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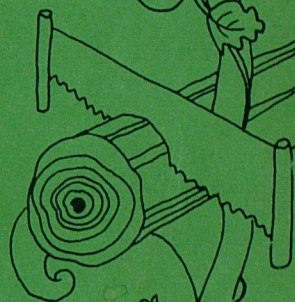
ATLANTA, GA. 30307

WOMEN WORKING

75¢

COUNTRY
WOMEN

ISSUE 16



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Make your need known
need is human
pain is woman

You are precious
to me
to the circle
to the people.
Becoming resigned to
a life without need
without silence or rest
is incorrect. A bad example
A short-sighted way.

Is this a cycle?
If so where is its door?
How do we break it,
shatter on to some new plane?

The others of us must hear your voice
and add ours
plan strategy to defeat this
thing sapping you
and others, too.

Our value is no Puritan one of joyless labor
but of hard work and fine life
from each according to her ability
to each according to her need



Our cures are homely things
sweet teas for the late nights
borrowed Chinese magic
digging fingers into the black Earth to
ease mind and tire body
We must apply them seriously and
measure our progress.

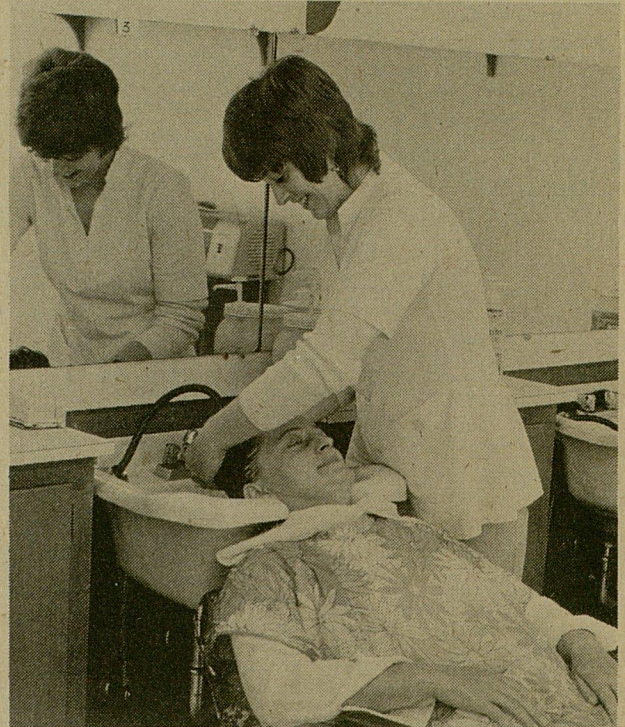
We must watch out for each other better
nurture your well-being
the way we guard you from the enemy.

Nothing is more important to do
than to renew,
regain your beautiful strength
which moves mountains.

WOMEN WORKING AND WORKING AND WORKING

I work. I am a woman. My body aches and so does my soul. I live constantly on the borderline of fatigue and exhaustion. I am tired, so tired, so very, very tired. Years ago when my teenagers were babies I kept on going with the thought that men had no choices, no options other than to get up and go to work every day. They, too, had to support families and survive the competition of the marketplace. In the last five years, however, I have come to realize that when most men are supporting families they have wives to ease the burden. If they are not supporting families their burdens cannot compare to a woman alone working, competing in the white male marketplace while trying to raise their children.

I have distractions in my work. My sick child home alone...will she take her medicine on time and in the right amount? Why can't I be there to soothe her and comfort her? Does she cry alone and sick, and feel sad and lost? What will I fix for dinner this evening? My car insurance is due again! How can I squeeze out money for new shoes which they need so desperately? It is getting cold so soon and they have no coats, will I have to moonlight



again leaving them alone more and more just to try to give them the basic things all children should have?

My teeth ache. I have no money for a dentist and cannot afford the time away from my job. My children's dental needs should come first. Why should they have to pay the price of two bad marriages? Why should anyone have to pay a price for two bad marriages? The sentence of borderline poverty and physical exhaustion. I am a mother but not allowed the time to mother. I am a business woman but not allowed the full status in this world either. I go from one half-tone shade of gray to another. My half-mother and half-businessperson, second class status, second class longing and dissatisfaction.

I have acted in good faith in both marriages, in both childbirths and in my work. There is not enough of me left over after half-way fulfilling my obligations. Bone tired I wake up, bone tired I retire, wishing I could smile more and listen more to children, but always thinking...please stop talking so I can just unwind and go to sleep.

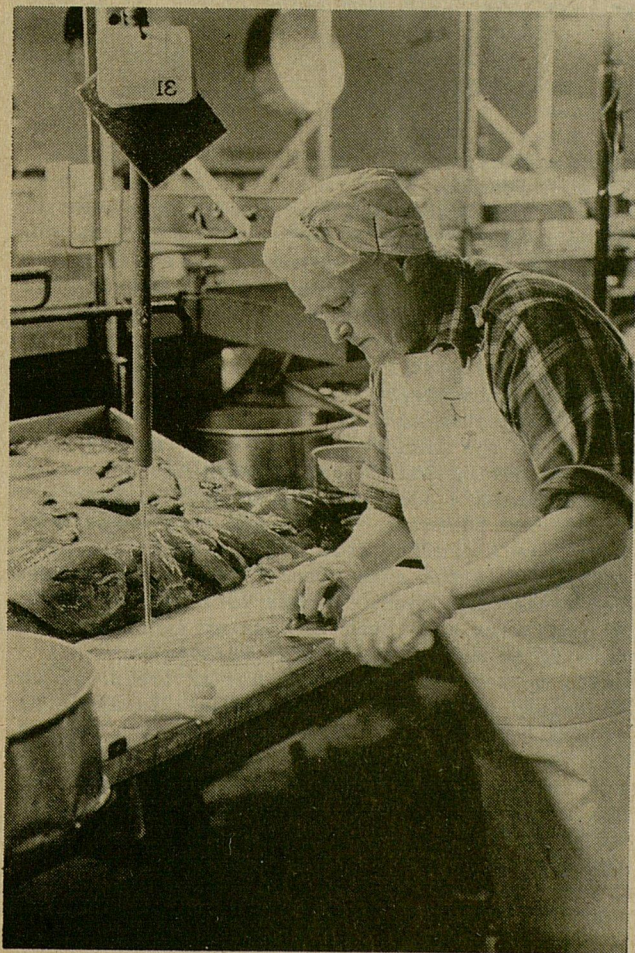
The children are angry because they are deprived. They are angry at me because I do not earn more money. I explain women's oppression, talk about inflation. I tell them it is okay to be angry, but not at me. Be angry at the system which says: If you want nice things, you marry them. Now they want me to get married so they do not have to be ashamed. But then, I would be ashamed!

So, every day I get up and go to work. Sometimes they have lunch money, sometimes they do not. And, sitting in my plush office, surrounded by affluent people, I feel bitter as I think of my daughter with no lunch money. I work to keep my car running so I can get to work...

I am a woman. I work. The best of being a woman and the best of working is kept from me and I feel so cheated. And, now that they are not babies, there is nothing but to go on working and working and working...but for what?

And, my daughters are women and they work. My little one. For two years up every morning at 5:00 a.m. to deliver newspapers. Cold, windy, rainy weather. Had to spend her earnings to buy a bike to deliver her papers (just like my car). Can't stay up late on summer nights or stay over night with a friend. Sacrifices, sacrifices for daughters working. Last year she had to give up sports at school. Couldn't maintain her grades, practice for sports and get to bed by 8:30. We need lots of sleep, we working women. The older daughter works. Cares for other people's children at night. Does the dishes, vacuums, bathes them, reads them stories, straightens up the house for \$.50 (fifty cents) per hour. Same rate I got 20 years ago. Inflation doesn't affect "women's work" and "child care." Four hours of child care won't even get her into a movie or buy one week's lunch. She gets home late, sometimes after midnight and has to leave for school at 6:45. There is no bus. She is tired too.

I want you to know that we are not officially poor. I tried for youth jobs for them and we are \$40.00 a month above being poor. So now it is official. We are three women working, we are all tired, not officially poor, just tired, frustrated, dissatisfied and slightly bitter. We are women working and working and working... ♀



Memo- To My Employer
by S. Lee

M E M O:

TO: My Employer

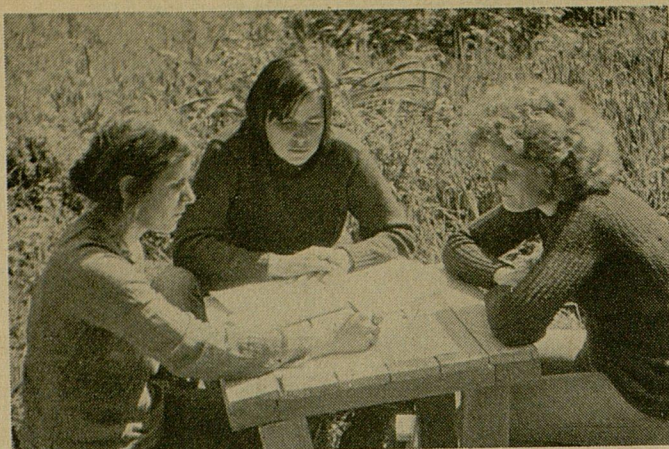
I'm the best investment you ever made
For \$80.00 a week I make you \$3,000.00
Each month...

Imagine what I could do with
A proper diet,

A warm winter coat,

And teeth that didn't ache...

love & kisses
employee #2419



A Working Definition

What is work? Is it scheduled physical labor; is it producing a product; is it creative activity; is it spiritual development of the self? Is childcare work? Is developing a relationship work? Is practicing an instrument work? Rarely have we felt so perplexed as we did this time about the meaning of the words that will adorn our cover. Women Working. This article is some of the thoughts the members of this collective shared while putting out this issue. We realized that once you stop equating work with jobs, trying to define it is like trying to define love. No definition is inclusive. In talking about work, we discovered how much emotion, how much guilt, pride, anger, resentment, anxiety and attraction we feel towards it. We found that our own options and choices affected what we felt qualified as work, and we never transcended the fragmented perspectives on work that had arisen from our own individual experiences. But we did come to understand each others' work choices more than we had two months ago, so we wanted to share here some of the learnings from our discussions.

Our discussions of work became heated, even tense, very early on and we realized that it was because we were talking about personal morality. We all seemed to be at least viscerally bound by the Protestant Ethic: "Work is virtuous." Most of us would go on to say, "The harder it is, the more virtuous it is." And of course, "The harder you work, the more virtuous, the more worthy, you are." These prescriptions weren't heartfelt, or headfelt; they were gutfelt. We protested against them, talked our way out of them, but we still felt the pressure.

The question is complex. Though we want to free ourselves of compulsive patterns, some of us still feel it's valuable to connect morality with work. As Sherry said, "With my growing self confidence has come a state of relaxation I haven't known before. My work still feels like work - a process involving effort and feelings - but it doesn't have the added burden of proving my self

worth. Still, I cannot conceive of my life not having some value for society or other people and that seems right to me."

If it doesn't get confused or entangled with oppression, exploitation and compulsion, work is something we like to do. One way to disentangle work from oppression, exploitation and compulsion is to work hard at creating alternatives, an option that's available to us in the country especially when we are not ourselves oppressed, exploited and compelled. I don't think we on the collective have illusions of being trapped on an externally imposed treadmill of work, even those of us who have full time jobs. Rather we recognize that we're from the middle class, that we're privileged, and that our privilege is shared by very few. Sherry: "I still feel a consciousness of and ambivalence about my responsibility to less privileged people in this society, those who can't live on half a salary; who must combine a full time job with sole responsibility for childcare; who do not have the education, family training, or a supportive women's group to help them discover what they want to do in their lives; or who, having discovered it, never have the opportunity to pursue it until they are sixty-five. I don't know what to do with that consciousness of my privilege, except to not forget or ignore it and to share as best I can what I'm learning."

Harriet: "I feel that although security is still a basic motivation guiding our work, we have moved, and have moved others, to a less self-centered morality through the political reaction of the sixties. We ask ourselves 'Is our work meaningful and socially productive?' I think it's interesting that in discussing our work, we don't mention the work we do on the magazine. And I feel this work satisfies those criteria."

On the whole, our feelings towards work we've done for money were pretty bleak. This has changed recently for some of us: myself working on a food store collective, Sherry getting money for her writing, Terry doing pottery. Still, satisfying jobs don't abound in the country. Sherry protests, "Towards my jobs I feel and have felt anger. I can't get used to not being respected as a person just because I'm lowest on the ladder." Nancy went through some changes during the course of working on the issue, about a job she'd recently obtained in her field: history. "Last week my dilemma was how to be a professional historian and a country woman at the same time. This week my problem feels like how to escape work oppression. My employers have just told me my appearance will have to be modified. I went back to work to raise my self-esteem and to use my training, but my salary is low and so, sometimes, is my self-esteem."

With jobs being as unappealing as they are, many women have opted to find a way around them. But we've become aware that many of our alternatives to holding a job still keep us basically dependent on men. I sometimes feel envy when I see country women my age whose financial burdens are lightened by lovers and husbands, past and present; overindulged parents (daddy); inheri-

tances (money accumulated by male progenitors even if it was inherited from a woman); or welfare (money from The Man).

And women who have an alternative to holding a job or who are somehow financially independent, usually express some ambivalence about their situation. Like Harriet: "I feel like my mother didn't work, because she didn't work outside the home, but I know this is ridiculous. I myself started selling crafts in the third grade. At seventeen I worked for an insurance company for five months, and I thought it was shocking. I hated it. I hated it! I soon got married and never felt the breadwinning was my responsibility. I expected to be supported, felt no economic pressure. When the time came to choose what kind of work I would do, I got pregnant. For the last five years I've been trying to work out my own work energy, to produce what I need. I'm trying to use my labor on providing my own space and food instead of getting paid and paying for them. I think in many ways it's been harder determining my own work than having my life structured by a job or a job identity."

Jenny, by contrast, feels less conflict about living on a financially independent commune. "I'm not connected with the job market. Money isn't a daily number one concern for us and I'm thankful for the space it gives us. Work and money aren't real connected in my present situation. My social conscience has always been strong, thanks to my Quaker upbringing that taught me the virtues of simple living and service. I feel our job on our land is to replenish the planet by protecting the land from destruction and by growing organic food for ourselves and others."

We often apply to our lives the capitalist assumption that work that's not remunerative is valueless. And what of that largest category of unremunerative work, women's traditional work, housework and childcare? Ellen says, "Sometimes I resent the obligation of parenting." Harriet adds, "I feel my dominant job for the last ten years has been being Allison's mother, and that means having my life totally run by an outside force." We've found in our own lives that "woman's work" can be far more pleasant if it's shared, if it's not constant and inescapable. Our collective was not a fair sampling of women doing traditional work, since none of us puts primary energy into our home and children. The majority of women probably do, and we would like to make it more widely recognized that child care and work at home are legitimate work.

If ordinarily a woman's work is never done, a farm woman's work is doubly perpetual. Nancy: "I always thought the point of moving to the country was to lay back and get loaded. But I'm forced to recognize that I don't do anything but work these days. Even when I'm stoned, I do work like weeding the garden." When we potentially or essentially provide our own produce, milk, eggs, meat, wool, heating, structures and entertainment, it takes longer than it would to procure the same quantity of goods by reporting to a job and getting wages to buy

those things. We all get satisfaction from a direct energy cycle in which we are the source of most of our own food, clothing, and shelter.

Yet while we have the satisfaction of nurturing the growth needed to feed our consumption, we have to be satisfied with a product that is continually being absorbed. Sherry: "The nature of a farm is that it's process, and not a product. We have to readjust our values when we switch to farming so that we can appreciate and value the work process for itself."

One of the more controversial designations for work (the controversy being whether or not it qualifies as work) was activity that we put under the heading of self-work, or spiritual work on the self. Some of us were inclined to think self work would usually take energy away from social and humanitarian work, but for others of us self work was our most important work, a seeking that guided our other efforts and would make us more effective humanitarians. Still, we may struggle to justify it. Terry: "I have a spiritual sense of being here to work out something. My work is to express an individual nature as part of a whole. Now I find a whole day at T'ai Chi or a day at the free school work even though I don't get paid for them. I'm trying hard not to worry about money, because what I want to do is learn, and you don't get paid to learn. Still, I'm dreading having to go home to my family in a month and explain my life when I'm not a production potter."

Virginia felt that self work was the activity that was most clearly work for her and of highest value. She spoke of her experiences doing Arica Training. "A friend suggested I take the training and I decided to do so. There was a group of about sixty-four people and about thirty rotating teachers. We came together and small groups of us got communal houses in the city. We worked together from early morning to late at night. We worked on the body, mind and essence. The work on the body was in the form of an hour of gym in the morning followed by T'ai Chi and African dance. In doing work like this, I realized that the energy of a group of people working toward one goal is more intense and creates faster change. The thing I found about essence work was when you really touched another person's essence there were no divisions between man, woman, young, old. Duality was illusion."

"The work of an individual to become, or to reach the highest level possible is a life's work. It is like assuming responsibility for your own evolution. Deciding to do work of this kind and actually doing it takes a goodly amount of discipline."

So where does all this leave us? Clearly for all of us, work is one, if not the, important aspect of our lives. We all share a strong sense that what we do is work and that our life's work is usually independent of or in spite of the jobs we hold for money. Because the ramifications of work are so widespread, we realize we've only touched on some of its aspects in this issue. But we hope the issue will help you focus on the meaning of work in your life. ♀

FIRE WORK

Startled as I look at the sky - yellows and greys. It's a big one this time - wondering how far away. My insides jump - shocked feelings in my scalp - my arms - a sensation I have trouble describing. Been wanting to have the experience of fire fighting for a long time. So far only stand-by, and my thoughts have grown out of proportion.

Jeff comes by on the way to the fire. He's part of a crew they've just gotten together. I say I think I want to go, unable to say it definitely. It's a big fire - going to be hard work and dangerous. God, I need support. Owlins says, "Go, Amber." But what about the kids? They're covered. I have no good pants. Daryl says I can have hers. I tell Jeff to pick me up after he gets his shit together. We ride to David's house - people rising from a quick few hours sleep - they bundle into his flatbed. Another stop and more people. It's so dark I can't see who's in the cab. I think I hear a woman's voice - oh, please!

Riding fast on this winding road, cinders in the air, glow in the sky ahead. Suddenly we round a curve and the world bursts into flame. On the mountainside to our right, flaming orange pillars, some hurtling down around us, remains of burned houses, propane tanks which exploded earlier. Across the river, to our left, our forests are burning. Gasoline spilling in the back of the truck - we work to clean it up with horrifying images in our heads of what could happen. Fear is coursing through every cell in my body. What the fuck am I doing? Why am I doing it? The thoughts crash into each other, pressure building inside my head. Deep breaths and into alpha, calm slowly spreading its gentle fingers, massaging my aching mind. You want this, Amber, you want the adventure, the experience. Not to go your whole life hearing men speak of their adventures in their world and knowing only in your fantasies you could be there too. I decide to settle into what's happening - experience it, not fight against it.

We stop and Joanie (a neighbor) steps out of the cab. We're so happy and relieved to see each other. She's incredible to be with, so strong - I like her so much. A few days later she gets poison oak so badly her eyes swell shut. Feel tremendous sense of loss as she leaves and I am now alone in a camp with hundreds of men. Her leaving makes all I hear and see magnified. The whistles and remarks deafening on my ears. I feel open and vulnerable. Realization: you are here for you, Amber. The appropriate filters come up - not blocking out the sounds, but I don't care now. I'm feeling good.

The first night of the fire, we follow a caterpillar tractor which is making the fire line. It's an inferno around us. A man next to me strikes a hornet's nest. They attack him - his face, neck, ears - he's carried away very sick. We work all through the night, the next day and into the night again. Once in a while, a brief

nap. I feel lack of sleep, nauseous from government rations and handfuls of brewer's yeast I've been stuffing into my mouth. We see fire on top of a hill, rush up, my legs complain under the load of my pack and tools. I am so hot. Layers of clothing sticking to me. Helicopters fly overhead with huge buckets of water. We stand underneath - shock of cold river water hitting our sweating bodies. Oh, how wonderful. Cold - I feel cold. Takes hours to dry and as night falls I am still damp, feel chilled. I stand outside of me, observing how I feel. I am not worrying, just accepting. It's eleven at night, we've worked twenty-one hours with no sleep to begin with. I'm very tired and slightly nauseous, but feeling good and strong. Ready for my four hours of sleep.

The days run together; there is no order to my experiences. The eight of us were dropped off somewhere - they drive off telling us nothing. We walk a few miles up hill till we find someone. He radios for instructions and as we wait for an answer, we talk. He looks at me. "Come along to keep the boys company," knowing smirk. "No, I came to fight the fire." "Oh!" We replace about forty men on the fire line. Just the eight of us. The wind starts to pick up. Burning snags fall everywhere, two-hundred-foot trees. If the wind shifts direction and fire jumps the line, the forest behind us will explode violently, and we are scared. Our crew boss, who has done much fire fighting, finds our best escape route. He's scared too. We talk among ourselves, just the eight of us; it's a mistake, the Forest Service has fucked up again. A few hours later, realizing the mistake, they send reinforcements. A crew of Chicano men - the same crew which had a member badly injured by a falling snag just yesterday. The section chief tells them to go in some preposterous distance and put out smokes. I hate him. I can feel the pleasure this sadistic bigot is getting out of the fear he sees on his crew's faces. I talk to one man. "He's crazy," I say. "It's too dangerous, too damned hot in there, snags falling every few minutes." "Hey, boss, this girl says it's too hot in there." The boss looks at me, his version of looking. "Yeah?" I look at him, his pot belly, pink baby-flesh neck, changing to red near his hairline. I tell him I've been here all morning and I know what's going on. "It's too hot, they'll get hurt." A cracking noise gets our attention. We start to run. There's an ear-splitting crash - the tree lands a few yards from us. "OK, just go in five feet and be careful." He walks away. The man I'd spoken to smiles at me and goes in five feet.

Later on I walked into the burned area, not working right now, just looking, feeling. The sun is blood red through the smoke above us. It's been a while since I've seen it any other way. I feel as if in a science fiction story - in another world. Cut off from my sisters and brothers, stepping through grey, white ash, clouds rising as I walk, no familiar forest floor. Black, charred shapes which were once my friends, the trees. Slight wind moaning through the emptiness. Desolation, death. I feel angry as I think of how our forests get fucked over. Fires should be good - a natural, beneficial process. But the slash and waste left after logging causes the

havoc I have seen. Millions of dollars spent fighting these fires just to save the few dollars and hours it would take to clear up their bloody mess. I sit down - the ground very warm - too out of it, in it, to care. A tiny bird trying to fly lands close to me in a daze. It's minutes before it sees me and then it doesn't even care. A butterfly clinging to me - I'm alive and it seems scared to leave. I cry and sob. It seems impossible to have enough filters. I feel, I feel so much. Sometimes I wish for numbness - not to know. The insects cling to me - it's good, I know.

The days continue. Less danger, but still very heavy. Men constantly coming over to me. "Can I help you carry your tools?" "Do you get the same pay as us?" "Shouldn't you be home making dinner for your family?" I decide to respond, explain without getting emotional. Sometimes I hear me talking, sounds strange to my ears. Some listen, some laugh - fuck 'em. Have I touched their lives at all? Started any thinking?

My first helicopter ride over Wooly Creek. Important we don't lose it here. If the fire jumps the creek which is the fire line, the whole wilderness area will go up and then... Later we find out we've been sent to this dangerous spot by mistake - glad we're here. Up in the copter, smoke very heavy, yet I can still see reflection of a bright red-orange sun in the waters below. How can the pilot see, I wonder? Crash shakes the helicopter, stomach lurches. We've hit the top of a tree. Pilot looks green - his head out the window trying to see. We have to go back, enter from a different direction.

We walk miles behind a Forest Service man - Harvey's heavy, but moving very well down the trail. Someone mentions he's taking diet pills and is in danger of losing his job due to being overweight. I get to like him later on while we watch the fire line. We talk, and yet I know it's only because we're here that this is possible. The fire is blazing very hot here. There's a snag burning on the side of the trail. Harvey says space out fifteen feet to pass this spot. My turn - there's a cracking noise - I freeze. Tommy behind me says, "Come on, get going." I run past, but wait for him. I'm incredibly angry. More at me for jumping to his command and endangering my life. I say in a very controlled way, "Don't you ever do anything like that to me again." I want to explode at him, but know the message will be lost and he can just call me a hysterical woman. Where does all the anger go? The thought flashes as I move on. We climb down the mountainside to a creek which is bigger than our neighboring river. So very beautiful with its huge blue-green swimming holes and fish playing. I realize again how little time I've had to absorb the beauty of this land.

Later we try to make it up to the trail, but the fire is too hot up there now. The only way back is to make our way back up the creek by swimming and scaling huge bluffs. Quite adventurous, and lots of fun at times. Sometimes we take off our clothes, laughing as a helicopter circles above us. Harvey is far-out - he stays dressed but doesn't make us feel uncomfortable. Tommy doesn't like water much, and I watch in



amazement as he scales rocks like a mountain goat. Most of the crew swims well. I start to think of my years growing up in England, no swimming, climbing or exploring. I see these men at twelve years old, running through the woods and city streets, climbing and jumping, while I wandered alone with my dog above the white cliffs, looking longingly down at the ocean below. I think of how much my body is having to re-learn. At one point, the water is very deep and the bluff steep. My crew decides to climb rather than swim. At first I feel I must climb too. But I know it will be hard for me - I still have fears around this kind of climbing. Part of me is scared to show fear to these men. But I decide to swim it because that is what I want to do. No-one makes fun of me - someone even verbalizes that it was good that I did what was comfortable for me.

So the eight days come to an end and we're getting ready to fly out of Wooly Creek. Harvey says, "You did a good job, men." Some of my crew come over and put arms around my shoulder saying, "You really kept up all the way with us, Amber." I start to respond and then decide not to talk to my brothers at this time. So I smile and know inside of me that I feel good and strong and satisfied. My adrenalin has started to flow and it won't stop now. There is much for me to experience. This once scared, innocuous little English girl is now a beautiful, strong woman - I really love me. ♀

Excerpted from January Thaw, a wonderful anthology of journal pieces, reflections; and poems that mirror the changing consciousness of an isolated country commune. Available from Times Change Press, % Monthly Review Press, 116 w. 14th st., N.Y. N.Y. 10011

FIRE FIGHTING

ON THE KLAMATH



One way to make money in the country is to fight forest fires in the summer. Few women have done it, and none had done it in the Klamath National Forest area before us, but no one has any legal right to stop you from fire fighting. As soon as you see a flash of lightning, go to your nearest Forest Service station and ask them if there's a fire. If there is, say that you want to sign on. Even if they only put you on standby, pay is \$2.95/hr. If you get to a fire it's \$2.95/hr, travel time and \$3.40/hr for actual fire time, until you get more experienced, then it goes up twice more. They give you tools, flashlight, hard hat, food, "sleeping bags". You should go in sturdy, simple clothes that you can move easily in and that won't tear. Don't wear jewelry - and you must have good boots, although it's true that walking on hot ashes can ruin boots. It's good to go with and insist on being with other women, because it's a very male trip and you will be more comfortable with sisterly support.

We had talked about fighting fires earlier in the summer, had been in touch with the Forest Service, and they came out to our place with films about the movements of forest fires and with tools to demonstrate and practice techniques. Last summer a group of us working for several days managed to make a few thousand dollars. I was one of them. It was terrifying, exciting, educational, exhausting, and depressing - but we were on a big fire, whereas some fires only consist of one smouldering tree. There's the fire in itself - so frightening at first that I thought of escaping but there was nowhere to go. Then there's a lot of digging and scraping and throwing to make a dirt line that the fire can't cross (an experienced person is "boss" and decides where to make the line). Then there's

"mop-up", when the flames are out and you have to go around painstakingly ferreting out all hot coals buried beneath the ashes. Then there's the men who always want to let you go first, or give you a hand, or excuse themselves if they swear in front of you. Then there's the politics of it all - ecologists, lumber companies - all that burned land - is it a shame, a waste, a tragedy, or a positive part of the natural process?

Another possible money-making venture, which also concerns dickering with the Forest Service, is tree-planting, in clear-cut areas or burned areas. If you're against clearcutting you may want to think twice about becoming part of the Forest Service program of regeneration, thereby making money off a practice you do not condone. Contracts to replant areas are given by the Forest Service to the lowest bidder. The Forest Service then pays the contractor to replant and supplies the trees. The contractor pays his workers. You can work for a contractor, but if you're a group and can get the contract yourself you can work slower, make more money, and feel better about it than you would if you were working for someone else's profit.

I like to make money doing something that enriches my life, or, at worst, that is not contrary to it. I feel that working for the Forest Service is questionable in terms of my desire to be in harmony with the land, to move with it not against it. The Forest Service is more concerned with economy than with ecology, and I don't yet know enough, for instance, to know if putting out a natural forest fire is a thing I really want to be doing, ecologically speaking. I feel that planting trees is ecologically sound, unless, as I mentioned, it makes me part of the logging practices that I want to change. ♀

TOKENISM?

I stand speckled with mud, hard hat on head, hoedad swung over shoulder. At first glance I look like the rest of the crew. On closer examination you would notice that I am the token woman on this tree planting crew.

I did not want to set an example, forge a place for women in man's world or prove women's values in terms of male standards. I do not believe women will ever find a really fulfilling place as long as the men still have the power in our society. All I want is to survive financially while living in the country. Other years, I went to the city to earn money. I do not want to do that this year.

I have lived in the country for almost four years and have supported myself by occasional waitressing jobs and migrant farm work. My other primary source of income was going to the city and waitressing. Now I want to support myself where I live. What's more, during my last waitress job I was demoted to dishwasher (pay \$1.65 per hour). No longer could I smile at the men civilly and ignore their flirtations. Waitressing is the only skill I have of value in the job market. It is obvious that men's skills are worth more than mine. My time is worth more than \$1.65 per hour. Obviously I am worth as much as a man.

A friend and I both applied for this tree-planting job. I had a little experience planting trees and a lot of experience doing hard physical work outdoors. I knew they would be unable to turn down a woman with my experience -- "equal opportunity" and all that. Besides I planned on raising hell if they did. I assumed my friend would get hired as well. But she did not have experience and she did not get hired.

I liked work the first day. The terrain was incredibly difficult, but I still enjoyed the hard physical work. I liked the feeling of powerfully swinging the hoedad. I felt like a dyke and loved it. The job demanded I keep up with the men, since the men all waited until I got done before we moved onto another row. After awhile I managed to keep up, but the truth of the matter is that I had lied somewhat on my application for the job. My experience was very limited and, in fact, I had virtually no experience with the hoedad. (I had planted trees behind an auger and with a dibble bar, which are other tools for digging the hole in which the tree is planted.) So my trees were often poorly planted.

My first taste of the job had been the conversation in the crummy (the jargon term for the truck in which the crew is driven to the job). The rest of the crew talked about hunting, then moved on to murder. I did not want to listen to such talk and, needless to say, I had nothing to say on these topics. That was fortunate since

the men on the crew (mostly boys in fact) had no intention of talking to me anyway. They seemed to regard me as an aberration, an intrusion into their male privilege. It was very surreal to be

with these people nine hours a day and be seemingly invisible. Furthermore, I was in a state of culture shock from the change of my usual life in which I live with all women and relate almost exclusively to women.

The first evening after work I felt sick, I ached all over, felt feverish. I did not know if it was merely fatigue or if I was, in fact, sick. The second day was a nightmare, nothing less. I was quite sick. It was pouring rain and hailing. My shoes were not adequately waterproofed, my rainpants ripped, my lunch spilled all over me. My trees were poorly planted, but the boss did not help me to improve. In many ways he treated me like the rest of the crew, but I was not like the rest of the crew. I am not a man. I am a woman.

Being sick made me very vulnerable, but I knew vulnerability was not accepted in the man's world. They made the rules and I knew when I entered their world I had best obey them. But beyond that, I did not trust these strange men enough to be vulnerable in front of them. So instead I bit my lips and held the tears back. That energy seemed to be rechanneled and come back as anger. That day as I climbed the mountain and swung the hoedad my thought ran like this:

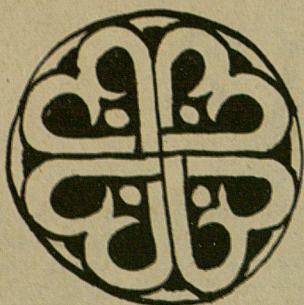
"I am not one of them! I can not play their games as well as they can. Furthermore, I do not want to learn to play these games; I am trying to unlearn what I know of them. They get to make the rules because they have the power. I am giving them power over me in return for \$3.23/hour. Money is power."

"My body is not as well trained for the job as their bodies are. I have trained my body for four years, they have trained their bodies for twenty or thirty years. But still they seem to expect as much work from me as from one of the men. The men get some kind of support from each other. In this work situation, I have no one to get support from. This is tokenism."

