

City - Country

Issue 22

COUNTRY  
WOMEN

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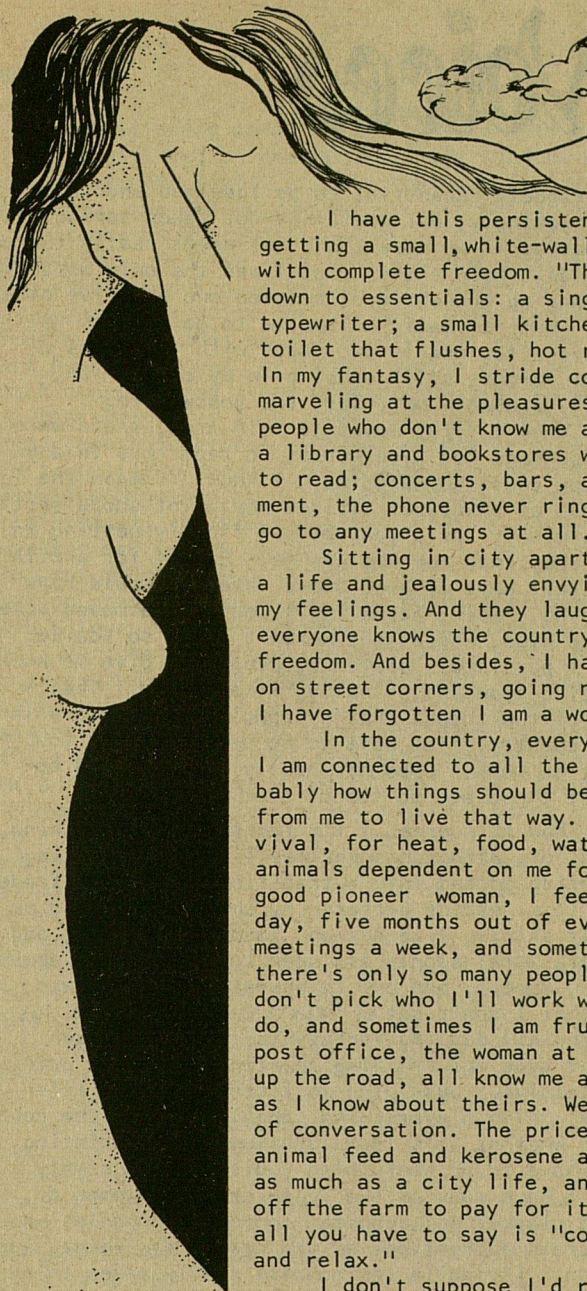
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I have this persistent fantasy of moving to a city, getting a small, white-walled studio apartment, and living with complete freedom. "The simple life" I call it, cutting down to essentials: a single bed, comfortable chair, desk, typewriter; a small kitchen, heat that just turns on, a toilet that flushes, hot running water, as much as I want. In my fantasy, I stride confidently down city streets, marveling at the pleasures of anonymity: thousands of people who don't know me and whom I'll never know. There's a library and bookstores with everything I've ever wanted to read; concerts, bars, and poetry readings. In my apartment, the phone never rings and for a few months, I don't go to any meetings at all.

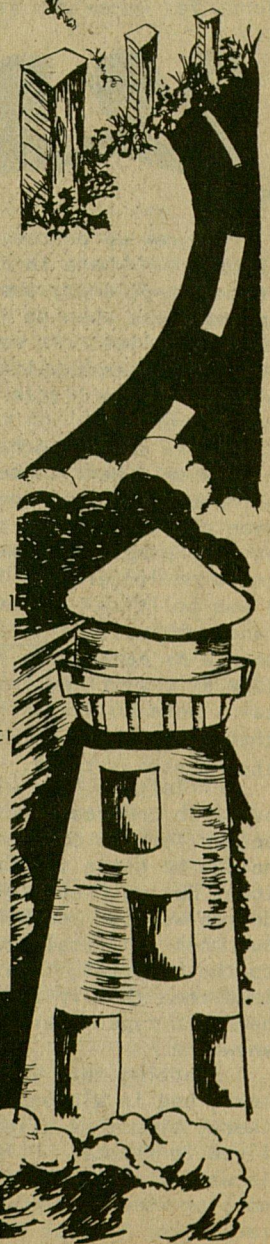
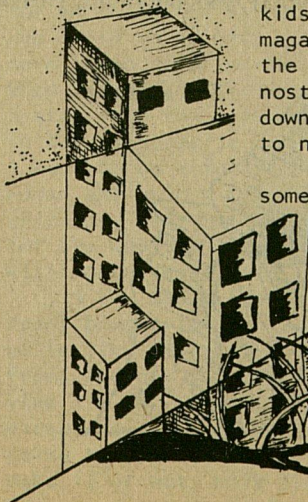
Sitting in city apartments, picturing my bliss at such a life and jealously envying my friends, I tell them about my feelings. And they laugh or are shocked, because of course everyone knows the country is where you go for peace and freedom. And besides, I have left out earning a living, men on street corners, going nowhere alone at night, ever. I have forgotten I am a woman.

In the country, everything is personal; personalized. I am connected to all the life around me, and that's probably how things should be, but it asks more, takes more from me to live that way. I am responsible for my own survival, for heat, food, water, shelter. I have fifty-nine animals dependent on me for their survival too; and like a good pioneer woman, I feed bottles to kids three times a day, five months out of every year. There's at least two meetings a week, and sometimes four. In a small community, there's only so many people to do what needs to be done. I don't pick who I'll work with, cause there's no choosing to do, and sometimes I am frustrated and lonely. The man at the post office, the woman at the store, my neighbor, a friend up the road, all know me and a good deal about my life, as I know about theirs. We have few secrets and a good deal of conversation. The price of land payments and taxes and animal feed and kerosene and truck parts comes to at least as much as a city life, and I've always worked another job off the farm to pay for it. For a sure laugh around here, all you have to say is "come to the country and lay back and relax."

I don't suppose I'd really trade, or not for long. I'm always saying I'll go to the city next month, when the kids are weaned, the sheep sheared, this issue of the magazine done ... and I never get there. But once in a while the crazy writer in me gets desperate and even dreams nostalgically of cockroach-ridden, bath-down-the-hall, cheap downtown hotels--anyplace where I can be alone and responsible to no one and no thing but myself.

I guess I just want to say that, for me, the grass sometimes looks greener in Golden Gate Park. ♀

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# Country Voices

The following ramblings are excerpts from a taped conversation the issue collective had during one of its first meetings. At that point we were going through our first consciousness raising and information gathering about city/country myths, truths and what each of us had gone through in moving to the country. We each felt it was an important beginning to share our transitions, fears and hopes about living in the country. We are at very different levels and are a very limited cross section of country women but we hoped it would be a learning experience for women thinking about moving to the country and possibly a sharing experience for women who are now living in the country.



NANCY

I grew up on the Mojave Desert, in a remote little town where land on all sides of the community was kept empty and open. It was a Navy base and was kept open so jets could fly over and test their missiles. It was a weird place. But it seemed much more weird to drive to Los Angeles with all those little houses squashed up against each other.

Like so many others, I was forced into the city when I went to college. It took years of going outside smelling the ozone, putting up with smog alerts, feeling uncomfortable being around so many people all the time, before I realized I could no longer live in that gray city. Though I was political and not part of the "back to the land" movement, I needed to see colors and the mountains again. My friends and I had a running joke at that time, that the San Bernadino mountains were on wheels - when the smog obliterated them, people had rolled them into Arizona to be the mountains there.

I left college with not only a history degree but also one year's experience working as a typesetter for the college newspaper. This experience helped me get a country job. I moved to a small town, Spring Green, Wisconsin, where a history degree without teaching experience was useless. But when the local newspaper's typesetter went to the hospital, I was suddenly employed. I realized then that if this community of 400 people needed a typesetter, I could take my skill almost anywhere.

Getting that job didn't solve the other problem I had in Wisconsin. I felt strangely alien there, almost as alien as I had felt the year I lived in France. I felt a total lack of community. It wasn't only that there was no feminist consciousness or women's community, but that people with radical or leftist politics were looked on as be-

ing vaguely eccentric, to be indulged and tolerated jokingly, but certainly not taken seriously. It was as if we were there but never really there. It didn't help either that I was the only woman in a changing household of between one and five other men. But it really killed me to go back to California after nearly two years with the words of local farmers still echoing in my ears - "Oh, you'll probably only last two years here."

When I first moved to this area, there were no openings for typesetters or reporters in any of the coast communities. I know. I made the rounds of newspaper offices and print shops pretty determindly for a year before finally getting in the shop that now employs me. Except for a CETA job that kept my head above water, I would have starved - well, actually, I would have moved somewhere else, where jobs weren't quite so scarce. But I persisted, pestering people to give me work setting type and, finally, I was hired. That's one of the things that's especially necessary in the country. You have to be persistent if you want to work. Jobs are really hard to find because there are so few of them.

Now it's great. I'm typesetting and liking it a lot, although sometimes I have the feeling of being locked into a traditionally female trade. But it's getting better. My shop is teaching me other skills, like design, layout, paste-up, and camera work; people are open to teaching me about inks, papers, and how to operate a small press, so that I don't get as frustrated as I would just typing all day. My fantasy is learning enough about type and printing to start a women's press collective. Just give me fifteen years. It's true. Almost everything takes longer in the country, whether it's learning plumbing or printing. You have to do everything yourself; you simply don't have many of the resources city women do, like classes at technical schools, companies eager to train apprentices on the newest equipment, and so on. Living in the country really makes things harder, but more personal. It develops your self-reliance, if it doesn't defeat you outright through initial intimidation.





BOBBI

I originally moved to the country with my family; we lived on another family's land as part of an extended family of four adults and three children. We shared running the household and such tasks as getting firewood, animal care and gardening. Finding jobs, however, was next to impossible and I did childcare for money for about a year as we used up our savings. Land taxes, food - it all adds up and never stops whether you are working or not. I finally got a job, falling back on something I had done during high school (nurse's aid). I took a test through the health department and became a Homemaker-Health Aide. My fancy title enabled me to take care of elderly people who needed care (cleaning houses, cooking their meals, shopping, massages, taking them on outings and to the doctor). After a year of working for the county at \$2.00 an hour, I started taking private jobs which paid quite a bit better and allowed me more freedom. Not wanting to do this for the rest of my country life, I had also been applying for everything in sight, taking a test to be a social worker and knocking on doors asking for training in anything. Finally, my third year here a local dentist's office hired me and trained me as a dental assistant. I recently went to San Francisco and passed a state test so I'm now another step up the ladder (a Registered Dental Assistant). I assume that there are always dentists even in the smallest country towns and with this certificate, I feel more secure about finding a job wherever I go. Talking to a lot of people, pushing yourself, and waiting for the right moment - that's getting a job in the country.

Despite the security, I'm currently unhappy with my job; it's a city nine to five life I lead. Driving 45 minutes to work, I spend more time doing my job than living a country existence. My job pays the rent and food but I'm tired of being a weekend gardener. The land we live on now doesn't have any animals because the owners don't want them. We aren't living collectively, merely as caretakers/renters and I find not living communally a real loss.

The country has been a strengthening process for me. I'm not the scared, insecure, city woman who first moved here. But I've also realized I've never been able to really live a country life. When I couldn't find a job, I asked myself should I starve in the beauty of the country or survive in the smog, noise and hassle of the city? Now, I want to be a full-fledged, over-worked country woman and gain a first hand knowledge of the land, chickens, and myself. I want to know if my love for the country is only beauty deep or if I'm willing to sweat, cry, and work over it.

A few weeks ago we (four adults and two children) bought land through various loans. My small collective will now enable us to live on, learn from, and pay for our own land. How we will survive I'm not sure since no one has a steady job except me and I'm about to quit, but I'm finally going to experience country life. Whether I'll make it or not, only time will tell.



LEONA

To some extent, the collective where I live represents what many people go through in living collectively in the country. If you don't have \$10,000 - 20,000 for a down payment and don't want to stay in the city until you get it, then you can do what we did - pool your resources and buy land together. By sharing the payments amongst several people, buying land is a lot easier. We began with four adults, seven children and thirty acres of beautiful, undeveloped hillside. One man made the necessary down payment and the rest of us have shared equally in the cost of the land. We became a working community, both in terms of developing the land and working on books together for publication. More friends came and joined the original group, one or two at a time. We share all tasks, from splitting wood to baking and building together. After five years, we have a main house, sauna, thirteen cabins, a garden, goats, chickens, and a budding orchard. There are now eleven adults and nine children. In three months, the land will be paid off and the extra money still coming in will be turned back into the land for more development. The monthly share for each person has been \$40.00 for the land payment and \$5.00 for taxes each month. We have established a meaningful and sustaining lifestyle in harmony with the earth and one another. This communal living also enables me to continue my book illustrating jobs in the city because I can leave my garden, goats, etc. and know all will be taken care of without hassle. No paying neighbors or getting rid of animals because I'll be gone for two months. It's ideal for enjoying both worlds.

When I look out my window to tree tops and hawks circling I wonder if we can slow down this area's growth. I used to know everyone on our road (30 -40 people) and now there are about 100 people. I'm a stranger instead of a neighbor to some. Change is an accepted certainty in our cont





lives and the question is: can we consciously direct that change to enrich our lives rather than diminish them? In this area, the point of balance between enough and too many residents has been reached. If growth continues at the pace of the past three years, the rural nature of this area will be destroyed. Can city folks move to the country without destroying the very rural nature that drew them to the country? It seems possible only if several questions are answered.

1.) Is this country community interested in adding to its population? If the answer is yes, look no further. If the answer is no, will the individual decide to exercise the option to move in anyway and disregard the community's needs? How will more people effect the area? Some ways are more human resources, more cars and traffic, scarcer jobs, less open space, less water, more people than can inter-relate comfortably.

2.) What will my contribution to this area be? A newly arrived person can start a business employing local residents instead of competing in an already over-burdened job market. Many small towns are short of one thing or another: a press, food co-op, community garden, community-oriented restaurant, entertainment spot, laundromat, crafts co-op, and the list goes on and on...

The idea is to add a resource to the area rather than depending on the community for support. I've watched many people come to this area and find they can't stay because they can't support themselves here. In so many overpopulated rural areas another dependent is not needed or wanted. One should investigate an area before moving there and be sensitive to its needs. It's sometimes, if not always, difficult to begin from scratch, but someone, sometime did that in every small town along the way. Who those founders were made a difference in what kind of place it is today. I've watched the women's community here grow and build over the last five years. All things take time and people with the strength and desire to begin them.

LEANNE

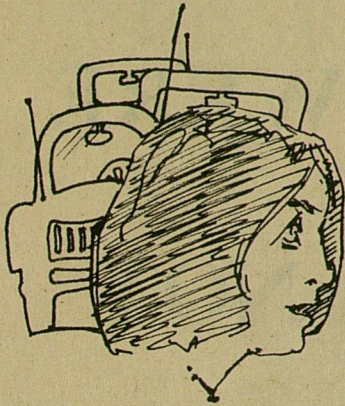
I'm not as far along the line to making it in the country as you are and there are a lot of people in my position, Leona. There are people who don't have enough money saved to buy land either by themselves or as a part of a group, who have just moved to or lived in an area for a short period of time and have not built up a network of friends who they could live with compatibly. It's a risky task to buy land communally with people you don't know! If they are working to support themselves, they don't have time to develop their land even if they might be able to make a down payment. Further, not everyone who is able to find a group to buy land with will have within that group the same sets of skills and knowledge to succeed. I'm not saying that communal living is not a desirable way to live, but it is a way that takes time, energy, and is based on a lot of variables falling into place correctly to be a stable living situation over time.

At the moment, I'm ready to settle down and find my "family", but I'm trapped. I have worked for the past four years at a school for emotionally disturbed children. Having recently quit, I am ready to rest and ready to go on to new things. However, I have no money saved, no real prospects of buying land with anyone, no way to earn a large chunk of money unless I either go back to the city or to school to get a degree to give me a better paying job.

I guess I've realized that the country is where I want to live. I'm in this particular part of the country because it offers both a women's community and counter-culture within a rural setting.







## MELIA

The thought of leaving familiar territory (city or town) and coming to a place and life I didn't know was frightening. I've found however, that it isn't like going 100 or 50 years back in time as I had envisioned it. I don't want to give up the present to live in the country, or the future--I like space age, futuristic things. The one winter I spent housesitting for my friend was just sheep, apple trees, and a couple of ridges out the window with a lot of rain. I found that I really missed seeing and being among masses of humanity, whether I related to them or not even though I realized the additional problems created by concentrations of great numbers of people. Leona mentioned in a previous conversation we had about moving to the city that "Some people like being a big fish in a little pond (country) and some would rather be a small fish in a large pond (city)." Actually, I was not impressed with my friends' enthusiasm for what I observed as the "soap-opera" quality of rural life, where everyone knew everyone else's business and affairs. This tended to make me feel more inhibited and claustrophobic than living in a city where I could be anonymous if I chose.

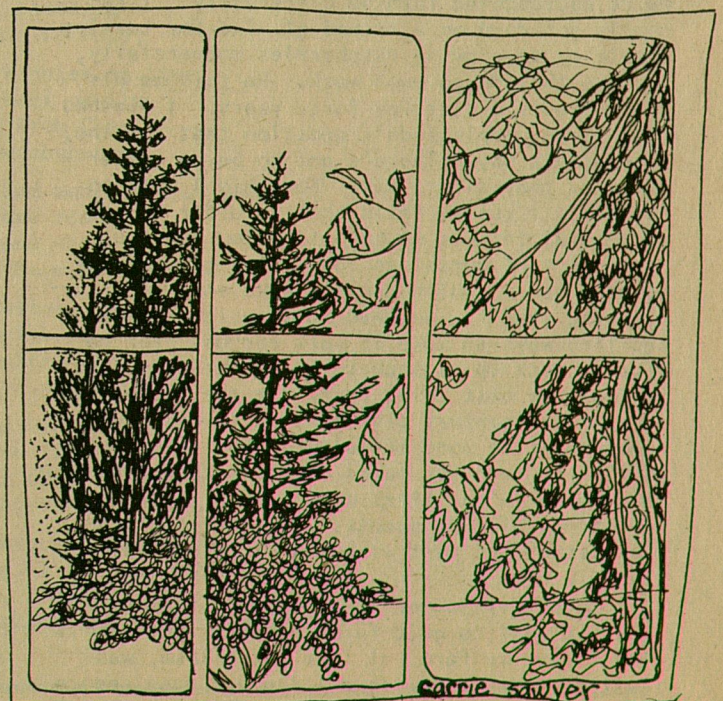
I've lived the last seven months in the country and I've discovered I can't stay here just existing month to month without a thought of a secure financial situation. I was also initially interested in the technical aspects of putting out a magazine and printing. However, I found that, for me, that learning process has to be done in the city. It has been good to be in an artists' colony, to have support and observe other people struggling to express themselves in their chosen field. I could envision myself moving back to the country again, on a long term basis, if I had a partner or was part of a group. My desire to have people to do it with has created a reluctance to just strike out by myself. I am not a hermit or recluse. I'd rather live with people than alone, as long as I have time and space to be by myself. Now, I'm back in the city for job training, to develop skills which will hopefully enable me to find work in the country.

## TAMI

I originally got the idea to move to the country because, like many people, I was fed up with the city. I'd been teaching in Los Angeles for the past four years and was totally burned out. I wanted a different life, away from the concrete, noise, and smog. I had planned originally to live outside Boulder, Colorado and make a slow transition to country life. But I found Boulder to be a large city complete with smog. I said, "It's got to be more country!" What to do? I flashed on an area where I knew only one woman. But that, coupled with an already existing women's community there, was enough to get me heading west again. After having lived all of my 24 years in L.A., it was scary enough to think of moving to the country, without giving up the support of a women's community too.

Now I feel myself in a second transition period. I feel good about the way I've made the change from city to country. Now I want to develop my country skills to the point where someday I can move someplace where it isn't quite so populated and then begin to build from the ground up. After all, this area didn't always have a strong women's community.

Now that I'm here, I too have the position of being worried about the overpopulation of the coast. I don't want more people to move here, and yet I feel as if who am I to say that? After all, I've only been here a few months. I feel as if when I came the door was slowly closing and now it's time for it to shut. ♀





The Country Women Festival started me thinking. I went to the "City-Country" workshop where my group kind of fell flat. I left with the feeling that our prejudices are true - that city women are "sped up", that we didn't have a lot to talk about together, that we viewed each other with a certain paranoia and we each felt that we couldn't break into the other's system. All those things that we had listed as myths came out as truths. I was disturbed about this.

I was mulling over these conflicts and feelings and how bad it felt for me to be so judgmental, and to make these statements to myself as if they were the truth - it just didn't sit right. And then, not too long after that, Carmen was going off to Europe, and Ellen was tired of the goats, Sherry was wanting more pretty things in her house, and I was depressed with farming. We're all bombing out on this middle class stuff. We want things, we want pretty things, we want more time. I said, "Hey, what's going on?" I finally came to the conclusion that in our intensity to be successful farmers, we were turning our backs on many rich experiences that we all brought with us into the country. What we have in our heads is a whole lot of experience of intellectual stimulation that we have put aside. We forget that we cut our teeth on the tales of Chaucer. Every once and a while I'm digging weeds and I think, "For this I went to school?" And I think that is a part of our lives now and it came from our early experiences in the city. And I'm using that almost as a metaphor because I don't think you had to live in a large town, but our education is urban set. Even in small towns, schools use texts that came from Sacramento, with their middle class values.

We don't approach farming the way our grandparents did in any way at all. They grew up with it, they learned it and they just had it there. We're approaching farming differently. I recently got down on a friend of mine for turning people on to growing raspberries commercially, because they're so much work. He told me his grandparents did it for forty years. I flashed that these people didn't question that routine, they didn't say, "There's got to be an easier way," or they didn't say, "For this I went to school?" I really think that in order to be successful farmers we have to allow for that other part of ourselves that we've groomed for so many years, which doesn't have any way of expressing itself. We have to give it expression and find ways to make it work for us. For me, I don't want to go back to no electricity. So, for me, the best thing is to use the technology of our 20th century civilization to make our homestead life more efficient. So I feel we're foolish to turn our backs on those things that at some point in our lives did us good. The way a new farmer will be successful is by combining the best of the past with what little wisdom there is now.

Late this summer I was unhappy farming. I didn't want to quit farming, but right then I didn't want to farm. I lost enthusiasm, was feeling crazy, and wished I'd never even seen a goat. This crisis came at a time when it was im-

# "WE'RE NOT JUST FARMERS"

possible for me to get away, so I just did nothing and rode it out. I came out with a quieter view of the farm and feeling stronger for having "weathered" it out. I now know that there are going to be times when I'm disenchanted with the farm and I'll need to make space for those feelings.

Another hard thing to deal with is feeling that the only things that count are "work chores". It's hard to give myself permission to do something beyond functional, i.e., shaking the goat barn. I don't like it when everything is all function and no beauty. We need to take the artistic parts of ourselves seriously.

I was bothered by the lack of communication at the Festival. Maybe in our intensity to learn and to be sincere and successful we're aggressively turning our backs on city ways and influence to our detriment. I feel the judgmental quality of our reactions to city women is detrimental - by rejecting these women, we are rejecting that part of ourselves. Because when that part of ourselves runs dry and we've forgotten how to nurture it, then we have to drop what we're doing on the farm and go on to something else.

