17, gather at noon for egghunt & picnic, ritual at 2:00 p.m., location to be announced

Beltaine

Sunday, April 28, gather at 12:00 p.m. for garland making and picnicing, ritual at 1:00 p.m., location to be announced

Summer Solstice

Thursday, June 20, at Ocean Beach south of Taraval, gather at 6:00 p.m., bring wood, things to make & decorate the Wicker Man, food or drink to share.

Lammas

Friday, August 2, at Ocean Beach south of Taraval, gather at 6:00 p.m., ritual at 7:00.

Autumn Equinox

Sunday, September 22, time & location to be announced

Samhain (The Spiral Dance)

Saturday October 26 or Saturday November 2, time, location & date to be announced

Winter Solstice:

Saturday, December 21, time & date to be announced



Reclaiming classes & events

ELEMENTS OF MAGIC with Beverly and Doug

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

RITES OF PASSAGE for women with Patti 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 January 15. Sliding scale \$60-120. Call Reya at (415) 826-2342 for information and registration.

POWER OF THE ELEMENTS: A SEMINAR INTENSIVE FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS OF THE CRAFT anchored by Patti, Thorn, Rose and Reya with guest appearances by the other Reclaiming teachers.

Reclaiming initiates its new mystery school with this in-depth seminar which will meet every other Saturday, all day, for three months. Each Saturday we will spend the day in careful study of one of the Element of Magic. The format includes: meditation practice, trance, ritual, work with tools, movement, music and journaling. Prerequisite: At least Elements of Magic class or equivalent. Preference will be given to those who have taken all 3 basic Reclaiming classes. Students must be committed to attend all 6 seminars. Begins Saturday, March 23, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., sliding scale \$120-\$240, call Thorn (415) 587-8655 for information and registration.

MOVING THROUGH THE TAROT I with Beverly and Doug

Learn to aspect (actively trance into) the Archetypes, Goddesses and Gods of the Major Arcana for insight and healing. Come willing to move your body, stretch to your edges and feed your soul. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic class. Six Mondays beginning February 26, sliding scale \$120-\$160, call (415) 331-9263 for registration and information.

JOURNEY OF THE SOUL: THE MAJOR ARCANA, with Hilary and Reva

In this class we will focus not only on qualities and energies contained in each of the cards, their sequence, numerology and correspondences, but also on the cards' relationships to each other and the impact of those relationships on you. This is not a beginning class, so if you are a beginner, be prepared to familiarize yourself with the trumps outside of class time. We will be using the Rider-Waite-Smith deck and recommend that you do, too. **Seven Tuesdays** beginning **February 20**, **sliding scale \$70-\$140.** Call **Reya (415) 826-2342** for information and registration.

POWER AND MYSTERY with Beverly and Doug

"... When you hear the call from the land below, it sounds both strange and familiar ..." Descend with Inanna. This class is based on Starhawk's Book Truth or Dare. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic class. Six Mondays beginning April 15, sliding scale \$120-\$160, call (415) 331-9263 for registration and information.

COMMUNITY 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. Our first meeting, (last October) was extremely enlightening. We want and need to know more. Please come discuss the possibilities ahead, Sunday, January 21, 1996, 3:00 p.m. in the Audrey Lord room at the Women's Building, 18th Street between Valencia and Guerrero in San Francisco. Childcare by prearrangement—call Laura Kemp (415) 468-6132.

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 January 16th. \$120- to \$160-sliding scale. Call Cybele (415) 541-5650 for info/registration.

SEX MAGIC FOR WOMEN with Kim Jack

This is a class for the adventuresome and fun loving. We will explore, inside sacred space, our sexual energy, and sacred your massage, as developed by Annie Sprinkle, discovering what it means to be in our sexual power. With breathwork, organic

(Classes & events continued on next page)

Reclaiming classes & events, cont.

energy, spellcrafting, sacred erotic touch, trance, music and art, we will develop ways that help us learn to love our bodies, set boundaries, attain fuller more satisfying orgasms, fullfilling our sexual desires. Women of all sexual persuasions welcomed, larger women especially encouraged. Six Mondays beginning January 22. Prerequiste: would prefer women to have completed Reclaiming's Elements of Magic class, or equivalent. Sliding scale \$120 to \$150 some work study available. Call Kim Jack for details (415)923-1458,

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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.