That was one of the most political days of my life.

I spent the week-end in bed quite sick. I quit the job Monday morning. I felt like I had no choice. Even though I was in desperate need of money I knew I could not possibly force myself back into that situation.

I never want to go back to another job in the man's world. My consciousness being what it is I have eliminated the alternatives I now know for making money. I have to create new alternatives. We have to create new alternatives. ♪



EARTH, AIR, WATER, FIRE: A POTTER'S MEDIUM

Last Sunday night, returning from a selling weekend in Eugene, I picked up a hitchhiker. He was on his way to San Francisco, quite exuberant-at 34 he had quit his job with a law firm and was in the process of getting together a yachting business. Very high, very fresh, he was determined to "take control of his life." Funny the timing of this brief encounter, for I had been under a cloud since my 25th birthday, questioning my own lifestyle, apparent lack of material security (money, land, savings), and at the same time discovering a desire in myself to own some expensive things, i.e. land, tools, a large kiln to fire pots in.

For the past year I have been making pottery full time, which means every day I am involved with some or all aspects of that process. With one other woman, I support myself completely as well as a few fetishes like goats and chickens and cats. We sell primarily at the Eugene Saturday market and a few small town shops. It is a rather low key way to do business, bringing in a subsistence level income, keeping us living simply in the country and keeping us potting. It fulfills a fantasy I've had for a long time and am now facing fully.

Selling something I make and making something to sell have led to frustration and challenge. The first weekend of the Market, Donna and I went to set up. It was a day towards which we had waded through a long Oregon winter. Rising at five in the morning, driving the 60 miles to town, neither of us talked too much. What if none of our pots, my pots, sold? Not an impossible conjecture at the time. Other things were upsetting. Seeing people appreciating pots which unbalance my sense of aesthetics, seeing things I take pride in sit for weeks on a shelf. Questioning what to do; learning the answers. It doesn't matter. Whether the pots sold or not, I would keep making them. It is my work. Work has come to mean an activity intensely personal and revolutionary. A tool for personal growth, change and self unfoldment.

We are not a "big time" production outfit. My biggest resentment is lack of time to do less defined, more sculptural work. I keep an ideas section in my journal for winter months. A holiday will be to leave the wheel for awhile

and hand build. Type is repeated if it seems to sell. The priority is on learning. My fears of doing something I love to do, full time, for money, subside a bit. I find I'm learning most from families, groups of pots. The never-ending duality of form and function is intriguing.

I can trade my work for others' work. I become a skilled laborer. I trade for mechanical advice, for the use of power tools, for a neighbor's time in caring for an animal. It feels good.

The country is a perfect environment in many ways for potting. Cycles of nature, starkness of the elements become the back-



ground against which I most readily see and can materialize my own energy. Rising early, kneading recycled clay, milking the goats, hammering a chicken coop together, digging fencepost holes, I look at my hands. Using them makes me feel whole, stronger. At other times it is frustrating. It does mean being dependent on a vehicle, driving long distances to market as well as for supplies.

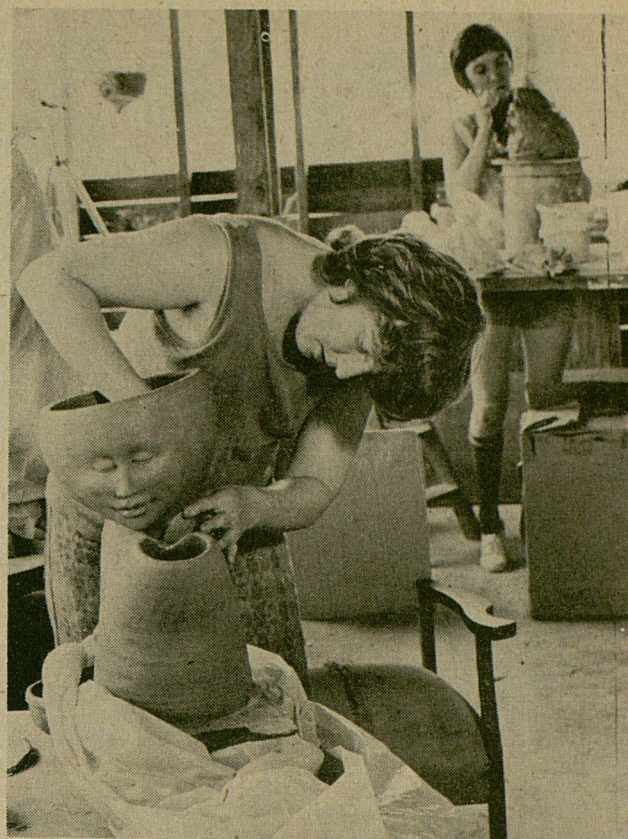
I have given up financial security and a certain standard of living for control of my time and space - head and spirit. I give up mobility and a social life (not necessary perhaps in a more collective situation) to learn the lessons of a smaller territory, indeed a full microcosm. To focus and concentrate, to narrow my vision and expand, differently than in a city lifestyle.

So all this narrative emanates from the fact that I make pots. That each day I enter a simple backroom studio, and depending where I am in a cycle, sit over a mound of clay, and center. I become conscious of inner and outer thickness/thinness. We buy our clay and borrowed money for an electric kiln. By working at a tree nursery for four months at night, potting during the day, we earn the money for an electric wheel. Neither of the latter are really necessary. Clay can be dug, kilns built and wheels homemade with ambition and ingenuity. I became friends with a woman making quite primitive burnished pottery by hand who was engaged in a remarkably lucrative business. There is a wide range of ceramic possibilities in between the pit firing of the Indians and the high fired stoneware tradition most prevalent today. Each requires differing amounts of time and financial investment.

A new sense of my own cycles emerge. Moon, sun, wind. Wet, dry, stone. The four elements guide me. Making pottery seems at times a by-product of Being. Forming, I sense a meaning of the word craft, feel the connection through culture, time, herstory. My work cycle becomes a metaphor for my life, for living. I learn to finish what I begin, learn to work with what I have, pay attention to details, discriminate.

Come the weekend I choose my reading material carefully. Selling days, Saturdays, go slowly sometimes. I set up a simple homemade booth and let the things sell themselves. With no children to support, land payments to make, exorbitant recreational needs or medical expenses, I rarely worry now if we'll be able to pay the rent. But sometimes if I hear "Isn't that cute," one more time I feel like screaming. Some days everyone does lousy.

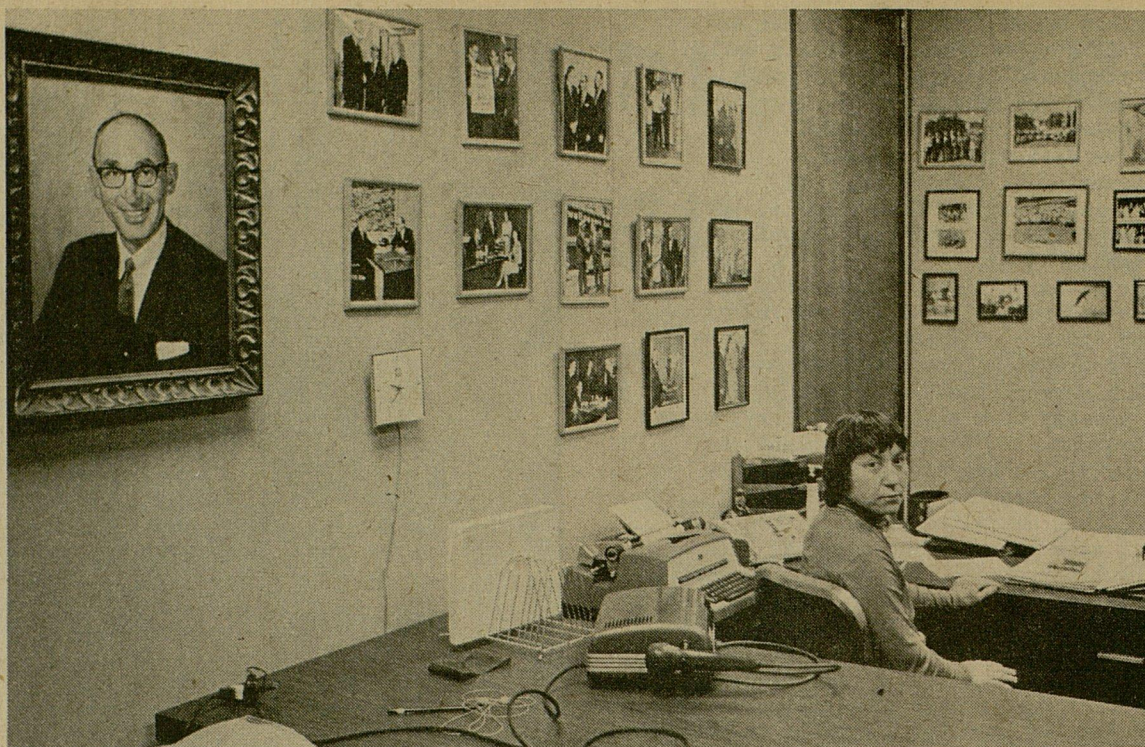
Putting a price on my work was difficult. What was a fair price, an attractive price? I believe in a quality of life which should enable everyone to own, to use, to appreciate, a finely crafted item. Generally a price was a compromise between the two of us, after an in depth, sometimes painful discussion. The time and handling involved with a pot became the decisive factor. Our books were unfortunately never clearly established. All I know is the end of the season has come and we are able to pay back



a loan for the equipment, rebuild the engine of the car, and each of us part with enough to tide us through to the next market season--barring of course a trip to the Caribbean or a new vehicle. Donna has been throwing two years, myself on and off for six.

Looking to the future I think the frustration of isolation, the long distances driven even bi-weekly may be resolvable in time through a more collective vision I feel evolving towards. I still feel a strong commitment to clay, to country living but I feel the need to manifest it differently. Silently I tell my rider my fears, a woman on her own financially, in unmapped territory in many areas, trying to resolve the schizophrenia of alienating, unfulfilling "jobs", working towards a more integrating lifestyle. I think of the hard work, and sometimes wish it was 9 to 5 so someone else could watch the kiln and I could go to sleep, so someone else could see the work process through, figure expenses, and go out soliciting new sales resources.

I believe I grew up knowing work was an economic necessity. But at some point my concept of work changed--from an economic necessity to a psychic necessity, and making a living becomes more than making money. Work became, or my work became, a means of expressing myself, releasing an internal pressure, resolving an unspeakable tension from within. It is said the pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real. I find myself reflecting on my decisions and trying to keep my definition of work expansive. ♀



Sexism and the white collar "girl"

Like many upper-middle-class, college-educated, working women I was conditioned to view my job as a stop-gap. A job was to have until you landed the professional man who would be your husband and support you and the four children you were expected to produce. A job was to have to "supplement" your husband's income while you were first beginning your journey on the road to materialism. I certainly was not trained, in any sense of the word, to compete in a man's world for an equal share of the goodies. My whole orientation was to be somebody's something. It took many, many years for me to accept the fact that I have continued to stay out there in that man's world, pushing, because I wanted to. Actually, there were other alternatives, but they were so limiting and limited that I gravitated toward this one - limited and limiting though it may be.

I have been working for other people for twenty-five years. All but five of those years have been spent in offices of one kind or another. The "white collar" world is, in every way, a man's world. The hassles and the sexism exist at every level, yet it may be those hassles and my reaction to them that has kept me alive and vital. The challenges to the feminist are tremendous. I never took any of the discrimination lying down. I have always been a trouble-maker. There just wasn't any "movement" behind me to help me know why I was making trouble - why I was never satisfied. What I discovered out there was that discrimination against women has been an acceptable part of office procedure for as long as anyone

can remember. This attitude is fostered and nurtured not only by the men of management, but by the women who are the victims of their philosophy. White collar workers are notoriously the hardest to "organize", from any standpoint, because they identify with management and with the men who oppress them. As a result, they are underpaid and overworked and practically never given the recognition due them nor the jobs they are capable of performing at an executive level. And, (until very recent legislation,) when given those prize jobs they were paid far less than a man would have been for doing the same work and had no recourse.

However, an uppity woman can make some inroads in the system if she is willing to be set apart from the group and not always be viewed positively. As far as I can see, one of the few pluses for the working woman is that which comes from her insistence that she be given an equal chance to achieve. I think that is becoming more possible as the years go by - it is certainly more real now than it was 20 years ago when I had to fight to get every pay raise and was never paid equally to the man sitting next to me, who, incidentally, was making more money for doing less work and less skilled work at that. During part of that period, I was working for a mammoth construction and engineering firm in the Billing Department. The women in this department were, in some ways, in an ideal position for bargaining. We were really good at our jobs and were each handling millions of dollars worth of pipeline and construction billings. If the billings didn't go out on time or were not accurate, it

cost the company lots of money. It paid the company to keep us happy and we knew it. We were not well-paid in the beginning, but as we formed a cohesive group and developed an esprit de corps we found it easier to make our needs known. All that was really necessary was for one of us to sit down and talk to the Chief Accountant about the unfairness of the salary structure, and how time-consuming it was to train new personnel, and how all we really wanted was to do a good job and be paid for it. It was a study in manipulation and although I got a perverse pleasure out of it (one uses the weapons that are available) I deeply resented the fact that it was necessary at all. It was degrading. Further, it was obvious to even the most naive that there was no way up in that company for a woman, regardless of education and skill. None of the supervisors were women. However, the camaraderie in our little group was consciousness-raising in itself and none of those women had any illusions about what it was like to work in a man's world. Looking back on it, I realize that part of our success was due to the fact that we did not so readily fall into the culturally approved competitiveness and backbiting for which women in offices have been known, particularly in pre-feminist days. We were still underpaid and overworked, ("Why, you're making good money for a woman!") but we kept making trouble on the periphery while keeping on top of our jobs and felt a kind of vindictive satisfaction in our roles.

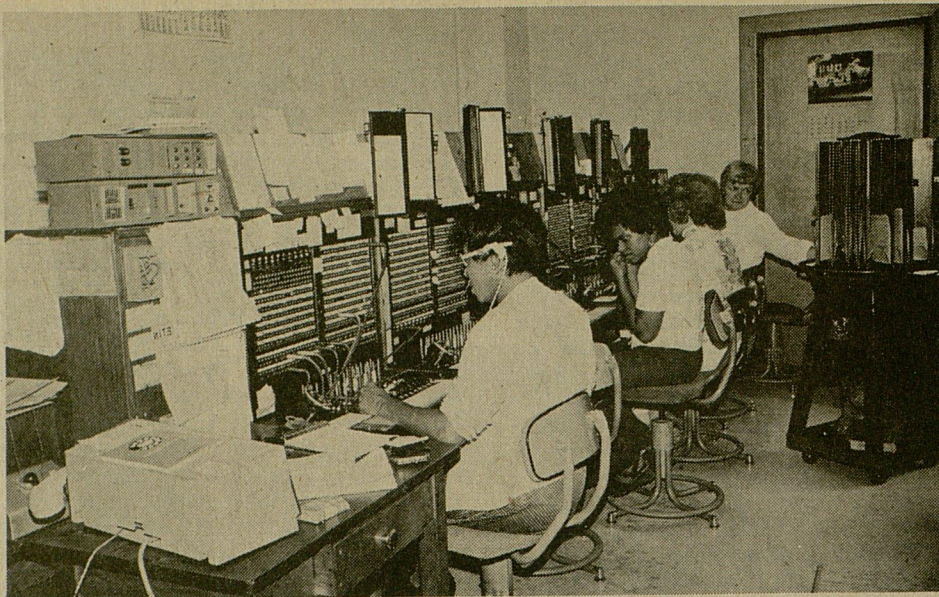
After finishing that chapter of my life and going on to graduate school, I went into the work I loved until it burned up my psychic energy; working with delinquent teen-agers as a group counselor in a juvenile hall. (It is not appropriate to go into the hypocrisy of law enforcement work in our society here, so I will limit myself to that which I experienced regarding women's rights within the field.) It was here that I really learned that "nice guys" do not always make the best employers. As a matter of fact, the "nice guy" will screw you faster and more thoroughly than the bad guy because he can make you feel so good while he is doing it. The fairest deal I have ever had in the business/working world was not from a "nice guy", but from a man who was considered to be a real "heavy". He was an idealist and ran the most progressive juvenile hall in the state. He demanded and got top quality performance from his staff and he saw to it that we were well-paid and recognized for our ability. He and the supervisors under him encouraged the staff to form a union in order to strengthen our bargaining power with the county government. Although he had difficulty relating to women on a one-to-one basis, I never saw what I would consider to be sexism from the standpoint of our work and position. We were paid according to our skills and seniority. We were assigned to living units on the basis of ability and preference. He encouraged women to apply for supervisory positions. That is not to say that the men working for him agreed with his position, but the women he hired had, by and large, good ego-strength and none of them got stepped on for long, if at all. It was a good experience for me, despite the many drawbacks of this kind of work. This was the only

time in my life that the women I worked with were not passive in any way. They were a vital and assertive group because they had to be - anyone who wasn't was going to have trouble controlling the kids. Those people treated me like I was a real asset and when I left it was with regret that I was not able to balance off the disadvantages of a corrupt system with the advantages of equality and opportunity for advancement. In short, I got the ego strokes I needed and those strokes have sustained me through some real hard times right to the present.

When I left that job 7 years ago I was making \$200 per month more than I am making now, and I have been working at my present job for 6 years! How can this be when we are making such progress? Are my responsibilities so much less? Are the working conditions so good that they offset the sub-standard salary? No! Emphatically, no! This situation exists because I have moved to an area which is an employer's market. The majority of the workers are underpaid and exploited because there are few decent jobs available and many, many people who need work. The payscale at the office where I now work is less than half of that for a comparable job in the nearest urban area. (footnote 1)

I am now employed as the "office manager" for a small medical office. From my observation, the field of medicine has to be one of the most sexist and discriminatory toward women. Remember that nurses (almost always female) have been the handmaidens of doctors (almost always male) for years, and for years were treated as little better than servants. The office staff of the doctor (frequently referred to as "the girls") re-





ceived even less recognition for whatever ability they possessed because, after all, they worked for God and who could follow an act like that?

What can you do to effect a change in this kind of situation? What can you do when you live in a tiny community where jobs are at a premium and the employer knows that he can find 5 women standing in line to work themselves into the ground for the wages that you are rejecting? What can you do when the employer himself has been conditioned to see himself as superior by virtue of a specialized education which may, in fact, specialize his skills to such a degree that he actually has fewer skills than the people he hires, but feels superior to them because of that conditioning? It is only possible to effect a change by becoming very, very good at one's job and by continually pushing for that change. If I am good at my job (and this means doing the work of two people for periods of time) then, although I may not be indispensable I am harder to replace. In this situation, I find that I must frequently remind the people that I work with and for (as well as myself) that I was hired to do a job, that I am equipped to do it and that I must be allowed to do it. I have had to learn a self-control that has come harder than anything else I have ever learned, as I insist that they rely on my many years of office experience and my familiarity with real dedication to good personnel policies and intelligent office procedures. I do not, for a moment, believe that the doctors I work with would wilfully disregard the skills and knowledge of a male colleague as they have done with me on many occasions. I have had to learn to confront sexism without losing my temper, and this has been a supreme test for one with a fiery temperament and impatient disposition, and I certainly have been less than 100% successful on this score.

The difficulty in improving the working conditions for the woman white-collar worker lies as much with the exploited as it does with the exploiters. Most women still find it almost impossible to stand up for their rights in this

man's world though they know they have no hope of coming close to earning the same as a man would for doing the same job even today. (2) Women know that the pressure exerted by their leaving the job because of unfair working conditions and low pay is non-existent if jobs are so scarce that sisterhood becomes an unaffordable luxury. Times may be changing but not fast enough to give us a fair wage for a day's work without reliance on each other. By this I mean that if "white collar" women ever want to receive that fair wage they are going to have to do what "blue collar" men did years ago and that is to unite and use the tool of collective bargaining. It is pointless to cry about what we're not getting, Sisters, where there is a good and positive tool available to us that we are not using. We are not using it not because it is not available to us - it is as available as we are to put our beliefs in equality on the line and to go out on strike to back up those beliefs. The unanswered question here is, do we women really have the back-up within the union structure that we need? After all, that structure is also reknowned for its sexism. For us who are single mothers, can we rely on this structure to help us feed and clothe our families if we go out on strike? Can we rely on our sisters for the all-important community support, as the working men have relied on each other through the years?

I must say that I have not as much faith as I would like to have. I have written here of minor successes - the positive side of some struggles. But, for the number of times when I have spoken out successfully for myself and my sisters, there have been an equal number of times when I, having spoken out, have looked behind me to find no one there - to find that, apparently, I was not speaking for them but for how I wanted them to feel and to believe.

(1) State of California Department of Labor Relations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and Research Report for March, 1975.

(2) Research Group One Reports; subhead: Economic Life Chances of Women. ♀

GOING FOR BROKER

Three years ago while desperately looking for a job I asked a real estate broker I had met if he would hire me to sell land. After an initial hesitation (I was a woman and a freak), he said yes - if I could get a license. I needed a job right then but for some reason I didn't tell him that and left him with the impression I would start studying for a license. Every once in a while I'd run into my broker and he'd ask me how the studying was coming. I'd astounded even myself with my nerve in asking for a job I just couldn't see myself doing, so I was too embarrassed to admit that now, as I was earning \$250.00 a month before taxes, I didn't need to sell land. I'd smile and tell him the studying was coming along just fine.

After a few months of living in a shack by the highway with not even enough yard to have a garden, I remembered this wasn't exactly what I'd had in mind when I moved back to the country. I just kept thinking of all the nice places I had left in the past because I didn't have the money to stay. I also knew the commune I was beginning to be a part of had a giant debt; the \$250.00 a month I was making wouldn't help much and took 48 hours a week to earn.

So I finally started studying. It was mostly memorization and very dull. It took me about two and a half months of very sporadic effort but in May 1972 I took the test and passed. As the test date came closer, I began to more seriously examine the idea of my selling land. The idea was hard for me to swallow but I was strongly motivated by two things. I was very tired of working at low income jobs; until then I had been a waitress, cook, clerk, typesetter, copy editor, printers' assistant, baker, switchboard operator, child care worker, and anything else that came up. I was also tired of being paid minimum wage or less for doing mostly boring work. But at least my conscience was clear. I had never been out of the oppressed class. By reputation, who is more sleazy than a real estate salesman? A used-car salesman, of course, but never mind, you can see my problem. I really went through a lot of hell telling myself what a jerk I was to even consider doing something so against my moral and political feelings. But in the end I came out with some conclusions: I am tired of being poor and oppressed. I've tried to do something about the society we live in for the past seven years and failed. There isn't anything too awful about selling real estate as long as you're honest. I trusted myself to be honest so I began selling land. But I've never been too comfortable doing it.

You meet a lot of people selling land and a majority of them are real nice. I see countless people who don't have enough money. I tell them to go north. I see people who want to escape the city and I see women who want to leave their husbands and start over in the country. I see old people who usually don't have enough money

and are mostly dazed by how expensive things have gotten. A lot of people tell me their stories and others want me to tell them what to do with their lives. People come in to just rap and find out what things are like around here. Most people accept me and my jeans and my stringy hair and my boots up on the table pretty well. The name plate on the door gives me some identity they can relate to beyond what I look like.

As well as the nice ones, there are those people who come into the office and ask me when the salesman will be back. Depending on my mood I am either hostile or sarcastic in reply. There is also another group of unpleasant people, almost always young and long-haired, who cannot get past their assumptions that I must be a crook if I sell real estate. They put me uptight when they persist in being hostile and overly suspicious for a long time, especially if they do end up buying something. They are also the people who are most likely to try to make some deal with the owner which circumvents our getting a commission. I see hostile feelings as just my dues for doing what I'm doing.

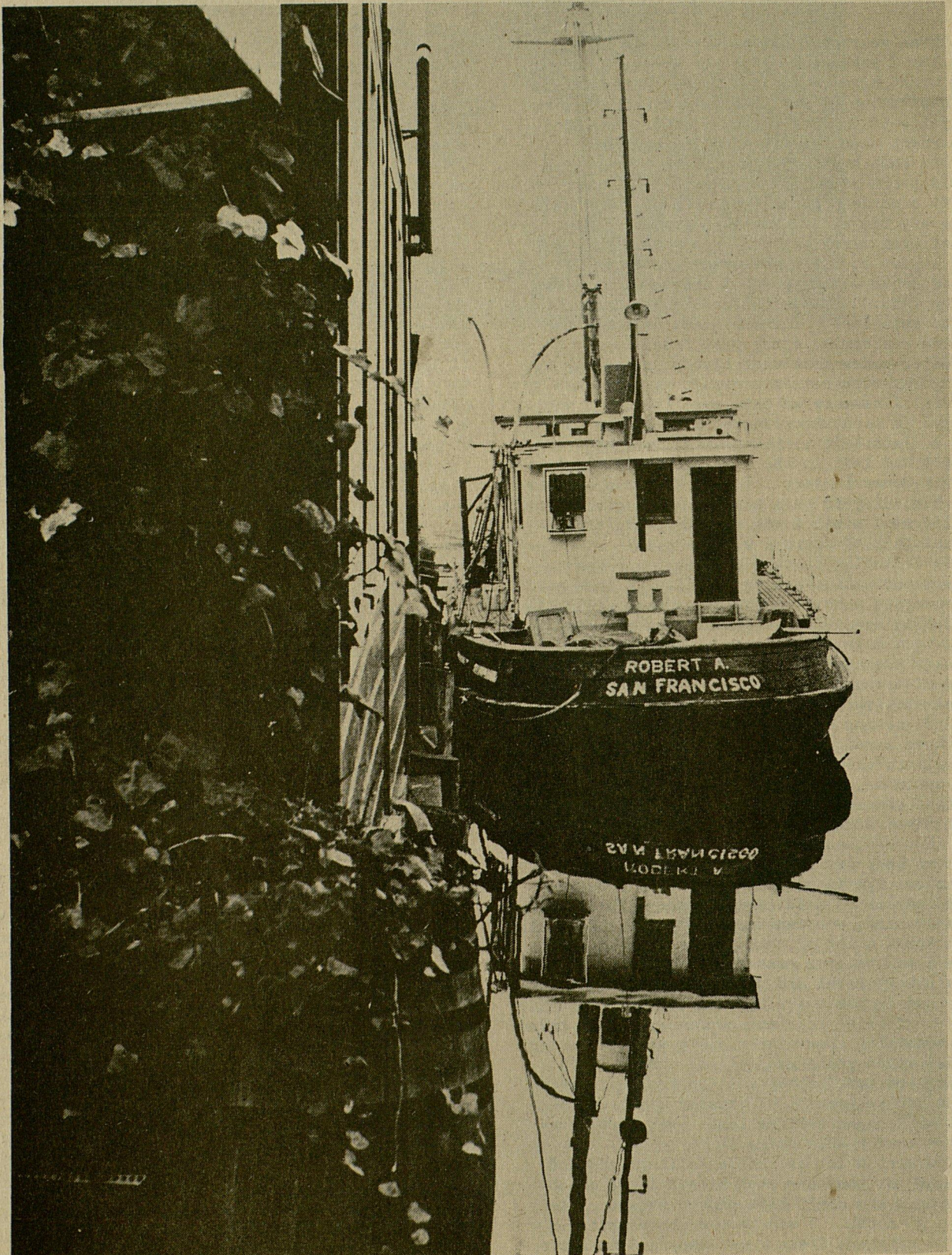
Financially, selling real estate has worked out for me. I'm certainly not a great salesperson, but I'm a lot better now than I was. I can sell a place more easily when I personally like it.

I had a big craving for some place of my own where I could do what I wanted and never get kicked out. So when ten acres that looked good to me came up for sale, I took out the money I had in the bank and made a down payment. Now I own it, if that's what you can call being totally in debt to it. I am trying very hard to make it but I just don't know if I will. Everything has cost more than I planned.

Probably the worst thing about selling land for a living is getting no salary. It's straight commission. Escrows (the limbo-land after the sale but before the commission) have an unpleasant tendency to stretch out past their allotted time, and the only sane rule to follow is don't spend it till you get it. But land debts don't wait. As a matter of fact, owning land and selling land for a living are antithetical. The days you should be digging in the garden are also the days you should be in the office. And when you're paid on commission, and have too many bills, there are no days off at all. I have cursed myself for getting into this awful mess, but if I keep knocking myself out for a while longer, I may get rid of the worst bills and have what I've wanted all along - my own place. I couldn't have done it on \$2.00 an hour slinging hash at the greasy spoon.

However, I look forward to the day I won't be selling land. It will be a pleasure to be working a fixed number of hours for a predictable amount of money. What a sane and human way to make a living here might be, I truly don't know. ♀

RIVERBOAT



COOK

I work as a cook on a riverboat. One woman among ten men. The boat is a towboat, and it pushes barges filled with coal, steel, and iron ore up and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. I work for thirty days at a time, then have the next thirty off to travel, farm, build things, and recover from the job. If I work steadily, I can make \$10,000 for six months of work. When I'm on the river I have no expenses, so I can save a lot.

I like the boat, or rather like being on the water for a month at a time, the bank passing slowly by. In high water, going downstream, with a strong current, we might make a top speed of 15 mph. Two thousand miles ahead of you at a walker's pace. No outside communication except for an occasional speedboat to bring in groceries and an out-of-date newspaper. Thirty days with ten other people, all of the opposite sex.

There is an old tradition of having women on riverboats. The steamboats, with a crew of thirty-five carried a crew of five women; three cooks and two chambermaids. Generally the older cooks have aligned themselves with the masters of the boat, the captains and pilots. The cook is supposed to serve the food that the captains want to eat, switching the whole cuisine to black-eyed peas and pecan pies on the lower Mississippi when a southern captain gets on the boat. The cooks traditionally wear white uniforms and retire to their room at the end of the cooking day. But that is not the way I feel like living. I've always worn explicitly chloroxed jeans, and some of the old rivermen find my cooking unpredictable as well. My friends on the boat are among the people I work with, the deckhands. At the end of the day we kick back, watch the sunset, and talk about all the crazy river stories.

On the lower deck, with all the noise and heat of the engines, the deckhands and cook live in little rooms squeezed between the deckroom, the galley, engine room, and laundry room. One deck above us, in relative quiet and space, live the engineer, mate, captain and pilot. At the top of the boat is the pilothouse, which is light, airy, and quiet. It is filled with polished brass and wood, leather seats, the newest newspapers and the latest gossip from the passing boats. Cooks never go to the pilothouse unless delivering a store order, and even then tradition has it that you stand on the top step and never enter the room itself. I liked it up there because it is quiet, sunny, and has a terrific view of the river. I started spending most afternoons there doing my sewing. Later it became a matter of prestige for me to be in the pilothouse, and they would radio passing boats and even ask me to go out on the deck to be looked over. Of course I protested and eventually stopped going up there.

The job can be mellow. Trouble is, it usually isn't, and I usually only go back to work

when I need the money. That means that if I happen to get on the boat at Pittsburgh with a crew of rednecks I hesitate before finding some reason to get off. Hassles in their usual form are complaints about the meat being rare. Then there are lightweight personal slights, which, if the captain is sympathetic to me, he'll ignore. If he gets off on them, he'll encourage gossip, reinforce suspiciousness, and after about twelve days it's impossible for me to be there. I know this, but always wait to see what happens. Every crew has at least two or three people, who, like me, are working for the money and the days off, and who like the strange slow pace of riverboats. If the whole crew is like that, or at least the deck crew, then the job is dynamite.

In February, I got on with a crew that was half redneck and half freaks. I knew that it would be a hassle but wasn't sure that it would be centered around me. Six days out at 5 AM the captain came into the galley and shouted, "Girl, have you been in those deckhands' rooms?" This was pretty surprising as we all keep our doors open and go back and forth borrowing books and listening to music. I tried to calm him down and point out that it was a normal thing to do. Instead, he had a tugboat come out into the middle of the river and take me and a deckhand away like two sinful creatures wearing a scarlet letter.

I thought that it was pretty funny, but was furious too. I telephoned the personnel department of the boat company. They sounded amazed and embarrassed, but said that they didn't know what had happened so couldn't comment. I called the National Maritime Union and got a moral pitch about it being against the maritime code for women to go into rooms of men. I went to New York and the ACLU, where I spoke to a woman lawyer, telling her of the situation and explaining that my union was unlikely to do much. My lawyer was sympathetic and the ACLU agreed to take the case on the basis of sex discrimination, should the company not reinstate me in the job, or should it become impossible to work after the incident. Clearly I could not be forbidden to go into rooms that men are allowed to enter.

Although I felt fairly sure that the boat company wouldn't fire me, I did have lots of doubts about going back to work. Never, in river lore, does a lowly cook defy a captain. I started a long series of calls to the company and the union. There were any number of personal reassurances and vague apologies. Both were fatherly, and clearly wanted me to just go away and get some "nice job for a young woman". It was easier to support the captain.