So after putting all these ideas together, one of the things I came out with was, one healing process that needs to take place both in our relationship to ourselves and to our sisters in the city, is that we need to not judge urban influence so negatively. We need to have an awareness and deal with all parts of ourselves - we're not just farmers.



# TO A DISTANT FRIEND

How long since we touched hands,  
Exchanged eye-glances, shared  
Belly-shaking laughter!  
Now words travel the miles.

Friends' words spoken  
Excite heart and mind.  
On paper, what do they say —  
Only how far we are apart?

You write of missing the old times;  
But more, of anger at the wars;  
You rage at crime in the Capital.  
Betrayal of public trust;

In despair, cry: Are not all of us  
Caught in the net of corruption,  
Unquestioning of ease, while  
Our weapons threaten the world?

You write of sleepless nights,  
Of using the streets in fear,  
You say: I work, suffer,  
Get drunk. I take no action.

Here, from Druid Heights,  
I write of pruning the apple,  
Seed-planting, progress of lettuces,  
The dwarf cherry lost to gophers;

Of perpetual astonishment  
That seeds burst to green, green  
Fruits of themselves coloring,  
Hard buds exploding to rainbows;

That last year's corruption feeds  
This year's harvests;  
Worms, sow bugs, bacteria  
Doing work surpassing ours;

While light, dark pulse on time,  
The stars obey their orbits,  
Design flowering from Chaos  
With no help from computers.

I write of this and months-long rains  
Washing out our one road;  
Of taking picks and shovels to  
Re-connect with the marketplace.

I tell of our festive times,  
Sharing wine, fruits of our harvests,  
Miracle of deep sleep after labors,  
Eager waking to an unknown day.

And of sitting in contemplation  
With Alan and our friends,  
Expecting nothing from it, but  
Heart-quiet, wordless communion.

Really, Nothing happening, Old Friend.  
Aware of the wars, I take no action.  
But writing this, I wonder:  
Are we still speaking the same language?



# Country / City Myths



## COUNTRY MYTHS ABOUT THE CITY

1. City women are more aware and politically committed.
2. City women are ignorant of how to live in the country. They rip off the country.
3. City women are more socially sophisticated since they deal with more people.
4. City women are more oppressed having to live in a polluted, noisy, crowded, violent place, and they are to be pitied.
5. City women do not work hard physically and are not as healthy as country women.
6. City women are too speedy and have a hard time slowing down, especially in the country.
7. City women are tough from having to deal with that oppression on a daily, personal level.
8. City women are insensitive, thick-skinned from living in too close contact with people.
9. City women are creating a "revolution"!!
10. City women want to rip off the country women by coming to the country to relax and not put energy into the country. They're just more people to clutter up the countryside.
11. City women want to take over the Country Women Festival - their energy is too heavy.
12. Once you live in the country, it's impossible to return to the city to live.

## CITY MYTHS ABOUT THE COUNTRY

1. Country women are not political.
2. Country women know more about practical skills - i.e. know how to survive better.
3. Country women are spiritual - more sensitive and more "evolved" because they live closer to nature.
4. Country women are white middle class, have access to a lot of money, and therefore can live in the country.
5. Country women are healthy and eat organic food.
6. Country women are "spaced out".
7. Country women live a life free of responsibilities; a vacation, not having to deal with the hard realities of a capitalist, patriarchal oppression.
8. Country women have stronger relationships with people because country life is a struggle and you need people more.
9. Country women are creating an "alternative lifestyle".
10. Country women just come to the city for a good time and rip off city women by not putting energy into city political activities.
11. Country women do not want to share what they've learned living in the country with city women who want to come to the festival.
12. Country life is too isolated with not enough things to do or people to meet - it's too lonely.



#### SITTING AROUND THE TABLE, JUST YOU AND ME:

In preparation for a workshop to be given at the Country Women's Festival several months ago, a group of women drew up this incomplete list of truisms we felt governed our views of city and country women. We were able to think up these statements with remarkable ease, and, had we allowed ourselves more time, I'm sure many more could have been generated.

Being all too aware of the dangers of generalizations, we promptly called them myths to show our skepticism and heightened awareness of the dangerous social mechanics that brought about such pat answers about large groups of women. Yet, even among the four of us - two from the city and two from the country - we found ourselves, during the course of the afternoon, relating to each other on the basis of such myths:

Because Laurie admitted early upon arrival her ignorance of country life, having lived most of her life in cities, I thought she'd enjoy doing that archtypal activity of country living - gathering eggs from the hen house! (I thought, superiorly, "This is something simple for a country neophyte.") I found myself (who up to two weeks ago had had NO contact with raising chickens ever before in my life) patronizingly telling her how to go about it - a task not really needing too much instruction on how to do it. She, picking up my air of authority, became unsure of herself, hesitating. At that point, we both caught ourselves in the act, playing roles most unconsciously, me, the expert farmer; she, the ignorant city-visitor.

In this small and obvious way, we saw how these myths entered our lives personally and affected the expectations we had about ourselves and each other. Because we knew each other somewhat and were especially tuned in to the whole dynamics of myth-making, we were able to catch ourselves in the act of making each other into narrow stereotypes which demanded that we live up to these roles for ourselves and colored our views of the other; often negatively.

#### THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES:

At the risk of being academic, American Heritage Dictionary is helpful in offering some insight into what "myths" are and where they originated in our lives: "MYTH: a traditional story originating in a preliterate society, dealing with supernatural beings, ancestors, or heroes that serve as primordial types in a primitive view of the world; myths bring the unknown into relationship with the known...any real or fictional story, recurring theme, or character type that appeals to the consciousness of a people by embodying its cultural ideals or by giving expression to deep, commonly felt emotions...one of the fictions or half-truths forming part of the ideology of a society...a notion based more on tradition or convenience than fact."

While not living in a preliterate society and in dealing with contemporary as opposed to ancestral beings, these myths we've created about city and country women serve the very real function of giving us ideals to aspire to in order to alter definitions of women given to us by

the patriarchy (to really BE super-natural beings, so to speak). If we are attempting to reject the limited cultural view of us as mothers, mistresses, wives, daughters and nuns, it seems we NEED positive images to place alongside of those traditional, but not complete roles. To be "Country Women" (strong, independent, knowledge in survival skills) and "City Women" (dedicated, tough, sophisticated, politically aware) are such positive images. Thus, these myths originated out of a need to re-define ourselves in a way that expresses our fullest potentials, or, more really, our present lives.

But somewhere along the way, we bought these views of ourselves too completely. We apply them too rigidly to ourselves and sisters in ways that do not accurately portray our lives; in ways that are too one-dimensional. Having defined the ideal country woman or city woman, we have come to expect ALL women living in the country or city to possess those attributes, subtly and not-so subtly putting each other down if we aren't living up to the ideal. This overlooks the reality that we are all in various stages of growth and knowledge, and that being individuals - not models we have a whole array of complex needs and interests. Ironically, we have made as difficult, unfair, and equally limited a set of expectations to live up to as the original roles we're so aggressively trying to escape and redefine more humanly.

It would also be too limited and polite a view to say these myths arose only out of a positive need to create alternative definitions for ourselves as women. Many of these myths have originated out of mutual jealousy, resentment, envy and disdain - i.e. "Why should country women have it so good, living in such a beautiful place, when we have to live daily in noise, pollution, and oppression?" or "City women sure have it easy and fun living in the city with all their basic needs taken care of and so many things to do!" Many of these ideas are based on misunderstandings, over-simplifications, and total ignorance of the other reality. The grass is always greener... Women living in each environment DO have privileges the other lacks, as well as oppressions to deal with. And trashing the other for what we lack or desire does not help them to deal with their own set of oppressions.

Finally (to tie up the more abstract part of this article), it might be said that the schism that exists between city and country women (as reflected in some of the more negative myths about each other) has arisen in part as a result of that common need for many counter-movements to define themselves, polarly, or in opposition to other movements; to give their own group a stronger sense of self-identity. The result has been a collective one-up-womenship within the women's movement in a similar vein to that which has happened between lesbians and heterosexual women. This filters down to the person-to-person level, estranging city and country women from each other, making it hard to get past criticism to give the encouragement and support we all need.

cont.



## STALKING THE ELUSIVE TRUTHS:

But understanding where these 'myths' originated and why they've become potentially a two-edged sword, does not deal with the reality that each myth DOES offer a kernel of truth that creates some real conflicts in goals and needs between city and country women. In a wildly impulsive attempt to explore the degree of truth in some of these myths, my city friend, Concrete Rainbow Tunnel (and she puts down such names as "Windspirit" and "Morningsong"? ) and I wrote a rough questionnaire to be given to the women attending the Country Women's Festival. While aware that we were playing the same label game that we found dangerous and were trying to minimize in our personal lives, we approached the questionnaire in the spirit of an experiment, a rough gauge, to sort out (hopefully) some of the confusion. We also felt that part of the idea of building and evolving a supportive, strong women's consciousness in the country and city is knowing who we are!

Of the over 200 women at the festival, roughly 120 or 60% replied, giving us a good indication of who the women attending the festival were. This, of course, is only a small percentage of all women living in the country but a good little hot-bed of feminist consciousness where a lot of these myths are bantered freely about. (Anyway, this is a cautionary note to take ANY statistical results with a grain of salt - especially these since they do only reflect a small percentage of country women).

## survey results:

The results did show some surprising things:

- roughly half of the women there lived in a city just prior to coming to their present country home.
- 3/4 were from the west coast (mostly California).
- 1/2 have lived in the country for a period of 1-3 years; with another 1/4 staying longer (3-6 years); a statement that women are staying in the country.
- 1/3 own their own land; another third live off the land free (most likely in communal or caretaking situations), indicating we're becoming more stable, land-wise?
- 1/2 were living communally; 1/4 as a part of a couple; an indication we're breaking old patterns of small nuclear families and couples?
- in politics, we were definite and divided where we stood with the two largest categories being 'anarchist' and 'back-to-the-land' followed by two less larger categories of 'radical feminist' and 'socialist feminist.' Country apoliticalness is real!
- 90% of us were raised in the middle class; all, now, in the throes of a country poverty spiral with a sizeable chunk of us identifying ourselves as working class, downwardly mobile. (Another indication of country apoliticalness might be seen in the significant number of women choosing to not categorize themselves in a class position now with comments of being "inwardly mobile"

or "rising above class consciousness".)

- 3/4 of us are young chronologically (in our 20's); almost all white, with a third labeling ourselves as Jewish.
- we are fairly diverse in our sexual orientation with 1/3 lesbian, 1/4 bi-sexual, and 1/6 heterosexual and the rest ('others') choosing not to be labeled.
- 1/2 of us have children.
- we are tremendously varied in the skills we feel competent in, with the largest response being 'country/farming skills' (gardening, animal care, plant knowledge); traditional women's skills (cooking, childcare); a sizeable number of us competent in auto mechanics, carpentry, artistic/craft skills, healing and health, political and organizational skills, writing, teaching and music. (we are also aware of other 'skills' not always recognized as such - talking, counseling, listening, being, living collectively, running, 'a good lover'...)

- BUT, we felt we needed to learn more - much more! in carpentry, auto mechanics (the two largest responses); with general farming skills, animal care, healing and body work, herbs, weaving, and self-defense also drawing sizeable interest to learn.) One woman wanted to learn "faith in my ability to do things"; another, "to take care of myself emotionally"; "to learn how to make money and be political at the same time" and finally, "to express anger".)

- we made our livings in a multitude of ways - selling firewood, truck-driving, cobbling, teaching, writing, crafts, fruit-picking, and herbs; barter; but many of us just 'live off the land' farming, growing our own; are collecting unemployment, food stamps and AFDC; and supplement those two with part-time jobs. (a sizeable number wrote they were not making it.)

Thus, if the women attending the festival were any reflection of the larger population of country women, some of these myths do reflect reality. We are in many ways privileged in being white, young, coming from middle class backgrounds, and owning land or living off it free. We are, in some ways, not too politically involved or aware (but that depends on whether lifestyle is seen in itself as a political statement, which I suspect many country women would agree it is). We are experimenting in creating alternative lifestyles through how we choose to relate to sexually, and how we make our livelihood. Many of us are trying to evolve a non-exploitive, harmonious way of living off of less, balancing our time in work and play in less production-oriented, inhumane, and rigid personal patterns. Living in the country has caused us to learn many practical skills not ordinarily encouraged of women, but we still feel the need to learn much more. While having the luxury of owning land and living off it free, it might be said that many of us are land rich and money poor, surviving off unemployment, miscellaneous part-time jobs, and growing our own food. While these



sometimes reflect a conscious choice, a political statement, freely made, to be more self-sufficient and less dependent on the 'system', to give ourselves more time for self-growth and to develop our own alternative lifestyles, they are also a statement of country poverty/job scarcity which forces many of us to "grow our own". Judging, too, by the long list of jobs and various money scams, we are all not country farmers - but are using ingenuity to make a living.

If the questionnaire does show kernels of truth to these myths, it also reflects how un-black and white things really are with the broad range of answers given; while one woman is working as an aide in a public school earning a comparatively decent wage, is new to the country and has no 'skills' so to speak; another may be living communally, doing volunteer work in a food-coop and is into astral projection and meditation. In other words, these generalizations drawn from the survey, reflect only parts of each of our individual lives at a given moment and do not change as we change. Yet to say "I'm from the city or country" places a rigid set of labels and assumptions about who we are, setting up a pattern of interaction between us, that in actuality may be far from the individual circumstances of our lives at the moment.

#### WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO:

It takes a lot of guts and energy to step outside the 'cultural mainstream' of "how-females-are-supposed-to-be" in patriarchal Amerika, and say, "Hey, I want to build a cabin in the woods, buy land and start a women's truck farm, live on a commune, plant trees and start a healing circle, food conspiracy, or just live in a quiet beauti-

ful place while pursuing a profession seriously," or, in the city "...start a class-consciousness group, teach in an alternative school, be a union carpenter, start a women's business, support sisters in prisons," to say, "Hey, I want to be MYSELF!" In both places! We don't have a hell of a lot of support coming from the media, our parents, history, or even our neighbors, who wonder why a woman would want to do 'men's work' or why we are being 'unamerican', 'weird', 'lazy' and the whole list.

It is understandable that being in such a vulnerable place, it's easy to fall into the same negative competitive, power games of "Who's better," or "I know more than you know," in comparing lifestyles different from our own. Not to mention that each environment (city and country) really does nurture different skills and attitudes in living there. In general, it is hard to truly feel our relationship to nature in a city environment, and vice-versa, to see graphically and intensely the daily results of capitalism in the country. But it seems we have enough going in both places and that we should be broad enough in our perspectives, to not have to rely on trashing and negative comparisons to give our own personal lifestyles validity. As the festival, or any gathering of women, so beautifully illuminates, we are strong in our diversity. Used carefully our myths about our unique lifestyles in living in the city or country can give strength to that diversity without negating the other. Further, we can build jointly upon what each life uniquely offers by trying to bridge the two, provide what the other lacks without taking away from either.





# Rural Relationships

Can a dyke separatist really survive in the country? Several months ago I left my "lesbian womb" in the city to find out. I left knowing that it would be difficult, for I knew from my initial visits to the country that my relationships, and who I related to, would change drastically. Could it be that I would once again be capable of relating to straight women, and even, heaven forbid, men? Today, I'm amazed to find that some of the women I feel closest to are straight, and I actually greet my male neighbors with a wave and a friendly smile.

In the city you can afford to be selective in who you relate to - in the country you can't (or is it simply harder?). While living in the country, if I related to only those people who I really wanted to relate to, I would have a circle of friends that included only about six women and my animals, and end up living a very isolated existence. In the city I could always rely on a woman to have almost any resource that I needed; in the country it's different. Chances are it's a man that has the tool that I need to fix my car. Therefore, I need to make connections with men in order to have the privilege of using their resources.

Upon moving to the country, my personal relationships underwent many transformations. I think the most noticeable difference was in the types of relationships I developed. While in the city, I developed numerous superficial relationships, and only a few that went deeper than sitting in a meeting together. In the country I want to develop deeper relationships; not only is this something I want, but I also see it as a pattern here. With fewer people to relate to, I find myself wanting to give and get as much as possible from my friends.

A difficult dynamic of relationships in the country is that for the most part, everyone has the same small circle of friends. When you have several circles of friends, as you do in the city, there is not as much of an investment in working out problems. I flash immediately on the situation created, shortly before I left the city, when my lover and I started dealing with non-monogamy. I had never seen Amy's other lover before I started relating to her, and chances are, even if I had stayed in the city, I might never have seen her again. The largeness of the city affords you that privilege - to not see someone if you choose not to. By not dealing with problems here, and simply trying to avoid someone with whom I have things to work out, it would be easy for me to lose contact with at least half, if not all, of my friends. Here, we all go to the same post office, shop at the same store, and go to the same meetings and parties. In actuality, although it can get very difficult and complex, it is a wonderful way of working through all the old patterns of jealousy, anger, resentments, and everyday feelings. In the

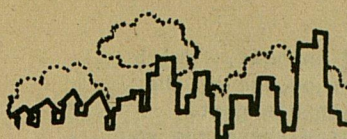
city I was able to get by with simply repressing many feelings and very rarely dealing with them. As a result, relating in the country can be very intense. Sometimes I long for the anonymity of the city - to be able to walk miles of city blocks surrounded by a sea of unfamiliar faces. No one knowing who I am, who I'm relating to now or what I had for dinner last night.

By making the choice to live in the country I gave up many of my support groups, which has changed the way in which I relate to people who may not understand or be supportive of where I am. In the women's community in Los Angeles, there were enough women who thoroughly understood my politics that I found it unnecessary to try and work with those who didn't. I feel that in the country, where there are fewer women with a feminist consciousness, complete political affinity is impossible to attain. In the city you can move from group to group until you find one whose politics agree with yours. In the country you're lucky to find one all women's group that is dealing with political issues. Due to this lack of total political affinity, and knowing the reasons for it, I find myself much more tolerant of who I relate to. In the city I never conceived of relating to any woman who oppressed me with her diets and had no comprehension of my feeling OK about being 15 lbs. "overweight"; or of relating to a woman who didn't totally understand lesbian oppression. But in the country I've been in discussions where not everyone agrees that the local logging operations are nothing more than another form of capitalist rape, much less agree that fat women are oppressed or understand that I no longer hold "society beautiful" as one of my values. "After all", they tell me, "fat women make the choice to be fat, and you make the choice to be 'ugly'". In the city, I would not choose to work with people with a different consciousness than my own, much less struggle with them on a daily basis. But in the country I do.

Given the choice, I would still choose to relate only to lesbian separatists. But for right now I don't have that choice, and I know I would have even less of a choice if I didn't have the privilege of living in the country in an area that has a strong women's community. I feel that my openness and tolerance would broaden even more if I was living someplace where I was lucky to find a woman with a feminist consciousness, much less another lesbian.

Although I'm having to deal with making many, sometimes difficult, changes, I'm enjoying the process that I'm going through in altering the way in which I relate and who I relate to. I see this process as just one more way in which I've grown ever since moving to the country. And it feels good! ♀





# City Voices

The following conversation was originally planned as a city perspective or reply to Country Voices. What took place however, was of much more value--a potpourri of many of the stereotyped views, prejudices, and fears and some accurate observations city and country women have about the other place and the people who live there. We hope you'll read this with that awareness. We tried in the course of the four hours to offer some sort of balances in points of view to offer response to over-generalizations. Mostly, we see it as an airing of those gut feelings many of us have and hope you'll glean ideas from it.

## *Ruthann's life = We've all gone through some of it, too--*

Ruthann: I don't think I can really define myself as a city or country woman either way at this point. I like the country a lot but for right now, it doesn't provide enough for me and that's why I moved to the city recently. I want to get more into theatre and in the country people are more into theatre and dance as an afternoon activity rather than something they devote their life to--its something to do. In the city, you have more people who are committed to it as a work process. That's what I really want right now and so I consider myself a city person, but I lived the last six years in the country.

Leanne: What drew you to the country?

Ruthann: I was living in Berkeley and you know-- "Back-to-the-Land!" My husband and I went to Oregon and built a log cabin on 20 acres with some of the trees. We lived up there about 3 years and then I came back to the city when we split up. I stayed for about 6 weeks and couldn't take the city so I decided to move to the Coast because it was a compromise of the two--there was a dance studio and it was in the country and I thought I could bridge the two worlds.

Melia: What was it about the city that you "couldn't take"? Were you just sensitized by living in the country?

Ruthann: I don't know if it was related to that or not. I came out of the marriage/relationship feeling really insecure and came back to a place [city] where I hadn't been particularly happy and could find nothing to connect to and decided to go back to the country in a different place. It

was too much stimulus, too many choices and at that point in my life I couldn't even make simple choices like buying a certain brand of toothpaste, let alone be able to choose between all the signs that were up on the board! (Laughter) I just wasn't in a good place at that time.

Leanne: How do you feel coming back this time?

Ruthann: I'm a lot more focused. I know what I want to do and I've gotten right into it--I've committed myself and that's kind of a heavy thing. I was able to fit right in and I don't miss the country at all.

Leanne: Did being in the country intensify your relationship with Bob?

Ruthann: Oh yes--it brought out a lot of heavy stuff. Living in the city you have a lot of outside energy and I really like a lot of people energy, which is one of the reasons I came back to the city. When we lived in Berkeley for four years we were never alone. Then all of a sudden there were the two of us in Roseburg, Oregon, with no one really that we had anything in common with and our friends were five hundred miles away. It was horrendous! We didn't know each other because we'd always been around people. We didn't even have a strong relationship and we tried everything at once--we had gotten married, we bought land, we moved to the country. So through that, the country became a real ugly place to me. I still like the country though.

## *Contrasting our different worlds--*

Lynda: Whenever I'm in the country I wonder why I ever come back to the city because I feel it's the place where I'm most tranquil and centered. I get a lot of "zen information", internal messages I don't get enough of in the city. There is a whole time/space that I respect that happens in the country--its immediacy, its what's happening right now. In the city everything is planned, it seems to me, and I find myself so busy! I think sometimes about what's the point of making your life into such an ordered existence, it doesn't feel sane at all. Something happens to me in the city where I'm greedy to get things done. It's like going down the road at 90 miles an hour to see more of the countryside.

Melia: But that happens in the country too.

Ruthann: That made me think about the community up there and how different it is here for me. Growing up around a lot of people, small communities are real confining to me. Its too colloquial perhaps. I remember going down to the store, talking, and getting the same feeling of restlessness from people--from anybody off the ridge. The feeling was not dissatisfaction so much but wanting a little bit more. In the city, it makes me feel so much better when I don't have to listen to that same "We're just trying to get those food stamps," or "I have an unemployment appointment to get to," and "Are we going to have enough money to pay for the hay?," "There's always this STRUGGLE! even though



people really love the country and are committed to living there. I feel a really strong creative force at work in the city. There are people who aren't all struggling, who are pretty satisfied and fulfilled with what they're doing.

Leanne: I think the differences you feel between city and country have to do with personalities. I think some people blend into different atmospheres better. Maybe you have a personality that is more given to the city environment.

Laurie: A lot of what you're talking about seems to me to be concerned with economics, too. A lot of the people I know in the city are concerned with food stamps, unemployment, barely being able to make the rent, having shit jobs and a terrible time. These are people who aren't particularly fulfilled in what they're doing, who don't have the money or the time for doing things they would be fulfilled in--so I think there are two sides to it and a lot of the more fulfillment and less dissatisfaction is just because of the people you have been around.