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The Companion Self trance takes you through the stages of life with an opposite sex compansion self. Lively discussion guaranteed. Come cross-dressed or just come.

BOUNDARIES AND PROTECTION, March 30

Be sure of where you begin and end physicall and metaphysically.

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.

ROSE RANTS

by Rose May Dance

Last night we held the first teachers' meeting for the new Reclaiming seminar, "Power of the Elements." I was quite excited to begin this work, and to meet with my dear cronies Patti, Reya and Thorn. Last night's planning session was our "Air" meeting where we did our organizational work, brainstorming, decision making and putting forward of intention. We will do further planning using energy work, trance, spellwork and meditation in order to craft this seminar. Doing this kind of planning, and this kind of teaching, is a dream come true for us. This article is my unabashed attempt to lure you into this course, if you have ever taken a Reclaiming class or two or three.

The Reclaiming Teachers' Cell has been talking for many years of how we want to deepen our work together and in the community, and bring the kind of magic we can have at Witch Camp-in an intensive atmosphere and in a larger group-home to San Francisco. We want the summer camp experience available to us in the winter. We have plans to establish a mystery school in the Bay Area, where year-long courses are available, advancing all of our knowledge and practice of the Craft. Last month Patti nudged us into starting with a threemonth course, taught every other Saturday, beginning March 23. Four teachers will anchor the seminar, and other Reclaiming teachers will move in and out of the course, teaching their specialties.

If you had asked me just a few months

ago if I would be willing to give up every other Saturday, I would have said no. But we have wanted to offer advanced training for so long, and we have wanted to teach in a big team-without having to get on or off an airplane-for so long, that I am throwing caution to the winds and making the commitment.

How will this course differ from the basic Reclaiming classes? There are probably four different opinions, at least, but I would offer that the three basic Reclaiming classes teach beginning magical skills in the context of circlebuilding. We strive to have our students ready to practice magic on their own in small groups upon completion of our "living room" classes. So group dynamics and a "can-do" attitude about making one's own magic have been emphasized. The "Power of the Elements" seminar requires commitment, discipline and focus from teachers and students alike, and is meant to stretch us into our next period of magical growth as a community.

The shape of the course begins to look like this: one day each will be spent Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Spirit, plus a final day of integration. The two weeks following each class will be a period of practice and study, working with the material presented in class. Each class will begin with a regular magical practice that includes cleansing, meditation, grounding, movement, and reflection. We will ask the students to create the circle with great intention and concen-

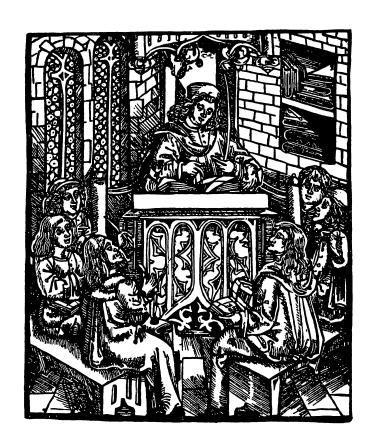
tration, so that the work of the day is empowered and crafted according to the element we wish to examine.

And what is our intention for offering this seminar? Recently I got together with a number of Witches, some of whom were Witch Camp teachers from out of town, and the rest of whom were Bay Area Reclaiming teachers. We had a piece of magical work to do, and we raised a lot of power. We were once again aware how wonderful it is to work

together with a large number of trained people who share common imagery and methods. Our intention in developing advanced training in our community is to help make more exciting magic happen, and fulfill our common hunger for spiritual challenges. We hope the Goddess will be delighted!

Will you join us?