After twenty-five days, the union had not met with the boat company. I wanted my job back quickly. So, I telephoned the Union and just told them that the ACLU was interested in the case. Within five days a settlement was made. The deckhand and I were paid for all the days out of work, equal time off, and were "invited" to return to the job when it was convenient. So, I went back out on the river for another trip. At this point I don't know what I'll do. Sooner or later I'll need some money, and it isn't a totally bad way to earn it. ♀

housewifery: an historical perspective

This is an article about work. It is about women working. It is about the dark side of the moon, a realm of experience which exists but has not been illuminated; for historians, until recently, have shown little interest in women's work.

In Woman's Work: The Housewife Past and Present, (Pantheon Books, New York, 1974), Ann Oakley takes a long, serious, critical look at the assumptions society makes concerning the female work role. Housewife equals woman equals mother equals consumer; ever since the industrial revolution it has been the female experience. While no exact figures are available, a recent survey reported that eighty five percent of all women between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four were housewives, meaning that they carried the responsibility for running the households in which they live. While nine out of ten women who were not employed elsewhere were housewives, so were seven out of ten who had jobs outside the home. Clearly housework is the major occupational role of women today. And employment doesn't alter the status or reduce the work.

An interesting comparative chart of the number of hours per week spent doing housework over the last four decades in four different countries, among both rural and urban populations, shows remarkable similarities. An average of about seventy-five hours seemed prevalent and unchanged by the addition of modern appliances or increased work opportunities.

Ann Oakley lists the characteristic features of the housewife role as being (1) its exclusive allocation to women, rather than to adults of both sexes, (2) its association with economic dependence, i.e. with the dependent role of the woman in modern marriage, and (3) its status as non-work, in opposition to 'real', i.e. economically productive, work. Not only is a housewife unpaid for her seventy-five or so hours per week of work, but she has no right to any other financial benefits, such as unemployment, sickness or disability, social security, etc. The benefits for which she does qualify come indirectly, through marriage or welfare, but to receive them, she must acknowledge her condition of economic dependence. Thus, as an independent worker, she does not exist, and this contradiction of housework is work - housework is not work - remains central to an analysis of the housewife's condition.

Women do not escape their presently inherited biologically defined role as domestic when they leave the house, either. In terms of the work they do, the pattern of their work careers, and the financial benefits they gain, women's work is still women's work. Teaching, nursing, factory work, retail sales, clerical-secretarial, waitresses and maid are the occupations of most employed women.

Typical work patterns are employment, marriage and fulltime domesticity, followed by a job again or part-time work. The gender role of wife-housewife-mother works in opposition to her

actualizing the modern individual's desired role of committed worker, because the achievement of both roles calls for more time, energy, and commitment than one person can reasonably supply and also because the traits necessary for success in these conflicting roles are often diametrically opposed. Enter the birth of the schizophrenic superwoman.

At this point, you may be wondering why is this article in Country Women anyway, just as I began to wonder why are we writing all this. Haven't we, as liberated women, broken away from prescribed roles? Certainly as we sat in meetings defining ourselves, our work, no one of us said, 'I am a housewife.' Isn't this all part of the world we left behind back in the cities?

Well, first, you don't really leave much behind, and the fact that we don't define ourselves as housewives doesn't change the fact that a tremendous amount of energy and time still goes into performing those duties. Invisible energy, which most of us refuse to recognize as either productive or important. The classic example of this downgrading of housework is one of us who finds it so trivial that she can only bring herself to do it at night. Daylight, it seems, is for really useful work.

In our group, this pervasive refusal to acknowledge housework as being worthwhile led us to the brink of coming out with an issue on women and work which did not even mention housework at all, nor the responsibilities of motherhood and childcare. That in itself, tells me a lot about the cultural value placed on the work women have traditionally done, as well as our own internalization of that value.

In examining the role of 'housewife' and the value placed on her 'housework', the most important point Ann Oakley makes is that the question, 'What is a housewife?' is specifically a question about industrial society. In looking at the historic development of the two major, opposed structures of modern society, home and work, it is very useful to recognize that their opposition is a fairly recent development. In a great many societies, and in ours before the industrial revolution began, work and family structures tended to be intimately linked. It has not always been true that life is divided into what one does to make a living, called "work", and what one does the rest of the time.

History, Ann Oakley says, can also teach us that before industrialization, women did a great deal of utterly indispensable work in agriculture. As late as the seventeenth century, a woman's work still embraced a varied range of agrarian production, for brewing, dairying, the care of poultry and pigs, the growing and preserving of vegetables and fruits, the spinning of flax and wool along with doctoring and nursing both animals and people, all formed part of domestic industry.

On top of all these activities, women in pre-industrial society also engaged in socially and economically useful work, in which the whole family as a unit produced goods and services intended for sale or exchange. This system, commonly known as cottage industry, saw English women working primarily in textiles, spinning and weaving both cotton and wool, in addition to pursuing such trades as brewing, baking, and keeping inns and shops.

Women, irrespective of their marital status, were commonly expected to carry on productive work, whether in agriculture, in textiles, or in some particular trade. Consequently there was no expectation of a woman's becoming economically dependent upon her husband: it was not thought the duty of the husband to support his wife, nor was it his duty to support their children. This assumption that a married woman would support herself and her children by her own labors became less typical among the upper classes towards the end of the seventeenth century, but it continued to underlie marriage contracts of the working classes until well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

One problem common to both preindustrial and modern working women was and is reconciling work with responsibilities towards the maintenance of both their dwelling and their children.

Before industrialization, homes were simple establishments, and rather rude ones by modern tastes. The space which housed the family was not divided into rooms with particular functions for each. There was no differentiation between cooking, eating, sitting and sleeping rooms. Domestic activity was centered in the central hall. Here the family cooked, ate their meals and relaxed together. Everyday life was a communal affair. Housework was an integral, if arduous, part of the work of the family, and was performed communally.

In part, this was because of another striking difference between the seventeenth century housewife's domestic responsibilities and those of her modern counterpart --- her attitudes toward children and her ideas of childcare. In those days of relatively primitive birth control techniques, the average life expectancy of a woman was between thirty and forty years, during which she bore something between twelve and twenty children. But the average family was much smaller, and usually only two or three children survived infancy.

The role of the father in the preindustrial family brought men and children into much more intimate contact with each other than is the case now in most families. When the place of work was the home or the area immediately around the home, it was easy both for mothers to be engaged in productive work and for fathers to spend much time in the company of their offspring. If there was no sharp dichotomy between the domestic and economic spheres of a woman's life, neither was there for a man. The working father was not physically separated from his children and they played around him while he worked. Obviously childcare was not the great barrier to a woman's working that it is today.

In short, women living before the Industrial Revolution were not called upon to choose work and domesticity as alternative, conflicting vocations. The coming of industrialization profoundly altered both her economic role and her family role. It is not simplifying too much to say that under the new order, work was totally separated from family life, men became wage earners, and women and children were simply shut out of economic life altogether, relegated to financial dependency on their husbands and fathers. The modern industrial enterprise turned work into an activity performed away from the home for its monetary return, a labor not of love but of impersonal efficiency. And it made work, productive, paying work, a man's job.

Now, I can just hear you wondering "How does all this ancient history relate to my daily life in the country?" Well, I think it does, in several ways. Most importantly, it is useful to realize that the pattern of automatically equating woman and housewife, which has been enforced with particular severity in the years since World War II ended, does not have the long, hallowed historical tradition some experts tell us it has. Housewifery as a woman's exclusive occupation is a phenomena closely associated with rise of industrial capitalism in the countries of Western Europe and North America. It is not woman's immutable status since the dawn of creation. The social arrangement of domestic work used to be considerably different than it is today, and it can potentially be still more different in the future.

Moreover, in moving to the country, whether in nuclear families or in communes, the pattern of the preindustrial family's working together as a group can be a useful one to emulate. Work does not have to be carried out far away from home, among strangers. And the family, whether extended or not, whether related by blood or not, can become once again a productive economic unit. Admittedly this is hard, very hard to do, but where it has been done successfully, the rewards appear equally great.

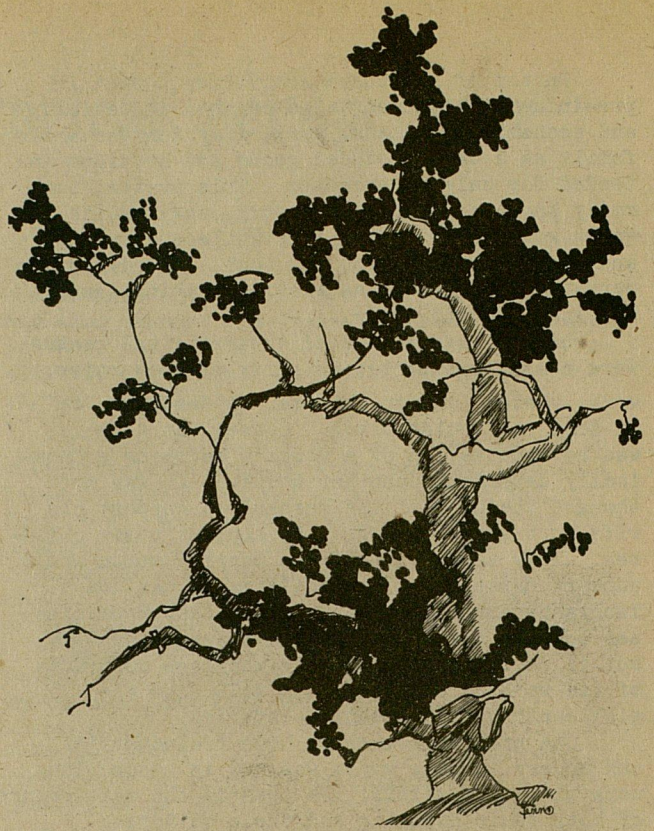
Finally, and I am speaking here as a deliberately childless woman of thirty, I really think that children are just as hungry for creative, meaningful work, just as eager to learn useful new skills, as most adults, probably more so. Providing their participation in the economic life of the family is not limited to dull, repetitive work and provided adults do not expect adult level competency from them, at least not initially, I believe children can find a meaningful connection to the work of country living. But they must be allowed to freely choose this work. On the whole, I see very little of this kind of attempt to involve children in the skills and pleasures of country living, and I think one of the reasons it is not done more is that we have a tendency to dismiss children as productive workers because of their youth and inexperience. In this connection, remembering the reality of seventeenth century household life is a useful corrective. Indeed, in this case as in so very many others, a historical perspective on our assumptions about people and life in general is a valuable aide in our struggle toward liberation. ♀

LOOK OUT FOREST SERVICE!

Working for the U.S. Forest Service is one way of having a job without living in the city. I have worked two seasons as a lookout in two different National Forests in New Mexico and perhaps I can offer some useful pointers on how to get these jobs.

Most jobs that don't require a degree in forestry are seasonal jobs during the fire season, such as lookout, patrol, suppression crew, and helitack. The exact dates of the fire season vary from place to place, but regardless of when the fire season is, one must apply for these jobs between January 1 and February 15 by sending Standard Form 171 directly to the National Forest, preferably to the individual Ranger Districts within each forest. The best thing to do is to fill out one form and Xerox as many copies as you need. Hundreds of people apply for these jobs, and those most likely to be hired are young, single men (especially veterans) who live within 40 miles of the Ranger Station. Women are rarely hired for firefighting jobs in New Mexico, though I hear that there are all women crews in California and Oregon.

The first season I applied I inquired about why I wasn't hired and they told me that "We don't hire women for suppression crew positions, uh, there aren't accommodations." Of course this was blatant discrimination, so I wrote a letter to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission asking what I could do, and I got a reply saying that the EEOC has no jurisdiction over other federal agencies (Catch 22). They forwarded copies of my letter to the Dept. of Agriculture in Washington and to the Forest Supervisor in the National Forest I complained about. A couple of months later I got a registered letter from the District Court saying I had the "Right to Sue" and appointing a lawyer, but meanwhile I had been offered a job as a lookout so I never took the matter to court. Later I learned that it is common for government agencies to offer positions to people who have EEO complaints to AVOID A CONFRONTATION. As it is clear that the Forest Service generally discriminates against women, my advice is to make inquiries about your applications and look for evidence of discrimination. When you get it, write letters reporting it to the Secretary of Agriculture in Washington, Forest Supervisor, EEO Counselor assigned to that forest, and district Ranger. If you hit all levels of the hierarchy then pressure will be put on the ones at the bottom to do something. I did all this the next year, but did not have so clear a case of discrimination, and was finally hired after re-submitting my application in person at the ranger station with a local address. This time I was on a tree planting crew (the only woman on the crew), for three weeks and then was a lookout for the rest of the season. There was one woman



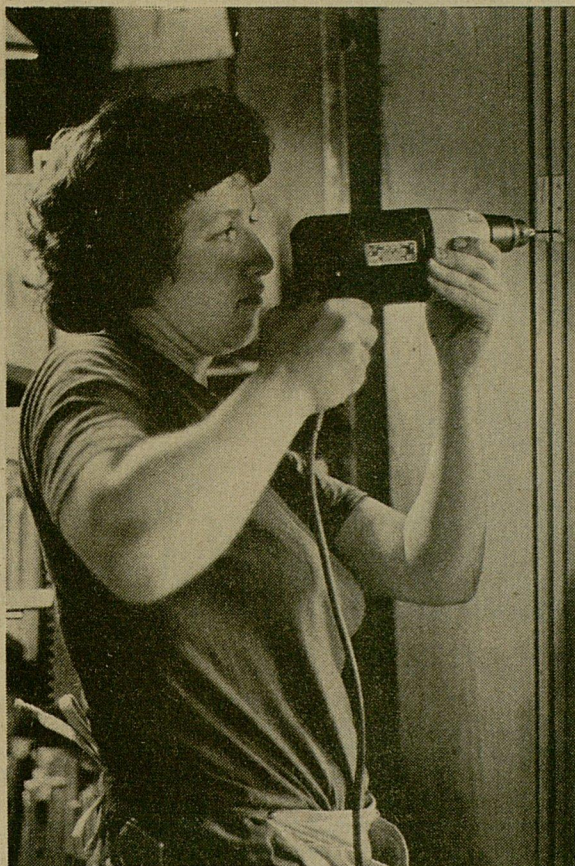
on the district who was on the helitack squad; all the rest were either lookouts or secretaries. The one who was on the helitack squad only got to go to one fire. The rest of the time they told her to stay at the heliport and answer the phone. I was glad to be a lookout so as not to be confronted with such sexism directly.

There were a lot of good things about being a lookout. It was nice to be up in the mountains with a beautiful view and lots of peace and solitude when not on duty. On the job I spent a lot of time reading, writing, drawing, doing exercises, playing my harmonica and recorder, cooking and making a quilt.

In short, you can do anything as long as you scan the area every fifteen minutes. It is a good idea to bring enough art and craft supplies and books to keep busy through the season.

The job also had a lot of bad things about it. Because the Forest Service is male dominated, (there were 50 men and six women on my district) it tends to draw a lot of macho creeps and ex-Marine types which I found hard to deal with on a daily basis. I feel that the whole organization is unnecessarily militaristic, with the result that the rights of individuals are rarely taken into account. For example, I heard over the two way radio once about a crew of firefighters who went without food or water for a whole day on a fire because the fire control officer had other things to attend to. In short, racism and sexism seem to be institutionalized in the Forest Service, but I have hope that things would be better if there were a lot more women at all levels and at all jobs. The more women that apply, the more chance for the whole system to become humanized. ♀

A Day in the life of a lady



ELECTRICIAN

A day in the life of a lady electrician, as some people try to call me, begins with trying to find a job. I've been doing electrical work for the last three years and I wouldn't trade it for any other job. When I couldn't handle the 9-5 jobs offered to women, I decided to learn a trade. I checked out all kinds of training programs, only to find I wasn't qualified because I was not hardcore unemployed: I hadn't ever held

a job for more than 3 months, wasn't a veteran or wasn't strong enough. (The last comment came from the apprenticeship people who added I should try Home Economics).

Since I was determined to learn a trade I finally decided to take classes in electricity and physics and enrolled in a Community College. I was one of two women in the program. We were treated with disbelief, mistrust and frequent joking. My teacher, a master electrician, finally decided I was serious and helped me solve job problems. Because I hadn't been accepted in an apprenticeship program I had no alternative but to work illegally. My first job was wiring a 1936 printing press.

Living in Oakland was helpful because there are a lot of counter-culture and more important, women tradespeople. I got help from women who were more skilled than I and jobs through carpenters and plumbers. I knew a few liberal people who liked the idea of women in the trades so they talked to their friends who hired me. Real estate and advertising people were good contacts in California.

Since I've moved to Oregon and the country I've gotten jobs mostly by word of mouth. As a result of my choice of work I've been very poor, sometimes not having a job for months. People are even more wary and disbelieving here than they were in California. They do a lot of their own work as well. I've been trying to organize a construction crew of women here, but all that depends on getting jobs!

Oregon is a lot stricter about who does electrical work and I've run into a lot of problems with inspectors. Learning to wire to code is not as simple as reading the book and practicing. Each inspector tells me a different way to do the same thing. Codes and the electrical trade are set up for ever-increasing consumption-30 years ago, 30 foot-lamps was adequate lighting, now it's up to 300 footlamps (watts per square foot). Electrical contractors charge anywhere from \$15.00 an hour to \$22.00 an hour, including traveling time and estimates. Inspectors want people to hire contractors, so anyone doing independent work is hassled a lot. Not wanting to be caught in the same rip-off racket, I only work with other women and our rates are lower. We work collectively and at our own pace. If any one of us can't handle working one day none of us do. We don't compete this way, nor do we make much money, but it feels better.

What has helped me most is other women's support for my doing electrical work. I had made a promise when I first started doing this to teach other women. Women are eager and want to learn. As a result, five of us have formed a collective called Project Start. We're trying to set up a women's skill center. We need better methods of survival, and one of them is women in the trades. I feel it's one more way for women to become self-reliant. ♀

FROM DAWN TO DUSK:

AN INTERVIEW WITH A FARMER

I interviewed Martha, a farmer whose farm almost supports a family of four - herself and husband (also farming full-time) and two children - about halfway through her 14 hour workday. Farming is a purposeful, joyful occupation here; the seriousness with which Martha regards her lifestyle as a political and economic alternative cannot be ignored - so we talk squatting on our haunches for a few hours, wrenching chickweed from strawberry beds.

Martha and her husband, in addition to farming full-time, co-parent a 3 year old son and teenage daughter. This beautiful 12 acre farm is in process. I have seen it change in the seven years I've lived here from a fairly efficient homestead to its present commercial venture. For some years the only real cash crop was jam they made from their own organically grown berries. The extra eggs and produce they sold were surplus beyond homestead need, but not intentional cash crops. Gradually, the emphasis has shifted to small scale commercial farming, and this year, for the first time, almost an acre has been put into garden crops specifically for sale to a local food store. In addition, over a hundred commercial strain pullets were purchased for an expanded egg market and the grade homestead goats sold and supplanted by a small herd of high producing purebreds whose farm value will be in saleable breeding stock as well as increased milk. Rabbits, sheep, and a few steers are also kept, primarily for home consumption.

A typical farm workday is about eleven hours, not including routine chores which consume another 3 or so which Martha consciously discounts as work, feeling that the real work day can't start until these are done. The subtle distinction of work within work - concentric ripples in a dark pool - are already emerging. I don't ask her to elaborate; there is no need, because I farm too and recognize the same distinction made by me. It's not that it's not legitimate work - regular chores - but it's the feeling of dissatisfaction, even if chores consume four daily hours, that accompanies me if nothing that feels productive in some way intervenes between morning and evening chores. There is the need to expand beyond maintenance of the status quo, it seems, in all human activities. Farming, perhaps, intensifies this drive, for I have had conversations with other farmer friends and have learned we all seem to suffer from the same distinctions. Perhaps it is the high percentage of "chores" in a farm lifestyle that pushes us this way - coupled with an inherent time pressure as seasons and daylight hours dictate so heavily what a farmer can do and when.

Parenting and housework are not included in those eleven hours either, but somehow absorbed in another way. Like almost every small farm I've observed, no exception mine, the living quarters are a study in organized disarray: a testament to lives which assert the higher priority of goat bedding over human beds. One of the problems of living the unalienated life, it seems, is that categories start to blur around the edges; the reality, indeed, is bigger than the sum of its parts.



Martha's day starts around 6:30 a.m. - after a savored half hour of peace and coffee - with milking and feeding the goats - and proceeds to maintaining the other animals, garden responsibilities, and so on until dark. Both Martha and her husband are familiar with all the routines which keep the farm running, and can perform them interchangeably, but there are definitely projects which are personal endeavors. The goats are Martha's big love; this involves daily care, record keeping, breeding program management, and the development and expansion of a cottage industry of cheese which she makes almost daily. She also keeps the books on the farm, and this past January started keeping separate itemized accounts for each farm enterprise. According to her books, the goats and chickens have net profited about \$100 monthly since then (about 4 months) - which she figures after all expenses are deducted. This includes direct expenses (feed), hidden ones (gas to get the feed) and their own food needs. Martha keeps daily production records and charts lactation curves, and has enough data on hand to

give me a pretty reliable projection of what the average monthly income for goats and chickens will be over a year's time.

This is the first year that separately itemized accounts have been kept but general records have been kept long enough to show them that for about a year the farm has been supporting them (pays its own operating expenses, feeds them, and provides cash income) with the exception of a few big expenses that must be met by occasional outside jobbing. Their land payment is the biggest of these expenses, followed by fuel to run farm equipment.

Martha claims diversity as the secret of small farm success; putting all your eggs in one basket, so to speak, doesn't leave sufficient slack in the system to be able to bounce back if some catastrophe befalls. If coccidiosis wipes out your laying flock and that's your sole farm income, you're really in a hole. Because of the seasonality of farming, one crop will keep another afloat from time to time. Most garden crops are at their harvest peak in late summer, when milk and egg production are declining; well managed goat and chicken flocks will have staggered production timetables, so that some animals will be coming into productivity in late fall and winter to insure year round supplies of milk and eggs and maybe some cash crop surplus when the garden is most dormant.

I'm not completely convinced that specializing in one or two things, if that's your preference, is not equally sound farming even on a small scale. How does one compute whether the combined odds against disaster striking when you have, let's say, eight separate farm projects, each with its own specialized disease and predator possibilities are greater than the odds of disaster if you have only one or two? I don't know the answer to that - because the source of the odds lies within the unpredictability of natural events - but it's an interesting idea to pull on, along with the weeds.

There is another aspect to making a small farm pay, Martha feels, and that is maximizing system efficiency on the farm. When time is scarce and valuable, it is thrifty to design and execute as many step and movement saving devices as possible. This is another specialization breakdown within their farm. Martha's husband has devised and installed most of the systems around the farm. We talked some about this as a necessary reality for small farm survival - and how we as women feel about the fact that we don't do these things comfortably and readily, if at all. I remember, all too painfully, an analogous situation in my own life, before I left my husband several years ago. He was a scientist (as is Martha's husband) - well versed and practiced in developing systems - and I remember the simultaneous feelings of relief and resentment I felt when he would step in and usurp all areas of problem solving on our homestead - letting me off the hook at the same time he backed me against the wall constructed of my own intimidation and feelings of inadequacy. Martha acknowledges the acculturation inherent in these labor divisions, but feels, at the same time, appreciative that somebody does it and

likes doing it, which liberates her to pursue activities she finds stimulating and rewarding. She'd rather develop a new cheese than a new gate latch. So would I. But still the suspicions of why I (and she) prefer what we do, grates.

I ask how Martha and her husband feel about raising a young child while farming full time? Well, she says, the reality is that it slows things down. Her 3 year old spends his waking day with one or the other of them, and is involved in whatever farm process is happening, though not always in a helpful way. But Martha says, he is learning and is involved in a reality they all live and share and is not alienated as a consequence of age. Martha relates to me an example of this integrative process. Until quite recently, he could not be relied on not to walk on or uproot plants in the garden; consequently he required close supervision. One day while weeding, Martha turned to discover him competently patting soil down around the roots of a weed she had just pulled, as he had seen them both do. He hadn't yet learned the distinction between weed and garden plant, but he had assimilated the process perfectly.

Martha loves the work she does, she tells me. It's strenuous physical work but rewarding. I know this too, as do all of us who survive in the country and acquire that gut-love for dirt-farming which is why we stay - that direct connection that keeps us responsible for and responsive to living things in ways unknown in the city. There is a real difference between outwitting garden slugs and engaging in dubious battle with cockroaches. Martha talks about her increased and yet increasing strength and endurance, and how frustrated she once was trying to do "man's work" (i.e. plowing). Now she can work long hours at strenuous tasks, and her competence and self-esteem have bloomed over these years, along with the plants she carefully tends. She doesn't feel tied down by the constant commitment she tells me but I remember the look of regret on her face recently when she had to turn down an invitation to come with me to a goat show one county away. It's not so much the necessity to be working on the farm, as the feeling that it's a necessity to always be working on the farm that makes it so difficult to get away for a day or so. A heavy dose of the Puritan ethic seems to be the farmer's lot - or indeed, the key to a farmer's success.

The sun has shifted since we've started weeding the now immaculate strawberry beds. We stand up, stretch and groan, then head for the porch where Martha's husband has set out three glasses which he is filling with delicious home-made wine. We linger briefly over the wine and I say goodbye and thanks and see you soon, and head toward my car. Looking over my shoulder I see this receding vision of country life; late afternoon sunlight falling on the couple, on their homestead porch. The picture is idyllic, but I know as I drive off that there is another eight hours ahead of them before the farm work day is done. ♀

BIOGRAPHY OF A BEAD BUSINESS

I remember a time when the anxiety at not having an income was with me at all times. It was a terrible consuming fear that seldom left me. A millionaire friend once volunteered a little story that I'll pass on. "Valery," he said, "People come to me and ask me 'How do I get rich?'. Well, I tell them the 'first thing you need is to be desperate'." And that's the best initiative I know for getting started.

I have a lot of creative talent, so I started trying different ideas. I borrowed cash to invest in materials and crocheted and macramed. I sold what I made locally and returned the loan but I didn't make much. So I looked around at prices and costs, studied what sold and where. Remembering my parents' teachings that you could make as much money selling a bunch of small things at a good price as you could a few large things, I decided to work small and quick as no one in my area had money to buy large items of art. I finally fell into making beads when I was still trying to get into the macrame market. The selection of beads I saw available to the macrame artist was limited so I decided to try my hand at making my own beads.

At first I rolled them one by one, scratched at the wet clay with a pin tool and stuck the tool through one end and then the other to avoid the rough edged hole. They were a feeble beginning but when they came out all fired and useable I was so delighted I began to leave macrame behind. There's something about beads...they've been used for money by nations-islands have been traded for them!

So I thought I'd make a few extra next time to sell. Then I went to San Francisco and Berkeley to the shops I had bought my beads from, carrying them in a primitive display box that I made from an orange crate and some redwood scraps. I sold them for pennies. They all sold quickly.

Well, here I had something to sell that people actually wanted more of in advance! I put aside macrame and started making beads full time in a potter friends' studio. At last it seemed I'd found the way towards an independent income (Although it wasn't exactly independent as I was using another potter's studio, clay, firings, kiln and knowledge.) As I sat there day after day I began to realize that unless something changed, the tedium of punching each of those little bits of clay with the tool twice and then scratching in them and selling them for pennies was soon going to drive me to be a basket case. At first it was therapy- I felt like a kid in kindergarten. As I see it now, it was a kind of kindergarten as far as my education in the bead business went. When it became clear that "counter-fitting pennies" was no way to make a living I raised my prices and geared my processes towards mass production. I, in turn, lost a few customers, which shook

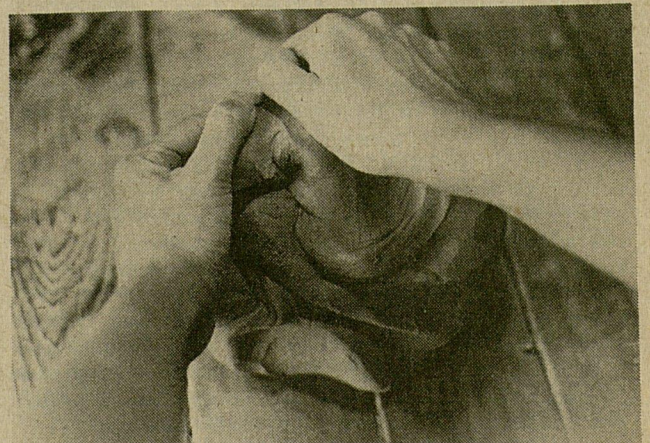
me up, but the market, little did I know, was just beginning to develop.

Let me speak a bit about saleswoman-ship. When a firing was out, I would count, bag, pack and fill my sample box. Then I went to the shops that I had heard carried beads or the ones I knew would buy. I tried to go to regular customers first, the ones I knew would buy because it's always easier to get a few sales under the belt before risking a rejection.

Dealing with fear of rejection was difficult. I dressed in clothes that made me feel strong and capable. I tried to play down my femaleness but not dress like a salesman. I wasn't interested in making a sale because of my sex. I didn't have to, my beads did the work for me just fine. I'd enter a shop, walk around looking to see if they carried beads and if ones that looked like mine were needed. When I decided to try, I'd ask a clerk for the buyer, putting my sample box on the counter so they could get interested in what I was offering. When the buyer came I'd ask if the shop was interested in carrying my porcelain macrame beads.

I chose a minimum quantity for wholesale purchases and sold samples, if that was all that was wanted, at retail prices. I gave my address and phone so the shop could order more and I told them I'd stop back. I have had some of the same accounts for three years now, gained many and lost a few.

It soon became necessary to buy my own clay and to begin to invent tools to cut the time of making the beads. I invented systems for making the beads that could easily be taught to others and began to hire helpers when I became swamped with orders. Certain times of the year are busier than others but I haven't yet learned how to get the work done in advance of the heavy pressure periods so I just hire out to





friends needy of work. They make a good salary when they learn to make the beads quickly but because I pay by the bead they can work at their own speed. We have a great time working together.

So I had a nice little business going and I wanted more, though I wasn't sure what. I thought "...perhaps someone to organize my books or check my firings for me when I'm busy." So I took on a partner.

Arlene was in my women's group. She was unhappy and looking for some source of income. I asked her because she appeared to be someone who could work with me as an equal as well as a woman who knew about business.

Since her addition, the business has changed and blossomed in great bursts of energy. She's added new designs, advertising, order to a funky system, increased knowledge of facts and details and the charm, spunk and drive to turn a little business into a serious enterprise. This year we bought our first business licenses. (Two! One for her house, one for mine.)

ARLENE ♦♦♦♦♦

Joining Valery in a partnership was one of the most self benefiting moves of my life. Until we began to work together my training had been solely in the world of business. My desire had always been to work in some form of art, but lack of confidence and experience had

always prevented my even trying. However after one and one half years of living in Manchester, and for the first time in my life being dependent on a man for support, the desperation that Valery mentions was at its peak. So when she asked me to join, I jumped in head first.

In the last year I've gained more self-respect than I had in all the past 29 years of my life. It's been extremely important to me that Valery has gained enough respect for me to see me as an equal. Also the man I live with sees my business adventure as having more potential for our future than his own.

Unlike Val, I haven't felt the need to dress down my femininity, just as I have not felt the need to dress it up. Having worked in the business world, I'm well aware of its infinite number of prejudices but I believe that femininity and strength are in no way diametrically opposed. So I am undeniably woman and woman is undeniably strong.

People have warned us about partnerships but we've found that we, as women, have the sincerity and the desire to overcome the pitfalls created by money and society that other partnerships have fallen prey to. We have had many very difficult times but have come through them learning that difficult is not necessarily bad. The foundation of our relationship is built with growth, love and sharing in mind rather than monetary gain, and a desire that this means of making a living for us will bring beauty and happiness to all who come in contact with it. ♡

You, me, and Mama CETA

Its no secret that jobs, any jobs, have been hard to come by lately. This past winter and spring, unemployment, especially in the country, has been particularly widespread. And though its been kept pretty quiet, the federal government is moving, glacially, to ameliorate the problem.

To do this, sometime ago Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973, called CETA. Originally, it was not intended as an emergency measure to absorb the economic impact of large scale unemployment, but that is what it has become. Under Title II of CETA, state and local governments were encouraged to hire jobless people who could provide needed community services and, over a period of time, absorb them into existing payrolls. To help insure that these newly created jobs would not be just temporary, Congress specified that about half of all individuals hired under Title II should be switched from their federally subsidized payrolls to permanent public or private jobs each year.

As the economic impact of the recession grew, this provision was toned down somewhat, and other titles were added to the original act. By all indications, CETA is well on its way to becoming an almost permanent economic institution, serving as a way for local control over federal manpower (sic)¹ resources to be exerted. For women in the country looking for jobs, this can be potentially very useful because one of the requirements for any use of federal funds these days is that in order to do so, local government must file an "affirmative action plan" telling how it will increase its hiring of minority ethnic groups and women. This virtually means that local agencies should be forced to hire women for most job positions simply because previous hiring practices discriminated against them so heavily. However, this provision of the law will be enforced only if women actively police local agencies, challenging hiring practices where they are discriminatory. Local agencies rarely do this without prodding.