Annie: I'm wondering if you're not mystifying that whole word "fulfillment". I was feeling the same thing with Lynda and her "zen information".

Lynda: I do think that I have sort of mystified what the country is about because I haven't gone through the struggle. In my limited country experience I never fully understood how much of a struggle it could be day to day. But that's part of the reason I didn't move to the country. I didn't want to spend my energy on the time it took to drive to town to get supplies. A lot of my not wanting to be in the country more than fairly short periods of time had to do with being hypoglycemic and I don't want to be more than twenty-five miles away from the nearest hospital. I did it for two months when I was in bad shape and it was really disastrous. It's a strange thing to have to deal with, but it made me feel like "I don't know whether I can do this."

Annie: I don't think that's strange at all. I've been getting more information about handicapped people. The statistic I read recently is one in eleven of the total population is handicapped. As OWL Farm and Covelo Land found out, handicapped people have a real hard time living in the country. One in eleven is a lot of people.

Lynda: I think it's somewhat true for me that I mystify what kind of place that I'm in in the country because I partly go there to retreat. I have made a commitment that I'm not going to take "the city" with me when I go. I go there wanting to totally flow with whatever space there is there. I don't do that here. So it's an attitude. I suppose if I got my act together I could bring that attitude here; that I could make it happen in the city. I finally moved after 6 years of living next to a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children where I never felt peaceful. I felt angry all the time. Moving was a compromise to me because I had to physically move instead of change my attitudes about the noise.

Annie: That's the way I live my life--angry at all the noises around me all the time. I was thinking about getting another shotgun to shoot the next car that honked it's horn at three in

the morning for about a half an hour. Which happens all the time--we live on one of the biggest streets in the Mission District.

Leanne: Annie, why do you stay there--do you have a choice?

Annie: It's defined economically where people can live. There are a few districts where people can live who don't make a lot of money, such as the Mission, the Haight and the Fillmore. All three are composed predominantly of working class people, racial minorities, students, artists, and other marginal types who can't afford high rents. That's why I'm in the Mission--it's cheap.

Leanne: So you came to the city four years ago and stayed because you needed a job.

Annie: Mostly yes. I've developed lots of ties in the city in friendships. There's lots of political work to be done and because of it, I don't think I'd break the bond. You have lots of choices and that's real important. I couldn't go back to the country and be as isolated.

## What is political? What is the country?

Leanne: Do you see any difference between political work in the city and the country?

Annie: I see very little political work in the country.

Lynda: I see country women's communities as considerably more political than so-called city politics. Women's communities can't escape living their politics in their daily lives--that is, sharing a tractor or a truck or taking care of each other's animals or children, making political commitments to bond a life together even if you have separate land, and the like. Country politics is a daily renewal of the commitment of sisterhood, of community, of really being responsible to one another. It's not like city politics concerned with unions, demonstrations and organizing. It's dealing on a one-to-one level with other people in the country. The way you start a revolution is first you deal with what's inside you and you get clear. Then, once you are close to clear about who you are and what your priorities are, then you work with another person.

If you can change the way you interact with other people, if you can make a commitment to live your politics in your daily life, then you can begin to change the way we all interact with one another.

Leanne: But that's privileged! Not everyone has that luxury of dealing with themselves first and then applying what they learn to a group.

Melia: I'm worried about women on farms in Idaho, North Carolina or Minnesota--can they relate to all of this? We're all being so West Coast-oriented. We're talking about people living their life in what they feel is a political manner--how they are interacting and taking care of each other's children, living politically correct communal lifestyles, starting women's land trusts. But I wonder if that's going on in the "real" country--farming and isolated areas without a



strong counter culture or women's community.

Annie: I don't want to discount the women's community in the country as not being the real country. I think it's a specialized form of country. So I wouldn't want to get into calling other places the real country, either.

Leanne: That's another myth. The real country is incredibly varied. I'm thinking about my own life in the valley which was basically almost suburban. I had a job and spent little time doing rural things--farming, taking care of animal, etc.

Annie: Small towns are a lot different than isolated country farms. I also have some feelings for people who are in the country and aren't connected with a women's community...I've been concerned for women who lived in places like New Mexico where a lot of industry is moving to be cause the labor is so cheap with a lot of third world women to exploit.

Lynda: But there aren't many third world people in the country in general.

Melia: There aren't many third world people who have their own land in the country, who are a part of the small farm group or the back-to-the-land women's groups. There are Chicano farm workers in California and the Southwest, Black tenant farmers in the South, and Native Americans on what little land the government didn't rip-off from them. We're basically addressing ourselves to the counter-culture/women's movement return to the country and that is mainly a white, middle class, educated group.

Laurie: Yes, and I think it's going to be your white privilege too that gets you out of the city. But some people have reconciled their guilt concerned with that by feeling that it's ok to use that privilege and get out and share it as much as you can in the country by buying land and having five friends live on it. People do that. It's something I could probably do--but not right now. That's why my politics get in the way of ever going to the country--I can't tap the resources I have for money and be able to use that privilege.

Leanne: If you could would you--do you see that as a justifiable alternative?

Laurie: Not right now. It may be hooked into a certain amount of guilt--my inner sense that says "I can't leave the city until everyone is able to." I can't leave the work I'm doing here because there are so many oppressed people here. How can I just say "Well, bye, I'm going to do my land trip." I'm not sure that gets me anywhere. I think it's ok as long as I'm not killing myself in the city. If at some point the city becomes so oppressive that I can't do meaningful work then I probably owe it to the revolution to go heal myself in the country and keep fighting.

Ruthann: I was thinking about this earlier when we were talking about privilege and moving to the country. Many people I know who, if given the opportunity of moving to the country, wouldn't. Many people still think in terms of "I'd rather have these other things that give me access to doing great things in the city." People choose to live in the city--that's a reality.

Leanne: They choose; and getting back to the whole mystique question again of what country life is like, I think they see it as a somewhat lower standard of living--back to more basic

necessities, a more primitive life. This prevents a lot of people psychologically from taking that step to move to the country. They think country life is all farming, hard work, and isolation--a whole set of negative connotations comes up in people's minds that prevents them from changing, especially third world people. That still is reality socially, if you're a minority. It is really hard to move into a small rural white community and feel some support.

## Exchanges & grand dreams

Laurie: One thing I want to get back to is talking about exchanges or more access. In the city/country workshop at the Festival where we broke into three groups, I was all gung-ho to talk about country/city sharing. I was going to say, "I want to set up this network where people can come and stay at my house for a period of time and plug into my political work, my social activities, and all things I have access to in the city. Then there will be a set-up where I can go to the country for 6 months..." I didn't even get a chance to say that because most of what the women from the country were saying was "Here I am in the country, I don't want to go back to the city; I don't want to do your culture; I don't want to do your work. That's all the stuff I left; that's all the stuff I hate; I can't deal with it and I'm barely making it in the country, I can't see my way to having other people come and be in my space with me." Leanne: In other words, "We want the country for us."

Laurie: Right. "We made it, we worked for it and it took years and years and if we could do it, you could do it." Which, in a sense, is true because of who I am in terms of access and privilege I have. I probably could do it. But that was disappointing to me to hear all that. They were definitely into doing it in their own intimately set up structures.

Lynda: Were you proposing to go and work with them or were you proposing to go and visit?

Laurie: The idea of a city/country exchange was meant to be energy input, not just "Let's go have a vacation in the country."

Lynda: What happens for the most part if you have a place or land in the country is that you might have a constant stream of visitors--everyone is suddenly very buddy-buddy. It's very disruptive to constantly have new people coming. Some of the things you work towards in a country life are some serenity and isolation. At the same time, a lot of country women want input from city women. They want material things--food, car parts, tools, books from the city, or they want to know what's happening politically or in music. They might just want to talk. But they want their own space and not to be inundated.

Leanne: That's just something that can't be resolved. It is a quality/quantity question that's in conflict.

Annie: The conflict is different--it's that country women want something from the city but they are not willing to pay for it. Not willing to exchange. cont.



Lynda: The fear is they'll stop having the country--that's pretty big dues.

Leanne: I can feel that resistance in my own community with a feeling like "You're a nice person but don't come and live here because you're one more person to see on the road" and that's privileged, but a valid concern in country women's minds. I'm wondering if all the things we like the country for, the lessons we learn from it, are incompatible with meeting the need of and sharing with many city women?

Annie: If you have privileges that you're not willing to share then how can there be sharing?

Leanne: I don't feel good about that. I'd like to think there is some way of providing for everyone's needs with land trusts and ways you can "regulate" the flow back and forth so that there will be that sharing of experiences. I don't think country women want to come to the city. That's very probable.

Laurie: It confuses me about whether you want to come or not because I hear it really strongly that once you're out you really don't want to come back. On the other hand, I do hear women wanting to come to the city to get a job or to get skills. I don't know why country women don't do it more often. Maybe it's because there aren't any jobs, which seems logical to me. I understand country women wanting to or needing to come and make money or for political work or for cultural activities. I wonder if those are just words or if there really are women who want to come for longer than little vacation trips and be involved in city life. Or, is the main thing a feeling that "Now we're here in the country it's a better place to be, so we'll stay."

Melia: I've been excited by the idea of exchanges. I envision more of that happening if women with money buy some pieces of land together as some have already begun to do. I'm speaking of this in terms of a size that could be used for more than a tight nucleus of four or five women. I was inspired by the Festival to think in terms of large numbers of women--this vision is probably very idealistic and unworkable but worth striving towards. I am more directed since I gave myself a chance to retreat and get my thoughts and goals together in the country. I see the country, in part, as a restoring place in which to gather energy to use in going back to deal with whatever projects you are involved with in the city.

Annie: I keep having recurring dreams of huge amounts of land that turn into a year-round camp.

Laurie: I have a friend who is sort of going crazy and freaking out. She wants to get into how she's feeling but doesn't feel safe to do that in Berkeley. It's too scary to let it out. There is no place to go and it's really hard. Everyone is trying to be supportive but we're all busy and scattered and can't help her. What I want is a place we can go, either with physical conditions or emotional, mental things to heal and just be able to be there in a supportive environment. Sort of like a refuge in the country. I want to spend my life part time in the city and the country. Assuming that I like the country, that it turns out as great as I think it might be, I still feel like there's a lot about

the city that I still want in my life--especially when I think about raising children. I want that mobility between city and country and see it as something I'd like to do with other women. It works better if you have supportive communities that are either changing as you change or are on both sides [living in the city and country]. It'd be really hard to just rip back and forth between your isolated place in the country and your isolated apartment in the city. That could make you really crazy! Having it more organized, with more women and awareness, makes it a desirable way to live.

## I've got some advice...

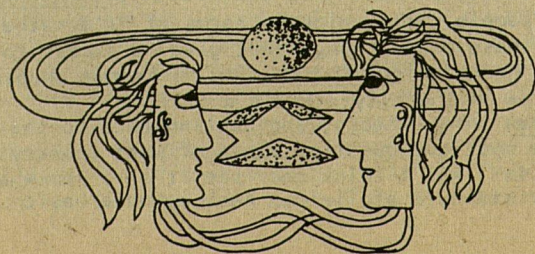
Leanne: I thought it might be valuable to include some sort of advice. Country women do move to the city and it's a hard transition to make either way. Having lived in the city for a long time, what would be something you'd recommend to be aware of in moving here.

Annie: I went from being a carpenter in the country to working in a factory, living next to a freeway; then to living in the city, driving a taxi cab, living in the Mission District. So, as far as I know, from my own personal experience, there is no easy way to do it. Just jump in--it's all traumatic.

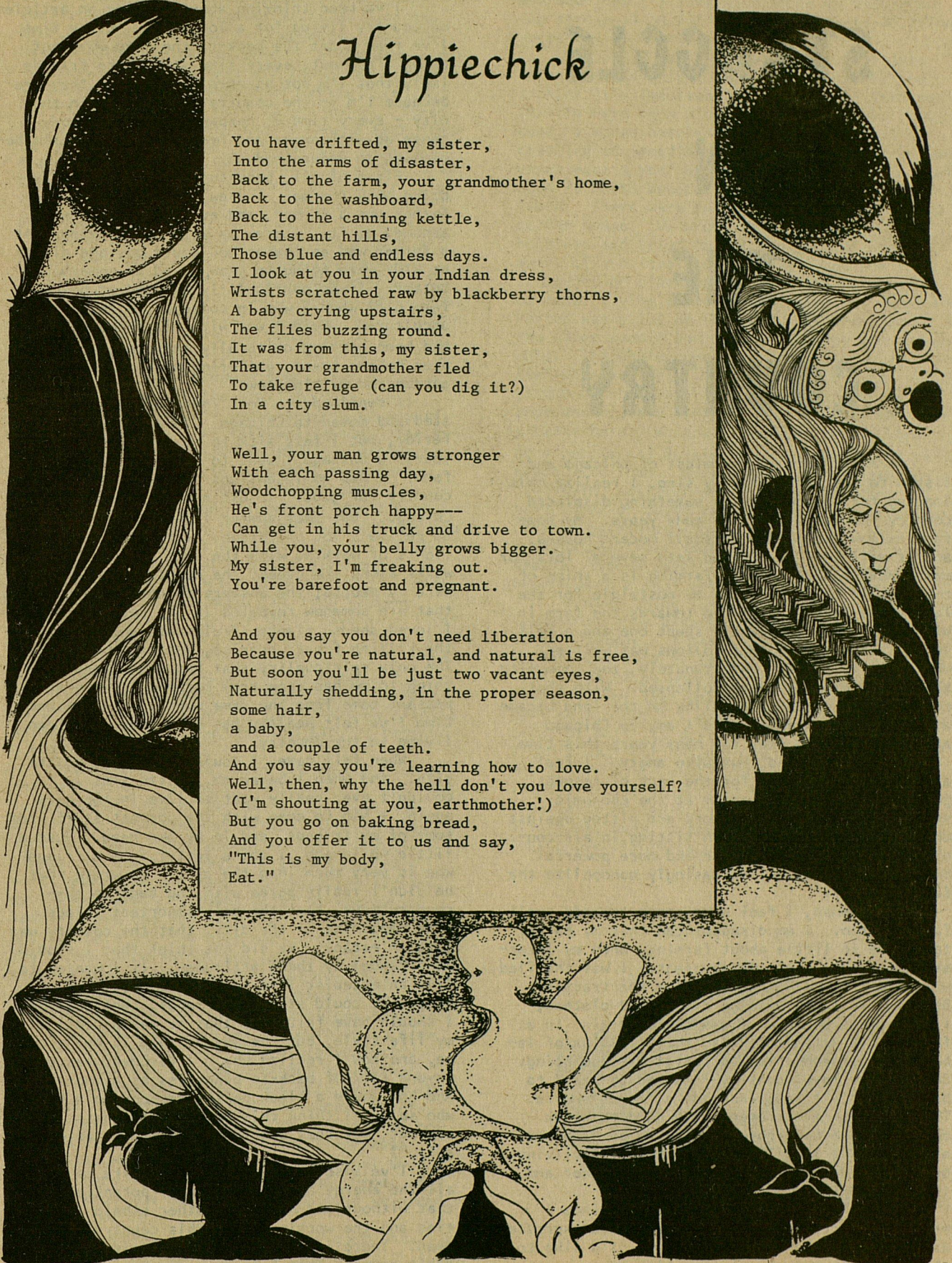
Laurie: The fears some women might have about moving to the city are absolutely valid. We really don't have very good ways of integrating new women into the city. Women new to the city, whether they're from Boston, Los Angeles or small towns and rural areas are bound to encounter some adjusting problems.

Lynda: There is beginning consciousness of that here. Once a month at a women's coffeehouse there is a presentation called "Culture Shock--a Media Fair for Women New to the Bay Area". It serves as an information source and a place to meet other people who are going through those same changes too.

Leanne: I'm trying to reverse the advice process too. Having lived in the country for four years, if I met someone who was coming to live in the country, what would I say to them to make that transition easier? My first advice would be to discard a lot of the romanticism associated with country living. That's only a small part of it, however. Be aware of the isolation, the hard work spent on basic necessities INSTEAD of doing a lot of other things you do in the city with free time. There are differences in the ways people relate to each other. These factors vary, of course, within the country but are still a good general indication of what I see you need to expect. In other words, take a good hard look at what the lifestyle is all about and decide if you want to commit yourself to that. ♀







# Hippiechick

You have drifted, my sister,  
Into the arms of disaster,  
Back to the farm, your grandmother's home,  
Back to the washboard,  
Back to the canning kettle,  
The distant hills,  
Those blue and endless days.  
I look at you in your Indian dress,  
Wrists scratched raw by blackberry thorns,  
A baby crying upstairs,  
The flies buzzing round.  
It was from this, my sister,  
That your grandmother fled  
To take refuge (can you dig it?)  
In a city slum.

Well, your man grows stronger  
With each passing day,  
Woodchopping muscles,  
He's front porch happy---  
Can get in his truck and drive to town.  
While you, your belly grows bigger.  
My sister, I'm freaking out.  
You're barefoot and pregnant.

And you say you don't need liberation  
Because you're natural, and natural is free,  
But soon you'll be just two vacant eyes,  
Naturally shedding, in the proper season,  
some hair,  
a baby,  
and a couple of teeth.  
And you say you're learning how to love.  
Well, then, why the hell don't you love yourself?  
(I'm shouting at you, earthmother!)  
But you go on baking bread,  
And you offer it to us and say,  
"This is my body,  
Eat."



# STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRY

As I sit here in the midst of Chicago and listen to the Carter family sing, I realize this longing for the country is something displaced country folk have felt for many years. My home farm is now surrounded by small modern houses, and it will soon be divided into several lots for more small modern homes. Farming is a thing of the past in that area. So my nostalgia for the land these days is directed towards the farm in Wisconsin where I recently spent one and a half years. The article that follows was written while living there. Unfortunately, the community that was beginning there collapsed. With that collapse, my hopes of settling on the land became a very distant dream. Here I am, in Chicago again, perhaps to stay for many years this time.

I feel saddened, but also angry. I feel angry at this society for the lack of respect given small farmers...angry at the economic structure where small farmers are pitted against one another, while rich men sitting in air-conditioned offices get richer and more powerful because corporations increasingly monopolize the farm "industry".

As a woman, I feel some anger towards small farmers, too. I am disappointed that my father taught me so little about farming, when my interest as a young girl was so great. I was thrilled when I got to milk cows or drive the tractor. But usually I was washing dishes and clothes, ironing, and baking. I was the only girl in a family of five children, so that division of labor is understandable, but still disappointing. On the farm in Wisconsin, I wanted to learn to be a farmer. I was, instead, a farmer's wife. The old roles are tremendously hard to break down. My one hope for learning to be a farmer at this point lies in the possibility of living on a women's farm, where we learn together and teach each other.

Though many things have changed since I wrote this article, the thoughts I have expressed are basically the same for me now. I'd like to share it with you, my country sisters.

I've been thinking about writing an article on country living for a long time. Every time I've read about the back-to-the-land movement being a cop-out, every time I've heard friends imply that I'm not as revolutionary as they are because I'm in the country and they're in the city - every time it happens, I feel my body tense up with anger and frustration. And I'm beginning to understand why.

First of all, back-to-the-land is really going back for me. I grew up on a farm. My father was a farmer, and enjoyed it, but was ashamed of it. I grew up with the feeling that a farmer was as low as you could go, and all of us kids were going to grow up to be something better. I was particularly ashamed of being a farm girl when I was in college. I felt really uncultured. Here I was with all those kids that had been getting culturally enriched, while I'd been baking bread, gathering eggs, weeding the garden and milking cows.

I continued to feel inferior when I graduated and moved to Chicago. I not only felt inferior, but I felt sick to my soul. After two years in Chicago, I went to spend a summer on a farm. I had no intentions of going back to the country for good. I just needed a break from Chicago. But that summer I began with no shame to relive a lot of things. I reveled in the delights of working with the soil again; the trees; walks along the creek; the country people who were my people; the answers to wordless questions that are somehow revealed in the natural cycles. I loved seeds, plants, fruits and vegetables; the killing frost; sunrise, sunset; the seasons. The only spirituality that has ever meant anything to me has come from nature. (Pagan and peasant come from the same word.) And the only time I've felt healthy has been when I've been living in the country.

When fall came, I couldn't go back to the city. And when I began to realize that I couldn't ever really want to live in the city again, I had to cope with the cop-out stuff from some of my friends, and in my own head. Just a little while ago, I got a letter from a friend who is very much into the city. He wrote that he didn't really agree with the back-to-the-country move, that the only important things were happening in the city, that the country was just an escape. He did not think that I should be offended by these attitudes. If I wanted to live an escapist life in the country, that was okay. We could still be friends. Well, maybe I should have felt good that he was accepting my life-style, but the way he said it bothered me, and now I realize why. I've never heard anyone talk of back-to-blackness as a cop-out. And how would a black person respond to a friend who said, "I think this back-to-blackness is a cop-out, but that shouldn't affect our friendship."?

I've also been told that the city is where all the energy and revolutionary potential is; that without the black and other ethnic minorities and the working class this country would be dead. There it is again - being told my people don't count. That bothers me as kind of a per-



sonal insult, but I also think it's not very realistic. As one neighbor tells us over and over, the farmers feed this country. And they have a lot of potential power. It remains a potential, because farmers all too often stubbornly cling to being independent capitalists, and collective action is hard to get going. There was a time when farmers really needed each other on the community level, but new machinery has changed that. There are no more threshing teams. Farmers don't go from one farm to another helping each other pick corn, and community wood-gathering has been outdated by oil furnaces.

But farmers need each other in a much different way today than they used to, because corporation farms are making it damned hard for the small farmer to survive. Fifteen years ago, my father had to sell out his dairy herd because our farm and herd were too small to be able to pay for bulk milk equipment. Every year a bigger percentage of farm produce comes from corporation farms. And if the small farmers don't get it together pretty soon, they'll be a part of the past, just like threshing teams. The National Farmers Organization (NFO) is trying to get farmers together to turn that potential power into a reality, but it's not easy.

There are a number of reasons why I feel strongly about saving the small farm and why you should too. First is that to have most of the land owned and most of the food produced by a few corporations is not a good situation. What it amounts to is a monopoly on food growing. And I also hate to see the small farm as a lifestyle disappear. The work that has to be done is hard, but not alienating, because it is complete and whole, so it all makes sense. Pitching shit from the barn by itself would be hateful, but putting it on the land where we plant a garden that we will harvest and eat, it becomes a part of a whole.

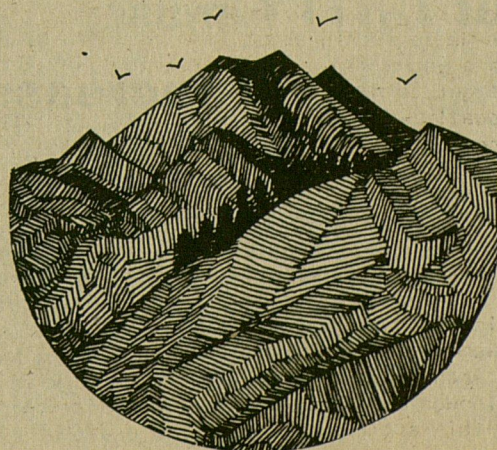
But, someone asks, what are we doing about the revolution? (What are you doing?) The revolution seems kind of distant to me sometimes, especially when the pump breaks, the goat gets sick, the bugs start devouring our broccoli plants, no one has money for the electricity bill, and there are tensions among the eight of us living here. It takes a lot of energy to learn to eke out our existence from this land, and to learn to live with each other. But learning to do those things are part of the revolution to me. Developing alternatives to the nuclear family structure is important to me. Learning to work for collective rather than individual goals is important. Learning to grow food without poisons is also a high priority for me. And being a non-consumer is another worthy goal to strive for, not only because the fewer of us who support this consumer society the better, but also because we're learning how to make it without that. If the Vietnamese guerrillas had had to depend on National Food Store, there would be no revolution there. We need to know how to live from the land in order to fight for it.