For more information on "Power of the Elements," see page 20.



A FAMILY RITUAL

by Calla

I'm sitting on a hummock of sand on the beach in North Carolina. The sky is grey, and a strong warm wind is trying to steal the paper from my hands. Down the beach, my grown son, Tor, is teaching his younger cousins how to fly his trick kite. The grownups are ducking for cover as the kite dives and swoops crazily, its bright colors and serpentine tail beautiful against the grey sky.

I'm filled with a deep sense of satisfaction. Yesterday, our family had a 'Coming of Age' ritual for Tor, who is leaving home for college this month. I really went out on a limb, and had to face a lot of skepticism and resistance to bring the ritual into being. I am the only practising pagan in the family, and the only one who felt strongly about having a ritual for Tor. Tor himself was neutral, he likes attention but was afraid of being embarrassed. My partner, Bruce, rolled his eyes, but went along with it. Grandma was afraid she would be 'required to make a fool of herself'.

The only 'ritual' that society had provided had been high school graduation, which is a pretty poor excuse for a ritual, in my book. You sit in an auditorium, bored out of your mind, wearing a goofy hat. It's an exercise in favoritism, in which the same few kids get all the strokes. The only cool part is when you get to throw your hat up in the air. Then you go get drunk.

In planning our own ritual, my situation was complicated by the fact that I couldn't priestess it myself. My role

was that of a mother letting go. For me to have been running things would have been all wrong, magically. Luckily, my sister was excited and willing to help. She is pagan-friendly and has powerful energy and good instincts.

So we set to work designing a simple ritual that would be potent without making the family uncomfortable. There would be none of the visible trappings of paganism, to make people wonder 'what on earth are they doing?'. We thought if we mainly allowed the participants to speak for themselves, it would feel safe.

The family group was two grandparents, six parents, and five children ranging in age from 3 to 10, plus Tor. We asked family members to help out with tasks that we thought they would feel comfortable with. Grandpa would say a blessing for Tor. Grandma would welcome each person into the circle. The kids would welcome the elements. My sister-in-law agreed to 'dragon', to deflect with any curious passers-by. And my sister would priestess. We decided to hold the ceremony in several days, on the beach at 4:00 in the afternoon.

On the morning of the ritual, we asked the children to help us prepare the ritual space, by creating a circle of sea shells on the beach. (Hurricane Felix had just passed by, leaving the beach blanketed the beach with beautiful shells.) But the grandparents decided at the last moment that this was the day to take the kids on an all-day field trip to



another island, assuring us that they would return by 3:30.

I felt annoyed and disappointed, afraid that everyone would return exhausted and cranky, with no energy for the ritual. It made me feel that they didn't value or take seriously what was being planned, which was true. But I checked in with myself, and saw that my anger was connected to what was happening on a deeper level, to letting go of Tor. So, I let go of my resentment, and stayed on track.

In the morning my sister, brother-inlaw and I prepared the space without the kids. We marked out a generous circle in the sand, and lined it with big white shells, one right next to the other. It was gorgeous. Then, we went up to the house and ate and napped.

At 3:30, the grandparents returned. As I had feared, the kids, who had been very excited about the ritual before, were exhausted and whiny, demanding a lot of attention. I stayed anchored, trusting that everything would work out. Together, we walked the long path down to the beach.

Grandma went into the shell circle first, and beautifully welcomed each person. My sister cast the circle with words alone, talking about the circle of family and our bonds of commitment to each other. Her partner grounded us, by asking us to imagine and feel the earth

under our feet. Then, the children welcomed the elements. The older ones said "Welcome to the ocean" and "Welcome to the sky". Then the little ones caught on and chimed in, and we got a lot more than we bargained for. People laughed, and it was perfect.

Then, passing around a beautiful conch shell to serve as a talking stick, each person shared a reflection or favorite memory of Tor and our family, and wishes for his future. The memories were funny and heartwarming. It was wonderful to hear each person's experiences. There were tears and lumps in our throats along with the laughter.