In most rural areas, CETA funds will be administered through county government. This means that inquiries about CETA jobs should, in most cases, be directed to your county manpower (sic) coordinator. Usually the courthouse of your county seat is the most likely place to find this bureaucrat.

The unstated assumption behind eligibility for CETA jobs is that an applicant be poor and unemployed. In addition, various groups have been targeted under Title III of CETA as being especially deserving, and among these are veterans, ethnic minorities and female heads of households. Special priority is also given to welfare recipients.

Depending on the particular title of CETA under which a person is hired, CETA jobs may be either temporary or permanent. Under Title VI, members for public works crews are hired to do such work as highway maintenance, brush clear-

ing, tree planting, or grading and graveling county roads. These jobs are temporary, usually lasting two or three months and paying between three and seven dollars an hour.

In contrast, jobs obtained under Titles I and II of CETA paid only the minimum wage of \$2.10 an hour until they were recently increased to \$2.50 an hour. However, in principal, these jobs are permanent ones. Under Title I, people are trained for jobs with federal funds in expectation that these newly trained workers will be picked up by the private sector of the economy, in many cases by private, nonprofit corporations. Title II monies are used to create meaningful public service jobs that can be filled by people who already have the necessary skills but who cannot find work.

Now, just what constitutes a public service job is, depending on your political and cultural orientation, an object of considerable dispute. Creative interpretation of the words 'meaningful' and 'public service' has led, for instance, to the hiring of musicians, photographers, clowns, mimes and muralists in San Francisco, all employed by the city to make urban life more enjoyable for people living there. And in Santa Cruz county, a coalition of community groups including veterans, a women's health collective and a food coop successfully sued the county government to obtain 20% of the CETA funds available, instead of the 5% originally allocated to private, nonprofit corporations by county officials. Since the total CETA funds for that county were something like \$750,000, this was a substantial boost to people's community projects.

In our local area here, an enlightened and liberal administration of Title I CETA funding has placed federally paid workers in many nonprofit organizations. The Title I funds are also being used for specially organized projects, such as one to train skilled carpenters, paying them as they learn. Several of these carpenters are women. In addition, some CETA funds administered by the state Department of Employment are also available to create new jobs in private, profit-making businesses. In this area, all these funds were being given to large, traditional businesses, until a woman seeking employment with a small, collectively run company threatened to sue for discrimination. She got a CETA job for the collective. Hers.

It seems important that community minded people in every rural area understand the administration and provisions of the CETA program enough to push their local bureaucracy to respond to their needs. For the first time there are locally administered federal funds to employ people to work for the benefit of their community (largely through nonprofit corporations) and to train women to do work previously reserved for men. But we will get our share only by working for it. ♀

1 Manpower is still the official term, despite recent declassification of most job titles by sex.

Working Collectively

We made a decision not to fill this issue of the magazine with what we call "horror stories" - women's histories of job oppression. We could easily have done so; each of us on the collective has at least one truly depressing story we're dying to tell. We've chosen not to tell many of them because the evidence seems overwhelming that women are discriminated against in almost all job situations, either overtly or subtly. (If you're not already convinced of this, a look at the U.S. Dept. of Labor's statistics on average income for men and women workers should be sufficient.) And beyond actual sexist discrimination against women, there is the oppression that many workers feel on their jobs, be they men or women. Most workers in this society have little, if any, say over how much, how fast, or under what conditions they work; they have little say over what they actually do while working, and no say at all over the results of their work or the profits made from their labor. The hierarchical organization of most work results almost inevitably in this situation, institutionalizing a system where those most directly responsible for a job have the least power to make decisions about it and those having the most power to make decisions are the least personally involved. Women suffer most especially under this structure, for we are almost always at the bottom of it.

In talking, while working on this issue of the magazine, about our most supportive and fulfilling experiences working, (those jobs in which we have been able to invest our whole creative selves), we've come back over and over again to the importance of collective organization. As the following articles show, working within a collective does not inherently eliminate the injustices and inequalities of traditional work patterns. But the collective structure always does contain within it the possibility of reconciling any conflict or problem for the benefit of those involved. Though there's a wide variation in the goals, structure, and process of collectives, collectivization means at the very least a commitment to shared responsibility and access to equal power.

The following articles are descriptions of four working collectives - a food store, a women's coffeehouse, a women's print shop, and Country Women. Two provide full economic support for the participants; the others provide limited income for some participants. This is largely a brief, tentative glimpse at the meaning and implications of collectivization, but we want to share with you a consciousness of the structures we are creating to work within and our commitment to the importance of the work process - how it feels to do what we do.

Free Box Collective

(The following article was written about a struggle which recently took place within a women's coffeehouse collective. This article represents the perceptions of only those women who chose to leave the coffeehouse because of the conflict. We're reprinting it because of the questions and insights it offers about collective work situations.)

This spring, ten women, half of the volunteer staff and one of the owners of the coffeehouse/bookstore decided they could no longer be a part of the existing structure. We are writing to explain our perception of the conflict which resulted in our leaving. We, as women, acknowledge our lack of experience in handling and confronting issues of power with other women. We also admit to our lack of experience in creating alternative structures in which we could deal with those issues. We recognize our perceptions of this particular struggle may reflect some of our feelings of hurt and anger. Yet, we have attempted to state clearly the issues involved.



The Set - Up: The coffeehouse is a small business owned by a partnership which consisted originally of five women. Eventually, this group came to be called (and called themselves) "The Small Collective".

Even before the store opened, these five women appealed for volunteers to run it by agree-

ing to work shifts. The following reasons were given to justify this volunteerism, reasons which seemed sufficient and for a time remained unquestioned:

1. Women could get satisfaction from this kind of involvement;
2. Women would thus be donating energy to the women's community;
3. When profits were made there would be profit - sharing;
4. As time went on and volunteers proved reliable, there would be greater sharing of all responsibilities, which would happen by enlarging the small collective.

Eventually, the volunteer group became known as the "Large Collective". The owners needed the work of the volunteers in order for the coffeehouse to function.

How It Worked: From the beginning, volunteers and owners staffed 38 weekly shifts. Volunteers worked 75% of them. As time went on, the small collective with one exception worked fewer shifts and the burden of running the coffeehouse fell on members of the large collective.

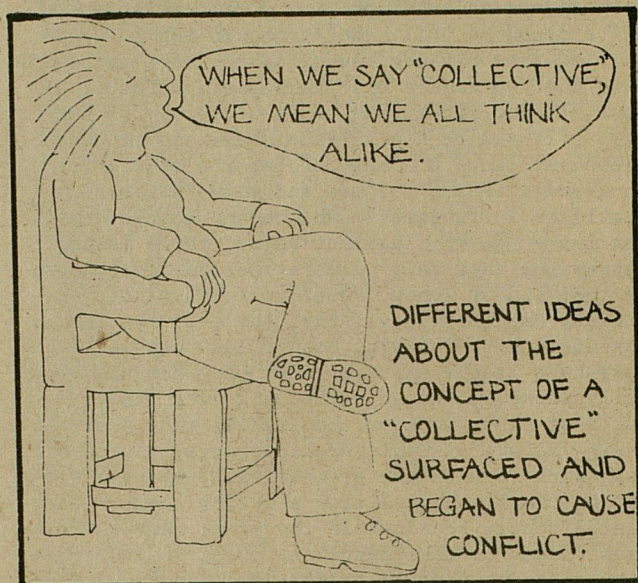
The small collective met apart form the large collective in closed meetings and made all financial, legal, policy and emergency decisions. These decisions were sometimes announced and sometimes not at occasional meetings with the large collective. At these joint meetings, we were also able to discuss a limited number of subjects such as: complaints from the community, the possibility of improving the appearance of the coffeehouse, and a fundraising dance. Volunteers could say anything they wished, but these comments were not effective, suggestions were neglected, criticisms were met with mistrust and viewed by the owners as negative and divisive. Women with energy, wanting to implement new projects were viewed suspiciously. Women who made the most frequent suggestions and criticisms were seen to be power-grabbing (by the owners) and counter to the best interests of the coffeehouse. No channels for effective change were left open to better use women's suggestions and labor.

How it Didn't Work: The inequalities of this structure were realized by different volunteers at different times. Attempts were made as early as last summer to begin discussing the decision making structure at the coffeehouse. Those attempts were made by individual women and nothing came of them. Some women left, and their reasons for leaving were seen as personal. At that time, the volunteers who left did not question their reasons for leaving; the rest were simply happy to be helping out at a women's coffeehouse. Few of the volunteers had clear thoughts about how the coffeehouse should be run or what directions it should follow.

As time went on, certain women offered to share some small collective responsibilities such as purchasing books and scheduling entertainment, both politically influential jobs.

At the same time, criticisms began coming from the community about the quality of the food and entertainment, aesthetics and maintenance of the place, disorganization in the bookstore, and lack of political consciousness. Criticisms were made directly to the women seen

running the coffeehouse: the large collective. Since it was apparent that the large collective meetings were not the channel for these criticisms, we had no answer but to say, "You'll have to talk to one of the small collective. They make the decisions." However, the owners were there less and less. Lines of communication between them and the volunteers and between the patrons and the coffeehouse diminished. There resulted an atmosphere of alienation and feelings of depersonalization.



Eventually, concerned members of the large collective called a meeting in early February to present these issues to the small collective and to the group as a whole. They felt it was time to stop making decisions based only on what was expedient and to start discussing structure and philosophy. Their priorities included: sharing all responsibilities, sharing in the decision making process, creating a structure in which personal and political differences were not ignored but confronted. These women wanted a structure in which confrontation was seen as positive and necessary.

It had become obvious that the five original justifications for volunteering no longer applied:

1. Satisfaction was limited as responsibility was limited. Volunteers did the mundane operational chores and made none of the decisions. Nor did we understand how decisions were made, as some were made individually, others collectively, and others not at all.

2. We realized we were not donating energy to the women's community directly but through a business controlled by a small group of women; the priorities of that small group were not necessarily our own, nor those of the community. It became obvious that we were the free labor of a small, private business.

3. We learned that three members of the small collective had been receiving wages for varying periods of time during the first year of operation, and those wages amounted to at least \$1,500. This might be called profit sharing except that the decision to pay salaries was

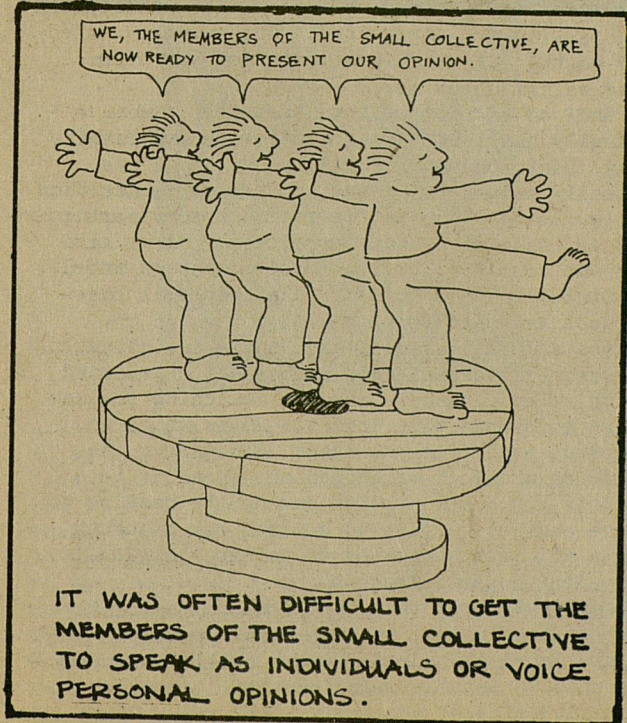
made solely by the small collective, without informing the whole group. In fact, the small collective posted a statement that said, "Everyone you see working here is a volunteer."

4. Some of us had been there since the beginning and were not admitted to greater responsibility.

5. As talk of enlarging the small collective grew, it was clear that new members would be limited to a few who would be chosen by the old members based on who agreed with them.

The Struggle Defines Itself: Although only a few volunteers initiated this discussion, many more voiced their agreement and solidarity with the women who wanted to share in the decision-making process. This time the dissent came not from individual women but from a group. We became aware that we were involved in a power struggle where there were no models for resolution. The women of the small collective found themselves unintentionally in a position of power and yet reluctant to give it up. The large collective began to realize its powerlessness, and along with this realization, came a growing resentment and frustration.

As workers demanded changes, the owners resisted the changes in order to keep power, not necessarily because they disagreed with the need for change. With one exception, the owners resisted open discussion because they wanted to retain final say in all decisions. They felt they knew best how to run their coffeehouse/bookstore and thus should continue to do so. Furthermore, they doubted the volunteers' commitment. They were reluctant to share their knowledge with the volunteers because, they said, the group was too large to run the place efficiently. They saw the attempt to move towards collectivity mainly in terms of personalities and motives. To them, a small group of women were trying to attack them and take away their coffeehouse.



In this atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion, resentment, and backbiting on both sides, the original issue - how to change and improve the coffeehouse - became obscured and insoluble.

Mediations: Because of the highly emotional content of these early meetings, it was suggested by one of the large collective and agreed upon by all to hire two women with experience in group mediation to help us with this struggle. We met with the mediators at long meetings over the course of a month. Four members of the small collective also met privately during this time, usually coming to mediated meetings with group positions. These positions, as in earlier meetings, changed from meeting to meeting. It became impossible to believe that the small collective was truly committed to any kind of change, except change of mind.

During the mediations, three of the owners finally expressed their mistrust of certain women in the large collective. Women who had worked for periods of up to a year could not be trusted to share "financial and legal responsibility" with them as it might adversely affect their "dignity, personal and legal reputations." The large collective recognized the heavier burden placed on the owners by their legal and financial responsibilities (i.e., names on leases, promissory notes, insurance liabilities). In an effort to alleviate the owners' fears, members of the large collective suggested ways to share and lighten those responsibilities: setting highest priority on the repayment of personal loans, subcontracting to share any financial liabilities, and possibilities of incorporation. When the owners did not respond to these proposals, it became apparent that the issues of mistrust and legal responsibility were ways of maintaining power and not sharing power with women who differed with the owners personally and politically. Offers of collective legal responsibility were made to no effect. Trust became a mystified concept, something shared only in the small collective or with known friends. Three women chose to remain owners and to run the coffeehouse as their personal business. The mediations made it clear that the owners' final decision against collectivity came from a desire to personally choose who they would work with. When their agreement for collectivity, arrived at after much group struggle, was taken back, ten women decided they could not work within the existing value system and left the coffeehouse. We left and we do not see this as negative. We have learned, some of us for the first time and some of us again, just how important struggle and structural change are for us as women in this society. We are still struggling. As former volunteers and now as patrons, we ask the owners for answers to the following questions.

Questions: 1. Having gone through this struggle with us, how do you see yourselves in relation to your new volunteer staff? Do you see any need to establish clear lines of distinction between your role as owners and that of the volunteers?

Having stated that you do not wish to work closely with women you mistrust or dislike, how do you intend to deal with such women in the fu-

ture? As women in power positions, do you see any need to examine the sources of your personal preferences?

2. Since you have chosen to remain owners, are you going to continue asking for community support through benefits, through donations of money, labor, skills and materials from women not within the volunteer staff? If so, will a discussion of expenditure priorities ever be opened to the community? Will you continue to hold ultimate decision-making power over financial expenditures? If so, do you intend to inform the community of those decisions? If so, how? Will some owner or owners continue to receive monthly salaries? If so, how do you reconcile com-

munity support with individual gain? If, on the other hand, donations will no longer go towards salaries, what provisions will be made to decide on how those donations will be used?

3. As owners of the only women's coffeehouse, do you see any need to support and work with other women's organizations? If so, which organizations and how?

Do you foresee the coffeehouse as an institution, committing itself to welcoming and supporting discussion of political issues? Do you foresee the coffeehouse initiating discussion of political issues? Do you ever foresee the coffeehouse taking a political stand?

Country Women

Country Women began and continues to evolve within the collective form. Now that we are starting our fourth year of publishing the magazine, we have some perspective on what that form has meant to the numerous women who have contributed in many ways to its success.

Country Women consists really of two overlapping and simultaneously existing collectives. The editorial collective is basically responsible for handling the business of the magazine, for determining its format, and caring for and tending to the overall philosophical direction on an ongoing basis. The issue collective comes together and is responsible for a particular issue; it develops the theme, decides on the content and does the work involved in putting it into print. This collective is usually in existence for two months (the time it takes to do one issue), and then it disbands. That is the skeleton of our structure, but how the collectives have worked in terms of people and change is really the flesh and blood of Country Women.

From the beginning, we recognized that power hierarchies and centralization are manifestations of the kind of patterned "male" aggression that has been responsible for the degradation of women, the exploitation of the work force, even the violation of the earth's resources. The trick for us was to seek a form that would be based on shared authority and cooperation but would not succumb to scattered energy input and chaos. I would like to examine more closely the process of our evolution, for I believe that the collective form itself was integral in developing our confidence and power as women and that this process is as important a tool as the product we produced.

Let's begin with the process of an issue collective. When a new issue is about to begin, the women who desire to work on it speak to a member of the editorial collective. Usually new members have already written something for the magazine, or worked in some other capacity, because a basic ability to work within a group is a prerequisite for inclusion on a collective. We are a careful lot, yet within this form, 39 different women have worked on issue collectives. And although this all happens by word



of mouth, I feel that we are genuinely open and welcoming to new energy.

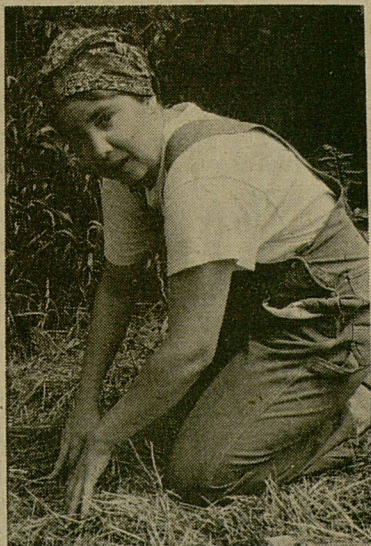
Once on an issue collective, each member ideally has equal power and equal responsibility. Decisions about which articles we use usually happen by general consensus rather than vote. But, of course, we are no longer coming to an issue with equal experience and we have become conscious that the older members often dominate the meetings because they feel confident and more knowledgeable of where the issue and the magazine as a whole are going. Newer, less experienced members often respond with silence, and we are now searching for new ways to change this process. Chits which you give up each time you speak, discussing the problem while it is happening, speaking in a circle, or a silent time during the meeting to give each of us time to collect our thoughts have all been suggested as perhaps helpful in equalizing participation.

There has been an effort from the beginning not to specialize, so that each new member would learn all the different skills necessary in putting out the magazine. Still, on the positive side of specialization, three years of

working on the magazine has opened many of us up to specific creative work energies which we have chosen to continue and develop outside the magazine..Sherry and Jeanne as writers collaborated with Leona as graphic artist and Sally as photographer to do a forthcoming Country Women farming book. River, who discovered she loved writing, stopped working on the magazine, locked herself in her cabin and came out with a book called Dwelling. Ruth and Jean from Oregon began their own magazine, Womanspirit, after working on the spirituality issue. Carmen wrote and illustrated The Sheep Book for Lollipop Press.

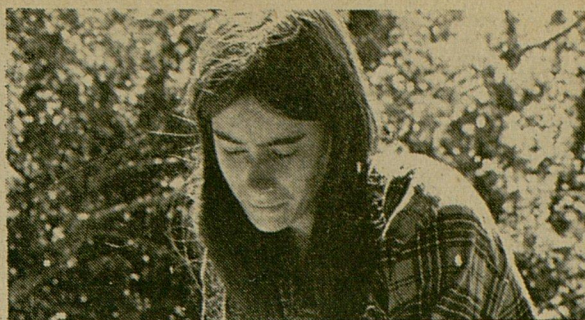
So, back to the drawing board. The issue collective meets together once a week, develops the theme, reads, writes, edits the material they choose to use; types, proofreads; and then spends four gruelling days of anywhere from nine to twenty hours each in laying out, pasting down, and getting the physical copy ready for the printer. Decisions about layout have traditionally been made by one person laying out a page, with two other women approving it. But that system just didn't work with the highly emotional sexuality collective, whose differing aesthetic and political opinions kept most of its members in various degrees of tension during the entire layout. As a result, we are talking now about consciously delegating more authority to editorial collective members during layout.

Working on Country Women is a serious commitment. You must, barring a death in the family or hospitalization, come to every meeting, and usually everyone does. An issue collective has



six to twelve members. At first, members of the editorial collective had to work on four out of five issues to insure continuity. But this often led to women working on a theme they didn't really feel involved in and proved a deterrent to new women joining the editorial collective, so that rule was dropped. Still, women totally new to the magazine are limited to two for each issue, to avoid confusion and insure a centered body yet allow for new inputs. Although this rule of thumb has been broken several times, the results have been difficult, and not necessarily productive in terms of the magazine.

Although consciousness changing and personal



growth are outcomes of working on an issue, the main job of the issue collective is to put out a magazine. The hope is that someone wants to work on a collective to explore her creativity within that theme, not because she is looking for a consciousness-raising group. Unfortunately, working within a two month deadline, and trying to take care of business often makes for busy, pressured meetings and leaves little time for the in-depth kind of study we desire. Frustration ensues as we try to walk two paths at the same time.

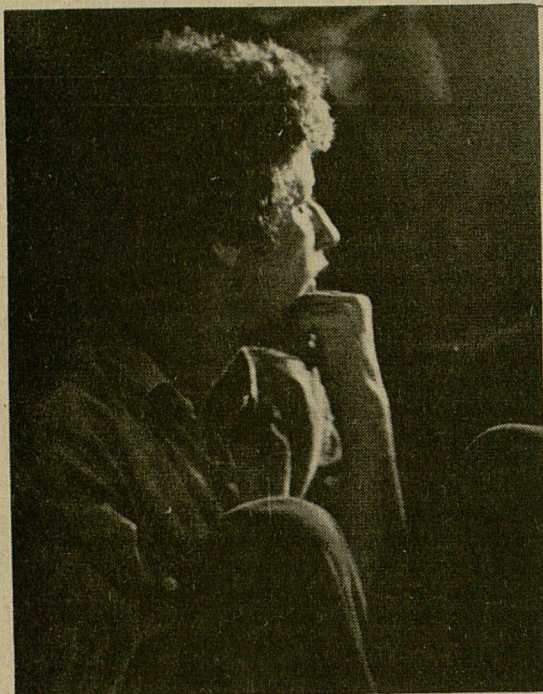
This brings us to the ongoing "editorial collective," misnamed since it is procedure rather than editorial policy that this collective is responsible for. (Of course, in choosing the issue collective memberships, it does also affect the editorial policy of the magazine.) The editorial collective keeps the magazine going. It chooses future themes, organizes issue collectives, sets the balance of practical and personal writing, states and makes policy about aesthetics, structure and process on collectives, business matters, and just about anything else that needs a decision. The editorial collective was formed to provide an ongoing structure to support and sustain the magazine. Originally, its role was largely that of handling the magazine business, but gradually its role has become less defined and more fluid. Nevertheless, the editorial collective remains essential to the magazine.

Originally the editorial collective began with three women, Sherry, Jeanne and Jenny. From the beginning, they were open to integrating women who they felt showed a positive and continuing interest in the magazine, and who would be committed to the incredible amount of work, both creative and monotonous, it took to publish this then 24 page magazine. They were soon joined by Carmen and Arlene and it was basically these five women who were responsible for the first seven issues of Country Women.

At that time, however, the tremendous amount



of unpaid and tedious work required, (addressing envelopes, filling orders, answering letters and attending unending meetings), discouraged most other women from wanting to join the editorial collective. Although help was obviously needed, most of the rest of us felt content with working on an issue, writing an article, or going to subscriptions once in a while. By issue seven, the five women on the collective were beginning to burn out, but a method of delegating power and responsibility more equally in the community wasn't readily available. The editorial collective felt



resentments at the same time they began to recognize their unconscious desire to hold on to the power that accompanied responsibility. With issue eight, the business of the magazine was to be turned over to the issue collective, but because of the issue collective's transient nature, this proved impractical and unfeasible.

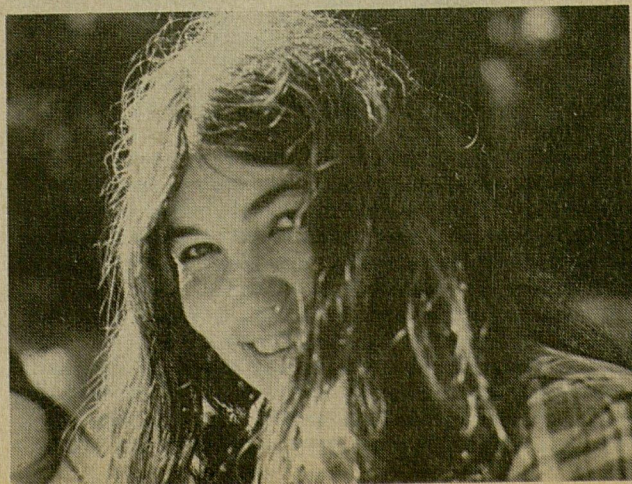
In October, 1973, after the second Country Women Festival, a community meeting for women interested in the magazine was called. Twenty six women showed up and (lest we believe interest or theme ideas were waning), fourteen topics or themes for future issues were decided on by vote. "Yeeks," said the knowing, "Does that mean another two and a half years of a ten to twenty-five hour per week commitment?"

At this same meeting, Jenny and Arlene announced their decision to resign from the editorial collective and put their energy into other aspects of their lives. In their wake, Sam, River and Harriet joined the collective, realizing that Sherry, Carmen and Jeanne could not possibly handle the work alone. (When Sam and River later set out for greener pastures, new energy again entered, this time in the persons of Helen and Slim.) Steps were taken after this community meeting to reorganize the business end of the magazine and permanent committees were established to do subscriptions and bookstore distribution in an effort to enlarge the number of people who were directly involved with the magazine. Country Women

grew: structures, spirituality, older women and living with children came out. Things were feeling pretty good and we were proud of the magazine.

Mention was made now and then that we were all still volunteer labor, and it was beginning to make little sense, either in terms of our politics or in face of the fact that many of us were desperately in need of financial support. But consciousness in terms of money has been slow and our commitment has been to do a magazine that could be bought easily by women who live in the country. The editorial collective finally voted to pay \$50 a month to the subscription and distribution committees, each of which worked over a hundred hours a month. Additionally, back pay bonuses of between \$50 and \$380 were paid to those women who had done the most work on the magazine over its first two years. In order to return any other profit to the community, we decided that we would use our 'extra' money to publish four anthologies that would be put together by women outside the Mendocino area. The first, an anthology of women's poetry, will be printed this summer. Our feeling now is that one of our priorities is raising salaries to a subsistence level for those of us who need to earn money. We hope to do this through increased sales rather than raising the price of the magazine.

In the fall of 1974, a second community meeting was held, but this time more radical change was necessary. The present subscription committee could and would no longer carry that burden. The Caspar House, a women's living collective, took over. The task of distribution which had been mainly handled by one woman was assumed by the women from a local commune. By delegating the ever bursting "Needs Answers Urgently" file to a group of women from Harris, some 100 miles away, we were able to break through the geographical limitations imposed by living in the country and give more women an active role in Country Women. But an interesting thing happened. For the first time, the people who were doing a lot of the business work were not part of the editorial collective. Resentments began to be heard. "We are not here just to take orders," complained distribution. It was time to re-examine our purpose. Had we unknowingly set up an authoritative hierarchical system? Judy as a representative from subscriptions and Pam from distribution then joined





the editorial collective to equalize power and remedy the problem.

Other changes happened concurrently with these, largely through unwelcomed but fortuitous circumstances. Sherry was the longest permanent, ongoing member of the collective. The files were in her bedroom and in her head, and nobody else really knew what they contained. Her plans to take an extended trip on the heels of a long illness meant she would not work on the magazine for six months. Our response was anxiety and uncertainty of what would happen. But I think that two and a half years of trying to decentralize and the growing confidence and leadership abilities that developed out of working within this collective process combined to provide a structure that could and did withstand the change. In fact, the power vacuum that operated when Sherry left has added to the intrinsic health of the magazine. With Nancy now joining us, we have a history of twelve women having worked on the editorial collective, and we are dependent on no one person for our survival and growth.

We have been learning to listen to each other and to speak our mind, and in that sense we continue the non-hierarchical organization that we learned in consciousness raising. I don't believe that the general growth would have been nearly as great if we operated in a system of editor and staff, with editor being responsible for final control and staff being delegated specific functions. What impresses me is how a magazine that started with three editors has continually widened its base and allowed for more and more women to participate, creating a

forum for learning rather than a chain of power that would crush change.

But lest you believe that we have reached utopian ideals, let me explain that we are constantly struggling with our desire to have an effective and orderly structure that doesn't promote a behind-the-scenes, separate and elite group that really runs the magazine. And our retrospective meetings that usually follow an issue's completion (a time for criticism and reviewing) often don't happen, or, when they do, the personal problems of working in the collective are often passed over in favor of discussing technical aspects of layout, or public reaction to the issue. In fact we have never, either in the issue or editorial collectives, been very good at bringing our personal difficulties with each other into the light and have stuck to the business at hand, in part out of fear that the magazine would not be able to withstand the conflicts, and in part out of fear of exposure. And, of course, the business at hand was usually thigh deep, and who has the energy to go over old history at 3:30 in the morning when it's her third meeting in one week? But it has become obvious to us that this has to change if we are going to continue to work together.

So we have begun to consciously look at the dynamics of our collective. Where have we failed or succeeded in collectivizing knowledge and work? Should we loosen our structure to provide more freedom for the issue collective or

tighten it to have a clearer basis on which to make difficult decisions? Can we as a group discuss layout and reach a general consensus in terms of aesthetics and format? Can we work out a personal working problem during meetings, not afterwards in small groups? How do we not intimidate others by our experience? How do we keep ourselves from being intimidated by each other's style? Do we have the energy to go on unpaid? How are we going to deal with money? This examination seems essential in that within the dynamics of the collective process lie the seeds of change for humankind. If power corrupts, making one egotistical, elitist, or greedy, servitude is not the answer. We must take responsibility for the control of our lives and our political systems, both large and small. Cooperation, mutual respect and ethical awareness are the hoped-for flowers. ♀

(The photos accompanying this article are of the members of the editorial collective.)



As Printed in Issue #8

- We have grown from 24 to 64 pages.
- Cost of printing has gone from \$300 to \$800.
- Number of copies has steadily increased to 3,000. This is still minute compared to most publications and is due to difficulty of distributing a country publication.
- Subscribers are now in almost every state and number 450.

Today, With Issue #16

- We continue to print 64 pages.
- Country Women costs from \$1600 to \$1900 per issue to print.
- We now distribute 7500 copies, which is good for any small publications. We sell in 150 bookstores in 26 states.
- We have over 2,000 subscribers.

Corners of the Mouth

I'm not a career woman. The work I've had to do for money (and virtually all my money since college has come through working) has been a necessary evil, minimized by an obsessive frugality to the point where all my jobs since the Peace Corps have been bearable because temporary. Hours spent on the job were just hours subtracted from my life. I was always so afraid of being fired from any job (for fear it would make it harder to get another one in the future) that I never told an employer what I thought of her/him. I never felt I could "be myself," and act and dress the way I do when not cowed by the tyranny of wages. Of course, everywhere I worked, it was men at the top and women at the bottom. But now I work on a collective, and some things have changed ... while others remain the same.

We're a young collective of two women and three men, running a food store that opened in February. Power is not equal. And I'm not sure that as yet it appropriately should be. But the other woman on the collective says flatly, "It's not a collective, because no one has equal power with Gary." And it's true, power divides up along pretty traditional lines, the men on top, women on the bottom. I'm last and least. Gary's first and most. He ran a food conspiracy as a volunteer for six months before he financed and opened the store. He offered to go to Los Angeles to get the truck we need to haul our food up from the city. He has made the 320 mile food run at least once a week since we opened, accompanied a couple of times by one or the other of the men on the collective. He works more hours for less money than the rest of us. The store is basically his gig, and we have in times past acceded to his attachment to responsibility. This means we are beginning with a real imbalance of power, and our task of equalizing it is greater than it would be if we'd all financed and created the store together.

The imbalance does not begin and end with Gary, however. The collective was conceived by three men and one woman. She joined partly, she said, simply to prevent this community service from being handled entirely by men. These people put in several weeks of unpaid planning and labor, creating a store out of an empty building and an inspiration. I came popping in when it had become a reality and said, "I'd like to work here (at 2/3 my present wage), but you've got to guarantee me twenty hours a week before I'll give up my other job. I just can't get by on less." Ellen, the other woman on the collective, and I have both been too overextended in our personal lives to go to the city and learn the ropes of the food run, though we agree that it is an important part of sharing the responsibility for making the store happen. So in several respects I'm a straggler.