As a woman, I feel especially good about learning how to work with the land and with tools

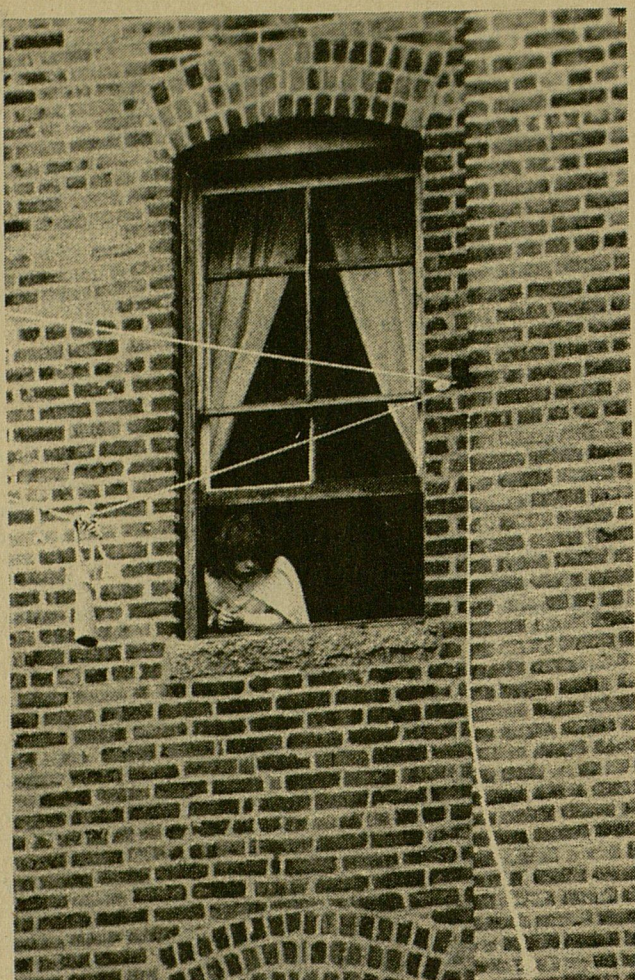
and machines. I feel good about my body growing strong along with my confidence to do things necessary to my existence.

I hope to begin to put some energy into things beyond this collective farm soon, too. I think it's important to be actively involved in life here on a wider community level. However, I moved here without any intentions of creating an immediate revolution. I had had an experience a year earlier of moving into a small town in South Dakota to enlighten the people there. There were two of us, and we started a coffee house. We wrote off the over-30's as hopeless and tried to get the younger people aware of and involved in everything from the struggles of black people to draft refusal to communal living to women's liberation. What resulted was a lot of fear and resentment among the older people and confusion among the younger ones. The whole community breathed a sigh of relief when we left. It was ridiculous for us to assume we knew what the people there needed to know and do, and I didn't want to make the same mistake here. We are slowly getting to know some people and develop a mutual trust and respect with them. We are sharing our ideas on lifestyle, politics and farming with them. I have hopes of doing several things: starting an organic gardening group, working with NFO, discussing political ideas and realities with more people. Those possibilities seem closer as we become more a real part of this community.

Another thing I really want to do is to try to develop some understanding between city and country people. I don't believe that everyone should move back to the land. But I do believe that those of us who choose to do so should be respected for that decision. We need to support each other. I grew up in ignorance of the city; of both its delights and its struggles. I don't want our children to grow up that way. And I sure don't want city people to feel isolated from the country or to underestimate the importance of the struggle in the country. We, all of us, need to see the whole picture, not just those fragments closest to us. ♀







**"When REPRESSION  
increases,  
our UNITY must  
increase."**

It is concrete here. It is screeching hot-  
rods and motorcycles, blaring horns and sirens to  
S.F. General Hospital, shattering of broken glass  
in the night, loud and angry voices. It is rid-  
ing the Muni, walking the streets, being hassled  
and pushed, trying to find a day's work and then  
trying to get paid for it...living day-to-day.  
Going to the corner store for a quart of milk  
involves a whole pattern of defense; I never for-  
get why I'm studying a martial art.

However, we did just put a "garden" into the  
small pieces of dirt that somehow escaped the con-  
crete, one on either side of the small backyard  
that's squeezed between the garage and the steps:  
a pansy here, a geranium there, a few dwarf mari-  
golds, some tiny herbs. The dogs jumped the  
makeshift fence last night to shit on the only  
dirt they could find, breaking two flowers. It's  
tough on every level here in the city.

This is survival in the cesspool of decaying  
capitalism that exploits and divides people ac-  
cording to their class, race, sex age, culture,  
sexuality, religion and/or political stance.

It is getting worse here, has been for quite  
some time now: the U.S. Bureau of Census reports  
that the official number of poor people--meaning  
for a family of four, less than \$5,469/year or  
\$118/month per person--increased last year, 1975,  
by 2,500,000 people, or one person in every eight.  
Also last year, 4.3 million people exhausted their  
unemployment benefits, meaning that they were un-  
employed for about a year and a half and still  
there was no work. No work for the poor, shit  
jobs for the "lucky" and soaring profits for the  
rich. Inflation: what cost \$100 in 1967, now  
costs \$171.90.

There is another important change; the San  
Francisco Chronicle reports that less than ten  
years ago the white population of San Francisco  
was larger than the total population is today  
while the decline of total population has not  
been comparatively dramatic--meaning simply that  
the white middle class has had the financial  
means to flee the city and has done so by the  
tens-of-thousands, leaving the third world and  
poor working class populations to try to sur-  
vive in the ghettos of capitalism. Example:  
60% of the city's police workers don't live in  
the city. City jobs don't go to city residents.  
These police workers identify with the ruling  
class instead of protecting the people who live  
here. It is a common and oppressive error.

I've spent the first part of this article  
talking about the city because I want those of  
you out there in the countryside and in small  
towns to have a brief description of the condi-  
tions under which city women live. For many of  
you, I know that I am only reminding you, but I  
want you to be reminded. Also, I want to speak  
to the fact that contact between city women and  
country women has been and continues to be very  
limited, and clouded by the contradictions that  
exist from the different conditions under which  
we live.

One of the few ways that city women and  
country women have been able to meet with each  
other has been in the form of the Country Women's  
Festival, an annual event for six years now. (It  
is not unimportant to also know that Country Wom-  
en magazine has one of the largest distributions  
of the many women's publications and has intro-  
duced country women to city women everywhere.)  
But the only open space for city women to meet  
country women has been the Festival, and only  
a handful of city women are invited to come and  
share their skills each year. This is because  
the focus of the Festival is "country" and be-  
cause the physical space is limited. Many women



from both the city and country are turned away. It is clear that the Festival cannot meet the need for all the women from both city and country to meet with each other; it is also clear that the need is real. I want to say that I have been to three Festivals as a city woman sharing, in the beginning my carpentry skills in a workshop, and then for the last two years leading/helping to lead a workshop to explore the issues of city/country women. Over the years, I've felt the contradictions that are growing and separating city and country women since the first Festival that I attended. I've also felt the need to confront the issue and to bridge these differences in a principled and creative way.

This last September at the Festival, a country woman and I gave a workshop to provide a forum where issues, contradictions, and bridging could be discussed. We both gained insight by preparing for that workshop together, because our preparation required us to identify specific problems and to organize material about them in a useable form. We both feel good about the work and the workshop and have decided to write companion articles about what we did in the workshop for this issue of the magazine. What follows here is an outline of part of the workshop, a part which utilizes the concept of Unity, Struggle - Unity. We found it useful for us to explore and investigate within the guidelines of this concept.

I. Identification of our unity: the shared concepts and realities of our lives. We found that we shared feminism in a way that meets real needs, oftentimes combining our resources, utilizing the contrasts of our lifestyles and experiences, recognizing the need to bridge our differences and begin to share our privileges. We also found that we shared such things as knowledge, skills and strength in the form of friendships, support, nurturing and healing, celebration.

II. Identification of our conflicts: the real differences in the way we live.

a. We found that living in the city or country puts our lives in very different frames, when we named the privileges and oppressions of each:

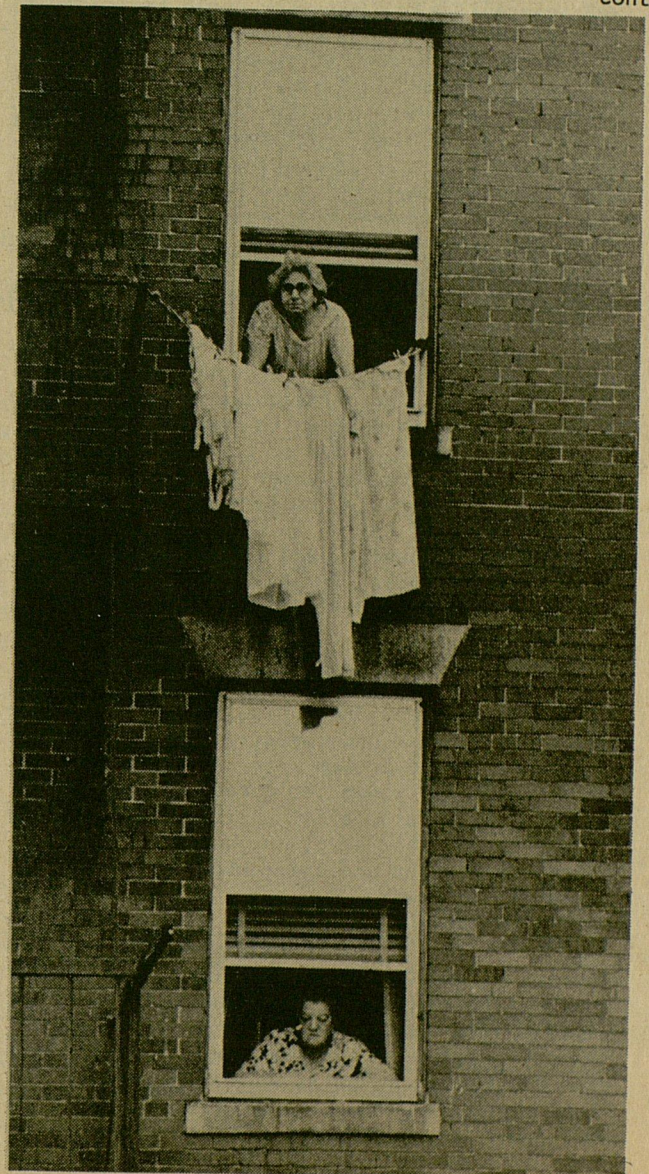
1. City women are privileged with more choices of who they relate to. They have greater access to jobs, entertainment, stores, work-groups and political information or organizations, but they are oppressed by the crushing numbers of people in a small area which means that their space is hostile, limited, noisy at all times, polluted and competitive.

2. Country women are privileged with open spaces and a healthful contact with the natural world that moves in the rhythm of cycles; with quiet alone moments which allow healing; time to create visions; skills in dealing with those aspects; a clear political perspective of how multi-national corporations are ripping off the people by raping their land and poisoning their water but they are oppressed by isolation (lack of access to all the things city women have access to) and by the very real and basic hard work of country living like caring for animals and gardens, keeping warm with wood stoves, all-around self-done maintenance.

b. We also found that we each held stereotyped myths about the other, like: city women are more politically right-on or country women have more practical skills. My country friend, who did the workshop with me, is writing about these myths and comparing them to the results of a questionnaire that we did at the Festival. We tried to ask questions that would give us an idea of who are country women (at least those at the Festival). I think what we were aiming at by this approach was to explode the myths in order to separate the stereotype and the value-judgment from the reality or element of truth, being like a seed which caused the myth to grow in the first place.

c. When we broke down the larger group of women at the workshop (about 50) into three smaller groups, we found that the discussion focussed on trying to explore conflicts by asking such questions as: What do we get from living in the \_\_\_\_\_? Why do we visit the \_\_\_\_\_? Are we defensive about our choice, and why? How does being defensive affect our relationships with

cont.





each other? How does the imbalance of numbers affect us (meaning fewer country women with greater access to city privileges and many more city women with less access to the country and its privileges, i.e. country women can more easily choose to come to the city to get jobs, entertainment, etc. oftentimes using space, support, energy that city women have worked to provide, while city women cannot choose to go to the country unless they have close friendships with country women who have land)? How do we get money and how does it affect our choices? How do city women get to the country, or how did they? What role does the Festival play in connecting women to the country? Why do a certain few city women get to come to the Festival while most others don't? How can we exchange privileges and fight oppression with each other?

III. Suggestions and evaluating possible solutions to conflicts while remaining consistent with our unity: the creative, practical changes in our daily practice that will re-organize our energies to deal with our new awareness. We identified several areas where work could begin:

a. Promoting consciousness around sharing existing space in both the city and the country in a way that moves beyond just a tight-knit personal friendship network. Some initiative has already been taken by at least two larger living-groups around this part of the country - seeking out 'third world and working class women to inform them about the country and to specifically invite them to visit, together with taking responsibility in matters like transportation and child-care. This can be done on a smaller scale, also, with individuals or small collectives.

b. Putting energy into the idea of many women's land trusts, such as the Oregon Women's Land Trust (OWL farm), in different areas. Since the Festival, women have begun to meet in San Francisco to explore the idea of buying land in Northern California for women to have access to open land for retreats, conferences, weekends, etc. The idea of having an urban land trust coordinated with country land trusts was also brought up. (Contact for California land trust information: Elena at 415-841-6500 ext. 334, message.)

c. Encouraging the Festival's organizing committee to be clear about the policies governing attendance; to consider making the Festival larger by adding a second campsite or having it for a longer time and broken into sessions which would allow more women; to consider sharing their skills in a detailed article on how to put a Festival together so others could more easily happen; to be open and clear about their decision-making power.

d. Organizing a conference for city and country women to meet with each other to do work on these kinds of issues by discussion, establishing priorities, and organizing the work to be done. A specific idea came up around creating a newsletter or contact sheet that would inform women who wanted other women to work with, share space or skills with, live with, exchange labor with, find land with, etc. This idea was to enlarge upon the concept of the "contact section" of Country Women magazine.

The workshop stopped with a feeling that much more discussion and planning needed to be done. There was also a feeling of frustration because many of our conflicts did not get resolved. I shared those feelings, but also felt that we did a lot of work around confronting the issues and moved forward towards a clearer awareness. I want to make a definite proposal to all of us: that those of us interested in continuing this work meet together sometime in the near future to further discuss the issues and ideas, perhaps with a commitment to start a group which will be responsible for putting the first contact sheet/newsletter out. My own politics tell me that this work needs to be paid and the expenses met; unpaid labor or volunteerism is another issue that needs to be discussed.

I am willing to take responsibility to begin the process by having your responses come to me to be sorted out for ideas and for those of you willing to help organize such a conference. Please include such information as: do you want to attend such a conference, what specific issues do you want to discuss, can you take responsibility to help organize the conference, where do you think we should have it and why, when should it be and for how long, how much it should cost per woman per day and how scholarships could be made available, should food be included, how out-reach should be done, and any additional comments or feedback. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want a response. Please reply to: "City Women-Country Women Conference", c/o S.F. Women's Centers, 63 Brady, San Francisco, Ca. 94103. ♀





# The Wisconsin Countryside

City living, I decided in the late sixties, was an insurmountable obstacle to my search for self-knowledge. The constant bombardment of stimuli, the bewildering choice of options, made it too easy to distract myself from what I concluded must be my top priority - discovering my real nature. After six years of living in the country, I find that the struggle for self-realization does not depend wholly on your environment. If you can't get it together in the city, there's no guarantee you can do it in the country.

But it is easier.

One of the biggest obstacles to self-realization is expectations. When you approach a person, a situation, with pre-determined expectations, your perceptions are clouded. Rather than looking at things directly, your mind is busy making comparisons between what you expected and what you see. This applies mightily to moving to the country.

The past decade has seen the formation of a rather rigid concept of going back to the land. As it turns out, while I love gardening, I have no interest in raising animals for food, milk, etc. While I love being surrounded by green rather than cement, I'm not into spending my time outside. I'd much rather be inside crocheting than hiking the hills. While heating with wood, even in our formidable Wisconsin winters, has proven quite workable, I dearly love indoor plumbing and electricity. Determining these individual preferences, however, has taken time. At some point I stopped feeling guilty because I wasn't executing in full the Mother Earth News way. My expectations gave way to a realization of what life in the country was for me.

I came to the country aware of a great personal need for solitude, and was quite surprised to find an active social life available here. We were temporarily pulled into it, and it took an exertion of will to enforce our solitude requirements.

Increasing your self-awareness does not, for most people, require a life totally devoted to meditation or a complete retreat from society. But, on the other hand, filling your life with frantic activity makes it very difficult to get a sense of yourself. Achieving that balance between these two extremes has been much easier for me in the country. But it doesn't happen automatically when you pass through the city limits.



In the sphere of personal relationships, things are thrown into sharper focus in the space of the country. Whether it was a function of being in the country, or whether we were at that stage in our relationship, my husband and I have had to look at each other more directly since our move here. On those long winter evenings, when it's just he and I, enveloped by stretches of snow and wind, we had to go a little deeper. A valuable experience, but frightening as well. There were moments when it seemed as though we were living a Bergman movie, and there was no easy way of avoiding confrontation as there would have been in the city, where distraction was just a walk to the corner bar.

A pattern has emerged in fact, evolving from being in closer touch with the seasons. Summer has come to mean activity, outward motion; and winter is the time of introversion, endless speculation on the course of my life. Productive speculation, at that. Those months of soul-searching usually net some conclusions, working hypotheses for the next cycle.

The country, in other words, is not a panacea, not a cure-all. It's given me the time, space and pace to proceed with the business at hand. But the gaining of self-knowledge is a long, intricate process, without shortcuts. The city, for me, was a hindrance, but was not itself the problem. The problem in fact, is life itself, and living is the solution.

cont.

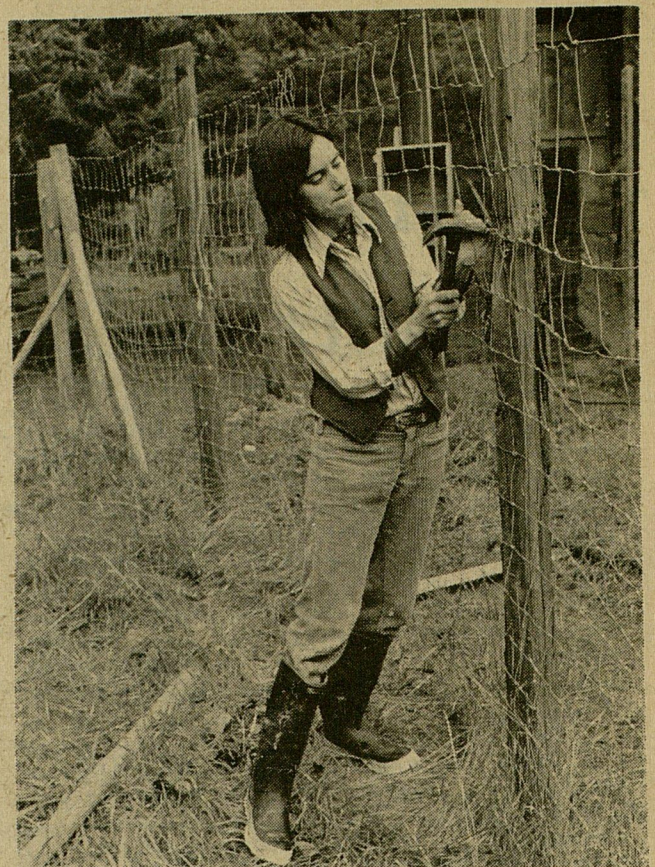


# SOCIAL CHANGE COMES FROM SMALL TOWNS TOO

For the last ten years, there has been a very common assumption among the Left in this country that moving "back to the land" is copping-out and abandoning the "real" struggle of the cities for an "unreal" life of simple personal freedom and satisfaction. During the last eight years in the country I have in many ways accepted this assumption, feeling both defensive and apologetic about not doing much real political work, while I spent twelve or more hours a day building a farm, producing food, helping publish a magazine and organize women's festivals, and writing a skills book for women. The women's movement seemed to me only somewhat political and farming not at all, while to my socialist friends in the city, life here was seen as one big privileged vacation.

"LIVING IN THE COUNTRY AND MY WORK IS NOT ONLY REAL, BUT ESSENTIAL TO ANY KIND OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THE U.S."

Then several months ago, as I researched information about farming for our Food issue, I began to understand more clearly how living in the country and my work is not only real, but essential to any kind of revolutionary change in the U.S. It is this analysis that I want to share in this article, as it is beginning to emerge. I hope that we country women will continue to build on and explore these ideas, for we have an understanding which is vital to the future of this country.



To start, I want to back up and repeat some of what I touched on in "Small Farms Are Dying" in the Food issue. It is important that we all understand the massive changes which have resulted from the government's farm policies in the last twenty years. In the early 1950's the Dept. of Agriculture designed an agricultural subsidy and taxation program which it openly admitted was for the purpose of "eliminating them (farmers with gross sales of \$10,000 or less in 1953) from agriculture and shift them and their children into non-farm employment...in other words, push them into cities..." (This quote is from a report of the Committee for Economic Development of the Dept. of Agriculture to the House Committee on Agriculture). The effect of these policies has been just that. In less than twenty years, 22 million people have been forced to give up their tenant farms or sell their own farms to corporate agribusiness and become urban laborers. OVER HALF of all the land in America today is in the hands of TWENTY-SEVEN corporations. This trend is still continuing, encouraged and made inevitable by government policy and law, so that three fourths of all our land will be owned by corporations within the next ten years. There is very little food being produced by "farmers" today; your turkeys come from Greyhound, hams from ITT, lettuce from Dow Chemical, potatoes from Boeing, strawberries from Purex, and vegetables from Tenneco -- most of this, of course, courtesy of the underpaid labor of farm workers. How have farm policies brought this about? Through subsidies which paid large farmers not to plant (putting tenant farmers out of work); through



monopoly control of the farm equipment, feed, packing, and marketing industries bringing unfair pricing and stock-piling for corporate profit; through inheritance and property taxes imposed on independent but not corporate farmers; and many other such tactics. (See the Food issue for a more complete discussion.)

The majority of the 22 million people who have been recently driven off their farms are black people, driven into seven major urban ghettos: Washington, Newark, New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The fact of their being now such a real struggle in the cities is in large measure a result of our agricultural policies. When I worked last spring taking farm animals to the Oakland and San Francisco ghetto schools, I asked the children in each class how many had ever been to a farm. Very few ever had, but almost all had long and heart-touching stories to tell about what their grandparents say about the farms they used to have. Black people realize what has been done to them.