When everybody had spoken, Bruce and Tor and I went into the center. Bruce tied a silver rope onto his wrist and then Tor's. He spoke beautifully about what it had meant to be Tor's parent. Then, I tied a silver rope onto my wrist and onto Tor's. I talked about changing his diapers and taking care of him. I was crying by this point.

Tor took a pair of scissors, and cut the ropes. It was an incredible moment. You could hear the indrawn beath of the whole group. He was supposed to say some words about becoming an adult, but we were all beyond words at that moment. So we just held each other.

We rejoined the circle, and Grandpa said his blessing over Tor. Then Tor went back into the center, alone. Grandma gave each child a bell to ring. The little kids ran around and around Tor, ringing the bells to seal the blessings, which made everyone laugh again.

We opened the circle, and snacked, and everyone went body surfing before dinner. I was very happy. I had really stuck my neck out to bring this to pass. And what had happened turned out to be important for the whole family. When I went to bed that night, I felt more solid, somehow.

Postscript:

Tor is at college, and enjoying it. He treasures the magical conch shell, full of his family's good wishes. I asked him whether I could write about his ceremony, here. He was enthusiastic about it, and said he hoped it would encourage others to create their own family rituals.



RECLAIMING COMMUNITY 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. Our first Community Meeting, last October, was very enlightening. We want (and need) to hear more from you. Please join us:

Sunday, January 21, 1996 in the Audrey Lord room at the Women's Building 18th Street between Valencia and Guerrero 3:00 p.m.

Childcare by prearrangement—call Laura Kemp (415) 468-6132

INVOCATION TO THE CRONE

by Sara Spaulding-Phillips

Quiet your breathing and allow the spirit of the dark mother, the spirit of the crone, to enter you now. Feel the crone, the old one, the wise one, climb into your body and fill your heart and soul. Let her swim into your blood and tissues, muscles, sinews and bones. Let her fill you with her crone energy.

The essence of the crone, the old witch, is in you now. You are about to travel with her into your future, to travel through the mist into your aging, through the desert. Your body is growing older now, wrinkles appear, cellulite is ever present and refuses to go away. For some of you, your skin sags, your eyes do not always sparkle quite as brightly. Your teeth, those that are still your own, often cause endless problems with gum disease and you owe your dentist a small fortune. Your joints ache and you have You cannot shed the less mobility. twenty, thirty, forty pounds you have put on, one pound a year since you were twenty. You are tired more often. You require more naps. You go to bed early and often have trouble sleeping.

You are acutely aware of your aging body-you are no longer a sexual symbol. Heads do not turn to look at you; in fact, you can walk in the world almost invisibly. Men don't notice you in the traditional sexual way; in that way, you are much safer than you were as a young woman. Sadly, even some of the young women turn away. They are afraid of your aging body and face and some-

times more conservative attitudes because they know it is the path they are heading down, the road their being human is taking them.

Let the loss, the sometimes terrible sadness and grief of growing old, come into your being. Walk through the dry desert ... you are barren now. You no longer spill your blood. You are no longer child-bearing. Energy is kept within you now, contained, free at some point to invest in different creations, children of the imagination, heart and soul. No more PMS and mood swings once menopause-"many pauses"-has been navigated. If you are a woman who have never borne children, you will no longer have that option.

In whatever case, you see the awesome void of emptiness and the unknown. You are no longer a pretty ornament or a trophy for men. Men choose more youthful partners; women sometimes choose younger, more vital partners. Through you, others are reminded of their own aging. Your aging father, your brother, are in denial about your aging; to them, you are becoming your mother.

Just stop a moment and feel the grief and fear and unfamiliarity of this aspect of the cycle, this stage of life and death. Walk all the way through that grief, water the desert of your life with your tears. Walk those mini-deaths, the great sadness, letting go. Let go of the burdens of youth as well. It is so important that you walk this wasteland, this barren desert, this burned-out crater.