Still, I began attending collective meetings as soon as I started working for the store. I was excited to be experiencing again the synergistics I'd previously felt mostly in

communes, consciousness raising and Country Women meetings. I tentatively began to grasp the significance of the store as an alternative, of the people, by the people, for the people. But I was not prepared to take on responsibilities or make any decisions. Until it gradually dawned on me that I was contributing, by default, to a good old sexist hierarchy.

Not explicitly sexist, of course. We just bring with us our entire lives of conditioning. Though we never had the discussion we planned to have about 'The Nature of Our Collective,' we adhere to equal decision making powers - it's just that four times out of five, the suggestion decided upon comes from a man. He is often overridden, but we won't have equality until I learn to take creative initiative myself. And then, if need be, I can struggle with being taken seriously. What I see myself and the collective faced with are a lot of critical turning points, choices through which our structural identity will evolve.

Aside from the collective, the employees we've had include one young man, who's been out of town during critical times of change, and he will probably not become a central part of the store. The other two employees have been women who have not shared a determination to participate in guiding the directions the store takes. One of them quit because of time and transportation problems but was never deeply involved in the collective. The other wishes only to do her eight hours cashiering and go home and forget the store. Its not important to her, except as a means to be less dependent on welfare or avoid a worse job.

I can credit her with knowing how to forego some of the compulsion others of us may be prey to. Though I am scheduled for just two days a week, I feel anxious when more than two days go by during which I don't check in to see how the store is doing. And I buzz around humming to myself, "I owe my soul to the company store." Still, it rankles me to see women coming in and saying, "Just tell me what to do," when there are no such acquiescent and disinterested men around.

As a collective, we have never made a conscious decision about whether or not the structure should include less committed employees, over whom we will then inevitably hold power, or whether instead we wish to insist that no employee be able even to designate her/himself as merely a loyal drone - that we all be executives and we all be drones. I once talked with a Bay Area film collective which refused to hire secretaries though they needed secretarial work done and there were people who would have been happy to do it. People were simply not allowed to select themselves as subordinates in that organization.

I think this equality for all members may be an important criterion for conscious, equal employment. I, as a woman (and I assume I'm not unique), have little enough self-confidence

that I will gladly say to almost any man, as he pursues his charade of competence and expertise, "OK, you take care of it." For weeks, I kept nagging, "We've got to get the vegetable cooler." (cf. "Honey, when are you gonna get those storm windows up?") Finally Gary said, "OK, do you want to take care of it?" "Oh no, I can't do it." (I'm not strong enough to help move it; I don't know how to hook it up or even what's needed to get it going - something about a compressor; I can't deal with the man who's selling it, bargain for it, make a decision on it; I don't have time for it.) With a flash of insight, I realized this was a critical turning point. The cooler will be installed. The person who takes on the job of doing that, if he/she doesn't have the skills needed to do so, will learn them. And the person who says, "I can't," will be as incapable of doing it next time it comes up as before. My hunch is that for a collective to become egalitarian, since we don't come in equal at the outset, the people in power have to consciously pass out some of their power. That's more likely than members with a history of powerlessness seizing the initiative, especially when the product the collective is producing seems to be materializing quite well within the existing hierarchical structure.

This also means power and its distribution must be recognized as part of the process. Many



communes and collectives have been caught in the illusion that to ignore it is to avoid it. Our collective has not discussed our structure self-consciously. We're pretty anarchistic and depend on one another to be self-regulating and enlightened. That means we make assumptions about mutual goals, about attitudes towards power. But power can be insidious. I think we need to stay aware that information is power, that power tends to spiral - upwards and downwards. If you're the one to whom all turn, you become the one it's most effective to turn to each time. Which is why one of the distributors we deal with, in aspiring to be "feminist, socialist and anti-imperialist in nature," states in the flyer they put forth: "We are fighting against manager/worker or bosses/secretary distinctions. Please communicate your questions or information with whomever you find at Red Star. Don't ask for the same person each time you call. Please address all correspondence to Red Star, to all of us as a collective."

It's hard to say what our collective form is and how I fit in as yet, because we are still very much on the level of potential. On the simplest level, we're merchants, middlepeople. It's not as though each of us spent our life dreaming of being a store clerk, or even a food distributor, and we're not in it just for profit and glory (fools would we be if we were). Taking only minimum wages and providing only minimal goods and services (not every need for everybody on the spot), we bring food to people cheaply. I feel financially we can succeed - because I trust that each of us cares about the store enough to do what needs doing. More importantly, we'll succeed because we are filling a real community need, not based on false appetites created by a system without a soul.

The woman who looks on her work in the store as merely a job noted that we talk about it a lot off the job. I think it's because we are sincerely excited about having a salaried job that is integrated into our lives and politics. We work with, not for, our friends, and can pursue our mutual visions of interconnected bakeries, gardens, distribution systems, sister stores to provide other community needs at low cost. I feel we're beginning to be a model for how we can take care of our own needs by organizing and putting out energy. We feel a part of the movement that has produced the Community Center and health collectives, which could go on to provide auto garages, child care, recycling, whatever we care to create.

We talk about collectivizing the collectives, having umbrella corporations where more profitable businesses support slower ones. Connections can be far reaching. This is already happening in Seattle, and with some of the food distribution systems in California. We don't always have to buy from the 3% who own the 95% of America.

One of the distributors we buy from makes this statement: "We do not see our primary purpose as moving food around, or having the cheapest prices. Please do not assume this of us. Our

Con't

concern is with reflection of true value rather than manipulated market prices, human nutrition and welfare (including our own) rather than convenience or appearance. Our concern is building a system of social distribution of wealth, rather than the accruing of gain to individuals. We don't see these goals as being 'idealistic' or something that will only come 'after the revolution.' They are the result of everyday decisions that we must make, and actions that we initiate, or refuse to participate in. We are striving for consistency in our personal, social, work and political lives. (You can bet that didn't come from Del Monte.) Another distributor reinvests a small percentage of its profit margin in capitalizing small farmers who want to remain independent of the corporate structure of American agribusiness.

A friend noted recently, "In most hierarchical jobs, those at the bottom are required to stifle their creativity or lose their jobs." It threatens superiors, shakes the boat, calls out all the self-preservation defenses of whatever institution you're up against. How antithetical to our collective, where I wonder if I can be creative enough to contribute my share. We are interested in creating for ourselves ethical, ecological and pleasurable work which provides us the means to live by.

Some of this visionary talk is pretty much bullshit (it'll never happen), but some of its history and the store is only one present manifestation of such vision. I think this vision is especially important for women since we are given the fewest options by remaining within the system. I don't think a feministically

sound collective is a top priority for any of the men on our collective, but I know that they don't feel men are intrinsically better fit to be masters, either. Its nothing short of phenomenal to me to have the right to say to any of the people I work with, "I think you're getting on top of me," and know we'll at least try to work that out.

Recently a man came in to see if we will supply food for his co-op up north. I asked my fellow clerk for one piece of information; he entered and usurped the dialogue. I returned to the cash register because customers were waiting while he continued talking to the man for twenty minutes. When it was all over, he had the precedent of the contact, knew what was happening up north and would be the one to be asked next time a question came up. On the way home, he shared in all innocence, his pleasure in having been an 'executive' all day. I allowed as how when we work together, I'd like to spend a smaller proportion of the day on the register (the least edifying, power producing, initiative-requiring job in the store). The next week, by gum, he made an effort to do his time on the register and free me to do the other stuff.

I might consider this take-over of dialogue an isolated incident if it hadn't happened almost the same way with the other man I clerk with. But this time, I felt less free to say anything to him, so the ending was not the same. It was a critical turning point I copped out on, which is now my problem. Daily I am faced with decisions and challenges, daily I have the power to affect the direction my work and work relationships will move in. That's my job.

Jackrabbit

Printshop

Jackrabbit Women's Printshop in Eugene, Oregon, is one of about ten women-owned, women-run printshops on the West Coast. The shop is collectively owned and collectively run by Kate, Jane, Lee and Eileen.

The original interview with Kate, Jane and Lee appeared in Women's Press, Eugene, April 1975. Since then Eileen has joined them, and her separate interview has been incorporated here.

For those who don't know what Jackrabbit is, how would you describe it?

Kate: As a printshop run by women on every level...We're into business printing and community printing-trying to make a living for the four of us, and hopefully we'll eventually be able to get more equipment. Our dream is feminist publishing, but at this point, commercial work is a matter of survival. Economically we can't do feminist publishing right now; we can only front labor. Folks we print for have to supply the capital to buy paper and supplies.

J.&R.: Could you describe how Jackrabbit began and the kind of work that is being done now?

Kate: Jackrabbit evolved out of a shop called Vision Works that was started back in 1970 or so; it in turn had evolved out of other movement printshops. The equipment was acquired through a lot of avenues; some bought by individuals, some bought with movement (notably SDS) funds. The organization was real loose, but it was a definite hierarchy; knowledge being power, Sean had the top spot. Jane came in the Fall of '73, so it was the three of us until Lee came to work with us in September. Just about that time, Jane and I were realizing the impossibility of working much longer with Sean. After a lot of hassle and arguments we finally asked him to leave.

J.&R.: What got you interested in learning printing?

Jane: When I came to Eugene I didn't know anybody. Jean said to me "oh you

should go up and see Katie at Jackrabbit, they're looking for people to help." I went up and just looked around and I sorta hung out.

Kate: I came to Eugene in the late Spring of '71 and began living at this hippie house up on the hill which was called the Press House because they had a press up in one of the bedrooms. I took up with this crazy printer fellow who was going to teach me how to print. I had been a waitress since I was 14 and I just knew that was not what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to be a printer. I didn't know of any women printing then and I was fairly ignorant of the Women's Movement. So I learned printing from Sean. Anyway, back then it seemed that printing was considered more of a political necessity than something you really wanted to do well. At 4 o'clock in the morning when Coalition ran over with something to print - you know, because the revolution was going to happen tomorrow and if we didn't get this thing out by 5 o'clock it would never happen - we got out of bed and printed it.

Lee: A couple of years ago I lived in a little town in Washington and got a job in a printshop. Mine is a Horatio Alger story, I began as a janitor. I mopped, I emptied the trash, I cleaned the johns, you know. Eventually I moved up to such thrilling occupations as jogging the newspapers as they came off the Webb press and doing minor binding work. I was real interested in living in the country at that time and I met a fellow who was running a printshop in the country and I ended up living with him and working in that shop. That's when I really began to learn about printing. Also, I learned about business. We ran the shop and I ended up doing most of the business work - the taxes and the bookkeeping and the whole thing - as well as doing basic camera work and running the press. A little over a year ago I was at a media gathering in Seattle and I met Kate there. I had been having problems learning stuff in the shop from that man; some of them I recognize as man/woman problems. He didn't trust me around the equipment. He'd show me a little bit and as soon as I'd goofed up he'd dash in and take it away from me. So I was really excited about Jackrabbit because there were two women working there. I came down here to visit a few times last spring and summer and then came down her last October to start working.

Eileen: I decided that this society wasn't going to support me as an artist and the skill most connected to visual arts was printing. A couple of months ago, I think it was, I had talked about silkscreening posters with Jackrabbit. In the meantime, I had gotten a job at a gas station and flipped out after a week - at which point

Jackrabbit decided to hire me. Mostly because we decided silkscreening will make money for the shop. Right now it's costing us money in paper and materials...I'm still learning and making mistakes.

J.&R.: How did you get your training; how much did you come to Jackrabbit with and how much did you learn on the job?

Jane: I came with nothing. I mean, I didn't know the first thing about a printing press. I had done layout for a couple of newspapers, but that's it. Totally. Basically when I came I hung out and started helping with small stuff like stripping negatives and camera work; eventually I tiptoed over to the press. My attitude then, and I think it's an attitude that women have, was that this is the most complicated machine that I've ever seen in my life and I'll never be able to run it. Women are taught to be intimidated by wrenches, not to mention machinery. Rubber bands and paper clips and tin foil holding the various parts together; I had to learn all those things about the press as well as printing on it. And it's a long process; there are still an infinite number of things I could learn about running a press - you learn something everytime you run it. And yet I feel I can do it very efficiently now and turn out good quality work - at the same time there are things, like color work that can be learned. It took me a very long time for each process so that I wasn't fucking up. The first couple of times I did runs all by myself, I'd just float home - I was so high. "I did it." I still feel that way when I run off a couple of runs and they really look good. It's a very satisfactory feeling to be able to run this machine - to be one with it - to actually get the end product to turn out the way you wanted. It's like a success story everyday. With the darkroom there's a whole lot more I could learn; although I can do basic things, there is a lot of technical work I would like to know.

Kate: Through trial and error - back in the days of churning out political leaflets at 4 a.m. - I figured out what was happening on the press. Just before starting Jackrabbit, Sean and I rebuilt the old AB Dick. That old press was really an abominable machine, enough to drive anyone to drink. It was neat though; I really started getting into the whole mechanical side of it. I guess I've found my true calling. Everytime I work with that press now I learn something; it's just never ending. It gets to the point where you're just so in touch with your machine when you run it that you sit there and you listen to it and you hear thirty thousand different levels of noises and clanks and clunks and underneath growlings and stuff and you can tell what each one of them is

doing and how a bearing is grinding and it's really neat. There are certain stock adjustments and fine tunings; the longer you run it, the more you get to know the machine - it's a constant process. You get one problem licked and it comes up with another.

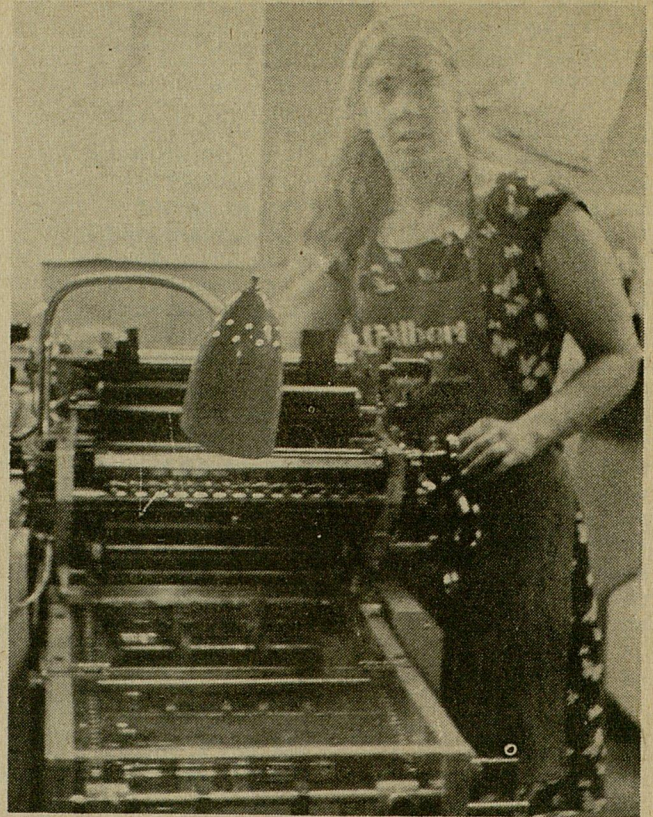
Lee: I have no real training in any formal sense of the word. I remember the first time I ever ran the press by myself; that man was away for a month and I was the only one there who could do it and these jobs kept coming in amazingly enough and I had to do them completely on my own. And it really felt good that I could. I had to do weird things; one time we ran out of fountain solution and we were so far away from any big city - I mean you didn't just go and buy things when you needed them, you had to make special trips to Portland to get them - so I started using lemon juice and water for the fountain. And it worked. I was just amazed. I've learned a lot about camera work since I've been here and a lot of it has been teaching myself...teaching ourselves actually... all three of us. And just learning by doing. I feel the lack of formal training in a way that I don't think you do (to Kate and Jane). That may be because I'm accustomed to finding an authority and learning from the authority. I feel the lack of someone to ask questions of, and get immediate answers, but I'm beginning to work through that and learn more by doing.

Eileen: A very tiny bit of silkscreen training I got in junior high school; the other through trial and error, books, and questioning people. But mostly trial and error, a lot of error, a lot more error than trial. As far as camera work training, I got that on the job. I started learning in the shop because I needed camera work for silkscreening.

J.&R.: It seems like all of you had opportunities...there was some kind of equipment that you could learn on and somebody willing to teach you. Do you think those opportunities are still around for women who want to learn printing now?

Eileen: As in any other male-dominated profession, there are few women in printing. It's one of the most closed of the union skills; as far as I know there are only a few schools that teach it - it's not like carpentry or wiring or plumbing - and most people who learn have connections with a shop, just like I did. But it is beginning to happen that wherever you have women in a non-traditional profession, you have feminists willing to train women.

Kate: Sometimes it seems that there are certain limitations within a shop structure that makes it difficult to bring in new women, like economics or space - it's a question that has



a lot of sides to it. Ideally it would be far out for us or any other feminist press to be able to train any woman who wants to learn. I was in California - the Bay Area and northern California - and I met a lot of women down there who are printers and who run printshops. This kind of energy is really exciting to me; we were trying to get some feedback on the idea of a women's printing conference in hopes that out of this conference will come a tight network of women into print media. (ed. note: The conference, sponsored by Jackrabbit and Olive Press, took place Memorial Day weekend.) It's really exciting; we have the resources, we have the knowledge, we have the skills - we can print anything - and most important we can teach each other. Printshops aligned with the Women's Movement, like us, seem to be growing in number, which hopefully means more women getting into printing.

J.&R.: How would you describe your working relationships with each other?

Jane: We've talked in terms of criticism/self-criticism and how we try to be open to criticism. Something we said is that technical criticism is a lot easier to hear than personal, and it generally is technical that we're dealing with.

Kate: I feel that we work together just incredibly well in a lot of ways. We all have a pretty heavy commitment towards Jackrabbit. And we all work as hard - I think that's the main thing - we all work hard and that's really important.

Eileen: We have a really good time with each other; at the end of a day of inhaling white gas fumes we become "off the wall". Our in-joke about the shop is that it's "edge-city" then...it's the test of whether we're going to jump off the edge or come into work the next day. It's free theater at Jackrabbit at 4 o'clock - anyone can come in and we'll be sure to be acting totally weird.



Kate: Also, negative feedback is a big frustration. In fact, I think you get more negative feedback from the customers a lot of times than you get positive feedback. To them it's a job, you take it and two hours later you miraculously give them a sheet of paper. And they don't understand that it's an incredibly long and involved process that takes a lot of skill, a lot of training, and a lot of knowing how to do it.

J.&R.: How do you think you fit into the community, besides just printing?

Kate: To know that we're building something incredible - it's material, it's here, and it's working - is a political statement as a print-shop and as an encouragement for women. It's essential for us, as women and as people into a socialist/communist revolution, to gain control over that tool that the capitalists use most to coopt and fuck us over with - the printing press. "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press" is a factual statement. With our own presses, we are able to provide fairly easy access to the tools to print those viewpoints not endorsed by the pigs.

Eileen: Some of the kinds of posters that we want to do are strong graphics that are political. Hopefully we will be able to pay women in the community for their work and provide a good way to get fine quality art work to the people for little money. Also, when you come into the shop and see women running machines that seem scary, you realize you can have control over the machine. It doesn't have to control you. I'm gaining respect for some parts of technology. There's nothing necessarily wrong with technology; it's just how it's used. Is the way it's being used more helpful or more harmful to people? Another contribution to this community is that we're a group of women supporting each other by running a cooperative business. Externally we are still dealing with a capitalistic society but where we're making the changes is within; that is, in the way we're relating to each other. In a future view: if we are going to be self-sufficient, if we're going to be strong women, if we are going to have a revolution, we have to know how to do everything.

J.&R.: How does working with women contrast with working with men?

Jane: It's obviously on more of an equal level for us (women working together) as opposed to working with a man who, no matter how hard he tries, still sees us as women and still has a lot of weird attitudes wrapped up in that. And so right away we aren't having to deal with that. I feel really comfortable asking either Katie or Lee...I used to feel with Sean I was giving him power by asking him questions and it was always a weird feeling. But it's not that way here.

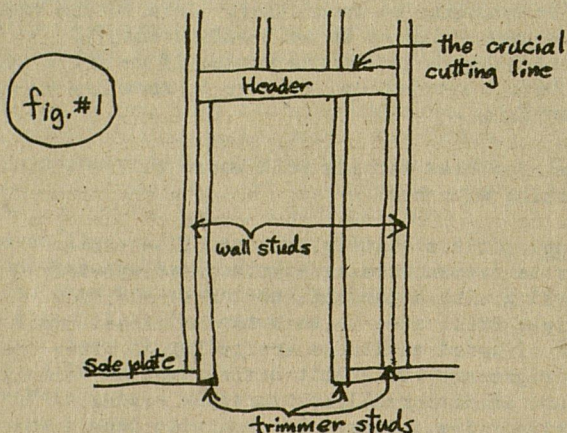
Eileen: I find that I don't get as uptight about making mistakes, admitting that I don't know something, and asking for help. I don't feel like I'm dumb. The women in the shop talk about how long it took them to learn and how many mistakes they've made - it's been reassuring. Nothing in the work itself bothers me; sometimes I wish we had more time for lessons on how to run the press. But we only have one press and it's busy all the time. Part of it has to do with me not being assertive enough with wanting to learn. The main dissatisfaction that I feel is when we do something poorly. In many ways we have to learn on other people's jobs. ♀

Hanging Doors

Hanging a door is exacting work, but with patience and care, anyone can do it. A door frame, called a jamb, is like a box and the sides of the box must be plumb and level - in other words, perfectly square - at all times. This box is placed within another box, the rough-framed door opening in the wall. And inside this box within a box, the door is hung.

If you need to install a door in a wall with no opening, you will have to remove the wall covering, cut away the unwanted studs and frame out the opening with 2 x 4's. If your opening is already framed, skip this part and go on to the section called Jamb It.

When you have determined where you want the door, be very careful measuring what needs to be cut away - especially the horizontal cutting line where old wall studs will be cut away to meet the top of the new door's header. (See Fig. #1) To figure this line, add the height of the header, 1/2" for shimming between the header and head jamb, and the height of the finished door jamb. If you're framing an opening in a building that's being built, don't forget to add the thickness of any flooring you may plan to lay.

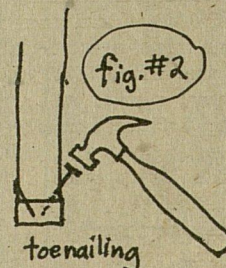


To determine how much of the wall covering you need to cut away, decide which studs will be the outside supports for your new framing and cut the wall covering flush to those studs. Then cut out the studs between those two by first severing them about 5" up from the floor. Then mark the cutting lines carefully with a square on each stud and cut. Remove the sole plate flush with the outside stud. Watch out for nails!

Rough framing for a door consists of vertical studs called trimmers which support the header or horizontal framing piece above the opening. If you don't have a piece of 4 x 4 framing material, you can make a header to fit a 2 x 4 stud wall by sandwiching a piece of 1/2" plywood between two 2 x 4's set on edge. Nail all three pieces with 12d or 16d nails (d means 'penny') staggered along the header.

The plywood makes the thickness of the header equal to the width (3 1/2") of the 2 x 4 studs so that everything is flush. The length of the header is the distance between the two full length studs you have left at the sides of the opening.

You will probably need to cut three trimmers - two to nail against the full-length studs and one to block out to the width of the actual rough opening. That width is the door's width plus 2 1/2". Prop the trimmers up against the existing studs and nail to the bottom of the header, placing four nails at each end. Then toenail (See Fig. #2) the cut-off studs into the top of the header. Using 12d nails, nail the two outer trimmers to the studs. Then nail the third trimmer into a block placed between it and one of the side trimmers. Toenail it into the sole plate and the header.



Jamb It: Now you are ready to put a second box within the rough-framed box. You can buy this box ready made (called a pre-hung door frame) or make one out of some 1 x material. Whichever you choose, be sure to allow 1/16" clearance at the top and the sides, and 1/2" or so from the floor. Allow more at the bottom if it's an exterior door requiring a threshold.

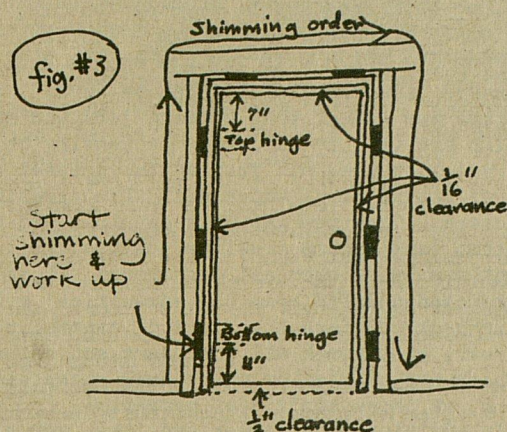
The method you will use to secure your jamb within the rough-framed opening is called shimming. Shims are shingles which, when driven together from opposite sides, form a block of the perfect thickness between trimmers and jambs. When the jambs have been nailed into place, the shims can be broken off flush with the framing.

Begin shimming at the lower hinge site. (See Fig. #3 for hinge positions.) Before you nail, check to make sure the jamb is aligned from side to side and flush with the wall covering. Now nail through the jambs and shims and then into the rough framing with two 10d finishing nails. Since there will be stop molding applied to the jambs after the door is hung, place your nails where this molding will cover them.

Next, shim out next to the upper hinge location so that the side jamb is perfectly plumb. You should allow a little extra shimming because nailing compresses the shims a bit. Nail in place as before. Repeat the process in the middle of the side jamb, checking for plumb.

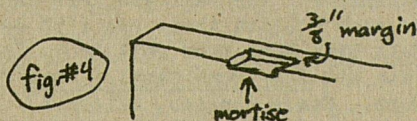
Shim out the top of the jamb so that it is

level by starting near the hinge side and placing a second shim near the opposite side. Then shim down the latch side of the jamb in reverse order. (See Fig #3) Now you've finished your jamb. If you want a threshold, install it now.

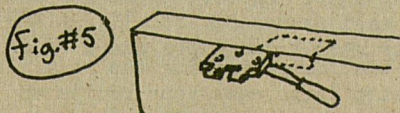


Hang It All: Take your door and prop it in the frame, placing shims all around it so that there is proper clearance. Holding the hinge leaf across both the door and the jamb, mark the hinge positions with a knife blade at the top and bottom of the hinge. If your door is extra large or heavy, plan a third hinge half way between the top and bottom ones. Take the door down.

Next, bevel the latch side of your door 1/8" so that it will clear the jamb easily as it opens and closes. Now mark the hinge side for mortises (the depressions that the hinge leaves fit into). To do this you can use the hinge itself as a marking template allowing at least 3/8" between the mortise and the door face. (See Fig #4) Or, you can buy what's called a butt gauge which will mark exact positions for mortising on the door and the jamb with just a tap of your hammer. But unless you're hanging several doors or trying to do a super professional job, you really don't need this gadget. Anyway, mark for all hinge mortises on both the door and the jamb.



The depth of your mortise cut can be marked by holding a hinge leaf flush with the side of the door. (See Fig. #5) With a chisel held almost vertically, make cuts to the depth line every 3/8" or so. Chip away the wood between the cuts and smooth out the bottom of the mortise with your chisel held almost flat. Put a hinge leaf into this mortise and check to make sure it is flush with the edge of the door or jamb.



If you have cut too deeply, don't panic. Shims made out of cardboard can easily correct the situation.

Now, mark your screw positions through the hinge holes and punch or drill starter holes. Screw the hinge leaves into place on the door and the jamb. Prop the door in the opening again. It's best to have help now, but if you don't, use your foot at the bottom of the door to maneuver it into position. Line up the hinge leaves and drop the pins in, starting with the top hinge. Don't force the pins, but jostle the door until they slip in fairly easily.

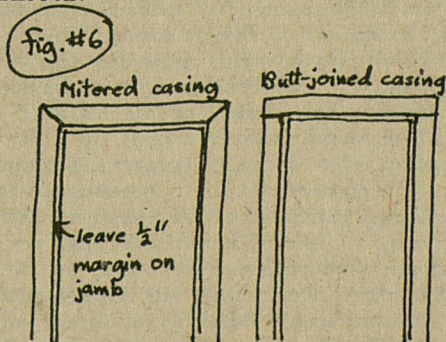
So, how does your door fit in its frame? Does it stick anywhere or lean away from the hinges? Mark places to be planed or sanded. Remove the door again and make whatever corrections you need for a perfect fit.

At this point, you should apply whatever kind of latch hardware you need. To simplify the job of installing the latch, borrow or rent a door boring kit from the hardware store. All you need with this kit is a brace. The kit has the proper auger bit and guides for boring holes.

Again, for the last time, hang the door. Mark for the strike plate on the jamb and mortise out a hole in the jamb for the latch bolt to slip into. Punch starter holes and screw in the strike plate.

Stop It: Now you're ready to apply the door stop molding and the casing which covers the seam between the wall and jamb. Close the door towards you and let the latch slide into the strike position. Begin nailing stop molding to the hinge side jamb with 4d finishing nails spaced every foot or so. Leave 1/16" space between the molding and the door on the hinge side if you plan to paint it. Traditionally, the corners of stop molding are mitered, and bevels are cut at the bottom of the side stop to avoid dust collecting and cleaning problems. But these details are completely up to you to do or not. Nail the remaining stop molding pieces flush to the closed door.

If you're using shaped molding, miter the top corners. With flat molding, you can simply join the corners (See Fig. #6) Leaving 1/2" margins on all jamb edges, nail the casing to both the jamb and stud framing with 6d or 8d casing nails spaced 16" apart. Countersink all exposed nail heads and fill with wood putty. Sand smooth.



Hope you enjoy your expertly hung door! ♡

CANNING

CANNING:

Canning is one of the most satisfying activities for me. I suppose it's because it is one of the few things that leaves lasting, tangible results from the hours of food-producing labor. The vegetables that go straight from garden to stomach satisfy all kinds of needs, but not the need to gaze proudly at well filled shelves and think of all I've done. In fact, I'm not precisely sure whether I can in order to have food to look at or to eat each winter! At times of summer abundance I like canning with a friend most of all. The jobs divide easily - one to cut fruit and pack jars, the other to wash jars and tend the canning kettle. Often we sing as we work, packing pears to a beat, smiling and hot and steamy, late into a summer night.

It's fairly easy to keep surplus fruits and vegetables from going to waste. There are three main types of canning: foods which are poured from cooking pot to canning jars with no other processing; foods which are put in jars and processed with boiling water; and foods which are placed in jars and processed in a pressure cooker. Which type canning you do depends on the susceptibility of a particular food to spoilage. Pressure canning protects against all types of bacteria, including botulism; unprocessed jars are protected against simple spoilage only. Any food which has a high acid, salt or sugar content, though, is not susceptible to botulism or ptomaine bacteria. This means that jams, jellies and pickles are the easiest things to can, requiring no special equipment (the first type of canning). Fruits, because of their natural sugar content, are also safe from the really dangerous bacteria and must be processed only in a boiling water bath (the second type of canning). Vegetables and meat come under the third type of canning (pressure cooking) to protect them from botulism. Tomatoes, because of their high acidity, are the one exception to this rule and may be processed like fruits.

EQUIPMENT:

The equipment needed for canning is not expensive, except for the pressure canner. An ordinary canning kettle (for fruits and tomatoes) is simply a large enamel pot with a wire rack to lift jars in and out. They come in two sizes, one which holds eight quart jars and one which holds sixteen. If you think you will be doing a lot of canning, the larger kettle is well worth the initial expense as you can put up sixty to one hundred quarts of fruit in one afternoon or night with the larger size. A pressure canner is a very large pressure cooker with a rack to hold the jars. I have chosen to pickle or freeze all my vegetables rather than buy a pressure canner, so I don't have any experience with this type of canning. This is partly because of the expense of pressure canning but also because frozen vegetables are generally tastier than canned ones.

Your jars need not be special "canning" ones (sold at grocery and hardware stores). Any glass jar which will fit the standard lids (mayonaise jars for example) can be used. Ordinary jars are weaker than canning jars and occasionally one will crack during processing but this rare loss does not justify the greater expense of bought jars, which will also occasionally crack. Once you get into canning, you will find that jars become precious possessions. I collect and hoard them all year round. Most of my home canned gifts bear the admonition: send the jar back! Before the start of canning season each year, go through all your jars and discard any which are cracked or which have nicks along the rim, as those won't seal properly.