Why then, has the Left so thoroughly ignored issues about corporate agribusiness, land ownership and reform, and the plight of the remaining independent farmers? In large measure, it seems to me, because the Left is predominately white, downwardly-mobile middle class, and relatively young. (The independent ethnic movements of whom this is not true are still busy fighting for day to day survival in their present environments.) For most of us who make up the Left, our families are two, three, and sometimes four generations off the farm. We are not the ones whose lives have been drastically changed by the advance of corporate agriculture. It is time now for our consciousness to change and increase. While it is fine and necessary to fight for better working conditions for farm workers, those changes are in some ways bandaid reform as long as people remain farm workers instead of farmers; as long as the land they till and the fruits of their labor are not theirs. For all of us to have the control of the majority of our land and virtually all of our food in the hands of a few major corporations probably means the end of any real change in this society. If we are completely dependent for food and survival on (and are therefore supporting) the very corporations we're fighting, there's no way we (all of us, the people) can win. Two generations ago this country was called "a nation of farmers". We are now a nation of dispossessed and oppressed urban workers. We need to save every independent farm that still exists and bring back tens of thousands more.

"IF WE DON'T FIGHT AGRIBUSINESS WITH OUR MONEY AND OUR WORK, WE ARE SUPPORTING IT."

What this means for those of us living in the country is that our food production skills are needed by the rest of the people in this so-

ciety. If living in the country is not to more and more become the privilege of a very few upper middle class dropouts in a vast desert of corporate land, we need to begin now to use part of our energy to build connections and alliances with city people to benefit all of us. In the Food issue, we discussed many aspects of alternative food distribution systems which will enable independent farmers to survive and the rest of us to get food. What we need now are more country people willing to commit themselves to farming beyond their own immediate personal needs, to take seriously the necessity of maintaining an alternative to food from Dow Chemical. (Just as city people must take seriously the necessity of building community-based distribution systems.) Beyond those immediate realities, we need to begin to fight for major changes in agricultural and taxation policies and to support radical farmer's organizations (like the National Farmers Organization). Ultimately, and most importantly, we need to build a broad-based land reform movement in this country. We have got to demand that we put an end to corporate land control.





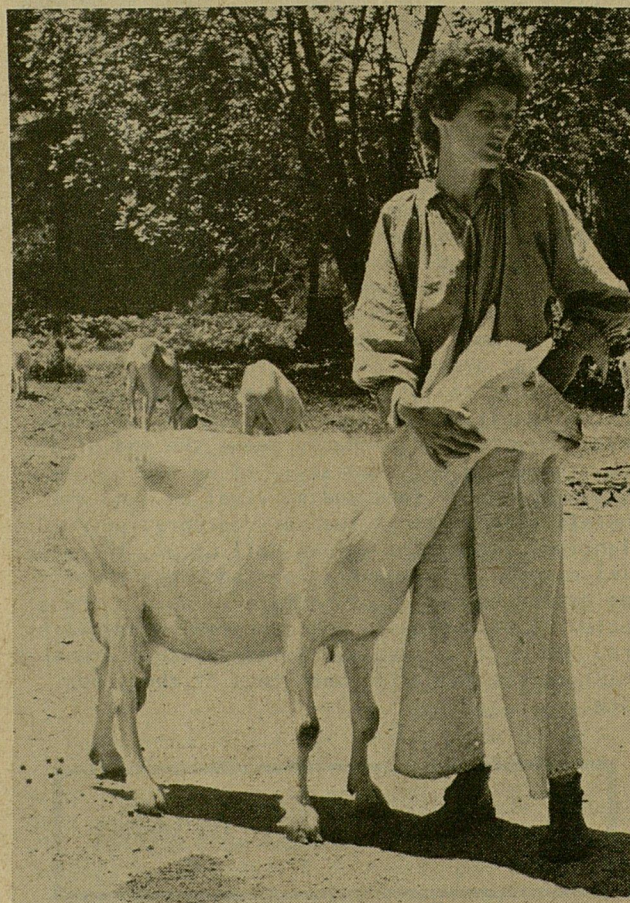
trol and food control returning agricultural land to the individual or collective ownership of the people who work it (many of whom are black, Chicano and Native American). As even the Department of Agriculture admits, "the most efficient farm production unit is a family working a 160 acre farm." That "family" could be biological or collective, but it's time that we all realized that "efficient" agribusiness is robbing us blind. The price of agribusiness has been urban ghettos and overcrowding, massive unemployment, welfare costs, deterioration of the schools, racial violence and riots. If we don't fight agribusiness with our money and our work, we are supporting it.

I don't want to jump too quickly over some of the valid criticisms of the country lifestyle. While it is a step in the right direction for any of us to get our vegetables from the garden instead of Tenneco (or the Safeway), it is not enough for us to just live simply on our own little homesteads. We all need to participate in social change or the society is going to change us. Rising taxes and monopoly control of the animal feed industry alone could put a lot of us back in cities in ten more years. Far too few of us have taken developing food production and farming skill seriously enough to be actually feeding others from the land we have the good fortune to tend. It is probably a lifelong task, for us recently unskilled ex-urbanites, to build and maintain an independent farm in the face of corporate America's efforts to make sure we fail. I want to encourage us all to take seriously our opportunity and responsibility to develop and share those skills, to make sure there will be some farmers around to teach others when land reform comes (and to feed all of us in the meantime).

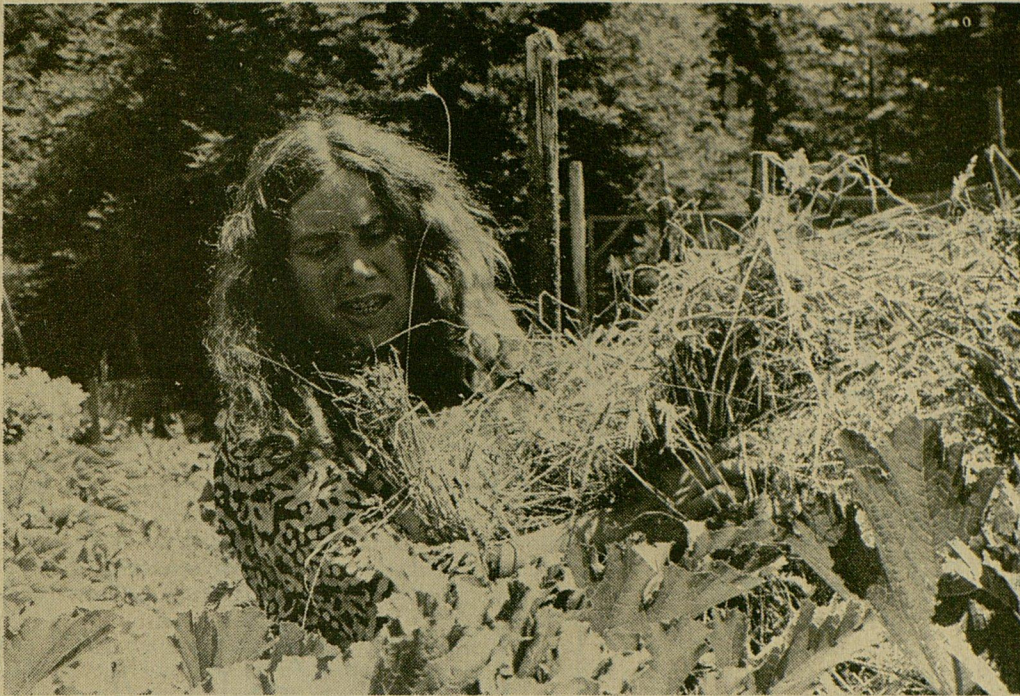
"...REAL CHANGE WILL ONLY COME THROUGH PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS..."

The country also offers nearly unique opportunities for working for change and building new institutions within our local communities. For some years, many urban political people have been seeking out factory and working class jobs, in an effort to participate in the communities from which change must come. We who live in rural areas, in a much less self-conscious and more real way, have a chance to be effective within the communities where we already live and work. Because of the low population densities in rural areas, each of us has a much more visible and direct impact on what happens in our own lives and in our communities. It is important to realize, however, that real change will only come through people working together for their own interests, and through a common recognition of

mutual needs and problems. Nobody needs a young urban messiah (or Amazon savior). Just as one does not go to work on an assembly line and emerge six months later as a trusted member of the working class, my experience is that it takes years to really become a part of and accepted by a rural community. This may be as it should be. But if one chooses to strive for this, to not ghettoize yourself in a rural subculture (be it "hippy", women's, lesbian, or whatever), then there eventually comes a day when you and the original residents recognize your commonality of interests and come to some measure of respect for each other. For me, that happened six years after I moved here, when half my sheep flock was killed by dogs. Somehow when I began the long slow process of rebuilding my herd from that disaster, the older farmers began to believe that I was here to stay, and I became "one of them". For a single woman feminist farmer to be understood and accepted is in some small measure a revolution. Now I can talk seriously with other farmers about prices, marketing, and local action. Who knows? We may have a farmers' co-op supplying an urban alternative distribution network in a few more years.







There are many exciting beginnings of real community action and support happening in this area of California and, I hope, in other rural communities across the country. Many people here first recognized our commonality last year when our property taxes were raised between 100 and 600%. The resultant tax strike is a model for community action, led in large measure by senior citizens, which correctly identified the role of corporate (logging company) profits in our tax situation and successfully helped force a major change in state law (see C.W. #18 for more details). Other recent projects include a food growers' association to help us cooperatively market our crops and homestead surpluses. By joining together we hope to have enough volume to create a steady market. I also have in mind the Pennsylvania Amish tradition of community cooperation in the ownership of large equipment and planting and harvesting work, with individual families maintaining their farms themselves the rest of the year. This seems a possible direction for our growers' association in the coming years. There is now in the western part of the county a highly successful farmers market and a second one is starting in the eastern half. These are building community traditions and institutions not native to the west coast. We also have not-for-profit food stores committed to locally produced food; a non-profit farm supply coop for fruit trees and seeds, and a community college offering free courses in rural survival and farm skills. Over July 4th a newspaper called "Hard Times" appeared free in local supermarkets, laundromats and libraries. The work of an anonymous group, this paper explored without rhetoric or jargon the plight of local farmers and the effects on our lives and jobs of Georgia

Pacific's control of most of the county's land. The paper is a classic of truly "political" work.

"...NO ONE WILL EVER AGAIN DOUBT THAT WOMEN CAN BE FARMERS..."

It has taken many of us five and even ten years to set our roots down here, to understand ourselves, gain skills, know something of our neighbors and our communities, but that learning is now bearing fruit in very concrete and exciting ways. The revolution isn't going to happen tomorrow; digging in for the long haul, we in rural communities have an almost unparalleled chance to work for change on a small enough, real enough scale to be achievable, recognizable. We have more control over our day to day lives and our communities than most people in this country and let's make the most of it. Especially we women, so that no one will ever again doubt that women can be farmers, and anything else we choose.

The rural populist movement of the last century was an important radical force; let us build one again out of the real bonds and struggles of independent farmers and rural people to survive today. We are as necessary to the freedom of everyone in this country as is each of the other movements for social change. ♀



# Touched by a Tropical Village



Last Wednesday, I woke at dawn to the sound of a rooster screaming outside my window, started the charcoals burning for coffee, and took my bucket to my neighbor's barrel to fill with water. By the time coffee was ready, the milk truck arrived and I was out the door armed with a few centavos and a basket for groceries. Later, after a breakfast of baked platano and cheese, and a trip to the river to dump my garbage, I headed for the beach to enjoy my last day in Ecuador.

Two years ago I began a trip to South America. After several months of travelling, I settled in a small beach village (population: 1200, half of them children) on the tropical coast of Ecuador, and lived there for fifteen months. The houses there had bamboo walls, wood floors and tin or palm thatched roofs. There was no piped-in water supply, but water was trucked in and stored in barrels. The town had its own electrical generator which was only in service from 7 p.m. to 11, sometimes. There were no phones, no movies, only a few refrigerators and blenders for making juices, and they only worked when the lights were on. Radios, treadle sewing machines, coal irons and kerosene lamps were common household items and only the hotel had toilets and showers. A few people had pick-up

trucks but the village depended on the open-air trucks to bring in our supplies. Farmers brought fruit and vegetables on horseback and fishermen used canoes and nets.

It was a beautiful tropical area, lush and green and full of life. The village itself was small, about half the area of my high-school, surrounded on three sides by rolling hills, farmlands and small rivers, and on the fourth side by the ocean. Although I lived confined within such a small area, I never felt closed in. I lived for the most part outdoors, using my house as a base, a place to sleep, dress and study. It was too warm to stay indoors and too nice to want to.

For most of my life I knew only cities - large urban sprawls covered with concrete and asphalt and filled with traffic. I could not breathe deeply, listen to birds, or see clearly through the smog. My mind was alert but my senses were handicapped by the urban environment. In the village, my senses awoke and tuned in to the smells and sounds around me; what with the variety of animals and birds in the village, it was difficult to ignore things. I was bombarded a hundred times a day. With new sensations, I began to look at things more carefully, notice plants, bugs, rainbows and stars. I measured



the time of day with the sun and the time of the month with the moon. I was in touch with the tides and the moon cycle at all times and felt every change of weather. The elements of nature seemed much more powerful than in the city. When it rained, roads washed away and houses flooded. The tides sometimes rose and wiped away part of the beach and knocked down fences. The weather was not something to be ignored - it determined and limited my activities to a much greater degree than in the city.

In the U.S., I travelled enormous distances at fast speeds every day and spent a great part of my time in a car. In Ecuador, walking became my primary means of transportation. The bus trip, to a city of 100,000, though only an hour, was a special occasion, and a ride in a car was an absolute thrill.

The speed of my life slowed down immeasurably. Days were very long. For one thing, the village was practically on the Equator so the days remained the same length all year long. I never went anywhere fast nor did things quickly; having no way or need to rush, there was always plenty of time.

During the first few months in the village, I began to realize how limited my physical abilities really were, outside of an urban environment. In the city, I had to arrange a physical activity - either an exercise class, a sport, or weekends at a pool or park. But I never got enough exercise, my muscles were unused and had to be strengthened. In the village, I hiked everywhere, climbed rocks and swam in the ocean. Exercise was not squeezed into my timetable but developed as a part of my daily routine. Any visit I made meant a long walk.

It took a while to rid myself of my fear of nature and to feel comfortable being physically active in the country. I felt awkward, unsure of myself. My balance was terrible. Pavements I could deal with, but rocky paths were treacherous, and crevices and steep hills foreboding. Pretty soon, however, I was jumping creeks, stepping into mud up to my knees, falling down, and learning to climb and balance myself. Nervously I did a thousand things I had never done. There was no choice involved: in order to get somewhere I had to cross a bridge made out of a thin tree branch, ford a rushing river, or climb down a steep hill. I did these things with my adrenalin rushing and my cheeks flushed, and I slid down many a hill on my behind.

There are certain things I, as a city person, rarely came in contact with, and harbored fears and discomforts about - namely insects, animals and dirt. I learned the hard way to get over these fears. Mosquitos bit me incessantly until I learned to cover myself at dawn and dusk, mosquito hours. My house suffered from cockroaches just like everyone else's, and this being the tropics, they were very large, about 3 or 4 inches, and made a lot of noise. These too I learned to deal with and even began to enjoy sweeping them out the door and setting them on fire. The first time rats came to my house I quickly lit a candle and went screaming into the night. But after a while I instinctively covered everything, hung food out of

reach, never left messes, and I learned to fight back fearlessly, slamming my hand on the floor when they came in at night.

My tolerance for other bugs grew as the time passed. Some were helpful and were given the proper courtesies - little grey lizards, who lived in the bamboo slats, ate other insects, and never crawled on the bed; spiders that lived on my ceiling; and big black bees that woke me up in the morning with their buzz. These creatures could not hurt me and we lived together in peace.

Outside my house, I was constantly surrounded by dogs, cats, pigs, chickens, horses and cows, all having their place and function in the village. Animals were not confined like they are in the cities and were not as tame. I could not assume they were safe. Dogs sometimes ran in packs and attacked people. Pigs could cause damage and were not always easy to control. These animals were not pampered and often not fed; therefore they acted differently from pets I had known. I could not assume anything about their behavior so I became very conscious and guarded in their presence.

As a city person my field of knowledge was sophisticated and broad; I knew what was happening all over the world. I had a little knowledge of a lot of subjects, but very limited first hand experience, especially about the natural environment. What kind of trees and plants grew in my city, what raw materials looked like, how food products grew, what caused changes in weather and terrain - these things I understood from studying but could not learn about, see the whole process/cycle, from my own experience. I found food on a supermarket shelf. I saw finished products, but never saw them manufactured; how wood was milled, ore mined, or wool spun. I could not make machines, and was dependent on specialists to fix them.

As time passed in the village, I learned what plants grew around me and what their uses were. I learned to use natural materials, like the bark of a palm for thread, and hollowed out mate gourds for bowls. I carved spoons out of bamboo cane, made brooms out of dried plants, and scrubbed my pots with sand. Most of all I learned about natural resources, where they came from and how they best were used.

Water was the most important concern I had. Each day I took my bucket and searched for the day's water. I had to anticipate water shortages and conserve; my washing water I hauled everyday from a well and washed dishes with as little as possible. I washed my clothes in a wooden washbasin near a well and showered by using a bucket in one hand and scrubbing with the other. I soon realized that bathing every day was a luxury and not that necessary. Often the wells would dry up or fill with dirt from the wind and I used the rivers. Never in my life had I bathed in a river! But, soon I preferred it for washing my hair and clothes. Rivers took on a different perspective, I understood their real importance. I was always aware of how much water I used, when I needed to get it and how often it was not around - I never again took water for granted! cont.





The village power generator was normally temperamental and undependable. When the lights went off, or refused to go on, no one was surprised except the gringos, who were used to machines that worked. I always had a supply of candles around just in case my single bulb did not go on after sundown; I learned to make the most of daylight, doing my sewing, cleaning and especially cooking, early. Candles were never left burning unless needed.

When the lights did not go on, about 50% of the time, I was amazed at the effect and significance of the moon on our lives. When there was no moon, the village went to sleep early, the stores were open only a short while, people stayed in their houses - for it was almost too spooky to go outside. When there was a moon, even a quarter, the light was bright enough to enable the villagers to see where they were going. As the cycle moved toward full, the entire energy level of the village rose; children played outside until late, people hung out on their steps or in the square and visited one another. Full moon night was light as day - something incredible and wonderful that I had never experienced before. It was indeed magical, and suddenly all the fairy tales made more sense.

The absence of artificial light and the subsequent strong power of the moon affected me, as a woman, in another way. I had never felt so closely attuned to my menstrual cycle. My body ebbed and flowed exactly in rhythm with the tides and the moon and I knew when I would menstruate

by checking the moon cycle. The absence of mechanical obstructions kept me in touch with my body to the extent that I even felt ovulation - a rare experience in the noisy, mechanized city.

Along with my daily concern about water and power was the problem of getting and preparing food. Although the village was in the country, we did not have to harvest our own food. The stores supplied staples (oatmeal, cooking oil, margarine) and the farmers brought in fruits and vegetables. Fishermen traded and sold fish and shrimp every morning, and a cow and some hogs were slaughtered every Saturday. I often went to the haciendas to pick fruit - guavas, chiramoyas, breadfruit, papayas, pineapples and guanabanas. There was an amazing variety of tropical fruits that I learned to recognize, plus the ever abundant bananas, oranges and grapefruit. People grew spice plants in their yards and camomile grew wild. Some of the old women taught me which plants to use for medical purposes and teas. (Lemon was prescribed for just about everything.)

All cooking was from scratch. Even the chickens were sold live. I bought coffee from the plantations, green, dried it in the sun, roasted it over coals and ground it by hand. I began to understand the total process involved in preparing food. To prepare a meal, I went around town shopping and trading for all the ingredients needed for that particular meal, as there was no refrigeration. I depended on the daily catch of fish, the supply of coal available and the weekly vegetable harvest. Milk was



trucked in fresh from the farms and had to be boiled. Beans had to soak for hours. There was often no cheese or tomatoes, and never any leafy greens. Preparing a meal was a full day affair, especially for a large family, for cooking on coals was very slow. There was no such thing as a midnight snack, and I seldom ate at night. I had to be aware of what was available, get up early to get fish or milk, and never could shop in advance. Sometimes there would be shortages of sugar or flour. I learned never to depend on the constant availability of anything except bananas, oranges and rice. And I appreciated every well balanced meal, for they were the exception, not the rule. My appreciation of good food grew as I realized how often it was not available, and I learned the true art of preparing food.

Because there were no prepared foods, there were few packages; all staples were sold in wrapped brown paper which was later burned. As a result, there was very little waste and what garbage there was usually could be eaten by the pigs - the only garbage service available. I must admit I enjoyed a few gringa indulgences like toilet paper, shampoo and toothpaste, the empty containers of which stacked up on my shelf for lack of a place to dispose of them. I had to take care of all my garbage myself, as there was no one else to do it. I learned quickly what had to be burned, what could be dumped in the river, or left for the pigs.

There was no sewage system, therefore I had to deal with my own refuse as well, something I had to get used to. As a city person, I never had to deal with or be in contact with in any way, my bodily wastes or household garbage. It was flushed away or dumped in cans or garbage disposals, and I never thought more about it. In the country, I was responsible for keeping myself, my house and my yard clean, the outcome being a total connection with the processes of life. I knew where every bite of food came from and where every bit of garbage ended up. The neuroses and squeamishness I had toward my own wastes vanished. Eventually, I preferred a nice quiet bush or sand dune over a public toilet anyway.

The time I spent in the country taught me my place in the natural process, and what my responsibilities were in keeping my environment clean and healthy. I acquired a new set of skills - I prepared live animals for cooking, washed clothes by hand, built furniture, caught fish and shrimp from a canoe; I made coconut oil and avocado hair conditioner, and began to recycle my clothes. I made do with what was available and lost some of my dependence on manufactured goods. By the time I left, I knew I could function and be happy without the conveniences to which I had been accustomed. As a city person, I became proud of my ability to skin a shark, bleach my clothes with the sun and recognize a poisonous plant from a medical one. Most important of all, I could not take for granted the necessities of life. Ecology was no longer an intellectually understood "good cause," but the necessary process involved in using and disposing of natural resources.

I am back home now, driving cars, fitting in exercise when I can, working indoors, watching movies and shopping in supermarkets. I haven't yet gotten accustomed to the conveniences: I still throw toilet paper in the wastebasket, stuff bits of plastic and foil in my pockets, look at the sky for the time, and check the ground for holes and mud. I also seem to be late getting anywhere, and my patience for traffic is nil. But it is surprising how quickly we bounce back and all the urban insanity seems just as normal as ever.