Then when your tears are dry, you will begin to see the greening. It is important that you look at the ones who walk with you. Stare deeply into the faces of your aging loved ones, your friends and lovers, your children. See how their faces begin to reflect their life, the lines forming around the eyes, the brow, the mouth. Look deeply into the mirror at your own face, see into your future. Notice the small spurts of returning energy and growing, the sense of accomplishment at having arrived at this age, into this time, so intact and competent and beautiful. Even if you don't feel that now, it lies within you, one of the new seeds soon to sprout. In these buds we remember beautiful growing things, ancient aspects, forgotten, unseen, undervalued in our culture because they're re not flashy or flamboyant or sexy or perhaps not classically beautiful. For in the burned-out crater of the devastating volcano as it cools. delicate purple and yellow and white orchids grow.

As you reach the other side, walking through this desert called aging, you are met by others who have gone before you, fortunate crones now who reclaimed their power or were taught or shown through contemporary and ancient spiritual practices, like Wicca and the Reclaiming classes and at witch camp. This is a fertile time. Crones are ripe

with creative juices; at last the time has come to apply the same mothering abilities-those you devoted to raising your children-to developing the creativity that is now available and to nurturing your own spiritual and symbolic babies.

If anything needs to get done, ask these crones, "The way of the crone is work without effort." If it isn't that way for you, then that way is a seed within. For through dozens of years of community building, through P.T.A., the schools, you learned how to organize, how to deputize, to delegate, how to manifest in the world and get things done-or not to do things if you didn't want to. As a crone, you have the privilege of doing what you want.

These years of the crone are a time of repose, the period between ripening and death, and that also means going within, developing a spirituality that satisfies and fulfills your soul and dreams. It is a time for developing powerful friends with women and men. It is a time for ritual. The crone is the elder priestess with all the authority and power of someone who has been trained all her life to give wise council and to live fully. You are now on the other side, ready to serve women of all ages, to make decisions for the good of all. Crones no longer compete, so you are free to support, to nurture, to guide and to heal. You are reclaiming old memories, keeping the family albums and history. You are telling the stories. You are teaching

grandchildren whenever you are with them, sharing the outdoors with them, camping, sailing, hiking, etc. With eyes to the future, you are sowing and tending the seeds and fresh new sprouts. You are sharing and caring for the old. You are doing hospice work. It is the crone in all of us who anoints the dying, honors the dead and chants them on into the next world.

Feel the company of crones who have passed through the wasteland and have found new beginnings, the chalice of life in their quest for the Holy Grail. See yourself come into this magnificent crone. You are laughing, dancing, loving-a sexy old crone, free from societal restraints, free from the ego's shoulds and shouldn'ts, free from expectation. Join all crones in their irreverence, their bawdiness and their acceptance of accomplishment, the success and freedom in reaching fifty, 55, 65, 75 and beyond come into your being. Stand in that place and let those qualities warm and fill you now and be a beacon to your future.



announcements

THE EARTH CONCLAVE, INC. ANNOUNCES:

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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.

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.





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For more information contact: Ancient Ways, 4075 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609 or call (510) 653-3248) between 11 am and 7 pm daily)

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ISBN 0-9649262-0-2. 8-1/2" x 11", 108 pgs, softcover. For wholesale inquiries, please contact Patti Martin c/o Reclaiming, POBox 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114

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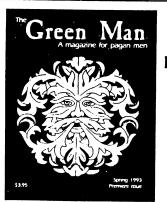
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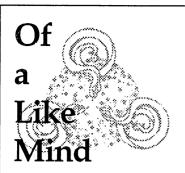
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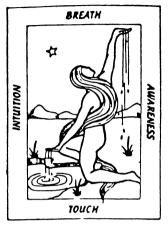
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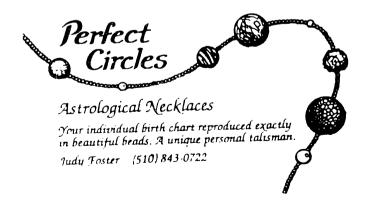
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