In addition to a canner and jars, you also need lids and rings. The lids are metal disks with a rubber seal which fits on top of the jars. Rings thread onto the jars over the lids, holding them in place. Rings must be used until a jar has sealed and cooled but then they can be removed, leaving only the lid in place. This means you need many fewer rings than lids. Lids can be bought separately from rings or in combination; they are much cheaper alone. Check to make sure you are buying the right size rings and lids for your type jars; jars come with wide, narrow, and small mouths. If you reuse old lids, always make sure they are not bent, punctured or dented and that the rubber is uncracked. It's hard to reuse lids more than a few times but rings will last almost forever, unless they become badly rusted, which those used to seal pickled vegetables do quite readily. The last two years there's been a severe shortage of lids in this country so if you plan to do a lot of canning, buy a whole case of lids when you can find one. Another piece of depression consciousness.

There are several basic primers on canning fruits, vegetables, jams, and pickles. They are all very inexpensive. The Ball and Kerr canning jar companies each publish their own (35¢ each postpaid). Ball Blue Book from Ball Bros. Co., Muncie, Indiana and Kerr Home Canning Book from Kerr Glass Corp., Sandy Springs, Oklahoma). The other good book is Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables (20¢ postpaid, Home and Garden Bulletin #8, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402). I have all three of these and find it is useful to cross check them when I can. Since I usually want to use little or no sugar and the shortest processing time possible, I use the books to decide on safe limits.

SIMPLE CANNING:

Canning jams, jellies, preserves and pickles is the easiest process of all. All you need is a pan for sterilizing jars and a large pot for making the jam or boiling the pickle brine. The first step is to make your recipe and have it boiling hot. Then sterilize your clean jars and lids by placing them upside down in an inch

ET FREEZING

or so of boiling water for twenty minutes. Sometimes the jars will suck all the water out of the pan; just lift the jars and you can break the vacuum. Remove the jars one at a time from the boiling water and fill them with the recipe. Standing the jar in hot water or placing a knife in it while you are filling will prevent its cracking. Fill the jar to 1/2 inch from the top. Then quickly wipe the rim clean, cover with a sterilized lid and tighten down the ring. Invert the jar to cool. Then fill the next jar. When the jars are thoroughly cooled, check to see if each one sealed. The lid should stay depressed when you push on it; you should not be able to "pop" it up and down.

Pickles don't really have to seal (remember ye old pickle barrel?) because vinegar is a preservative, but I feel superstitiously safer if they do and try to eat the unsealed ones first. Jams and other sugary goodies will get moldy and ferment if they don't seal. I once got some nice "brandied" peaches off a bad seal, but in general sealing failures look, taste and act weird. They should be refrigerated right after canning or thrown away.

Making good thick jam, jelly or preserves is hard because it takes a lot of sugar or honey, more than I am willing to use. Most recipes call for equal parts sugar and fruit. Two things cause jams (etc.) to thicken - sugar and pectin, acting in conjunction with each other. Pectin can be supplied by adding green apples or lemon juice to your fruit or by buying commercial pectin (derived from fruit sources). There are recipes for making your own pectin (from apples) in the canning books but I've never done it. I started to use the commercial powdered pectin after making very runny jams without it for several years. Unfortunately, even the commercial stuff only really thickens with a lot of sugar, so I've learned to live with partly runny jams.

To make jams or preserves, you basically cook the cut up fruit with as much sugar or honey as you want until it is rapidly boiling. Then add pectin (if you want). The mixture will thicken as much as it's going to in about twenty or thirty minutes. I've found further cooking usually thins it. The jam should be poured into jars while it is rapidly boiling. Apricots are the only fruit I've found which makes good thick jam with little or no sugar and no pectin. Just cook very ripe apricots to boiling. I once was reduced to adding cornstarch and arrowroot to jam, in an attempt to make a thick, lightly sweet concoction. Instead, I got a very thick, strange blackberry "pudding" and I haven't tried those additions again. There's an art to keeping runny jam on bread - peanut butter helps! The really runny stuff, I call "sauces" and use on custard, pound cake and ice cream. Substituted for honey in homemade ice cream, it gives good fruit flavors.

Fruit butters are also excellent and easy to make - they are thicker and somewhat less

sweet than jams. To make apple butter, you quarter whole apples (skin, core and all) and steam them in a small amount of cider vinegar until they are soft. Puree the cooked apples in a blender or strain them through a sieve. Then put the sauce-like pulp back in a kettle and cook it, adding sugar or honey, grated lemon peel, lemon juice, cinnamon and other spices to taste. Cook the butter until it is quite thick. While boiling, pour it into sterilized jars and seal. Pear, peach and apricot butters are made the same way except the fruit is steamed in water or fruit juice. The peaches and apricots must be pitted but need not be skinned. I discovered these less well known "butters" at a farmers market when I lived in rural Pennsylvania and they're really delicious!

Pickles: There are two ways to make pickles: by cooking the vegetables in a vinegar solution or by packing raw vegetables into jars and adding boiling liquid. Except for chutney and one zucchini recipe, I prefer the raw vegetable method. This makes much crisper pickles and they have as much flavor as cooked ones if they're allowed to cure for several weeks in the jars. Cucumber pickle recipes abound in every cook book and it is fun to try a variety (carefully labeling each jar so you can make your favorites again next year). There's an amazing variation in flavor.

My favorite pickles no longer come from cucumbers, however. During our first year of overwhelming garden surpluses (before we learned about successive plantings), we invented dilled beans. I've been dilling almost every garden vegetable ever since, and though beans remain my absolute favorite, there have been many other successes. Almost anything can be pickled: beans, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, small onions or onion pieces, green tomatoes, all kinds of squash. Dilled vegetables are crunchy and wonderful to munch on or in salads.

To make them you:

1. heat to boiling a mixture of:
2 parts vinegar
1 part water
1 T. salt to each 3 cups
2. Fill sterilized jars with the vegetables. Beans, small onions and green cherry tomatoes can be used whole. All other vegetables should be cut into thin pieces.
3. Add 2 cloves garlic, dill weed and dill seed, 8 peppercorns and a pinch of mustard seeds to each jar.
4. Place a knife in each jar to prevent cracking. Fill each jar with the boiling mixture, remove the knife, wipe the rim, seal and invert. Let pickles stand at least two weeks before eating.

There is a zucchini pickle recipe which is another favorite of mine, both because it is delicious and because it solves a chronic zucchini problem - overpopulation. To make it, you com-

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bine the following ingredients and boil them for 25 minutes:

- 3 medium squash
- 2 onions
- 2 tsp. mustard seed
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 c. sugar or honey
- 2 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. celery seed
- 2 pinches alum
- 2 c. or more cider vinegar

Pour the boiling mixture into sterilized jars and seal immediately.

My other favorite pickle recipe is homemade chutney, a treasure after years of buying meager and expensive half pints in fancy food stores. Chutneys can be made from many fruits but my favorite is this combination of pears and (or) apples and green tomatoes. I cook up gallons in my big canning kettle and pack it all in jars at one time. This recipe should be adapted and altered at will. I use it only as a rough guideline and often make five times this quantity. Where the stars (*) appear, the spices are often doubled.

- 3 lbs. firm pears and/or green apples
- 1 lb. green tomatoes
- 1 lb. brown sugar
- 1 pt. cider vinegar
- 2 onions
- 1 cup raisins or currants
- 1/4 c. preserved ginger chopped (I sometimes substitute 1 T. chopped fresh ginger)
- allspice, coriander, cardamom if you wish.
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne
- 2 tsp. salt*
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon*
- 1/2 tsp. ground cloves*
- 2 tsp. mustard seed
- 3-4 tsp. curry powder
- 1 clove garlic, minced*

Core the fruit. Dice the unpeeled fruit and the vegetables. Combine the sugar and the vinegar and bring them to a boil. Add all the ingredients and cook slowly, stirring from time to time, until thickened (about 1 hour). If you double the recipe, use only one and a half times the vinegar. While boiling, pour into sterilized jars and seal. This recipe makes about four quarts.

HOT WATER BATH CANNING:

To can fruits or tomatoes, you fill clean jars and then place them in a canning kettle full of boiling water for processing. There are two different methods for filling the jars: hot pack and cold pack. In hot pack, you cook the fruit in juice or syrup until it is boiling and then place it in the jars. Cold packing is simply placing raw fruit in the jars and then filling them with boiling water, juice or syrup. I prefer cold packing since the fruit is minimally cooked, and tastes more like real fruit when you go to eat it.

Fruits may be canned whole, halved or quartered depending on their size and your taste. Apricots and peaches are best halved, so the pits may be easily removed (and this is when you will learn the meaning of freestone and cling peaches). The core can be removed from a pear once it is

cut in half by scooping it out with a small spoon. Peaches and tomatoes can be blanched in boiling water to remove the skins if you wish. Only unbruised, ripe fruit should be canned. Damaged fruit can be used to make jam or sauce. Sauces: Damaged fruit can be made into sauces by cutting it up in small pieces and cooking it in a little water until it is mushy and thick. You can add sugar and spices to taste if you wish. When the sauce is thick and boiling, place it in clean jars, seal and process in the canner as you would whole fruit. Plum, peach, pear and apricot sauce is as delicious as apple. They make great quick breads and cakes, too, substituted in recipes calling for applesauce.

Whole Fruit Most canning books will tell you to pack your whole fruit in a sweet sugar syrup. Boiling water works just as well, forming a light syrup with the natural fruit juices. More sweetening can be added when you eat the fruit. I find fruits canned this way have more natural flavor and texture than the too-sweet store bought varieties. Honey may be substituted for sugar in any recipe, using about half as much honey as sugar.

Processing: Once the clean jars are filled with either hot or cold pack fruit, the rims should be wiped clean. Then cover them with lids. Screw the metal rings on tightly and place the jars in a canning kettle full of boiling water. While one batch of jars is being processed, fill the next. This is when the advantage of a sixteen quart canner becomes apparent. The jars in the canner should be covered with water. When the water returns to a full boil, begin to count the processing time. Each fruit requires a different amount of time. The canning books have tables to tell you what they are. When the time is up, remove the jars from the kettle and let them cool. When you hear the lids "pop" (forming a vacuum seal), you can remove the metal rings leaving only the lids in place. A jar is sealed if you can't press the lid up and down. Jars that do not seal should be refrigerated when cool and used fairly soon. That's all there is to canning. It is often an all night orgy (or ordeal) for me when all the fruit ripens at once, but that one night's forty quarts of pears is a year's worth of food. And they are so beautiful to see - row after row on the shelves!

Pressure canning of vegetables (except tomatoes) is something I know about second hand. The books will give you all the necessary information.

FREEZING

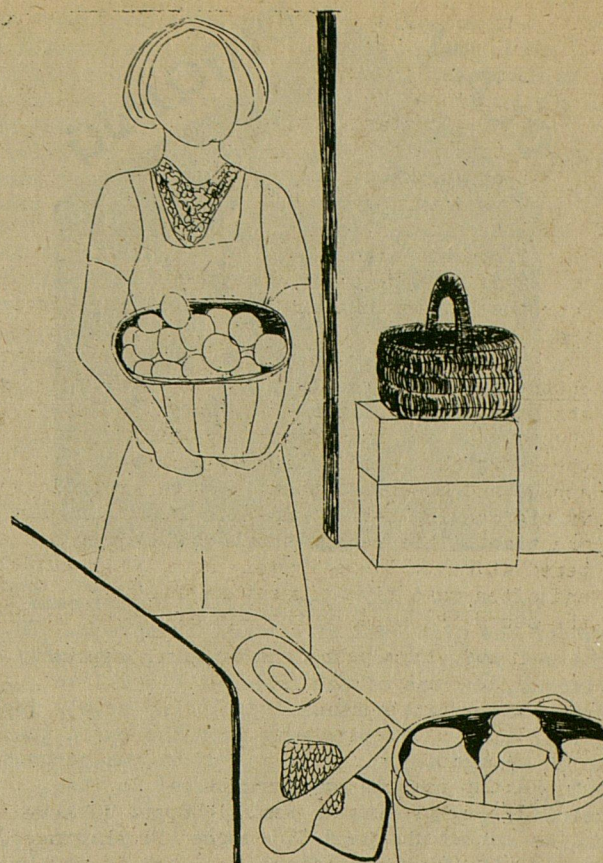
I am now a great believer in freezing, which is often quicker and easier than canning vegetables and many fruits, and produces more edible results. The initial cost need not be very high either, if you hunt around for a second hand freezer. In the long run, an upright freezer is better than the chest type. Its freezing coils and insulation have a much higher survival rate than the chest type has. Containers for freezing can be expensive (plastic or glass freezing jars), but you only need those for soups and sauces, if at all. Freezing paper works fine for meat. Clean milk cartons filled with water

are wonderful for fish (the water keeps out air and protects the flavor). Plastic freezing bags (especially the quilted, "insulated" kind) do well for everything else. I even use them for liquids like soup or tomato sauce, placing filled bags inside the cardboard sections of a canning jar box. Then I put the whole box in the freezer. When the bags are frozen solid, they can be removed from the box, neat solid squares easy to stack and store. This method prevents strain on the bags which could cause them to break, or the coozing of still unfrozen liquid between the coils in freezer shelves or baskets.

Most freezing instructions tell you to cook the vegetables, then cool them, then place them in containers and freeze them. The cooking destroys enzymes in the vegetables which would damage color and texture if left alone. But the well cooked vegetables end up mushy and tasteless, anyway. After some experimenting, I've discovered that the enzymes can be stopped without overcooking the vegetables. First I wash and slice the vegetables if they need it (like broccoli or cauliflower). Then I prepare a pot of rapidly boiling water and a bowl of ice water. Next I get my freezing containers ready for packing. Thin vegetables like snow peas need only a swift blanching (ten seconds) in the boiling water. Other vegetables need slightly longer (about thirty seconds). Green vegetables will turn bright green when ready. As soon as possible, remove the vegetables from the boiling water, plunge them into the ice water and then pack in containers. Keep adding ice to the cold water as it heats up. Place the filled containers in the freezer as soon as they are ready. To speed the freezing process, don't stack newly filled containers together in the freezer. Spread them out on shelves or cookie sheets until they are solidly frozen. Vegetables treated this way will still be crisp enough to stir-fry or steam when you go to eat them. They are far more like "real" vegetables than traditionally canned or frozen ones.

I have also discovered that tomatoes for cooking freeze really successfully. I never can them anymore. Just blanch them in boiling water, plunge them in cold water, pull off the skin if you want, and seal in plastic bags. They make wonderful perfect red balls in the freezer. Instead of freezing tomatoes whole, I sometimes cook up large pots of fresh tomato sauce (spices included) and then freeze that.

Freezing books will also tell you to cook fruit in sugar syrup and then freeze it. Instead, I simply place the fruit in the freezer on cookie sheets and then pack it in plastic bags when it has frozen solid. This method uses no sugar and freezes each piece quickly and individually, for the best texture and flavor. You can also remove as much as you need from a package and then reseal it, since each piece is separate. To prepare fruit for freezing you just wash it and cut out any bruises or rotten spots. Berries can be frozen whole. Larger fruits should be cut into pieces and pitted or skinned if you wish. Spread the fruit in a thin layer on the cookie sheet, preferably



with no piece touching any other. When the fruit is frozen (about six hours), place it in tightly sealed plastic bags. It will get frost bitten if left uncovered too long, losing flavor and texture.

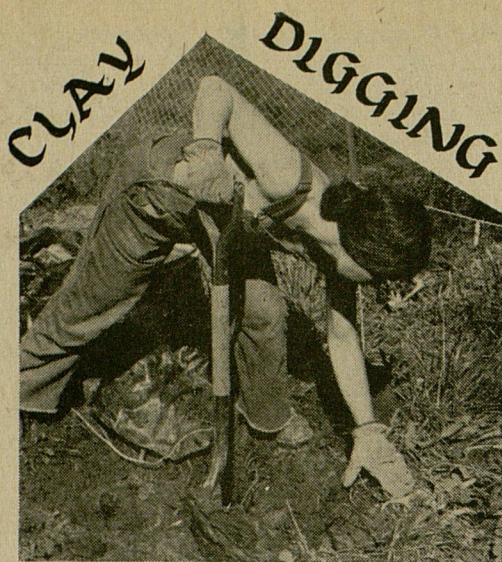
Always keep your freezer temperature at below 0° F. Use a freezer thermometer to determine temperature as the built in gauge is often inaccurate. Keeping foods longer than a year in a freezer isn't good - vegetables get icy, bread gets soggy and meat gets tough.

I discovered that keeping the freezer full cuts down on its running costs, especially in a chest freezer, as the food holds the cold in when the lid is opened. So share freezer space with your friends and it will save you money. Chest types are less expensive to run than uprights which lose all their cold when the door is opened.

The best book on freezing is Home Freezing of Fruits and Vegetables (Home and Garden Bulletin #10, Supt. of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 20¢). It has a lot of good useful information and also a lot of advice you can decide not to follow.

Though I certainly would never want to spend my life in the kitchen, like a good farmer's wife, I get a lot of pleasure from canning and freezing, the results of my labor. It provides me with food all winter, delicacies I could never afford to buy, and gifts for city-bound friends: good use of summer surpluses.

Living in the country has taught me not to waste what is so abundantly given and canning and freezing are among my valued skills. ♀



The first local Catskill clay I used came out of the side bank of a mountain stream. In the wet state it was dark red-brown, extremely viscous, and one of the cleanest clays I've seen come from a surface deposit (no pebbly junk, grits, etc.). It came away from the earth in thick spongy bands. Organic matter was scrunched and pressed into it and contributed to its peculiar gummy, elastic feel. It was totally unlike any of the pond-side muds I'd played around with in my childhood. I let it settle, drained some of the excess water off on a plaster bat, and then used it straight, just wedged up with a sprinkling of grog (less than 2%). I assumed, on the word of the available written authorities, that it was a low-fire earthenware clay—that it would mature somewhere between 1500°F and 1800°F.

I rolled out sample slabs and cut out a few test tiles, dried them and put them on top of flat tiles of my regular stoneware clay body. I fired them in my next bisque firing, to cone 06 (about 1800°F). When I unloaded the kiln, I found the test tiles of the stream clay were pale pink, not much different from the color of my regular stoneware clay body in the bisque state. This was not in line with my expectations. The stream clay tiles should have been a deep orange color, approximately the color of old Mexican or Portuguese country pottery.

On a hunch, I decided to fire the stream clay tiles in my next regular glaze firing, up to cone 6, about 2250°F. Just in case my hunch was wrong, I placed them on top of a control tile of my regular clay. Should the mystery stuff turn out to be a low-fire clay after all, and go to ruin over 2,000°F., I could have wound up with a mass of glass on the kiln shelves. That was not the result at all. What came out after the test firing at glaze temperature was the most beautiful cone 6 oxidation fired clay I had ever seen. The clay was tight, very mature, impervious, had a beautiful ring when struck, and the most extraordinary deep red color I had yet encountered in an oxidation fired clay.

I had had about fifteen pounds, wet weight

of clay from the original dig. Successive batches came from the opposite bank, stream bottom, and sites downstream. These also fired to cone 6 without deformation and only about 11% total shrinkage but with different ultimate colors, related but qualitatively less pleasing than the first. I tested my regular studio glazes over the stream clay and was amazed to meet no fit problems, no crazing, shivering or other defects. The different digs produced differing end colors in the fired clay, but all the batches had similar working and physical properties.

That was six years ago. There's lots of accessible surface clay in my region, and it isn't all "common", low-fire clay as I had been taught to believe. You don't know what you have located until you subject it to the tests of fire and experience. Of course, you can send it out for chemical analysis, if you care to spend money and it's a large clay deposit, but it's more fun and more direct to test it yourself. Dig sample batches, ten pounds will do, and run them through the standard workability tests suggested in beginning clay texts and through the firing procedures outlined above. Once you've hit a desirable clay that fires to a range your equipment can handle, you can bring home larger quantities.

The earth reveals her workable clays, Streams, ponds, and the shores of other bodies of water are her sites. You may find it helpful to check with your local Federal Soil and Conservation office for geological information relevant to workable clays in your locality. Sites of defunct potteries and brickyards were usually located near the clay source. There are many farmers and older people in your area who know where there's clay; they've been meeting up with it for forty or fifty years when tilling and planting. Well sites and construction clearances provide accessible sources. You have to get there and dig before the project is completed, before cheap topsoil and astroturf are brought in to hide the scars. Folks are very kind about giving permission to dig and haul clay; I think they like to see it going to some use.

The best tools for digging and explorations are a wrecking bar, a pick axe, and pointed shovel. Plastic containers are the most convenient receptacles, because they don't add weight to the heavy stuff you're carrying, are usually seamless and can be obtained at no cost. The five gallon plastic buckets that are current packaging for joint compound and institutional food are durable and appropriately sized, and very available for recycling. Don't let clay you dig sit outside unremembered in its plastic container. If the weather goes below freezing to any serious degree, the containers will crack under the strain of ice expansion (there's lots of water in clay), and lose their serviceability. You can however, greatly improve the plasticity properties of the clays you dig by subjecting them to freezing, weathering, and ageing. Wrap the mass up in a flexible skin, an old feed bag or recycled sheet of plastic and bury it all for the winter, or store it in an unheated place.

To utilize womanpower efficiently when

digging, it's important to have foresight regarding the physical hauling of the clay. When planning a dig of 100 to 300 pounds, wet weight, round up many medium sized (no larger than five gallon) containers, hand truck, dollies or wheelbarrow. Terrain sometimes mitigates against hand trucks and dollies, or against bringing vehicles in close to the dig. The most flexible hauling aid may turn out to be two 24" lengths of 2" diameter hardwood doweling that you can employ as rollers under your receptacles. Sometimes a bucket chain may be the way you have to move the clay from the site to a vehicle; so keep the batches small. Forty to fifty pound units are about my maximum. If you're aiming at an amount over 300 pounds, try to plan it so that you don't have to dig and carry all in the same day. Weather sometimes does make decisions for you. Potters' hauling yoga includes several sun salutations, a few cobras, a bow, and a few forward bends. After silicosis, bad backs are potters' major occupational hazard. Conserve. If you're not planning to make your sole cash income from production potting, a supply of 300-500 pounds, cleaned, reconstituted wet weight, is a good year's supply to learn on, to discover yourself and the gifts of the earth.

A uniform and cleaned clay can be achieved with some additional labor input. Dig your clay and then dry it, spread it out thin on plaster or on unfinished wood (in the sun, if it's about). When you have collected a batch of from fifty to one hundred pounds of dried clay, break the stuff up pretty small with a good sized mallet. Mix the dry, pre-tested clays from several digs, but from one site, and then push it all through a crude mesh sieve, such as a heavy duty restaurant kitchen sieve; this moves slowly, bit by bit. It's a tedious business. The sieved, now relatively homogeneous dry mix is then sifted into a large can ten gallon + size, that has four to five gallons of water in it. The mixed and sieved clay will reabsorb water and settle to the bottom. In a few days, siphon the excess water from the top and then lay the reconstituted clay out on plaster or another absorbant surface. Keep a close watch on this last stage. Many of these reconstituted, dug clays seem to dry quickly; and you don't want the clay to go beyond the moist, plastic state that is perfect for wedging. My test is to stroke the surface. If no gumminess clings to my fingers, I attempt to roll the mass up from the plaster. If it comes away and rolls up easy, I wedge it right off. If it resists starting to roll up, it needs a bit more drying time.

This pre-drying, mixing, sieving, and reconstituting takes time and alot of labor, but it does result in a homogeneous large batch, even though the clay originated from diverse digs around a specific find. There have always been small differences, mainly in fired color rather than workability, among the batches I've brought in from a site. These differences do indicate variability in chemical composition in the dug clay. And here you come to the

main reason for authorities to steer would-be diggers away from surface clay experiments. You'll probably meet up with a goodly amount of variation, sometimes within a radius of only a few feet. The process outlined above yields a relatively uniform and clean clay. In recent times this kind of hauling and preparation labor has been deemed expendable, inefficient, uncreative. If you get off on working to grow your own food, you'll probably like locating and preparing your own clay; especially if you're not thinking in terms of large scale production and a professional income. Digging it yourself also brings you closer to the clay because you get to trust your own experiences with a particular clay rather than turning to generalized written formulations.

Glossary*

Bisque: Once-fired, unglazed ware; low-fired, unglazed clay that doesn't hold water. Bisque firing refers to the preliminary first firing to a low temperature, aimed at driving off chemically combined water.

Cone: Visible devices used to measure and indicate the heat inside of a kiln chamber, made up of clays and glaze material blended to change shape or bend on a standardized scale, as specific temperatures are reached inside a kiln.

Earthenware: Most of the usable clay found in nature might be called earthenware or common clay. It contains iron and other mineral impurities in sufficient quantities to become hard-fired at about 950 to 1100°. In the raw it is red, brown, greenish or grey.

Glaze: A glassy coating melted in place on a ceramic body, rendering it smooth, non-porous and of a desired color or texture.

Grog: Pre-fired high temperature clay product that is pulverized and made available in a great variety of particle sizes from very fine to extra coarse. It is mixed into clay to reduce shrinkage, to open up the body for the outward bound hot gases during firings, to add strength and to change texture.

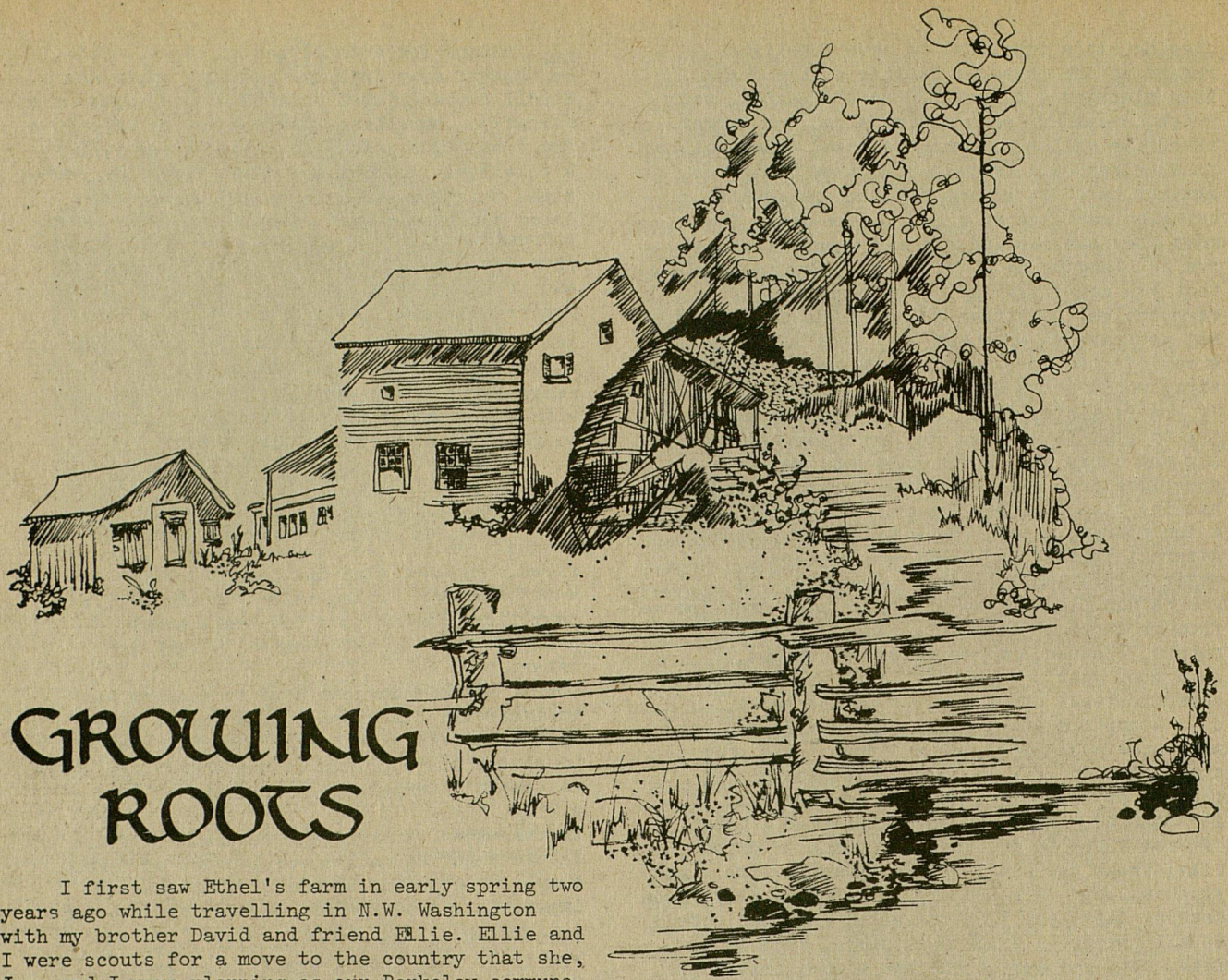
Low-fire: Any clay reaching maturity below 2000°.

Mature: Hardness, density and non-porosity add up to maturity in a clay body. Every clay has its own or appropriate maturation point.

Oxidation: A chemical interaction characterized by combining of oxygen with another element. A type of firing utilized by potters to heat their ware to achieve a certain glaze finish quality.

Stoneware: A high temperature clay ware which is dense, hard, non-porous, durable usually reaching maturity at above 2300°.

*Some of the above glossary can be found in a book by the author, Potworks, A First Book of Clay available from William Morrow & Co., Wilmor Warehouse, 6 Henderson Drive, West Caldwell, NJ \$2.45 postpaid. ♪



GROWING ROOTS

I first saw Ethel's farm in early spring two years ago while travelling in N.W. Washington with my brother David and friend Ellie. Ellie and I were scouts for a move to the country that she, June and I were planning as our Berkeley commune (nine of us sharing two flats, one dog, and our changing lives for nearly 2 years) began - with pain and excitement - to split apart.

Three miles down to the end of the winding road. We were at Ethel's and made welcome. I think the local merchant sent us there partly because Ethel was seen by some as a local "woman tripper" and that label seemed to fit us o.k. too. She asked of our visions and shared some of hers. She said, "I'm a farmer. Other things people are doing are groovy, but this is a farm." There was a strong focus on work and a lot of work to do. Various others had lived there, forming groups, helping farm the land. Wonderful beautiful land. An 80 acre general farm, a little of everything going on, with pleasure in the idea of growing people-food (vegetables, maybe grain someday) organically; and working to become financially independent in the process. It was the second season on the farm and the first big food crop was going in . . . two acres of carrots.

A year later, after gradually easing from our city heads to country bodies, June and I moved onto the farm. The farm group varied with time. Three women and three men were the most consistent members. We comprised one of the 5 local organically oriented farms that related as a loose equipment and work sharing group and also provided a lot of friendships and social contacts.

Planning the season

In March we started forming plans for the summer crops and garden. Carrots were viewed as a main cash crop. Why carrots?

They were grown the previous year with some success (4 people harvesting about 1/4 acre of 2 acres planted), providing a lot of experiences to learn from and some useful contacts (markets and information).

We all like carrots as a food (and loved carrot juice). They usually grow well with relatively few pests and diseases, and being a root crop, have more flexibility in harvesting and storage than other more perishable foods.

We decided to grow mainly carrots for juice since that market (health food and alternative food stores) often wanted organically grown produce and were more tolerant than many others towards carrots with strange shapes or splits, and they especially liked big carrots (to our advantage when sold by weight).

We started seeking new markets and to our delight, by mid-May, had formed a verbal agreement to sell all the carrots we had available to an alternative juice maker-wholesaler in Seattle. They wanted us to provide a regular supply over several months. We started checking into various storage ideas.

How much to plant

We decided to plant 3 acres of carrots in three or more successive plantings with the first going in as early as possible. It seemed like a lot even then, as we listened to the long spring rains coming down and had expansive fantasies of how much we could do in the long sunny days to come. (We estimated a possible \$10,000 income from a 3 acre crop.) We were counting on low-cultivation (not trying to get every weed) and lots of tractor work to keep up with the carrots. We sent away for seed - ordered various strains and in general avoided hybrids - found most seedhouses already out of bulk carrot seed (mid-April), felt lucky to finally find some (red-cored chantenay, danver half-longs).

Certification

Whether to certify as an organic grower under the Northwest Organic Food Producers (NOFP) program was much discussed. NOFP was the only visible group that sought to represent and regulate organic growers in the N.W. We wanted the organization to be more focused on solving farming problems. We eventually decided to participate; some markets, including our juice co. contact, wanted certified produce. We paid \$25 dues and \$125 for lab testing of soil and plant tissue for the presence of chemicals. Our tests showed traces (within NOFP specified tolerances) of various chemicals. We speculated their sources to be: residue from past farming, irrigation water, wind drift, and chicken shit from a commercial egg farm used heavily as fertilizer.

Preparing to plant

The long rainy spring kept us from planting our first carrots until late May. Our choice of fields was part of an evolving plan to restore and enrich the soil. We used crop rotation, green manuring (plowing crop back under), summer fallowing (keeping ground bare, exposed to kill weeds) and spreading chicken shit - aged 3-12 months, at the rate of 6 tons to the acre. We planted in the bottom land by the river for the irrigation access and sandy loam soil that carrots like.