Some things, however, I will never forget, no matter how difficult it is to keep remembering. I still turn off the water in between rinses, refuse to throw good food away, save all usable wrappings, and try not to use unnecessary energy. It is not easy - the city almost forces people to be wasteful and unaware, because we are detached from the total processes involved in living. We are dependent on nature yet ignorant of its workings. We live in an urbanized cloud. I am still a city person, but my experiences in living in the country give me a connection and awareness of the natural environment, despite the concrete and the noise. ♀

## Mission Street

mission street 7:30 a.m.  
sunglasses and coffee at doggie diner

i want to mingle with the people she said  
quietly becoming a part of the sidewalk

pena del barrio  
fifteen-minute passport photos

women with empty faces and knarled hands  
with veins branching up their arms

women of passion  
women of fire

hogan women  
cactus women

clinging fire women

dark dark chicana  
women of tears

hot hot  
sun women

ash women  
dancing





# MOON LIGHT SHADOWS

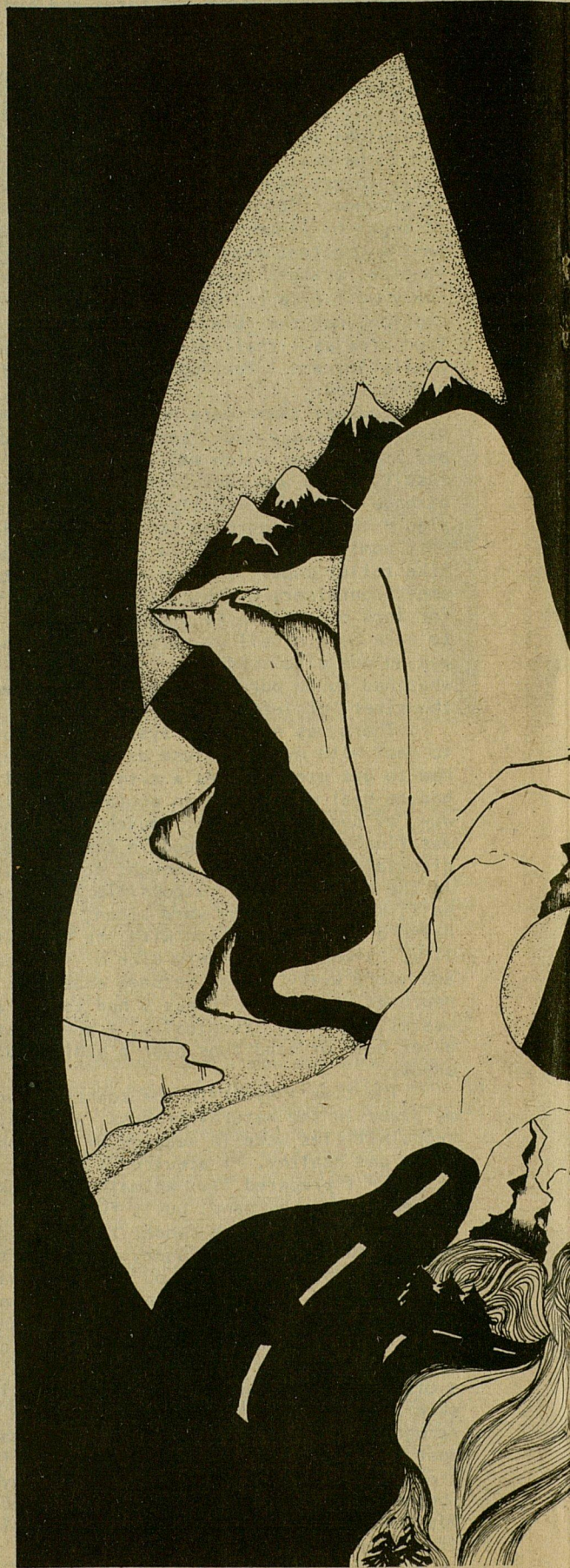
Once  
I woke up  
rose the sun  
smells of cookin' bacon  
eggs  
scrambled  
out of bed.

Hair curlers  
painted nails  
blue shadowed eyes  
and black lines  
lashes  
longer  
How long  
my mirrored image stared back.

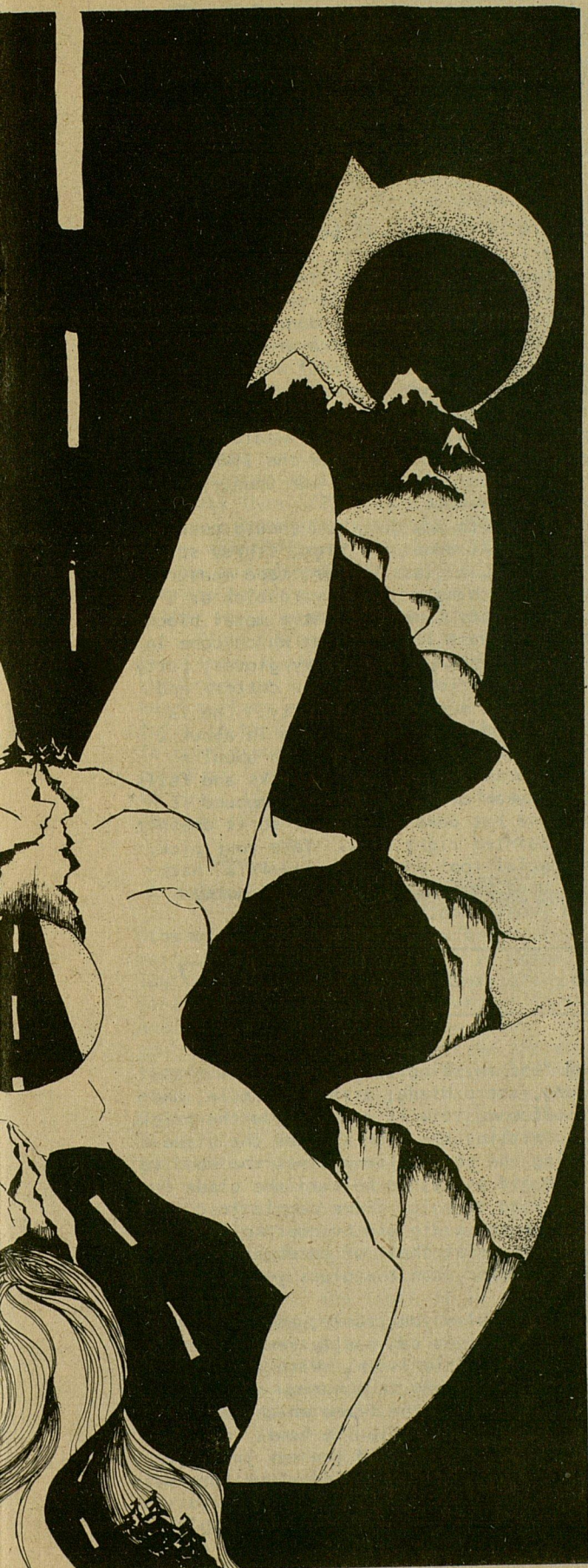
Once  
I danced on  
high heels highways  
fast cars  
fast men  
always knocking at my door  
sleeping in my bed.

Once  
I saw by  
city lights late night  
color TV dinners  
shopping centers  
but no center.

Now  
I wake in  
morning moon light shadows  
of pine trees  
on the wood  
I split  
to heat  
my water  
and my house  
smells of rinsed sprouts  
and kerosene light.







Now  
I dance on  
barefoot earth forest paths  
lined in fallen  
stars of quartz  
and fallen  
leaves of gold.

Now  
I see by  
mountain peaks  
sun shining star light  
wind music played by swirling clouds  
changing  
I change  
but still no center.

Changes  
too fast to know  
who am I today  
I was yesterday  
I am tomorrow.

Searching for answers  
do you know?  
who am I?  
Can you tell me  
if I love you.

Once  
I caged my time and mind  
in university classrooms  
9 to 5 typewriter keys  
telephone conversations  
Christmas shopping  
lovers and travel.

Now  
I do not invent escapes  
I sit alone  
searching  
for me.

But, I'm blind  
where I am  
I can't see where  
is a ray of clarity  
to scatter  
the smog of my mind  
I scatter  
with the clouds in the wind  
searching  
for  
my center.



# GLAZING WINDOWS

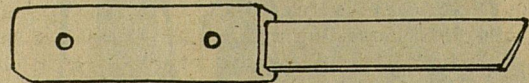
When I moved to the Mendocino Coast three years ago, I was overwhelmed by the lonely beauty of what was to become my home for much longer than I ever would have anticipated. I soon became good friends with 'the man next door', but after a few months, inability to find a means of support in the county forced him to return to the city to find some source of income. He happened into a window-repair operation that offered not only regular work for him, but also part-time work for me so that I could spend most of my time here in the country where I felt at home, and part of my time working in the city. My friend quickly taught me the basics, and then some of the special tricks, so that I could also do this work on my own in the country. Thus, for me, was solved the problem of earning an income while still living basically in the country. The work itself isn't difficult, but requires precise attention, exactness, moving slowly and carefully, and never trying to force anything - an important exercise for me, accustomed to casualness, quick movements, spacing out, and trying to push things. Fortunately, my teacher had enormous patience and calm, for frequently I had to be allowed to make mistakes before I learned what was necessary.

It has been good for me to have a useful manual skill with which I can make a living. I have constantly received encouragement from others in the same line of work (all men), from customers, and from my friend. It has given me a new perspective on so many things to find myself working among manual workers instead of among those who earn their livelihood with their heads. What I do feels more related to people's needs, like 'shelter from the storm', and gives me a chance to relate to all sorts of people I'd never encounter otherwise - our customers - as we repair broken windows in the Mission District, on Pacific Heights, the Haight, St. Francis' Woods, the Western Addition, or the Marina.

Interesting to me are the reactions of the people whose windows we work on. Generally, women are more surprised than men to discover that I am an equal worker, not just a lackey or assistant (or secretary). My friend says people are more open and trusting when I am along. He and I work very well together, needing few words, almost like one four-handed being. People frequently ask how we started doing this sort of work, and occasionally a friendship develops with our customers. Many are impressed that we really care about doing good work and having satisfied customers, and now a large portion of the work we get is through referrals from old customers who were pleased with our work. It feels good to do a really good job.

But this is supposed to be a 'practical' article, so I must get down to it and share what I've learned. It is much easier to show than to describe, but I will do my best. The process is simple enough to be done by anyone with the proper tools, but there are a few tricks (especially when using old glass) which make it easier and may save some 'panes'. This article will deal only with wood sashes, as there are so many types of metal sashes that I would need many pages to describe them, and the likelihood of our having metal windows in our Country Women homes is fairly remote.

First, as with any job, you should assemble the tools you will need. A large, sturdy screwdriver, a hammer, a glass cutter, tape measure, straight edge such as a wooden yardstick or T-square, push-points (special little metal pieces which hold the glass in the frame which come in a small box for around 25¢), heavy gloves, putty knife, oil (to lubricate the glass cutter) and putty. There are two sorts of putty. One is made with linseed oil which sets up in about 2 weeks and needs to be painted within about a month, or else it dries out and cracks and falls out within a year or so. Glazing Compound is more expensive but doesn't dry out so it doesn't need to be painted right away. Take your pick. The only special tool you will need is a 'hacking knife' used to 'hack' out the old putty. A "real" one looks something like this:



If you can find anything around the place that has a strong, sharp blade, a sturdy handle, and a squared-off end, it will probably do the trick. You will be hitting the back side of the blade while holding the sharp side against the wood to chip out the old putty, so be sure the blade is sturdy enough to take it. Some people just cut off the tip end of a big old butcher knife. You will also need a flat sheet of cardboard or thin rug slightly larger than the glass you need for your window.

Having assembled your tools, the next thing to do is to see if you can easily remove the window from the wall it is in. With standard house construction there is a narrow strip of wood along the side of the frame which can easily be pried off. In our hand-built homes this may not be the case, however, and you may just have to figure out how to get the window out, or leave it in if it is easily accessible from the outside. Then you want to break out the old glass entirely, either breaking it over a trash can with a hammer or removing the pieces by hand



with a pair of thick gloves to protect your hands. Then with your hacking knife, remove all the old putty and 'points' around the edge of the wood. It is important to remove all the old putty and points down to the smooth wood, as even a small irregularity caused by a chip of dry putty can break your new piece of glass. Points are usually most easily removed with a needle nose pliers. This process can really try your patience, but is definitely worth doing well.

When the sash is clean and smooth, measure it carefully. You have 1/8" leeway - no more! Measure from side to side where the glass fits against the wood, then subtract 1/8" to give yourself room for the fresh putty. Write down the measurements, even if you're sure you'll remember them. If you are using used glass, find a piece that is close to these dimensions, but unless it is exact, be sure it is at least 1/2" larger, as it is sheer agony trying to cut off less than 1/2" unless you are experienced and have some special tools. (We have access to large quantities of used glass and that is all we use ourselves). If you are buying new glass you can have it cut to size at the store, but either way, "measure three times, and cut once".

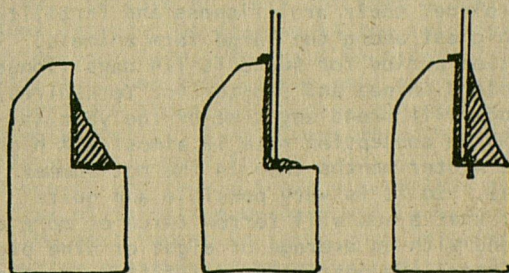
Find a flat surface - a truly flat table, the floor, a piece of plywood - and place your cardboard or a piece of thin carpet between the hard surface and your piece of glass. Look carefully to be sure it's really flat and the glass is evenly supported. Old glass frequently has a curve or 'bow' in it and is thus more difficult to cut. If this is the case, be sure the bow is laid on the surface thus:



Otherwise it will inevitably break when you try to 'cut' it. Glass 'cutting' is actually 'scoring' and then breaking the glass along the score line. The roller on your 'cutter' is very sharp and scores the surface of the glass. Be sure your cutter is in good condition and try a few test runs on scrap glass. It should make an even, smooth score across the glass with moderate pressure on the cutter. Oil the wheel before using it to make it roll more smoothly. Hold the cutter much like a pencil, but straight up and down, keeping your pressure even, and always try to make one smooth movement, not going over the line more than once. Be sure your straight edge is long enough to allow you to cut your piece of glass in one stroke. You can soon tell by the sound of the 'cut' if it is a good one. Mark your measurements on the glass carefully - a fine felt-tip pen works very well. Place your straight edge along your marks and 'cut'. Don't put too much pressure on the straight edge or cutter or you may crack the glass where you don't mean to. When you have made your 'cut', strike one end of it from below with the round ball on the handle of your cutter to start a 'run' along the cut. When the 'run' has started, place the cut line over the edge of your straight edge or table, and press downward gently but firmly on the part you are cutting off, starting at the

end with the run. It will snap off along the score you made with the cutter (if all goes well). (This process is easy to show someone, but difficult to explain in words, so if you've got a friend who has 'cut' glass before, or you can watch someone do it before you attempt it, it will be clearer to you how to proceed).

Having successfully cut your glass, place it gently in the empty sash to be sure it fits with a little space around the edges for the putty, which you are now ready to apply. Take the glass out, pick up a blob of putty and knead it in your hand until it becomes soft and pliable. How long that takes depends on the outside temperature. If the putty has been in the hot sun it takes only a few seconds. If it is cold it takes a minute or two. Take your putty knife and spread the putty against the wood where the glass will fit. This is called the 'backing putty', since it is in back of the glass, and it cushions the glass against the wood. Get it as smooth as possible along the edge so it will provide an even seat for your glass, especially important for larger pieces of glass. Now set your piece of glass in the sash and gently press along the edges until the putty squishes against the glass and forms a sort of gasket around the edges. This putty smoothes out any unevenness in the wood and provides a moisture seal, also. Once the glass is seated you can put in the new 'push points'. These are slid, point first, into the wood, using the putty knife, in such a manner as to hold the glass firmly against the backing putty. You'll need about one point every 18" along each side - more if the wood is no longer solid.



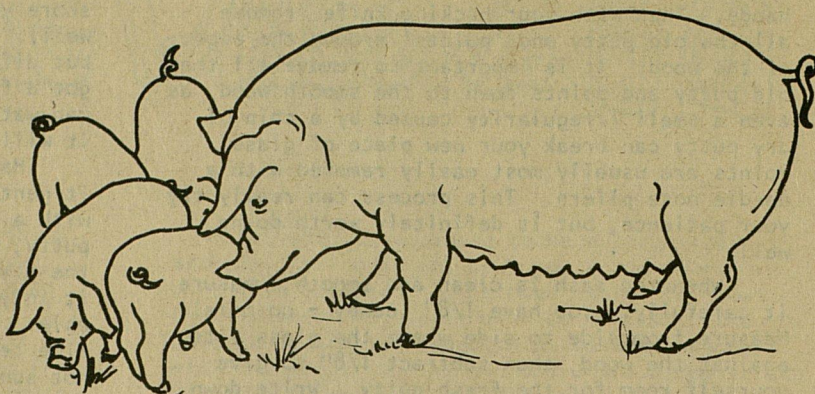
Now the final touch is to glaze the outside with a smooth wedge of putty to seal the glass into the sash, keeping moisture out of the wood and supporting the glass evenly on all sides. This is done with the putty knife and is tricky at first and simply requires patience and practice. It is important that the putty adheres to both wood and glass for a protective seal. The smoothness of the line is a matter of aesthetics, thus up to you.

Now put the window back the same way you removed it, putty side out, and clean up. One warning: if you used linseed oil putty, don't get any window cleaner in contact with it for about 10 days (until it becomes solid) as the detergent in the cleaner will deteriorate the putty. Also, don't put any undue pressure on the glass until the putty hardens a bit, as the only thing holding the glass in is the points.

Now - sit back and enjoy your handiwork with a cup of tea. You've added a new skill to your abilities to be self-sufficient. ♀



# Raising Hogs



I like hogs. I like raising them, I like working around them, and I like eating them. Having lived all my life in the heart of the Corn Belt, hogs on the farm seem as natural to me as a big, red barn. Today, however, the big red barn and the small farm with a few sows, sheep, chickens and pigs is being quickly replaced by very large, very specialized confinement units holding up to five thousand sows. This is not my idea of farming. This is AGRI-BUSINESS and the forthcoming series of articles on hog raising will attempt to steer clear of AGRI-BUSINESS and its high ideal of "efficiency at any cost".

This series is being written for and directed at the small farmer and homesteader who might want to keep a few sows or maybe buy and raise feeder pigs. I feel that hogs are a natural for the small farm or homestead. In the first place, their prolificness and fertility are highest among the large farm animals. The gestation period for swine is 114 days (longer for Poland Chinas and shorter for Yorkshires) and hogs will breed any time of the year (although the conception rate is almost 20% higher in the winter months than in the hot summer months). So it is very possible and quite likely that a sow will farrow twice or more a year and with an average of eight or nine pigs per litter; the possibility of fifteen to twenty offspring a year is extremely feasible.

Manure is another incentive for the small farmer to keep hogs. Pigs produce sixteen tons of manure per year per thousand pounds of body weight, nearly twice as much as horses and a third more than dairy cattle. This manure is also extremely high in nutrients with each ton containing five hundred pounds of organic matter, ten pounds of nitrogen, ten pounds of potassium and five pounds of phosphorous. This can be a valuable addition to anyone's soil.

The scavenging ability of swine is another plus for hogs on a small farm. They can eat nearly anything, leftover milk, spilled feed and most organic garbage. (This last item can be a potential health hazard, but if it is properly prepared that can eliminate the problem. I will discuss this more thoroughly in the article on feeds and feeding.)

As I've said the hog is prolific, a source of high quality manure and a good scavenger. I think this combination will work well on any

small farm whether self-sufficiency is the aim or not. Another attractive extra for those of us who are still a long way from self-sufficiency is the fact that hogs, even just a few sows or feeder pigs, can in most years provide a nice little income. If you happen to be into another enterprise that is consistently losing money (something like trying to raise purebred dairy goats around my area), those few sows can really help take up the slack, besides hanging meat in the smokehouse.

## SELECTION OF BREEDING STOCK

There are several different ways of getting started raising hogs but they usually come down to either (1) having breeding stock and raising hogs to feeder pig weight (40 lbs.) and selling them as feeder pigs or else raising them all the way out to market weight (220-240 lbs.) and then butcher or else (2) buying feeder pigs from a breeder and then raising them to market weight. Since this article will cover breeding and reproduction, I'd like to concentrate on the first method and the various aspects of starting a breeding herd. (By the way, when I use the term "herd", I mean two or more hogs in the same place at the same time.) A future article will deal solely with raising a feeder pig (also called a weaner).

## THE BOAR

The boar is probably the single most important aspect of the breeding herd as he will directly influence half of all the traits and characteristics of the resulting offspring. In selecting a boar, no matter what breed, the first and foremost criteria should be health. The reasons for this are obvious. An unhealthy boar or one that has come from a diseased herd can bring various disease organisms on to your home place and very likely transmit them to your sows and gilts. An unhealthy boar may also exhibit depreciated breeding performance, particularly if the boar's body temperature has been above the normal 103° for an extended period of time. This can cause the temperature in the testicles to rise and kill or damage the sperm cells. Extremely hot weather and over-heating the boar can do this too. It will take several weeks for the new sperm cells to mature enough to fertilize any ovum (eggs).

As far as vaccinations go, it's usually a



good idea to see what is for your area as many swine diseases seem to be particular to various regions of the country. In my area I would want any boar I purchased to be blood tested negative for brucellosis and vaccinated for leptospirosis, besides being in an overall condition of good health.

The next criteria I would use in selecting a boar would be type and conformation. The hog industry as a whole is still in a quandry about what they feel to be ideal conformation. There are still many swine breeders that hold to the type of boar with as much muscle as possible and to the tell-tale mark of this over-muscling, the apple ass. Now muscling is fine because muscle is meat, but unfortunately these heavy muscled boars very rarely have the frame and bone structure to carry around all this meat. The resulting offspring, if this type boar is mated to a similar type sow, will usually be small boned, heavy muscled and have a tendency to put on too much fat too soon. Heavy muscled hogs can also exhibit a condition known as Porcine Stress Syndrome (PSS). A stress prone pig is more susceptible to various crippling diseases, such as arthritis, and several nervous ailments. A pig suffering from PSS can die from the stress of merely being moved from one end of a pen to the other.

The type of boar that I favor, in contrast to this small boned, heavy muscled boar, is long and loose in his muscle structure, heavy boned, deep and square in the rib with a lot of lung and gut capacity, width between the front legs, and most importantly, free wheelin' on the feet and legs. The ability of a boar to get around and mount sows is of obvious importance. Feet and leg problems are second only to actual breeding difficulties as reasons for culling boars. Several sources that I have seen recently that are supposedly directed at the adherents to the back-to-the-land movement have endorsed a hog that is compact in structure and has a good arch to its back. This type of conformation makes for a tightly wound hog that has a lot of trouble moving around and it's one that I would really try to avoid, especially in a breeding boar.

Another important characteristic of any breeding boar is his sex drive and actual potency of his sperm cells. If the boar I was considering buying was an unproven breeder, one that had not actually settled any sows, (and this is a real possibility if buying a young boar) then I would want some type of guarantee from the owner as to the breeding ability of the boar. This will usually be in the form of an oral or written agreement that if, after a certain period of time, the boar hasn't settled any sows that he will be replaced with a boar of equal value. This agreement is of extreme importance because a boar that won't or can't breed is virtually useless.

In addition to this I always check the boar's testicles to make sure that they are uniform in size and consistency and that there is no evidence of swelling. Also check the sheath surrounding the penis for swelling and obstructions. Try to see if the boar acts sexually aggressive. This is by no means a hard and fast rule because sometimes even the most aggressive acting boar

won't breed when it comes right down to mounting the sow, but it's still a good idea to take note of sexual behavior.

There are many, many other traits that could be used in boar selection, i.e. loin-eye size, feed efficiency, rate-of-gain, etc., but the ones I've discussed here are the ones I feel are of prime importance to the small farmer who is starting in hog raising.

#### THE SOW HERD

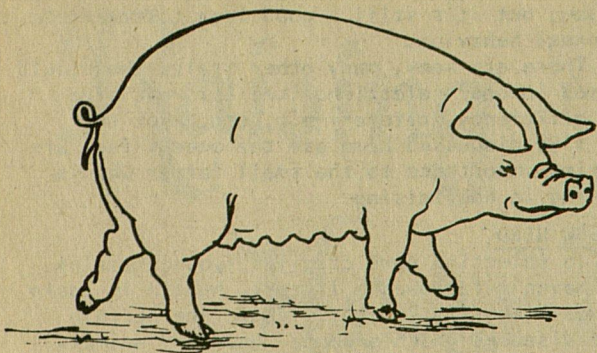
In selecting sows or gilts (young females that haven't farrowed a litter), health is again the most important factor. There are certain swine diseases which produce "carrier" animals. These are animals that have contracted a disease, recovered from it and now are capable of transmitting the disease to other animals. Leptospirosis and brucellosis are two of these types of diseases and both can cause abortions in sows, so they should really be watched for. There is no cure for brucellosis (although a sow that aborts a litter because of this disease will usually farrow normal litters from then on), any sow or gilt that I buy must be blood-tested negative for brucellosis prior to purchase. There is a vaccination available for leptospirosis, but again, I must say to watch out for those "carrier" animals.

Outside of these two specific problems, overall general good health is the rule. Again, make sure the rest of the herd is healthy. Watch out, especially, for coughing pigs. This could mean any number of types of pneumonias and respiratory ailments. Many times, it might seem like a good deal to get a couple of sows that aren't in the greatest of health for next to nothing. Believe me, it's not such a good deal! Besides introducing disease to the animals already on your farm, you might be bringing in organisms that can live in the soil on your farm for years and the problems they can create are extremely costly. I am always more than willing to pay a little more for an animal I know is in good health and from a healthy herd than to take the risk of infecting my herd and farm.

The next factor in importance in selection of females are the reproductive traits. This would include: fertility, prolificness (number of pigs farrowed), ease of farrowing, mother ability and milk production.

In sows, these traits can usually be determined by checking with the breeder and looking over herd records. With gilts, however, you're pretty much in the dark. You can check the records of the gilt's mother, but since reproductive traits are low in heritability (0-15%), this really isn't a sound basis for selection. I really didn't want to get into breeds yet but this is where selection of a certain breed can help. Certain breeds, i.e. Yorkshires and Chester Whites, are noted for their reproductive qualities. I wouldn't have a sow or gilt on my farm that didn't have some Yorkshire blood in her. Last year I worked for a breeder who raised purebred Hampshires and purebred Yorkshires. Watching them in the farrowing barn was really enlightening. The Yorkshire sows consistently laid down and farrowed more pigs, and healthier pigs than the Hamps. They were also much better  
cont.





mothers and had fewer infections, etc. of the reproductive tract. I don't mean to be putting down Hamps, because they have certain qualities I want in my herd too, but I do believe that it's a good idea for the sows in your herd to be at least 25-50% of one of these mothering breeds: Yorks, Chesters, Canadian Landrace.

Conformation and type in sows/gilts is another important factor in selection. Again, the long, loose muscle structure is desired over the extremely heavy muscled sow. Plenty of substance of bone and gut capacity are also desirable in sows/gilts. A good way to spot substance of bone is in the size of the head and the thickness of the root of the tail. The head and tail are the two most obvious extensions of the skeletal system, and, especially on young gilts, they're good indicators of overall bone structure.

One word of caution should go in here. Beware of fat sows!! They may look plump and healthy and just ripe and ready to lay down and farrow a dozen fat, healthy pigs for you, but they aren't! The reason isn't really known yet, but, it seems to be clear that excess fat deposits are very likely to decrease reproductive performance and it's the leaner sows who farrow with less difficulty and raise healthier pigs. Another reason for staying away from fat sows, especially if a litter has just been weaned off them, is that they probably weren't doing a very good job mothering and were poor milkers. A good milk producer will burn off that excess condition.

Last but not least in selection factors is the sow's underline. I always like to see at least 12 good, functional teats that are fairly uniform in size and shape and well spaced. Inverted nipples can be a problem and will make the teat non-functional, so watch out for this. The underline and how it functions is really important in raising baby pigs and maybe this factor should have been mentioned first. If a sow/gilt can't get the milk to the piglets, all it creates is a lot of hassles for you and even if you try your hardest to raise the pigs yourself, they'll more than likely end up starving to death.

A word here about buying gilts. They usually have their first heat period at about 6-8 months of age. It's usually advisable not to breed gilts in their first heat period, but to wait until their third heat period. One reason for this is that a greater number of eggs are ovulated as the gilt grows older and this increase in ovulation increases throughout her productive life. Another reason for waiting until

the third heat period is the fact that the gilt is usually more mature, carrying more weight, and will usually do better raising the baby pigs.

Another question that arises when buying breeding stock is "crossbred or purebred". Unless you've got a lot of money, and a lot of extra time to indulge in raising purebreds, I would definitely say raise crossbreds. In the first place, you can take advantage of heterosis or "hybrid vigor". This refers to the increased performance of the crossbred offspring over the average of its parents. To site a few statistics to illustrate this point, an Oklahoma crossbreeding study showed (1) an 11% increase in litter size when the sows were crossbred, (2) crossbred pigs were about 10% heavier at birth and crossbred sows farrowed 3% heavier pigs than purebred sows, and most importantly (3) a 13% lower death loss from birth to weaning among crossbred pigs.

Secondly, if you're going to spend money on buying breeding stock, crossbred sows/gilts will nearly always be considerably less than purebred sows/gilts of similar type and conformation. If you buy purebreds, you're paying for registry in a breed association, and it doesn't really make any sense, considering the advantages of heterosis.

A good cross that I have seen work is using a purebred boar on crossbred sows/gilts. This gives the resulting offspring the maximum hybrid vigor (100%) attainable in a three-way cross. There are any number of ways to set up a crossbreeding program, (rotational cross, back cross, etc.) but this three-way is simple and will give the advantages I mentioned earlier of using crossbred sows and you can still utilize the offspring gilts as replacements.

Since I'm talking about crossbreeding, I guess it's time to discuss breeds, although I'm kind of reluctant to do so. There are outstanding individual animals within every breed and my comments about specific breeds should be taken in a very liberal sense.

There are several different breeds of hogs and it's usually good to have some idea of what breed you want before you go looking for breeding stock. Each breed has some characteristics which you may or may not want in your herd. It's a good idea to see what's being sold in your area, especially if you plan on selling some of the offspring as feeder pigs.

In the three-way cross I was discussing, there are two breeds that I would recommend using as boar power - Hampshires and Durocs. The Hampshire is a black hog with a wide white belt across the shoulders and front legs and will normally yield a fairly meaty carcass with a minimal amount of fat. The Duroc is a solid red hog whose carcass is also noted for meatiness, but they occasionally have a tendency to become over-conditioned. The Duroc is also noted for its docile temperament whereas Hamps are sometimes inclined to be nervous. Both these breeds will work well as the sire breed in most crossbreeding programs.

As for the sow herd in this three-way cross, if using the Duroc boar, I would recommend a Hampshire crossed with one of the "mother breeds". Of the "mother breeds", the Yorkshires are my



personal favorites. They are all white and are excellent mothers, very prolific and good milkers. They do sometimes have a tendency to become over conditioned, as do the Chester Whites, another excellent "mother breed" with a high degree of prolificness and fertility. The Canadian Landrace is a fairly new breed in this country. They are also all white, excellent mothers and a very long bodied type hog. These will probably be fairly difficult to obtain for awhile because of import restrictions and they will probably also be fairly expensive.

There are several other breeds, i.e. Spots, Poland Chinas, Berkshires, etc., which I'm not going to mention in any detail because I feel that the breeds I have discussed are of much more value in a crossbreeding program. As I said before, all these comments about breeds should be taken in a very general sense and not applied to any specific animals.

Once you do obtain some breeding stock, there are a few items to keep in mind about adjusting them to their new surroundings. First of all, if they are to be housed indoors, have all housing thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the animals' arrival. A lye solution is an excellent disinfectant, although it should be handled with caution and one of the best disinfectants around is sunlight. All organic matter should be removed prior to disinfecting for the disinfectants to work properly.

Secondly, and this is especially important if you are bringing new animals into an already established herd, is a thirty day isolation period for all new livestock. This gives the animal a chance to become accustomed to new surroundings, adjust to a new regimen and most importantly, to build up an immunity to the organisms on your farm. It also gives you a chance to watch for any signs of disease that may not have been noticeable at the breeder's farm.

After this isolation period, it's a good idea before breeding actually starts to give the boar and sows/gilts a period of "fenceline exposure". This will give the breeding herd an opportunity to develop a common immunity to the various "bugs" floating around. This particular practice is especially important in controlling the SMEDI complex which I'll discuss in further detail in the article on farrowing. Fenceline exposure and the sight and smell of the boar will also help stimulate estrus in the sows/gilts.

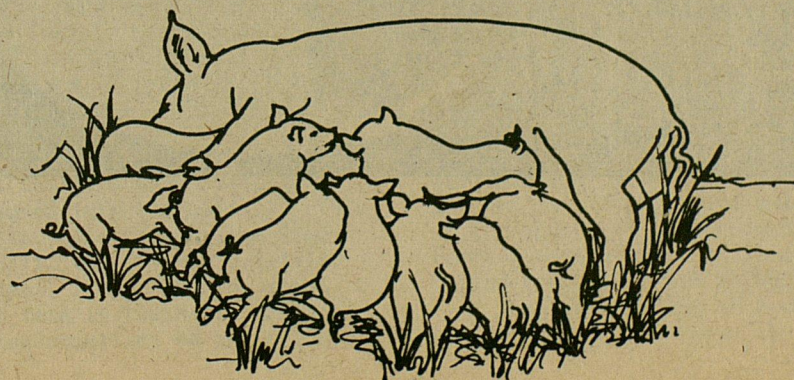
Flushing, the increase in quantity and quality of feed prior to breeding, is another prac-

tice that can help stimulate estrus. This increased feeding at breeding time can also increase ovulation and the number of pigs farrowed. Flushing is only effective in gilts and the best way to bring on estrus in sows is to wean their pigs off them. Alfalfa meal in the ration is said to be another method of increasing ovulation rate, although I've never tried it myself.

Prior to breeding, females should be vaccinated for leptospirosis and this should be repeated in advance of every breeding season. If erysipelas has been a problem, the sows/gilts should be vaccinated prior to breeding. This vaccination can also be done during pregnancy and some producers prefer to vaccinate three weeks before farrowing. This will increase the antibody level in the sow's milk and the baby pigs won't have to be vaccinated the first week of life. The vet is really the best one to advise on the time of erysipelas vaccination. Lice and grub control should also be done before breeding and then again a few weeks before farrowing. Non-detergent crankcase oil rubbed on with a stiff brush is a good de-lousing and won't leave any chemical residues. Have the sows/gilts in as good health as possible for the breeding season. Don't breed any sows/gilts that are suffering from the flu or pneumonia and be sure they are fully recovered before you do have them bred.

When all the breeding stock has been pre-conditioned, isolated, flushed, etc., and it's time to start breeding, the first thing to do is to decide when you want baby pigs on the ground and how many you can handle. The gestation period for swine is 114 days or three months, three weeks and three days, and if you are planning on farrowing outdoors, the weather for the proposed farrowing month has to be considered. Baby pigs are extremely vulnerable to cold and dampness at birth and for the first few weeks of their lives. They just won't survive outdoors in cold, wet weather so plan accordingly. Another good reason to attempt to arrange farrowing dates on some sort of schedule is to try to have the sows/gilts farrow in pairs to make any necessary transfers of baby pigs possible. (Baby pigs can be put on another sow, usually within the first 24-48 hours of life, if the sow has just recently farrowed. You might want to do this to even out the milking load if one sow had 14 pigs and another only 5; or if a sow developed mastitis and dried up then the pigs could be transferred to another sow.)

cont.











Another item to check before breeding is that you have adequate boar power. I don't really think this is too critical if the herd is small, but if you're using a young boar, even on a small herd, it's easy to overtax him.

Number of services by a boar:

	<u>Per Day</u>	<u>Per Week</u>	<u>Per Mo.</u>
Mature boar	3	12	40
Young boar	2	8	25

Mature boar considered to be 15 months or older, young boar under 15 months. (This table should give a good idea of what an average boar can handle.)

The estrus period for swine usually runs 19 to 23 days, with an average of 21 days. This means the sow/gilt will go into heat every 21 days until bred. The heat period usually lasts about 2 to 3 days. It is usually at the end of the first day of heat that the eggs (usually 10-15) are actually released into the oviduct. This is where timing and heat detection become important. If bred too early, the sow won't settle or else will have a small litter and the same goes for breeding too late in the heat period.

Heat detection can sometimes be tricky, es-

pecially with gilts who sometimes go into a "false heat". The first thing to look for is the swelling of the vulva and a clear, stringy discharge. Also watch for restless behavior, such as walking the fenceline and general nervousness. A real good indicator is when the sow in question attempts to mount other sows and will stand to be ridden when they attempt to mount her. One good thing about heat detection is that it gives you an opportunity to just stand and look at your sow herd every day.

If you are hand-breeding, that is watching for heat and then taking sows/gilts to the boar for breeding or vice-versa, this is where timing is critical. If only one service by the boar is possible, I usually try to have the mating done about 24 hours after true heat is first detected or early on the second day of heat. If you have adequate boar power, two services are better than one and usually will increase the conception rate. If the sow is to be serviced twice, I would recommend once as soon as true heat has been detected and then again 24 hours later.

The other method of breeding is "pasture breeding". This is when the boar is turned in



with the sows and gilts and breeding is assumed to take place as the sows and gilts come into heat. A lot of people use this system, but I've never had it work real well for me for several reasons. First of all, the boar is sometimes unwilling to service specific females and if 3 went into heat at the same time he might breed one 7 times, one 1 time and one not at all. Secondly, this can lead to an overworked boar with poor semen quality and hence poor conception rates on the entire herd.

Another reason this system hasn't been a favorite of mine is that it's too difficult to keep accurate records of when sows/gilts are bred. I always like to know when the sows are expected to farrow and it's almost a must for my type of pen farrowing system. I like to bring the sows in about 5 days prior to farrowing and get them used to their surroundings and give them an opportunity to nest. If I were too far off on the exact breeding date and then off again on the farrowing date, it's very likely that the sow could farrow outdoors and in the middle of the winter around here, that means baby pigs freezing to death. Besides the fact that a sow that's just farrowed or is nesting can be very difficult and dangerous to move. (All this applies mainly to pen farrowing. Pasture farrowing is another story and I'll discuss all aspects of farrowing in the next article.) If you can get pasture breeding to work for you, then by all means do it. It saves a lot of labor and individual handling of animals. With pasture breeding, it's a good idea to put the boar in with the sows/gilts for a few days to help stimulate estrus and then leave him in for one estrus period (21 days). With both breeding systems keep an eye out for sows/gilts that fail to settle and recycle and then have them bred again. If a specific sow or gilt continually recycles while other sows/gilts bred to the same boar have settled, the recycling sow/gilt should probably be culled. (When using a new boar for the first time, I would really recommend hand breeding, because you might have to help him out by holding and positioning the sow/gilt.

#### GESTATION

Gestation begins when some (ordinarily 95%) of those 10-15 eggs ovulated are fertilized - and continues until farrowing begins, some 114 days later. Not all of the eggs that are fertilized will develop into baby pigs. Somewhere during gestation some of these developing embryos will die. If it is early in gestation, the chances are that the fetuses will be reabsorbed by the reproductive tract of the sow. If past the 30 day point in gestation and calcification has occurred, the fetuses will become mummified and may be discarded at birth.

The most important job you have during gestation is keeping the sows healthy and not letting them get fat! It would seem that giving the sows a lot of extra feed would benefit growing embryos and get the sows ready for a bountiful lactation. Overfeeding can be very dangerous for the sows by making farrowing more difficult and it can greatly decrease embryo survival. An over conditioned sow is also more likely to abort than one that has been limited in feed intake. I try to keep

the gilts to about a 1 lb. daily gain during gestation (about 100 lbs. total gain is good; for sows, about 50-60 lbs. total gestation gain is desirable), and usually provide some type of high quality protein supplement. Maximum amount of exercise is also desirable during gestation. This can be accomplished by arranging the feed and watering facilities so that the sows/gilts are going to have to walk a ways to get them. Don't force them, however, to travel over great distances on rough, frozen ground or on ice.

Besides taking good care of the sows/gilts during gestation, do not overlook the boar. He should also be provided with adequate, clean housing, watched so he doesn't get too fat, and given plenty of exercise.

There are several items and practices (vaccinations, worming, etc.) which should be taken care of the last month of gestation, but since most are in preparation for farrowing I will wait until the next article on farrowing to discuss them.

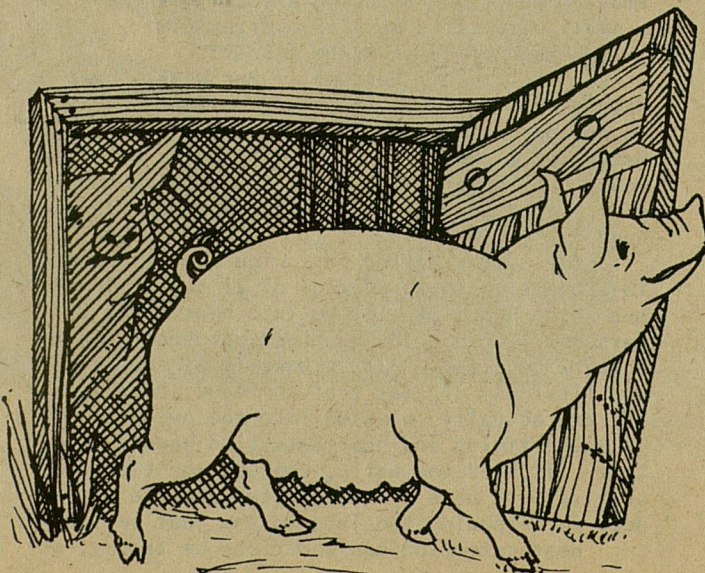
This is it for this issue and I hope there are no glaring omissions. I have refrained from discussing feeds and housing, as they relate to breeding and gestation, because I plan to cover them in depth in a future article. I have tried to cover the facts of selection and breeding that I feel are most important and have been guidelines for my own herd selection.

#### Bibliography:

"National Hog Farmer," Swine Information Service Handbook. (This has some good general management sections, but it is mostly geared to large, maximum efficiency, swine operations.)

Richard W. Langer, Grow It. (Langer's section on hogs has some good information and practical ideas but I question his selection criteria for breeding stock and a few of his breeding and farrowing methods.)

I have yet to find a really good basic sourcebook on raising hogs on a small scale. Most literature is either aimed at the big producer or else is so simplistic that it isn't of much value.





# Farm Notes

This space is for comments on practical articles which have appeared in COUNTRY WOMEN, questions about practical matters for other readers to answer, and short notes and articles which don't fit into our usual format. We're beginning this column because we want a place for feedback and dialogue about practical homesteading information. We also want to encourage women who don't feel up to writing a whole article to send us letters with stories about things that have worked well for you or problems you need help with. We welcome letters and contributions to this column!

## Nutrition Corrections

Our apologies to Laura Finkler for calling her article in the Food issue "The Last Word on Nutrition". She was never under the illusion that it was "the last word".

Further corrections to that article:

- p.35 2nd column - Insulin helps the sugar get into the cells, but often, due to the sudden burst of sugar, it lowers the blood sugar level too much.
- p.36 2nd column - PUFA (polyunsaturated fatty acids)
- p.38 1st column - Others like iron (Fe), Copper (cu) and Calcium (Ca) are needed in smaller quantities.
- p.38 1st column - RDA (recommended daily allowance)
- p.38 2nd column - (under picture) The normal distribution of values forms a bell shaped curve
- p.39 1st column - Pills, on the other hand, are pure vitamins and minerals, not complexed with other substances.

## Plumbing

Plumbing - When the weather is cool, it's hard to get black plastic pipe onto the connectors. Dipping the end of the pipe in hot water, or pouring hot water over a joint that's stuck works great. Copper pipe is wonderful if you can afford it. It's very easy to work with if you can get someone to show you how to sweat solder. Get a good pipe cutter for it. If there's any moisture in the pipes, the heat will draw it to the connection you're working on and make it leak. A good trick here is to first dry the pipe out as much as possible and then stick some bread in the pipe to absorb the moisture. It works. The bread is quickly dissolved and washed out your faucet.

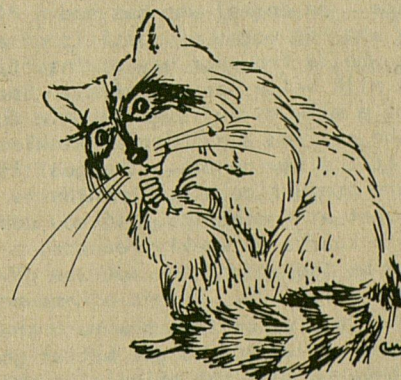
Gail Murray

## Chinese Vegetables

For women readers who want to grow Oriental vegetables such as nappa and Chinese cabbage, burdock, Japanese pickling melons and greens, bok choy, pea pods, daikon radish (the greens are the best for women's hip baths) and more - highly fertile seeds are available from Kitazawa Seed Co., 356 West Taylor Street, San Jose, Ca. 95110. This is the third year I've planted them - very fine veggies.

Becca Harber

## Hides



Hunting season is either in process or about to be in most states. I have found that if hunters know that someone wants raw (green) hides, they will often give them away. Another source of hides is a sheep ranch or rabbit farm. I've gathered hides from both and have made sheep pallets and am starting on a rabbit blanket as a Christmas present. Both are small enough to work on in the house and don't require a lot of time.

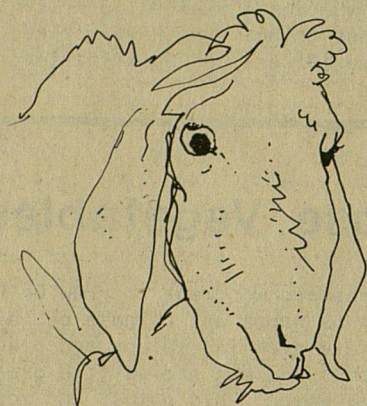
Mary Malwitz

cont.



# Farm Notes • Farm Notes •

## Goats



The goat production chart on page 53 of Issue 20 was pretty, but misleading in certain respects. Milk curves are a useful selection tool. Many breeders keep too many animals or retain does for a pedigree with some outstanding animal so far back in the lineage as to be meaningless. Production is the key feature of a dairy goat, but it varies with age, condition, and feeding. A first freshener milks much less than a five year old doe. An animal who has had a difficult kidding or who has worms or mastitis or any other illness or who is fed poor hay or insufficient grain will milk below her potential. Second, the idea of a milk curve is to be able to cull out does who go from a gush to a trickle or who fade out after a few months. The goal is a gentle curve, where production at ten months is not too far below that at freshening. If you don't want to mess with charts or weekly records, a fair guide would be the amount the doe was giving when she was dried off. That's a more accurate indication of her value than how much she gave on her highest day. And to get better goats, you don't have to sell the animals you have and buy others. Breed up, using the best bucks you can find, and keep only the best of their daughters. It's expensive to raise a kid to milking age, but satisfying to see the improvement from one generation to the next. You also lessen the risk of bringing disease home with new animals. Whatever method you choose, each year you must sell the lowest producers and those kids least likely to be good milkers. Don't try to keep more animals than you can take care of properly. Overcrowding causes stress, raises feed bills, and extends chore time. It's not good for you or your goats.