Steps we took preparing the field: (all tractor work)

Plowed to break sod in the spring, though we questioned how deep and whether to plow. Traditional plowing turns topsoil and humus building sod too far under to benefit a crop, and the plow sole (first surface formed by cutting action) encourages hard pan - a thin impervious layer in the soil that prevents the movement of water, nutrients, or plant roots deep into the sub soil.

Cultivated several times over the field with curved shovels to lift and expose roots of our most feared weed infestation, quack grass - with its spreading bamboo-like root shoots that can penetrate carrots and other tubers. Our efforts were successful - despite poor prognoses offered by others - quack grass damage was negligible.

Disc-harrowed to break up clods and dragged the field to make a smooth firm seed bed.

Planting

We planted by hand-pushed planters into

double rows 400' long, about 30" apart. Powerful work; sharing in the earth's regenerative, mothering force.

Our rows weren't very straight. Their swoops and shimmies brought us problems to struggle with all summer. Combining hand and machine work in a single field frustrated planting, weeding and harvesting efforts. Big machinery can't adjust with enough speed or delicacy to allow for the variation in hard work.

Cultivation

A lot of time was spent behind the tractor adjusting weeding knives and shovels. We wanted to go between the rows close enough to the carrots (ideally 1-2") to be an adequate weeding technique and avoid cutting into carrots when the rows varied. As the weeds grew large, their sheer bulk clogged the cultivating knives and tangled and pulled at carrot tops.

Early July, after weeks of depressing, uninterrupted rain, chest colds stalked most all of us and weeds in the plantings were growing at a frightening rate. Low cultivation with the tractors wasn't going to do the job. I felt waves of panic and immobilized energies on the farm. The task of weeding seemed overwhelming. Only one of us had been weeding regularly.

We started talking about it. We questioned:

-How carefully to weed ("clean" or "rough")

-Whether to first weed when carrots are very young (1-2") and expect to need two more weeding, or wait until they're older (6-10") and expect to weed once more (the approach we had planned for the first and second planting).

-Are weeds sometimes a good "nurse" crop.

Do they provide protection for young plants.

-Whether and when to thin. Our goal had been to plant thinly (1 seed/inch) and avoid the need. We mixed sand with seed in the planter but the densities didn't mix. Thin, even planting is difficult without pelletized seed or machines that precision plant.

-Whether to mulch with weeds and face problems of wet weather allowing weeds to re-root, and mulch clogging tractor cultivation.

-When, how often to cultivate considering the resulting loss of soil moisture.

Carrots, commitments and money

We tried to estimate, project and plan more consciously how the carrot crop was fitting into our lives. Our first concern was financial. We had enough money on hand to cover farm and household expenses (then running about \$600 and \$500/month respectively and cut to about 2/3 that amount as money ran low) thru the summer. After figuring other income we'd be having that season (from hay, pigs, milk and eggs) we decided we wanted to make \$4,000 on the carrots and, guessing at lots of other factors, translated that into weeding, harvesting, and selling 2 acres (30 rows) of carrots.

We figured we had 2 weeks before the first and second plantings (about 1 acre each) became overrun with weeds. At our fastest rate, (1/2 row a day per person, 8 hours of weeding "roughly" with tractor cultivation taking out about 10-15" of center weeds and loosening some others, we couldn't get to them all. A painful time:

Con't

anxious about finances, feeling out of touch with my energies and out of balance with nature to have planted more than we could care for.

We talked about the energy we each had or wanted each other to have for the carrots. Hard to share the expectations we were carrying. Our desired degrees of commitment ranged from wanting to weed from 2 to 8 hours each day. We said we'd try 4 to 6. Weeding energy was high for about a week. Our work rate was slower than expected, and soon personal needs and a stream of other projects pulled some of us away from the carrots. Some of us turned our energies to the later (third and fourth) plantings, wanting to thin and clean weed these carrots while still young to experience and compare the efficiency of this approach.

Lots of good memories - weeding the carrots. I learned about my body and its pains, finding work rhythms, long slow hours. Learned a lot about each other - working out working together.

August. Some of the carrots were looking/tasting beautiful; others weren't doing so well. Differences between plantings seemed pretty understandable, but the great variation showing throughout the field puzzled us.

All the carrots were wanting a drink.

Irrigation

We hoped for rain and worked on a system for irrigation: 1000' of 3 and 4" pipe and 20 rainbirds borrowed from a neighbor. We'd bought a PTO irrigation pump (powered off the tractor) for \$250 at a spring auction. It was a good pump, but needed a lot of work.

Sharing Work

In our group, one man took primary (but often shared) responsibility for mechanics (pretty much a full time job). We questioned how specialized we wanted our work focuses to be. Daily chores (food preparation, clean-up, wood chopping, animal care, gardening) rotated weekly. Specific important projects, like hay or planting, we did as a group. But generally, we each worked in the areas that felt most important and rewarding. I felt a shared (usually unspoken) desire to respect individual choices toward work. A goal sometimes in conflict with the high

level of expectations for group work. Specialized skills encouraged group dependency on one member. This was especially heavy around mechanics since most of our farming projects were dependent on the equipment functioning. Expectations and time pressures were put on our main mechanic and the power surrounding this important role made for times of uneasiness among us.

Getting the irrigation pump ready was one of those times. Finally the system was together. Hooked up. Turned on. The rainbirds flew...arched spouts turning, hissing, filled with rainbows of sunshine.

We irrigated the field twice, half at a time, soaking the ground to 6-8" each time.

Using machinery

My sense of responsibility toward the land grew with the carrots. I wanted to respect her own form; to consciously restore fertility lost by past abuse and to make new changes carefully.

It's a puzzle how to farm consciously and make enough money to meet needs. Determining size of operation and (correspondingly) machine use are parts in the puzzle. Farming with machinery means accepting responsibility for continuing maintenance, repair and financial needs. We often found it complicated to determine whether a particular piece of equipment would justify both the financial and human investment it required. We questioned the effects of machine use on the land and on people. Heavy machines pack down the soil. Their operation pollutes the atmosphere with noise and exhausts. On the other side, joining with and directing the tractors' power gave me a rush and knowing the power could help grow more food felt good.

We enthusiastically considered rototilling for between row cultivation as an alternative to using the tractor. In late July we borrowed a Troybilt-6hp tiller and went into the later plantings where hand weeding within and near rows had been done at an early stage. Weeds in the 2' center strip were maybe 14" and proved already too high and dense for the tiller. I was surprised and disappointed, but came away feeling that done earlier, and perhaps with a different machine (more hp?; heard good things about the Ariens), rototilling could work out really well on a few acres of row crops. Turning weeds under as it goes, the tiller simultaneously enriches the soil and gets weeds off the field.

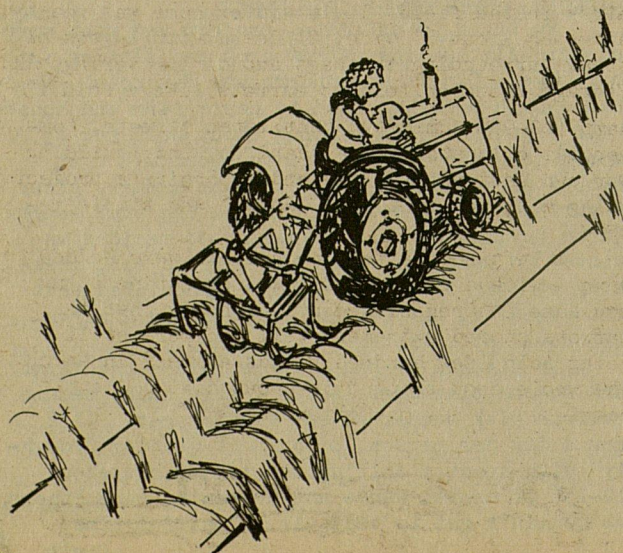
Marketing

All summer we planned to be selling our carrots to the Seattle Juice Co. In August we heard that the company collective had split apart and folded the business. A reminder of how unstable and undependable the new structures we find for getting food to each other can be.

In our need, the range of places we approached as markets grew:

Alternative food stores in Seattle - often showed interest in our being local and organic, but too much confusion and not enough volume to be a good market. The organic distributor in Seattle had another local source.

Local food co-op - friends; and a small outlet. In mid-summer we joined energies to set up and operate a farmers' market (produce stand) in town. Too big a project for available energies. Still seems like a good idea.





Large natural food distributor in Vancouver - too many hassles around selling in Canada. USDA grading; inspection and shipping costs.

"Straight" health food stores selling fresh carrot juice - a few became our best customers: regular orders; paid a little more for the carrots.

U-picks - advertised locally for people to come dig their own carrots for 10¢/lb. (stores paid us 13¢ for clean, bagged carrots). A good system: the labor savings for us felt well worth the price break and the personal contact was satisfying.

Local supermarkets, groceries - sold a few ...but most buyers wanted only the long skinny carrots, currently in fashion. Ours were short and tapered.

Canneries - they were paying 1 1/2¢/lb.

Large West Coast natural food distributor - offering to contract for whole crops to be flown and sold on the East coast. Didn't like the idea.

We learned some things in our looking:

The closer to home the better.

-We paid 1¢/lb. to ship carrots 80 miles on an alternative trucking company run.

-Commercial shipping is higher.

-We liked the idea of local people eating the carrots - extending our connections with each other.

-Locally grown food, being the most successfully adapted to our area, would perhaps have the most useful qualities to share with us.

But problems came up between growers and community people involved with distributing, trucking, buying and selling produce. I felt a lack of understanding and appreciation of each others'

needs and lifestyle commitments.

Harvesting

We harvested the carrots from late August to November, usually pulling two times a week to fill specific orders. It felt best (even fun) when we had a big (6 or more) harvesting crew.

Two discs were fitted onto the cultivator - slanted to cut next to the rows and loosen the soil for hand pulling the carrots. Anxious work - inching the tractor down uneven rows, with someone walking behind, calling out when the discs cut into carrots. Some places in the field we used hand shovels instead of or in addition to the discs. In others the carrots came out without loosening the ground at all.

Sometimes we pulled selectively - trying to take only the biggest carrots. Usually we went down a row pulling everything - hauling three buckets for sorting into "juicers" (big), "market" (middle size, even form), and "culls" (under 4-6", split, 'strange' looking). Our overall ratio of grades was probably 2:2:1 respectively.

Full buckets were dumped into barrels on the truck or trailer moving with us down the field.

Washing

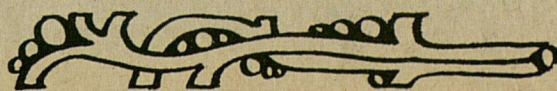
A fine carrot washer was devised by one of us and fashioned after one he had seen. The PTO irrigation pump gave us plenty of water under pressure (80 P.S.I.). Late in the harvest, not wanting to remain dependent on the tractor for power or locating by the river for water, the washer was run with our household gravity flow water from the creek. With the much lower pressure (30 P.S.I.) we soaked the carrots first to loosen dirt. Clean carrots were weighed into 50# bags, our basic selling unit.

By November, it was time to harvest the 3/4 acre of carrots remaining in the field. This gave us a total harvest of 1 1/2 acre (about 6 tons); the rest were lost to weeds. Most of us were leaving the farm soon - winter rains would close the fields to machinery - the carrots would rot if allowed to freeze in the ground.

Storage

Carrots for storage were sorted and bagged dirty in the field. Their winter home was nearby. A trench about 6' wide, 2' deep, with layers of straw surrounding the bags and dirt covering all. Storage research told us carrots like a cold (35°) damp (80-90% humidity) ventilated climate. Commercial cold storage was hard to find; building our own unit was too big and expensive a project. Using a trench felt good. An old and simple method.

I left soon after the carrots were bedded down - with a few bags for winter eating at my new home in Oregon. Recently I heard that the carrots stored extremely well and were still being sold (few hundred pounds a week) in March. The whole crop brought in about \$1400. A cycle completed. A new one beginning. ♪

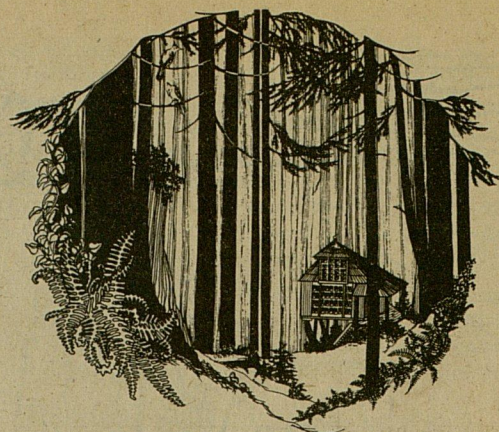
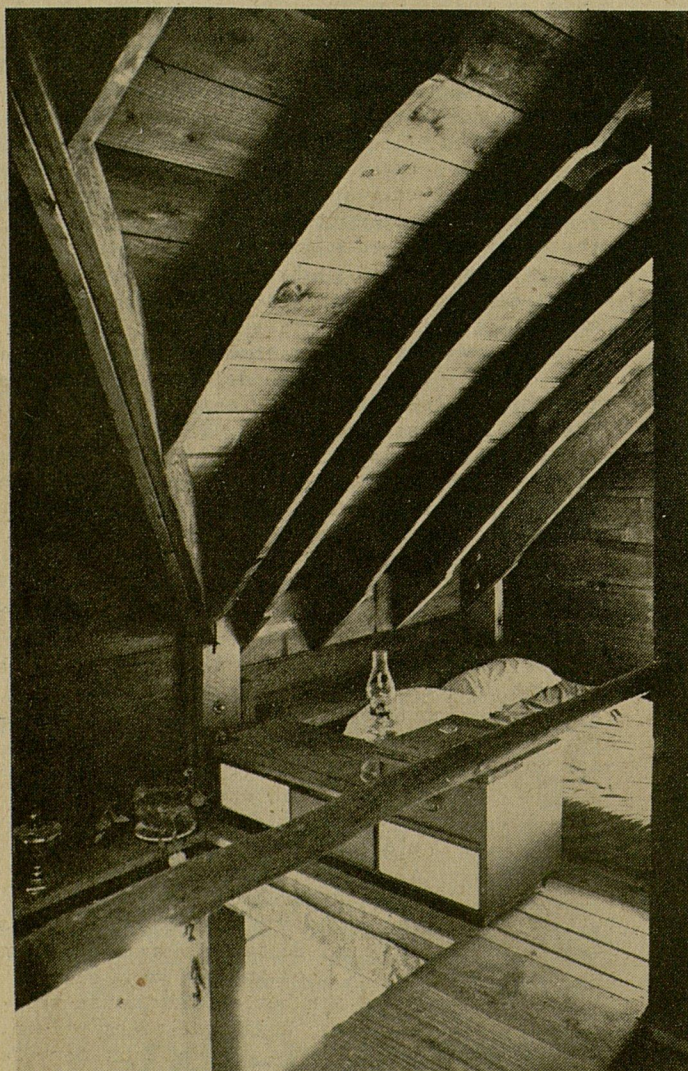


Dwelling On Making Your Own

by River

Illustrated by Leona Walden
Photographs by Sally Bailey

Available from: Freestone Publishing Company
Box 357
Albion, Ca. 95410
paperback, \$5.00



I think Dwelling is a good book. It's a hard book to review. There is a multi-level movement of energy through it. The book is about people building their own houses. It's about the houses, in photographs, drawings, and poems. In interviews with the people who live in them, it's about the relationships between the earth, the houses and the people. It is also about the building code laws restricting these relationships. And it is about the author and her quest for her own space and her own work. To date she has written this book, she has yet to build her own house. "I choose to share what I am learning about dwelling because I am fascinated by our ability to create and be created by our environment." River's fascination and a good deal of hard work have enabled her to share an exploration into her own headspace, into the woods, into friends' houses and their internal journeys, into community politics, and into planetary consciousnesses. Centering on how people would, are, and have chosen to live and on how they have gone about making their choices reality, for the woods or farm dweller the book is supportive and beautiful. For the curious, it is informative, philosophically and technically. For everyone it is inspirational, being about working from one's center, and being a job that itself was done with honesty, humility, and sensitivity. There are houses included built by children, women and men. There are chapters on minimal shelter and on symbolic space. It is necessarily about a "life style", something which I usually find limited and thus distorted. In the case of this book, the truth of the effort to share comes through, questions which span cultures and times expand, humanize, and give a sense of proportion to the subject. River says that the feedback which has pleased her the most came from a friend who said that Dwelling had (at last) given her mother understanding and appreciation of her (the daughter's) way of life. There is in Dwelling a combination of the particular and the universal which parallels that quality in the houses. As one builder says, "You can't do it any other way than one nail at a time." The book reads, looks, and feels as organic as the houses in it. ♀

How Green My Garden Grows

Now, as you're sitting in that luscious strawberry patch enjoying yourself, with that big energy output of spring planting behind you, you might begin wondering why your vegetables are looking accusingly at you again. It might be a good idea to go get a pencil and piece of paper and go over your entire garden, seeing what each patch, row, or plant might need.

Major summer garden care includes watering, mulching, cultivating and harvesting. Remember, watering guides (see CW issue #7) are not specifically geared for your soil and weather. The only way to know your plants watering needs is to go out on a hot day at 10:00 AM, at 2:00 PM, and again at 4:00 PM and notice what is wilting.

There are two sorts of wilting. One kind occurs when the plants wilt in the heat of the day and then perk up at night. The other is permanent wilt, when the photosynthetic ability of the plant is permanently injured. If your plants get permanent wilt they will die or at best produce terribly. Temporary wilt isn't fatal but it can reduce yields since it slows the plants down. Sometimes it seems unavoidable; e.g., no matter how much water we give our squash, it wilts temporarily in the heat of the day.

In any case, definitely give such plants more water. However, do make sure your soil is not continually flooded because too much water can prevent air from getting to the root hairs. Air is vital for the root hairs osmosis activity and plants will drown if they stand in water more than a day or two.

If water doesn't help the wilt, try shading your plants. Plants are more affected by temperature than humidity and shades reduce heat significantly depending, of course, on the type of shade you use. We use a combination of shades made of pole frames with branches laid over them and tobacco field netting, which is woven cloth considerably thicker than cheesecloth. The latter we originally used and found too flimsy. Use shades that can breathe, not plastic. Shades work well for farms that have limited water supplies and for plants that just don't like it too hot. Strawberries, for instance, will slow down their flowering and berry production if it gets too hot.

The best time to water your garden is early morning, so moisture can be available during the sunny part of the day. Evening is also a fine time for watering but keep an eye out for mildew. Your plants are most active in early morning and it is an exciting time to be among them. Try walking, sitting, or working in your garden one day at 7 AM, one day at 2 PM, and one day at 6 PM and feel the differences.

If individual plants look droopy, try giving them drinks of manure tea or fish emulsion. Manure tea is made by putting a layer of the fresh-

est manure you can find in the bottom of a bucket and filling it with water and letting it steep for two days. Fish emulsion is a commercial fertilizer that is diluted several tablespoons to the gallon with water.

Summer is definitely the season for mulching so look to see if your garden is mulched well. Mulch is a layer of organic material placed on top of your soil, which slowly adds humus to it while decomposing. In addition mulch performs admirably its duties of weed control, moisture conservation and soil protection. Common mulch materials include uprooted weeds, barn cleanings, grass clippings, leaves, leaf mold, compost, straw, sawdust, woodchips, seaweed, bark, etc. One of the best methods of killing weeds is to lay newspaper sheets down and then put weeds or straw on top of them. You want your mulch heavy enough not to blow away and yet loose enough when wet to allow air circulation to the surface soil.

The only danger with mulching is the possibility of robbing the soil of nitrogen in its effort to break down the mulch. You can check for nitrogen deficiency by noticing if plant leaves become paler green or yellow after the garden is mulched. This problem can be avoided by sprinkling some cottonseed meal, bloodmeal, or other nitrogen-rich material around the plants under the mulch layers. Also preparing the garden properly with plenty of manure and/or cover cropping should insure enough nitrogen. If you use a very acid mulch like oak leaves you might want to sprinkle some dolomite lime through it. Check to see if your mulch is thick enough. Is the soil moist underneath? Depth of mulch varies with material used. For straw or leaves I like to see about eight inches but for woodchips or sawdust usually two to four inches is plenty. Don't use mulches with a lot of nitrogen in them on your root crops for they will stimulate the greens instead of the root portions. If you keep piling that mulch on through the summer, you should have virtually no weeds.

If for some reason you don't or can't mulch you must do weekly cultivating with a hoe or rake to prevent the soil from packing and cracking. Otherwise the sun will bake the soil and your water will run off rather than soak in.

O.K., now the garden looks beautifully moist and mulched and we can turn our attention to specific vegetables, and see what state they are in.

Beans A true summer crop. You could be both harvesting and planting at this time. First look at your beans and see if they have that common mosaic bean rust: thousands of tiny black spores on the leaves that eventually cause the leaves to drop off even though the beans remain. If they do, pick the leaves off and bury them far away from your garden, since the rust is spread



on the wind. Put your beans on three year rotation and don't walk among them when they are wet. This can spread the fungus too. Pick your beans before they show thru their pods or are four inches long. If you pick early and steadily, the same vines produce crop after crop. If you want beans for baking or seed, leave them on the vine until they get big or even until the vines die. If planting (and you are probably safe to plant up until mid July) make sure you get the poles in first for the climbing varieties. High nitrogen content of soil is not desirable for beans since it will promote foliage rather than bean growth. Beans are a legume, therefore they add nitrogen to your soil.

Peas Your crop is probably drying up around now. Peas are a good crop to save your seed from for next year's planting. Leave the pods on your finest plant until the leaves turn color and begin to die. Pick the pods, shell the peas, and dry them further in a dark dry spot. Then store them in dry glass jars and check for mold.

Carrots You can bet they can probably use thinning. Thin when the soil is damp to two to three inches apart and after final thinning cover the shoulders with dirt to avoid exposure to the sun which turns them green. Harvest carrots when about one inch in diameter. When watering carrots, flood the soil since their feeder roots are deep. You can continue planting carrots thru August. Do not use much manure and especially fresh manure, because it makes carrots tough skinned and stimulates root branching. Also make sure you have a good eight inches of humus. If carrots hit a hardpan they will make elbows and grow sideways.

Cauliflower Need special soaking every day while heads are forming. When the flower head begins to break out of curling center leaves, before it is bigger than an egg, tie the large inner leaves loosely together over the flower. Watch it carefully and as soon as a solid head develops, cut it or it will deteriorate. Heads don't get larger past a certain point, just looser. Cut the stem well below the head if it

is to be used immediately. If planning to store it, pull the plant up by the roots. Cauliflower stores well about a month.

Corn Check for corn wilt at 10 AM and if it is wilting increase water. Corn needs most moisture right before, during, and after tasseling. It can withstand drought early in its cycle and as the ears are forming. Corn likes plenty of potash and can use side dressings of wood ash. Do not remove the side shoots or suckers for they provide extra food for the plants. Harvesting corn at the right moment is an art. Check it every day as it is maturing. In hot weather corn can pass its prime in a day or two. The test for ripeness is to stick your fingernail in the kernels and see if they exclude "milk" when dented. Cook ears within an hour of picking before the sugar turns to starch. After picking the ears off a plant, remove the stalk and give to animals or compost. Otherwise they become great insect homes. And, if you have trouble with earwigs or earworms, try putting a drop or two of mineral oil into the tips of the ears just when the silks are wilting.

Cucumbers These are very thirsty plants. Check how your vines are growing. Depending on your support system you might want to pinch the tops off to encourage side branching. To harvest cut the stems an inch from the fruit. If your cucumbers are bitter try more water or shade.

Eggplants Very heavy feeders and usually in July like more rotted manure put under their mulch or weekly drinks of manure water.

Summer Squash Harvest when fruit is eight inches long for tenderest eating. It is a good idea to pick them regularly to keep the vines producing.

Winter Squash Go over your plants weekly and pick off all the blossoms after the middle of June because these fruits won't have time to mature before the frosts. This means the plant can put more energy into the fruit already set. You can also cut off extra foliage, i.e. new vines that keep wanting to sprawl and blossom.

Tomatoes They call for weekly pruning and staking. If you do stake your tomatoes, (and I have found it disastrous not to do so because so much fruit rots, gets lost or stepped on), make sure you tie them up loose enough to let the stems breathe. Use soft cord or cloth strips to avoid cutting the stems. Pruning tomatoes is basically helping them follow the way you want them to grow. We usually train ours to one main stem climbing a seven foot tall stake, pinching off the suckers. You can train them to three main stems, each tied to a different stake, or trellis them.

Potatoes Check how thick the mulch you put on in early spring is now. Add another layer of straw or leaves.

Trusting that everything growing in your garden has been tuned into and taken care of, you can now think about more plants, more planting. July is the time for planting vegetables for fall and winter use. Hard to believe, in the heat of these days, that you should be thinking about putting more seeds in. Do plant your seeds deeper and a bit thicker than in the spring. It is a good idea to put boards over

your seed rows until they germinate, for seeds need to be continually moist until they sprout, and that summer sun too often zaps the sprinkled water away almost instantaneously. You will probably want to add a bit to your soil so check on those compost piles. Do they need turning? Are they moist enough so that when you squeeze a handful, it feels like a wrung out sponge? Think about making beds in your garden which are excellent for winter rain drainage. It is never too soon to be gathering manure, leaf mold and soil for them.

Now what to plant? Whatever you plant, check the variety of seed, e.g. you would want late cabbage and cauliflower. You still have time for a last planting of corn and beans if it is not already past the first week in July. But those would be your last summer plantings. Now for fall use, you can put in root crops of carrots, beets, turnips, and rutabagas, also around the end of July. The idea with fall cool season crops like late cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, turnips, and chinese cabbage is to have them mature or head during the cool fall weather. This takes tricky timing since they will bolt if they mature while it is still hot. Most of these crops can stay in the ground part or all of the winter especially if your garden is well mulched to prevent the ground from freezing hard. Hoe the dirt up around your root crops before winter mulching.

For winter greens, start kale, chard, collards, and parsley. Last winter parsley salads, particularly rich in vitamin A which fights infections, were our lifesavers. You might also try more lettuce but make sure it is always shaded, since the heat can turn it bitter very quickly.

Don't forget, summer is the time to enjoy your garden. Work slowly, join in the play of sun and water. Sitting here at the typewriter, in a headspace far from what I feel when working in the garden, I feel the dilemma of how to share garden facts, knowing most of it is individual experience. I want to communicate the excitement of this creative life nurturing work -- to make garden maintenance sound flowing and cyclical rather than mechanical. It is important to share our gardens, to share the way we feel working among plants, being in these islands of colors, smells, and fruits.

How can I communicate the glow I feel walking out of my garden, knowing I leave happy plants behind cozy in their soft mulch beds? It is difficult to share in words this work so many of us do: the muscles pushing wheelbarrow load after wheelbarrow load of compost and manure, the back bending again and again, the hands pulling weeds, the knees always dirty, the fingertips exploring leaf textures and temperatures, and the senses, oh so alive in these energy centers. Spend time in your garden, not only working, but playing music or eating or reading or breathing or sitting. Try closing your eyes and move around that way, slowly of course, feel your plants brush your legs, smell your way around. Pick a salad by feel and smell, enhance your memory. Work in your garden with friends. ♀



AUTO MECHANICS

There is more to basic car maintenance than just tune-ups, and in this article I'd like to cover some of the things you need to do regularly. Twice a year, spring and fall, are the best times to run through this list, but now's a good time to start.



One: Check coolant/antifreeze: Most antifreeze is made to last year-round nowadays. Down at the bottom of your radiator in the back (See Fig. 1) is a small stopcock for draining the water. Unscrew the stopcock a little bit and let a cup full of liquid out. Look at it and see if it's reasonably clear, and see if it has rust or junk in it. If not, pour it back in, top it off and forget it. If yes, you need to flush the radiator. This can be done

by draining off the liquid, leaving the stopcock open, and running water in the filler hole at the top for ten minutes or so. Be sure to do this where the run-off goes into some rocks or sterile ground. Plants are not fond of antifreeze. There is also a kit (\$5 or less) that lets you "backflush" the radiator. That means running the water in at the bottom and out the top. It flushes out a lot of gunk, but you can live without it.

Two: While you're under the hood, check your various belts. Older or simpler cars have one fan belt, but newer cars with power equipment, air conditioning, etc., have as many as six or seven belts. See if the belt looks worn cut or frayed. Push on the belt to see how tight it is. It should give a little, but not more than 1/2" or so. Too loose a belt does not go around the pulleys easily, flaps and wears itself out far too soon, and sometimes flies off. Too tight a belt makes the engine labor, slips the belt on the pulleys and sometimes snap at inconvenient times. If you have an air-cooled engine (i.e. a fan-cooled engine with no radiator; VW, etc.) always carry an extra fan belt. If your fan belt breaks, you are stuck.

If you drive without a fan, you will get maybe a mile before your engine gets so hot it seizes. That means that the moving parts get so hot they expand and cannot move. This does not change when the engine cools either. In water-cooled cars, you can limp into a filling station before the radiator starts to boil.

Find out how to change your fan belt, and adjust its tension. And, it's a good idea to keep a spare in your tool kit, especially with an air-cooled car.

Three: You should have the car lubricated, or do it yourself. Here it helps to have a friend with a rack so you can stand underneath the car to see more easily. You can, if you want to do this, get a grease gun for \$10 or so, crawl underneath the car and fire away. On each moving part of the body, there will be a

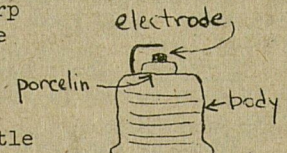
nipple or two. Fit the end of the grease-gun hose over the nipples and pump grease into the joint. Look in a manual so you know where the lube nipples are on your car. They're little-bitty details and are cleverly hidden.

Before lubricating your vehicle, you should take it to the nearest car wash and wash underneath the car thoroughly. Mud frequently covers up these nipples, making them impossible to find. Wash your engine as well, but first, get a plastic vegetable bag, put it over the distributor and tie the bag tightly. If water gets in there, the car won't start and you have to sit there feeling like a fool until it dries out. Soap the engine and rinse well. A clean engine radiates heat better, runs cooler, and lasts longer. If it's really any oily, greasy mess, get a can of "Gunk" engine cleaner. This is stuff you pour on the engine, let set, and then wash off. It works, and you'd be amazed at how good a clean engine looks. Most people have never seen one.

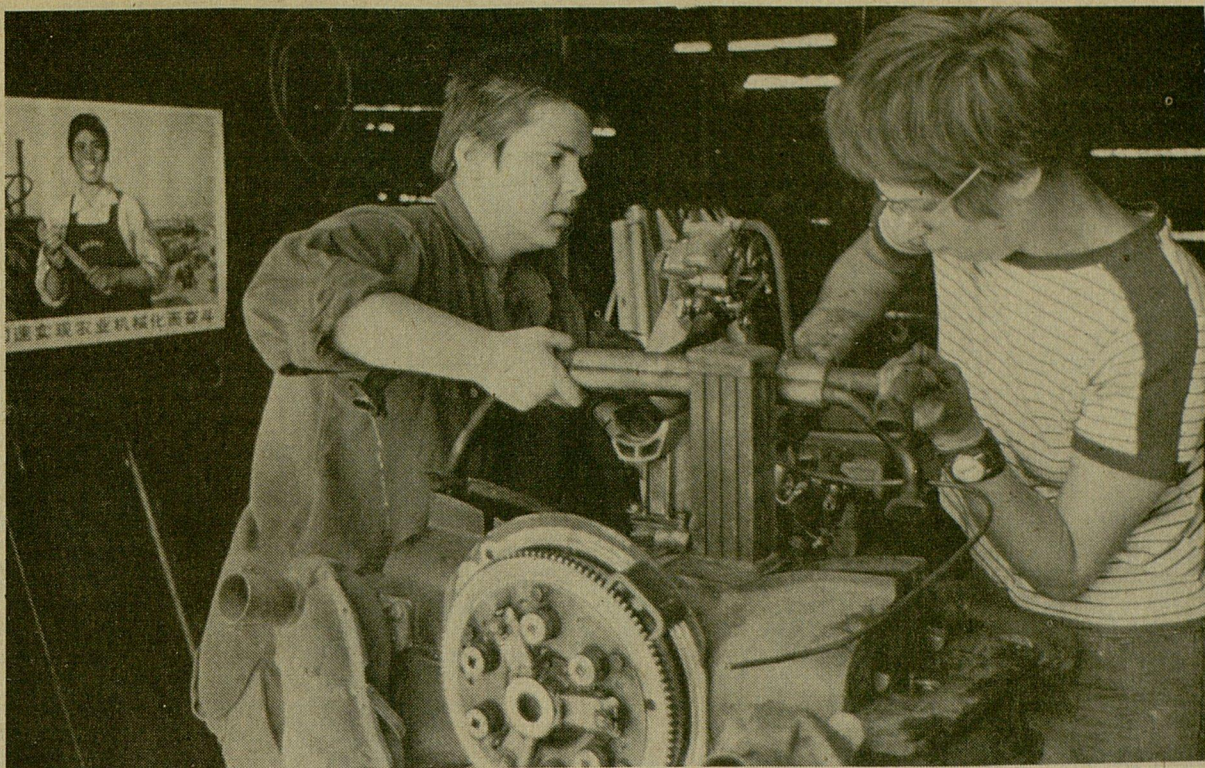
Four: Change the oil if it needs it and change the oil filter. Be sure to get the right filter. I was going to change the oil filter on my partner's car the other day and discovered that I'd sent her after the wrong filter. This was a disconcerting discovery to be made under the car.

Five: Take a good look at your air filter. If you have an oil bath air filter (much to be desired), empty the oil, clean out the sediment with gasoline or kerosene, and refill the filter with clean oil. If you have a paper air filter look at it. If it just looks dusty, blow it out with compressed air, and put it back in place. Get a new one if it still looks grubby; a dirty air filter loses gas mileage, and makes the car run poorly. The air filter is a big round thing above the carburetor and engine. It filters dust and dirt out of the air that the engine breathes. It keeps the carburetor clean and keeps dirt out of the innards. Look at it often in the summer when dust levels are high, especially if you drive on dirt roads.

Six: Although tune-ups usually need to be done more often than twice a year, this check over your car time is also a good time to check spark plugs, points, timing, etc. Find out what the gap in your spark-plug should be and check yours. Take a small, sharp knife and gently clean the deposit off the electrode and the porcelain. Don't crack the porcelain or the plug won't work. The little "I" shaped piece of metal is



what you bend to change the gap. You'll need a 13/16" socket to take the plug out. You can buy real cheapo spark plug wrenches that do work, but they are hard on your hands. If possible, use a socket that has a rubber pad in it to protect the plug from breaking. If the plug breaks off, you may have to take the head off the engine (a major job) to get it out. Fortunately,



this is rare.

The points are pretty easy to adjust, but I can't tell you how. There are literally dozens of different distributors and point set-ups, so back to the manual or mechanical friend. Adjusting the timing is more complicated and requires a timing light. You should borrow one from a friend with tools who can also show you how to use it.

Seven: Check your brake lines. There's a rubber tube that runs from the back of the wheel to the steel brake line that goes to the master cylinder. See if this is cracked or weatherbeaten. If it is, replace it. Water and dirt can get in there and play hell with your brake fluid.

Check your tires. It's time to take snow tires off and put street tread back on. One way to do it is to get two extra rims, put street tires on them and just change wheels. It's easier and you're more likely to do it.

Check your shock absorbers. We talked about them in a previous issue.

Have your wheel bearings repacked. They get water and gunk in them and need new grease about twice a year.

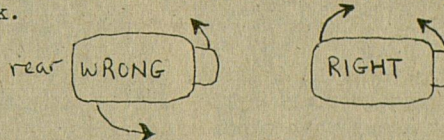
Also check the level of grease in your rear-end. There is a plug in your differential which comes out. Stick your finger in the hole. The grease (actually 90 weight oil) should just reach up to the level of the hole. Don't let anybody fill it up so far that the plug has to be crammed in. Too much oil will blow the seals on your rear axles. Check the inside of the tires. If there is oil or an oil stain on the tire, change the rear seal. Otherwise, the grease will drip out and your rear-end gears will get hot and chewed up.

Eight: This is a good time to go over the car and just look at it. Check the screws all over it - there are dozens of them. Check bolts

and nuts you pass by. There are always a few that need tightening. It doesn't hurt to take the covers off the lights, front and rear. The glass covers get dust and bugs inside them. Dirty covers can rob you of 20% of the light you need to keep you safe. It's a good time to clean out under the seats and get out all the dust and kids' toys and beer cans and books the library wants back, etc.

Have a lovely summer. I hope your happiness grows like a wild plum tree.

I made a BIG MISTAKE in the article on tires in issue #13. I said to turn into a skid. That was right; however, turn so that your front end goes like this. It's hard to explain, and I can't figure out how to tell you what I said wrong. Look at the picture and do it that way. It really does work.



Random Thoughts: I need to replace the engine in my '61 Ford 1/2 ton pickup. It's a four speed six - any suggestions will be gratefully accepted. I know how to do this in theory but haven't done it yet. When I asked for feedback once, I got four or five of the loveliest letters you ever saw. I was living in a half built dome with four children and a partner with a busted leg so I never answered them. One was from a woman who was sitting in front of the fire with her cats in her lap and it was rainy and cold and gray out. It was a graceful, lovely letter and I'm sorry I lost it. Write me again. The letters really gave me a boost that was badly needed. Thank you and love. New address: 228 Sacramento St., Nevada City, Ca. 95959. ♀



Spearhead strike to eyes with downward block

自信道

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Ja Shin Do is a martial art with primarily Korean origins. It was founded by two women, Jayne West and Dana Densmore, who had obtained black belts in the male martial art of Tae Kwon Do. Ja Shin Do takes the best and most serious of Asian traditions and cuts out the macho, glamor, and sports aspects that appeal to men but have little relevance to women's needs for powerful self-defense.

Ja Shin Do's theory of power is uniquely suited to women, as it maximizes the force of the whole body and spirit rather than relying on muscle strength alone. This power theory also facilitates extremely fast and disabling blocks and strikes.

The name Ja Shin Do (pronounced jah-sheen-do) is Korean, but it is taken from Chinese characters which give it a richness of meaning and connotation. Ja Shin Do may be translated most literally as the Way of Self Belief. It also means the Way of the Determined Spirit, the Path of the Fierce Will. In another interpretation of the characters, equally meaningful, it is the Art of the New Self. These meanings of our name describe both the transformation that occurs in the trained person and the process by which that transformation takes place.

Ja Shin Do developed from a "women's class" in a male school, to an independent women's school in the male martial art, to a revolutionary feminist martial art. In the traditional historical pattern, this new martial art reflects and expresses the individuality of its founders and the theory, style, and philosophy they worked out over the years in teaching women.

Self-defense is a day-to-day, life-and-death issue for women, not a diversion, amusement, or glamorous "manly art". For this reason Ja Shin Do approaches the teaching of self-defense with greatest seriousness and the style of teachings follows closely the techniques which have proved to be most effective.

The Ja Shin Do founders are opposed to quickie courses, self-defense tricks, and classes that condescend to women by giving them

"easy" things to do "in their spare time". We want every woman to study seriously and believe every woman can get a black belt. But the process is a long slow one that is really a transformation of the self - interpretation of the Ja Shin Do characters as "art of the new self" - and think in terms of six years for a black belt.

This philosophy differs from most male schools which try to rush people through toward black belt; a rank which sometimes indicates little more than an ability to do a certain number of sets of exhibition techniques (forms) in a flashy or graceful way, and/or to do a certain level of tournament sparring. Neither the dance skill of attractive forms nor the sports skill of tournament sparring necessarily have any relation to real self-defense. The reality of fighting gets lost behind the aesthetics and the sport - or is explicitly rejected by the teacher who sees sport competition as the proper use of the art. And why not - to most male instructors the need for self-defense (as opposed to the choice to get into a bar-room brawl) is far from his experience.

Ja Shin Do emphasizes an intense reality of the fighting application. No technique is practiced without thorough understanding of the type of blow, striking surface, and application.

Forms are simulated fighting - and the fighting meaning must be so real the imaginary opponents can almost be seen. Free-sparring is done for reflex training, but it is recognized that one will not be likely to "free-spar" with a rapist; for that, a single full-power, disabling blow is most likely to be the response. So we train our full-power kicks, strikes, and blocks from every position as well as in combination.

Our training is always serious, always full power (though not full-contact), and always oriented toward the reality of fighting.

There are at present two schools of Ja Shin Do, one in Boston and one in Washington D.C. All students are trained in depth with a view to developing teaching ability as well as personal proficiency, so that training can gradually be expanded to more and more women. Students who have had a year or more of training often begin their own informal classes on the side to provide introductory courses to women who cannot join the regular school (which in Boston always has a waiting list).

MORE INFORMATION:

The Jan. 1975 issue of off our backs has an interview with Dana Densmore about Ja Shin Do, and the politics of self-defense, with photographs of Ja Shin Do techniques.

Cell 16, a collective of which Jayne West and Dana Densmore are members, and of which the women's martial arts school was a project, has published considerable additional material on the topics of self-defense, defying rape and dismemberment, the philosophy of self-defense, the politics of rape, how to start a women's school, etc. Most material is found in issues 3, 5, and 6 of the Journal No More Fun and Games. As a "Ja Shin Do Information Packet" they can be purchased for \$4.75 from Cell 16, 14A Eliot St., Cambridge, Ma. 02138. ♀

INFANT CARE

The following is the third in a series of articles about pregnancy, birth, and the newborn. The first two focused primarily on the pregnant and laboring woman. I will now examine what is happening from the new born's perspective. Please use this information as a supplement to other reading. I have used the word "co" throughout the article as a pronoun for either sex.

Psychiatrists have talked endlessly about how the "birth trauma" can affect people throughout their adulthood. We have the ability to minimize and even eliminate this kind of scarring by making the transition from the perfect womb into the imperfect and varied world as smooth as possible. In utero it is evenly warm, dark, and quiet. By making your childbirth environment womblike in those elements, especially at the actual time of birth and the period afterward, the baby has a much better chance of easing into the new world untraumatized. Imagine the experience of being drugged beyond functioning, held upside-down and slapped until you cry, and then put away from the warm contact you have known every moment of your life until then.

As soon as the head is born, one can start clearing the mucus from the nose and mouth by gently using a rubber bulb syringe. When the mucus is clear, the newborn can make a sound. If there is no sound or mucus flow after birth, stroke the neck along the trachea, from the chest towards the chin. A little later, small sips of boiled water from a spoon will help clear out mucus. Shyela, my daughter, made sounds as soon as her head was born, but over the next couple of days was congested and had trouble nursing. I was told later that could have been avoided by giving her water.

As soon as the child is born, co can be placed on the mother's abdomen where that familiar contact is regained in a new way. If the air is cool, co should be wrapped so as not to lose body heat, or held up to the neck in warm boiled water (before the cord is out) for comfort and relaxation. Avoid holding the baby high above the level of the mother's abdomen, so the blood doesn't run back into the placenta. When the cord turns white, is the blood stops pulsating through it, it is ready to be cut. Tie the cord off with a sterile tie (shoelaces work) about one inch from the umbilicus (where the cord meets baby), and with a second tie about one inch further towards the placenta. Cut between them with sterile scissors. There is no sensation felt. The stump should be treated with an antiseptic and wrapped on the baby's belly with gauze. It will dry up and fall off in a few days. Read carefully beforehand about expulsion of the placenta. DO NOT PULL ON THE CORD!!

The lubricant which covers the baby, the vernix, should be rubbed into the skin, and the blood and meconium (black, sticky first stool) cleaned off, before the baby is wrapped up and put to rest with co's mother or someones comforting arms or into co's own warm small bed near the mother. Neosporin should be dropped into the eyes to prevent any possible VD infection which could otherwise cause blindness.

Immediate post-partum care is important. Any minor perineum tears (area from vagina to anus) are no problem unless there is a lot of bleeding. Vitamins A, D and E applied to the area and taken internally, and exposure to the sun are adequate healers. Anything larger is best to have stitched so that the pelvic organs don't lose their support. Special care must be given to the external genitals to keep infection from going up into the uterus. Use menstrual pads and don't touch the side which will be against your body. Always wipe the vulva from the front towards the anus. Keep your hands washed and the perineum washed with boiled water. Lochia are discharges of mucus and blood from the uterine lining which pass out through the vagina. Bacteria grow easily here, so pads should be changed frequently. The normal color progresses from red to brown to white. Keep an eye on it.

Walk around after delivery to promote circulation. Again, I am not dealing with problems. Inform yourself of possible major difficulties before going into labor. Two of the most severe ones, for which a doctor should be called immediately, are hemorrhage and fever. While waiting for the doctor, in the case of a hemorrhage, someone should raise the foot of the bed and push up on the uterus with one hand while massaging the fundus (rounded upper portion of the uterus) with the other.

Now begins the period when the genital organs return to normal size. It takes a lot of rest and calm or recovery could take months. It usually takes about six weeks for the uterus to shrink from two pounds to two ounces. It is good to get a check-up after this time. Do not be surprised at the pain involved as the uterus contracts back down. You will need lots of fluids and small frequent meals. Urinate often so the bladder doesn't get too full. It is common to be constipated for a couple of days. After the third day, a laxative or enema may be helpful.

For the mother, this should be the beginning of a time of rest and love. Perhaps the most important thing of all is to prepare beforehand to have help. The first few months with the new child can be a shocking realization of the energy and emotions needed. Also, although some of the post-partum blues is alleviated by staying

connected to the birth process, it is still a reality as you move into consciousness of your new responsibilities. It is important for the people you live with to know about this and be supportive.

Unless impossible, I would urge you to nurse your baby. Bottle-feeding can produce a healthy and happy baby if the all-important love and human cradling are there. This society is trying to tell us that we can't nurse anymore, that we won't have enough milk or time, etc. This propaganda is simply untrue. Again, it takes confidence and calmness to persevere against this sentiment which is the very force that can, itself, dry up your milk. State of mind is directly tied up with milk flow. It takes calm and freedom from mental strain to establish this working relationship. If there are others you live with who want to develop an intimate relationship with the baby right from the start, and I think this is important, they may also let co suckle for the non-nutritional aspects of nursing--security, calmness, warmth, closeness.



Move the infant with care after nursing. Burping is to rid the baby of air bubbles and prevent colicky pain. Co will definitely let you know when hunger strikes - we needn't try to set up systems to second guess this. Arbitrary schedules can lead to great frustration, for the child must wait in pain or be forced to eat when not hungry. Also,

never wake a sleeping baby for a meal. It will be hard for you to be woken up night after night by hungry cries, but it soon ends. Persevere!

A newborn's body cannot easily wait for food, hence the hunger screams, and the breast milk is conveniently there. This makes traveling together quite easy. Night feeding can be given in bed. The milk is fresh, raw, sterile, the right temperature, and easily digested. Breast-fed babies don't get constipated and rarely have serious digestive upsets. They are less likely to get skin disorders or respiratory infections. Breast milk contains protective antibodies against many diseases the mother has had. The sucking exercise makes for strong gums and other facial structures, not to mention the exquisite joy of the experience for both partners. There is an incredible physiological mechanism that sends a rush of calmness over the woman when a baby starts to nurse and the milk is let down. A baby satisfied in co's nursing requirements leaves that dependent relationship a strong and independent child.

The colostrum flows for the first two or three days. Don't worry if the baby doesn't eat too much--co has stored food. Sips of warm boiled water are helpful in this case to keep the mucus flowing out. About the third day the milk comes flooding in, giving you breasts the size of which you never could have imagined. Support them. Keep the nipples clean before each nursing. You will feel waves of contractions as the nursing stimulates the uterus back into shape. If your nipples are slightly sore, anoint with thin honey, almond oil, rose water, buttermilk, or lanolin. Even with more troublesome soreness or infection, keep breast-feeding unless there is inflammation or pus. A supportive binder is helpful as well as cold-compresses, including cucumber or cold buttermilk. Be strong in not letting a doctor talk you out of nursing because of infection.

It is advisable at first to nurse just a few minutes on each breast for each feeding until the milk supply is established and the breasts are not sore. This will help avoid cracked nipples. When the milk is established, let the baby milk you out. The last bit has the greatest nourishment.

A baby a week old may need only 15 ounces of milk (about one pint) in 24 hours. Within three months, co may need 28 ounces. If the mother's food is not adequate, this milk will be produced from her reserves, weakening her body before it will stop being produced altogether. You will need more protein, minerals and vitamins than normal. (see "They Are What You Eat" in Sexuality issue) Sleep, good air, and liquids will increase production. Cereals (especially oats and barley), onions, beans, peas, lentils, raw fruits, berries are all good for this. Also root vegetables (especially carrots, sweet potatoes, parsnips), green herbs, nuts, seeds. Some foods, like turnips, make milk strong-tasting and objectionable to the infant. A good beverage for lactation is sweet red wine with much powdered sesame seed; or the same wine with mashed baked eggplant.

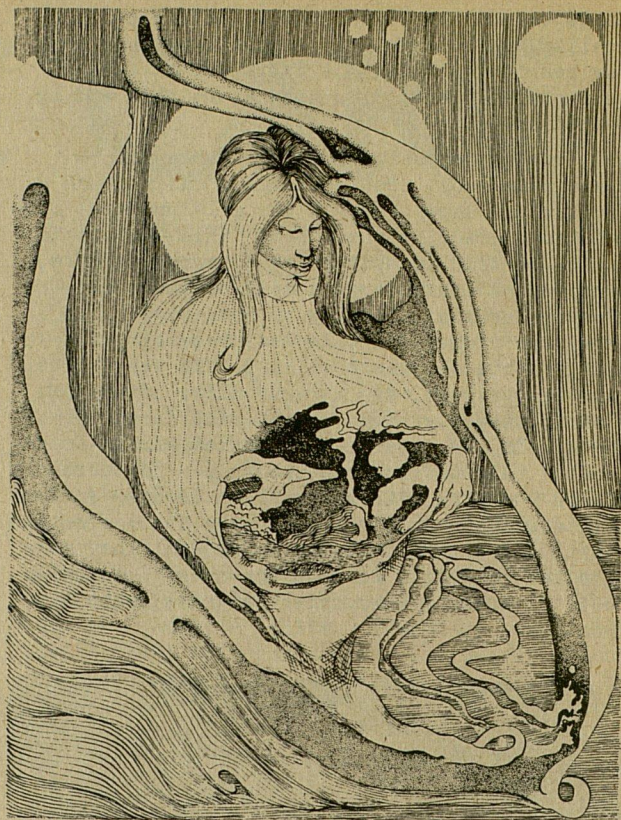
The infant will sleep most of the time at first. There is no need to be particularly quiet; let the usual sounds continue. Use of a pillow is harmful to co's strengthening body alignment. Cats can also be a danger as they sometimes are drawn to sleep on an infant's face and can cause smothering. The child should be put on co's stomach or side so there is no chance of choking on mucous, saliva or spit-up. Spitting up, incidently, is quite common. It is the result of the valve at the top of the stomach, which normally opens and closes as food passes through, not quite closing properly yet. It appears that the baby is spitting up most of what co ate, but it really isn't the case and needn't be a cause of concern. Throwing up is different (when there is force behind it) and should be looked into.

The babe should urinate very soon after birth, and if co doesn't, it is probably a sign of not enough water. At first, there will be excretion of the black and sticky meconium. After this, the stool should be a soft, yellow paste. Five or six times a day is normal. Watch for any color or texture abnormalities as indications of ill health. Frequent illness hinders growth at this stage, so keeping healthy is particularly important. At first, the infant will lose weight until the mother's milk is established, but will probably be back to birth-weight by 7-10 days. If weather permits, it is preferable to let the babe be naked except in the sun, or to wear loose clothing that permits freedom to move arms and legs vigorously. This is especially good in between times of wearing diapers so the skin can breathe and recover from contact with urine. Remember for girls to wipe the vagina toward the anus. Refrain from using commercial oils and powders, as they can irritate the skin. Do not wash the clothes with detergent for the same reason.

Do not bathe the baby until the navel is healed. After this, baths are for relaxation and enjoyment as much as for cleanliness. Put co into the tub feet first, slowly so not to cause fright. Have a basin, cloth, and towel for the baby only. Soap is not necessary unless co is really dirty. Feed after the bath and put to sleep. Nails should be kept clipped right from the first days to avoid scratching.

A birth certificate can be filled out by going to the county office of vital statistics. I was pleasantly surprised that no particular note was taken of the three different last names for mother, father, child; nor of the answer "irrelevant" to such questions as date of last menses. The question of immunizations is a big one. After much deliberation and research, we decided it was wisest to immunize against polio, measles, and DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus all in one). This takes a couple of years. Also, we followed advice to get her a PKU test at a few days old. This is a prick in the heel to test for the presence of an enzyme without which certain food nutrients are not digested and sent to the brain, causing retardation.

When born, the baby has already been practicing breathing, sucking, swallowing, urination, and flexing all muscles. Co can see quite well.



In fact, all the senses are very alert and sensitive. Right from day one, this new person has a vast mind and intelligence. And right from the beginning and through-out life until adulthood, people cramp this intelligence by believing that it doesn't exist. Decide on practicing this exercise in consciousness-raising until it becomes innately true: talk to babies and children as if they understand what you're saying. They do; and they will more and more if you believe that they do and don't talk to them condescendingly. It's like our attitude toward foreigners who know only a little of the language. We assume their intelligence goes only as far as their ability to talk the way we do. Children understand phenomenally more than they can speak. I believe a lot of their frustration is having so much together in their heads and not in their coordination. Sometimes we get shocked into this reality. One evening Shyela was sitting in her high chair when only a few months old, apparently able to say no more than da and ba. She was fussing to be taken down and no one responded until finally, at the peak of frustration that she had to have someone else do it for her, she blurted out, "Let me out!"

Present all kinds of stimuli right from the beginning. Let the infant experience environmental sights, tactile sensations, sounds, smells. Until co is mobile, you determine the environment. Communion with nature can begin right away, with the experiences being taken in long before we can see them register. Carry co with you in a pack on your front or back for stimulation as well as movement and closeness.

Respond to co's actions and sounds for further stimulation and to let it be known that the world is a responsive place. To the infant, it is completely here and now. There is no perception of a self that is separate from anything else. If hunger is felt, the world is hungry. The chair and this hand are one. As the idea begins to develop that co is personally uncomfortable or that this hand moves separate from the chair, parental response to the baby teaches that co can be heard and that people care.

The complete uniqueness of this young person is there waiting to unfold. What we can give is the freedom and support to actualize co's potential. The most important factor in personality development is self-concept--I am a likeable, competent person or an unlikeable, incompetent one. This begins as soon as one is born. One's basic outlook on life--trust and happiness or distrust and unhappiness--is learned as a baby from the world's (parents') responses to co's needs. If you respond to cries, co learns people help each other and trusts them. Excessive frustration does not foster learning. Independence is learned when the dependence needs are met. To get attention, all the infant can do is cry. Helplessness. The infant's needs help to maintain an internal equilibrium, and that, it seems, is the job of the parent. This may be the hardest job there is.

I believe, the first nine months outside are as crucial as the nine in the womb. Food, sleep, stimulation, privacy, loving contact, responsiveness, physical comfort are important. This young child cannot be spoiled. Co does not yet know how to want more than co needs. Later on, you can work with limits and self-control. Everything registers. Sing and talk and make music; massage and exercise the little body; provide variation as co gets bored just as you do. Pay attention to the different sounds the child makes--this is co's only verbal expression. Hold and nurse and rock co; keep a calm and loving environment, one in which it is wonderful for the child to be alone as well as in company.

On suddenly becoming parents, there is a lot we don't know. It is a difficult and critical job, and one for which we were very poorly prepared. Yet the important thing is to trust yourself. If you are the biological mother of this child, you know co better than it seems by the long time already spent together. You have been physically as well as spiritually connected and already have a great deal of understanding. People will offer you all kinds of advice (like me!), but remember to listen to your own instinct. We all have heavy feelings of inadequacy and resentment, yet are afraid to admit them. It takes a while to believe that the baby will actually survive. Feelings of rage are also normal. The main thing to control is the action.

There are biochemical factors that determine an inherited desire and capacity to care for one's offspring. This is easy enough for us to accept in animals, but applied to ourselves, the condition seems conditioned rather than biological. From a feminist, communalist vantage point, we want to say that we can prove community child-raising works better than motherhood.

I really do believe there is a biochemical reason for the mother's care, and we must be careful when we criticize the role. It is one of those positions that has been so brutally misused that its essence has become, in some minds, as abhorrent as its defects. It seems in these politics that fatherhood is liberated; motherhood is not. I struggled with this for a long time with Shyela, feeling guilty as a feminist, communist, and busy homesteader, if I gave "too much" attention to her. More often than not, it was she who lost out as I did what looked best as a liberated woman rather than what I thought was best for her. To a new parent, I can only say pay equal attention to your bonds of love as to your political consciousness. One can live free of nuclear family limitations without everyone in the communal family being in totally equal relationship. You needn't lower your instinctual capacity to care for your offspring in order to try for defocused child-raising. On the other hand, if others want to share equally, that is a wonderful blessing. There may be possessive tendencies which can be worked out when there are others who show real loyalty.

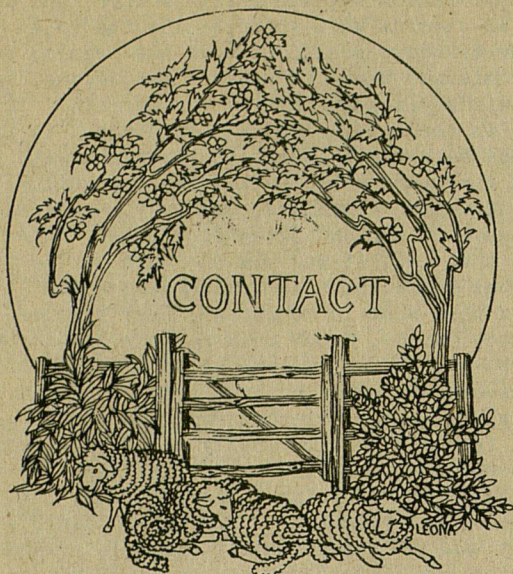
I realize that I am speaking to a very small audience in the above paragraph. To the rest of us, consciousness about the motherhood role is quite different. It is important, I think, to spend time apart right from the early weeks--to maintain your own personhood outside the child. Coming and going has always been easy with Shyela, and she loves to be alone with new people. The critical bond period referred to above is directly after birth. That is the survival factor. If a newborn goat or lamb gets separated from co's mother, co later may not even be accepted back by the mother. This is precisely the period during which hospital routines separate the mother and child.

People are influenced by experiences they can no longer remember. Infants are influenced by experiences we think are not really being felt. We say and do things to children thinking they can't truly see or understand, let alone remember or subconsciously retain. In terms of the mental health of society, what is important is babies' happiness during the first year. The environment has to come to them--they cannot do for themselves. How the child receives and gives love determines how co will love as an adult. ♀



Reading List:

How to Parent by Fitzhugh Dodson
Nature's Children by Juliette de Bairacli Levy
Child in the Family by Maria Montessori (exc.)
Birth Without Violence by Frederick Leboyer
What Every Child Would Like His Parents to Know by Dr. Lee Salk
How to Raise a Human Being by Dr. Salk and Rita Kramer
Natural Parenthood by Eda J. LeShan



We are three gay women looking for one to two roommates. We have a beautiful farm five miles from Cotati. Rent is \$62.50 plus deposit. Space for a garden and some animals.
Contact: Wendy, Mary or Carolyn, 815 Pepper Rd., Petaluma, Ca. 94952 (707-795-3943)

A Feminist Credit Union is being formed in the Bay Area by a coalition of women's groups. If you have money to deposit in the credit union or want to help organize it call 415-431-1180.

Project Start, a non-profit collective of five women, offering classes in carpentry, electrical wiring and plumbing, is looking for qualified teachers and funding. Classes begin in September.
Contact: 26179 Siuslaw River Rd., Lorane, Oregon.

Midwestern Women's Festival, Sept. 5-11 at Cuivre River State Park, fifty miles north of St. Louis. For further information,
Contact: 7157 Pershing, St. Louis, Mo. 63130

We are the Sojourn Women's Center, Inc., one hundred strong in Springfield Illinois looking for other sisters and support in the corn belt.
Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Springfield, Ill. 62705

We are looking for people to join us in a progressive commune - and eventual community - centered on creating social change through feminist socialism, radical nutrition-vitality, and bisexuality.
Contact: Maureen c/o Vocations for Social Change 5951 Canning St. Oakland, Ca. 94609

You are invited to attend the world's second planning conference for the world's first World Women's Culture Caravan, a traveling community of feminist women and children. July 10-13.
Contact: P.O. Box 3488, Ridgeway Station, Stamford, Connecticut 06905

Lesbian Mothers National Defense Fund is a Seattle based organization which gives support to lesbian mothers who are or who may be faced with child custody suits. Support for our cases, financial as well as emotional and political, will really be appreciated. For help or info.,
Contact: 2446 Lorentz Pl. N. Seattle, Wash. 98109

A Minstrel Show, with a cast of five women exploring self images and roles, is in process of setting up a tour that will include women's prisons, colleges, and women's centers all over the east coast. For more information,
Contact: Amy Saltz, 120 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10024

The Lesbian Tide is resuming publication bi-monthly beginning May/June 1975. We now pay our writers and artists. New mailing address:
1005 Ocean Ave., #B, Santa Monica, Ca. 90403

We are offering free room and board plus pocket money to a couple in exchange for a reasonable amount of farm work and housekeeping. Beautiful 63-acre hay farm in the Catskill Mountains. Want farm and garden experience and ability to tend small livestock and behead and dress chickens. All letters will be answered.
Contact: Poste-Bazaar, Box 744, F.D.R. Station, New York City 10022

I am a 30 year old woman living in a self-made cabin on the coast of Maine. I am working towards having animals, a workshop and darkroom and larger garden. I wish to meet and correspond with other women who are interested in a quiet, simple, spiritually oriented lifestyle.
Contact: Barbara Cleveland, Box 19A, Orland, Me.

The Women's History Library proudly announces that its "Women and Health" collection is micro-filmed and ready for distribution. This covers six years of research and reference.
Contact: Women's History Research Center, Inc. 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, Ca. 94708

We are a couple with a house to share in the country. We have a six year old child and we're into ecology and art. We have a collective studio and alternative school next door.
Contact: Greer, 6030 Roblar Rd., Petaluma, Ca. 94952 (707-795-5096)

Union for Radical Political Economics is sponsoring a "Women and Work" research project. Currently there are research collectives on health care, welfare, women in the garment industry, and women in economic crisis. A series of pamphlets will be published. If you are interested in doing individual research or starting a research group,
Contact: Nancy Wiegiersma, 1201 Fern St. N.W. Washington D.C. 20012

We are inviting submission of poems to Amazon Poetry: An Anthology, a collection of writing by living lesbian poets to be published in the Fall of 1975. Send poems to: Amazon Poetry, 496 3rd St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215 by July 15.

FUTURE ISSUES

The next issue is about how our feminist consciousness affects our relationships with other people - be they women, men, children, lovers, friends, neighbors. We want to explore the problems and realities, not just idealized visions. This issue came from the idea of doing an issue on relating to men and another on feminist separatism and it will cover both these topics. We want this issue to represent a spectrum of women beyond Albion, so please send us your contributions! Deadline is August 15.

The issue after next will be on country politics - local politics, developing alternative political structures, politics of ecology, the political meaning and implications of our lives, the effect of national politics on ourselves.

We are also planning an issue on mental and physical health.

We are trying especially hard to improve the appearance of Country Women. Doubtlessly you read our plea for graphics each issue, but this time, please take us seriously. Our current file of graphics has dwindled down to practically nothing. By graphics we mean pen and ink drawings, ink washes, wood or linoleum block prints, etchings, engravings, sumi brush drawings, black and white photographs, even fingerpaintings. But clear, crisp reproduceable material is what we need. When you send us your graphics, please print your name and address on the back of each one.

GRAPHICS CREDITS

PHOTOS:

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Ann Banks: 33, bottom; 54
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Dana Densmore: 58
Karen Gottstein: 8
Alice Flores: 32, top
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Joanne: 31 bottom
Candy Rich: 22
Rusty: 32 bottom, 46 left
Ruth Mountain Grove: 4, 30, 38
Sue Sellars: 25 (clay pipes by Sue Sellars and Janet Graham)

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Judy Oliver: 1
Kay Rudin: back cover
Nancy Curtis: 45
Skylark: 7
Sue Sellars: 62
Free Box Collective: 27, 28, 29

Country Women Festival

We're planning now for the fourth Country Women's Festival. Like the last two years, it will be held in a campground deep in the redwoods. The festival this year will be from noon Friday, Sept. 5, to noon Tuesday, Sept. 9. Provided are beds in cabins and tents, running water and showers, and all meals. Like last year, there will be scheduled workshops to share country skills and special interests. If you can teach a skill or will coordinate a discussion group, please let us know, with specifics of what you'd like to do. We also welcome suggestions from last year's participants about improving this year's festival. We have found in the last years that both mothers and nonmothers have a more complete experience if there are few children to be cared for. Women who can make other arrangements are strongly encouraged to do so. However, collective childcare will be provided and we will try to do so more successfully than we have in the past.

Space at the festival is limited because of the size of the campground so the festival is open only to women living in the country. Admission is by advance registration only. Cost for the four days (camp rental, insurance, and food) is \$20.00. Profit from last year's festival will be available for partial scholarships for women in need. We can also arrange trades. Reservations, accompanied by a \$10.00 deposit, must be made by August 15. No one will be admitted without a prior reservation so get yours in now. (We'd appreciate the full fee if you can afford to send it in advance.)

Send reservations to: COUNTRY WOMEN FESTIVAL, BOX 462, ALBION, CAL. 95410

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