Sue Klepzig

Countless experiments conducted by experts (such as dairymen, commercial calf raisers) have established that a calf needs a total of 225 pounds of milk or reconstituted milk replacer during its first four weeks of life in order to develop properly. This means an average of eight pounds of milk per day. The Goat Production Chart in issue 20 shows that Helen Walsh's goats produced an average of four pounds of milk per day during the nine month lactation period, whereas David MacKenzie's "super"-goats produced a daily average of seven pounds of milk. This means, that even MacKenzie's goats would barely be able to support one single calf each. Under these circumstances, someone owning two top-producing goats could possibly raise two calves at a time, not four or six.

Just for the record: a two year old goat which produces a total of 1,500 pounds of milk during a 305 day lactation period qualifies for the registry - this implies that she is an excellent milker (at an actual average of roughly five pounds of milk per day)!

Milk consists of about 87 1/2% water and only 12 1/2% nutrients, so the daily milk ration of eight pounds of milk per calf only contains a little over one pound of nutrients. If several calves had to share this single pound of nutrients, they would all starve to death. Those among us, who are not willing to accept the experts' findings at face value, should look to Mother Nature for guidance: she has equipped a goat to support two to three kids with a combined weight of ten to twenty pounds at birth, a far cry from the 80 to 120 pounds a Holstein calf weighs at birth. And nutritional requirements are, of course, related to body weight.

Goat's milk has about the same food value as cow's milk, but the sugar content is lower, the ash content higher (see Encyclopedia Americana). Undoubtedly, milk production can be increased by feeding a special diet, but there are limits. Thank you for reading this clarification which I wrote to prevent the suffering of six poor calves put on the starvation rations provided by two goats.

Gerda R. Ulrich

Editor's note: Despite the indications of the goat production chart we published (see further comments below)--many goats average 8 lbs. a day for their whole lactation and freshen at twelve or more lbs. Were you to get feeder calves at the time 2 goats freshened, you could quite possibly raise three calves from two goats.



# Farm Notes · Farm Notes ·

## Horses

What motivates me to write is the article you published on horses in the Food issue. Because of my veterinary training, I have some objections:

Worms: This is a very complex subject, and no lay person needs to know all the gory details, but conditions and parasites differ markedly and it is important to ask a local vet about his/her recommendations. The best and most effective worm medicines can be gotten only through a vet. Worm medicines can be toxic, or an animal can develop a tolerance to a particular kind. It takes a microscopic fecal exam (by a vet or lab) to tell if your worming program is effective. If you can afford a pleasure horse, you can afford the veterinary fee to properly worm it.

Colic: This is a very general word meaning pain from the gastro-intestinal tract. It is not just gas in the stomach, although this is one cause of colic. It can be an immediate, life-threatening emergency or a mild stomach ache. Some colicky horses should not be kept moving. They may have a torsion of some piece of gut, salmonella infection - there are a huge number of causes.

Many colicky horses should be given nothing by mouth. Using human common sense remedies is not common sense. Most of us have no common sense about sick animals because we are inexperienced. What we need is knowledge. Also, most vets don't drench horses; they put fluids down by stomach tube. Drenching is dangerous.

Founder: There is no cure for this hoof problem once the bones have shifted in the foot. One thing we do is pack the soles of the hoof (all four) with cotton and tape. This may give some support to sore feet. Again - in any situation, prevention is best. Founder can best be detected and treated early so feel the feet. If pulses are increased and the feet are warm, founder may be imminent.

Monday Morning Disease: This is much more serious than indicated in the article. With it, you may see red urine (from muscle breakdown) and irreversible kidney damage.

"Twisted Gut": is a form of colic and can be caused by any number of things. Most causes are unknown, but the caution of "beware of sudden changes in routine" is a good one. However, this can be seen with no changes or discernible cause.

Distemper: is a wrong name. Strangles comes closer to an O.K. name. It is a disease caused by streptococcus equi, a bacteria. I will only comment that it is very contagious, and after abscesses form, systemic penicillin may prolong the course of the disease. There is a vaccine - but it should be given only if you know what you're

doing. Don't just order it through a supply house. Consult a competent vet.

Antibiotic Therapy: This is an area of great misunderstanding. There are no panaceas for anything. Improperly used they can create problems. The only two specific comments I will make are:

1. Combiotic is a poor choice. Penicillin and streptomycin are combined to fight gram positive and gram negative infections, which is a good idea. However, the penicillin should be given about once every twelve hours, the strep once every six hours. If you give combiotic every six hours, you waste the penicillin; if you give it every twelve hours, you don't have high enough blood levels of the strep to heal gram negative infections.

2. Blind use of antibiotics can create resistant strains of bacteria easily and you will end up calling a vet who will have to use gentamycin at \$70.00 a bottle because it is the only thing the bugs are sensitive to.

Wounds, even really deep ones need tender loving care, thorough initial cleaning (debridement), and daily (or more often) washing with saline. Not just a shot of penicillin.

Shots: 1. Glass syringes should be autoclaved. If you can't do that, boiling for five minutes is useless for killing most bacteria; twenty minutes at least is needed.

2. "Live" viruses are really modified live viruses - that is, they are not infectious. If they were infectious, they wouldn't be marketed.

It is important to use care when handling any biological, but you should be more worried about keeping the vaccine cold, adequate mixing, etc. than infection.

3. Too much alcohol will kill the modified live virus (MLV) and should be avoided. Don't pour alcohol on the needle. You may want to wipe the vaccine top, but most authorities agree that alcohol in these quantities for these short times is useless.

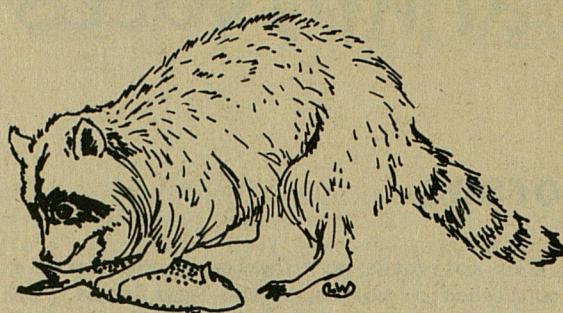
4. As to selecting what vaccinations to give, it varies over the country. A vet or USDA extension could be consulted. It is important to do it right - the right amount, the right number of vaccinations, the right interval apart. Sometimes only foals need vaccinations. Sometimes pregnant mares should not get them (they may abort). Be careful and vaccinate only if you know what you're doing!

Linda Rhodes ♀





# Bucket Tanni-Dermy



"Bucket Tanni-Dermy" is what I call it. My interest in learning the processes grew out of a work-study job I had in college. I was asked to stuff birds if there was time in between running pollution tests in the Biology Lab. It didn't take but a few seconds for me to realize that stuffing birds would be more fun than dropping chemicals into bottles of sewer water. Apparently not many previous work-study students had been interested in the fine feathered fowl frozen in the freezer, but I thought it was intriguing. Before long, with a minimal amount of introduction, I was stuffing everything from song sparrows to egrets. I found myself choosing the largest birds to work on because I didn't have to be so dainty and precise - an individual preference. I like massive jobs that require physical exercise. A large bird is not exactly a gargantuan task of physical endurance, but it requires more than finger muscles.

Soon I began noticing dead animals that litter the roadways; raccoons, squirrels, skunks and occasional deer. In some states roadkill game animals like badger, deer, elk, pheasant, etc. are off-limits to passersby. It is illegal to pick up dead animals. You are supposed to report such finds to the Natural Resources Department or similar agency. There are sound reasons behind such laws - the critters could have died from rabies or some parasitic disease which may be communicable. The department also attempts to keep a record of animal populations so that hopefully seasonal hunting laws will be responsive to estimated numbers within a given species.

On the other hand, I reasoned that small game road-kills were probably healthy just before they were run over, and were simply going to rot. I took my chances and began by processing road-kill raccoons. Finding the right tanning solution was a real headache. The book I found gave at least twenty-five types of solutions. Having tried about five, I finally decided on the sulphuric acid formula:

One gallon of water  
One pound of uniodized salt  
One ounce sulphuric acid

Dissolve the salt in the water. GO OUTSIDE and carefully pour the acid into the mix. Sulphuric acid fumes are extremely dangerous. This is enough to soak an animal the size of a raccoon. Increase accordingly. The hide should be completely covered in the solution. When mixing

the solution be careful not to use any metal containers or utensils. I use plastic or glass. Plastic garbage cans are perfect for large game animals. I've used dishpans, cottage cheese pots and even measuring cups - for mouse skins. Wooden buckets can also be used but they must be water tight.

Before soaking the hide in the bucket it has to be prepared. Generally speaking, here's my approach:

Make a slit from the anus to the top of the neck. Be careful not to cut into the flesh under the hide. Now make a cut from the elbow of each leg up to the belly cut. Using your fingers and some muscle, separate the hide around each joint and cut the hide from the leg. Do the same thing around the neck. Using a knife and your hands, begin separating the hide from the carcass. Work slowly since all the flesh and fat

removed at this time will save work later. Be careful not to make holes in the skin. After the hide is free, flesh the remaining tissue by scraping it carefully with a dull knife. At home I use a porch railing to drape the hide over and work on one small section at a time. The railing provides a flat top with a curved edge so the chances of slicing through the hide are reduced. A fleshing beam is the ideal rig to have if there is room in your home to store it. There are fleshing tools available but for a novice, a dull knife will do almost as well.

Once the hide is thoroughly cleaned, it is ready to be put in the brine. The solution should cover the skin at all times. Stirring it once in awhile will assure complete pickling. A small hide should be soaked about 5 to 7 days. Larger skins take about 7 to 10 days. Test by making a small cut in a thick spot. If the hide is white all the way through and is somewhat stiff, it is ready to be neutralized.

Make up a solution of four parts water to one part baking soda. Soak the hide in it for a day. This process will stop the action of the acid. The hide will now be ready to dry.





Tacking it to a frame helps dry it evenly and maintains the shape. Do not dry it near a heat source or in direct sunlight. Heat will damage the fur and make the hide more brittle. Dry it to the point where it forms whitish stretch lines when it is pulled tightly. Too soon and nothing will happen. Too late and the hide will be so hard that it won't give at all. The purpose is to soften the hide by breaking down the fibres that keep it stiff. This is where the work comes in. Use any technique you can think of to break down the tissue that is stiff. I have pounded elk and deer hides with a hammer, jumped on them, rubbed them back and forth across a tree trunk, pulled them over the edge of the kitchen counter, sat with the hide over my leg and pushed on small sections at a time with the blunt end of a hammer. Eskimo women chew the hide to soften it. I haven't come to that yet, but I may before I'm through. Of course, there's always the tanning factory. Because they have huge machines, they can produce skins as soft as warm putty. If the skin dries too hard, it can be dampened with water repeatedly without harm.

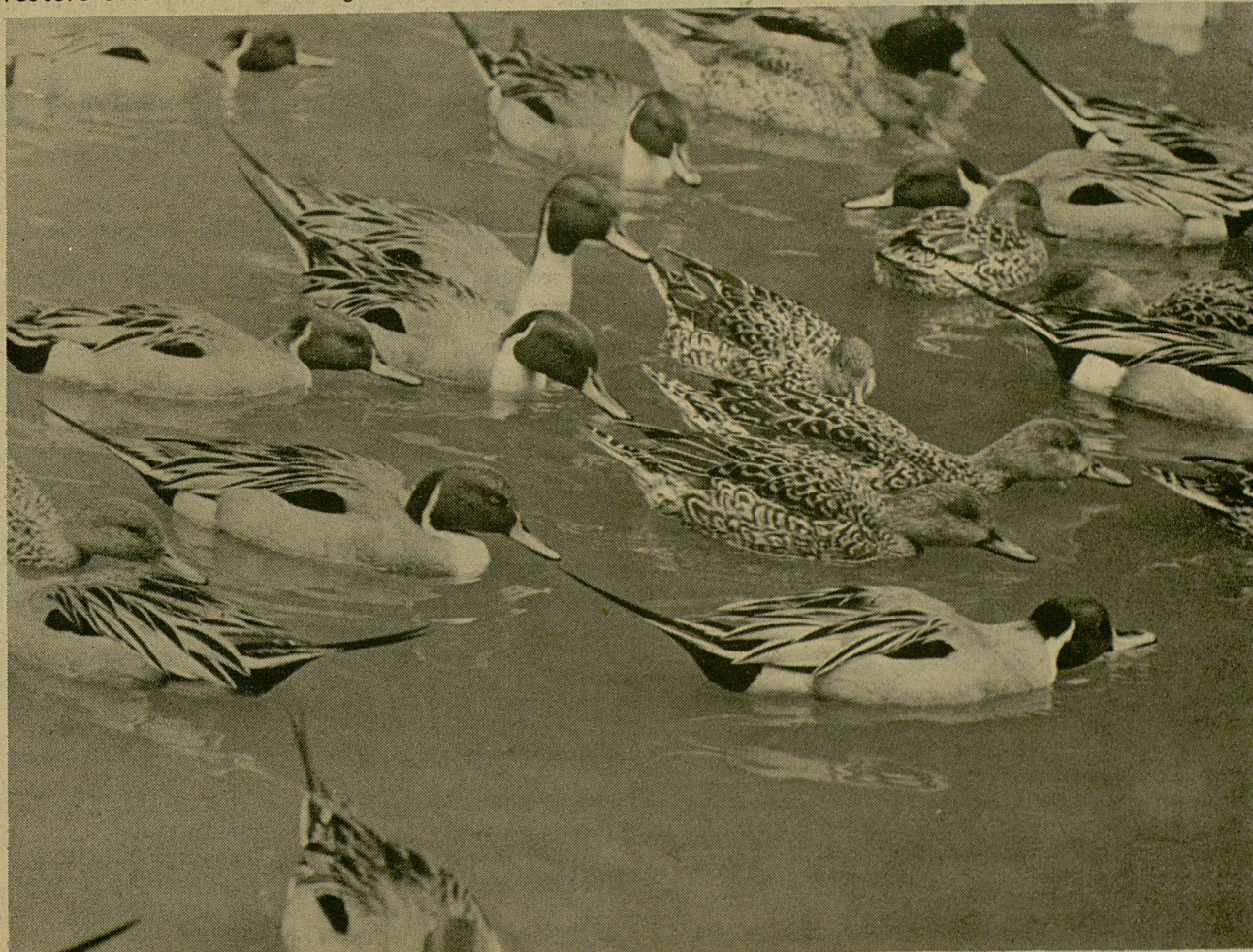
Once the softening process is completed, the hide should be gone over lightly with medium sand paper. This removes any strands or tiny rough spots that remain. A good rubdown with neatsfoot oil will keep the skin supple and will restore oils lost in tanning.

To clean and polish the fur, rub warm sawdust into the fur side. Work it through the fur for awhile then beat or shake it out. The fur will be cleaned and will smell better. If the hide smells bad, clean it by soaking it in gasoline for an hour. Gasoline works as a deodorant and fur polisher. Shake it in the air to dry and leave it outside until the gas smell is gone.

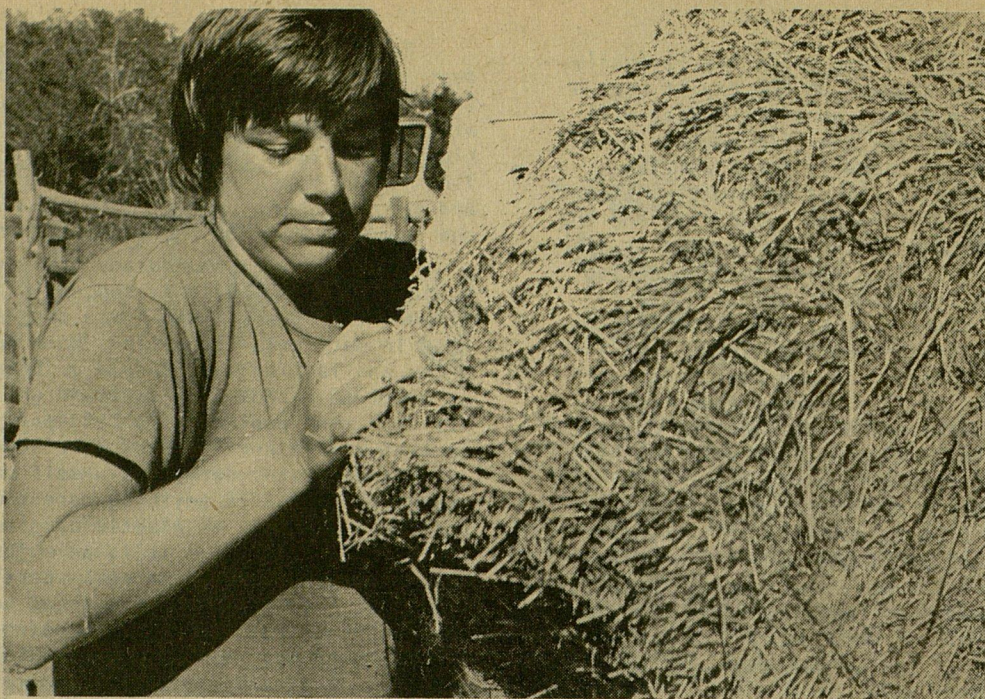
I strongly recommend any taxidermy book because there are many more suggestions and types of work that there isn't space for here. One book in particular is called "Home Book of Taxidermy and Tanning", by Gerald J. Grantz. It is as complete a book as I've found and is clearly written. The publisher is Stackpole Books, Cameron and Kelker Streets; Harrisburg, Pa. 17105.

Bucket Tanni-dermy was a self taught skill that didn't require anything more than a book, a knife and a couple of plastic or glass containers and solution makings. It is an enjoyable activity that has turned into a career. Getting into the field was a matter of having spent several fun hours, off and on for 3 years, doing something that pleased me. Disenchantment with school and needing a marketable skill prompted me to ask for a job at a professional studio. I am now learning the finer details of professional taxidermy work.

What I've told you about is a simple beginning for those who want to try it out and see what you can do for yourselves. ♀







# Mulching & Winter Garden Preparation

A mulch is any material that is placed on the soil surface to conserve moisture, to keep soil temperatures relatively constant around plant roots, to prevent erosion, to keep fruits, flowers or leaves clean and dry, or to reduce weed growth. It can be either organic or inorganic material.

Mulched plants are not subjected to the extremes of temperature of an exposed plant. Unmulched roots are damaged by the heaving of soil brought on by sudden thaws or sudden frosts. The mulch acts as an insulating blanket, keeping the soil warmer in winter and cooler in summer. Back breaking weeding and hoeing are practically eliminated. It also prevents sun and wind from drying the soil, so less water will be needed to maintain your garden. During growth it prevents loss of produce from rot by keeping produce clean and dry.

Organic mulches decompose and thereby furnish some humus which improves the soil structure. These mulches also contribute to the soil's nutrient supply by adding small amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and minor elements. They also prevent pounding rainfall or watering from compacting the earth.

Certain materials used for mulch contain rich minerals, and gradually, through the action

of rain and time, these work into the soil to feed the roots of plants. Mulch fertilizes the soil while it is on the surface as well as after it decays.

Organic mulches: Partially decomposed compost, grass clippings, ground bark, leaf mold, manure (cold - not fresh or filled with uric acid which will burn), peat moss, pine needles, redwood bark, chips and shavings, sawdust, straw, hay, other cured grasses, corn stalks, shredded leaves, cocoa bean hulls or shells, corn cobs, rotted pine wood, and even more. (see references at end of article.)

Inorganic mulches: Gravel, sand, plastic, and rock are also mentioned in detail in the reference books listed at the end of the article. Descriptions of their best uses, such as around patio trees, are also helpful for no-weed gardening.

Mulch can vary from an inch to a foot in thickness. The basic rule of thumb is, the finer the material, the thinner the layer. When mulching with something like hay, the mulch approaches the one foot level - after your mature plants are taller than this of course. Finer mulch, such as ground corncobs, peanut or cocoa hulls, or sawdust need only be an inch or two thick; 2" of sawdust would have the same effect as say 6" of straw. Mulches around trees



and shrubs should be deeper than in flower and vegetable beds. I keep adding to the mulches continually throughout the year to keep them at their desired height.

Straw and pine boughs are common winter mulch to protect plants from winter injury. The purpose is not so much to protect against cold as to control extremes of temperatures, including wind and warm winter sunshine, which burns the foliage of some plants.

The soil must be able to breathe through the mulch! For this reason you shouldn't use materials such as leaves, that will bind together into flat cakey layers with no air penetration. Leaves are great for your soil, when added to the compost pile first.

Don't mulch the soil when it is very dry - water it first. Otherwise the mulch may prolong the dry conditions by absorbing moisture from the soil, or light rain, which otherwise would have gone to the plants.

It is believed by some that certain organic materials decay very rapidly (sawdust, corncobs, etc.) and rob the soil of nitrogen as bacteria start the decay process. When using sawdust you may counteract the nitrogen deficiency by adding soybean meal, cottonseed meal, cold manures (goat, sheep), or compost. I have added sawdust with no problems but I always turn in plenty of compost and manure during winter mulching and before spring planting. If the mulch is an acid mulch (from sawdust, wood chips, or bark) you may counteract by adding lime.

When sowing seeds directly in the garden, mulch between the rows, but not right on top of where the young plants will come up. Wait till the plants are well formed and then mulch around them. When transplanting young seedlings into the garden remember mulching may keep the soil too moist for certain plants. Newly planted seedlings or perennials can damp off (a disease caused by a fungus inhabiting moist, poorly ventilated soil, which can be 90% fatal) or develop crown-rot (a disease also caused by fungus). Merely keep about a 6" circle of dry non-mulched area around the base of the plants. After about two weeks, you can bring the mulch up closer to the plants' stems.

To mulch my berry patch (raspberries, etc.) I use a one foot layer of straw mulch, which I replenish throughout the year. If you live in a dry area give the plants a good watering just as the berries begin to form, for an extra boost. It's a good idea to mulch with 6" used livestock bedding (I used goat) first and 6" of plain straw on top. Don't bring the mulch closer to the canes than a 6" circle - to keep field mice in their place. Nitrogen is very important to the bushes fruiting so the addition of tankage or dried blood to the soil before mulching will supply large quantities of nitrogen. Two good handfuls spread around the base of each bearing bush once a year is about right.

For grapes, mulch each vine with 6" of good compost, leaving the plant to grow out of a volcano-like depression. Don't bring compost right up against the cane, however. For mature plants, 6" of alfalfa hay mulch is excellent.

I mulched my strawberries right after planting. If the mulch later prevents the runners from taking root, nudge the mulch aside beneath each new runner and show it the way to the soil. If there is a low snowfall in your area or temperatures fall below 25°F for any length of time, mulch your plants for the winter with 6 to 8" of straw after the first frost, when the plants will be completely dormant. If you have lots of snow this will work just as well for insulation. Remove straw blanket in spring when the days warm up and the strawberries look as if they're about ready to grow again (i.e., they've begun to leaf out, but leaves without sun, will be yellow). Just gently move the mulch clear of each individual plant and let it lie. During late fall the plants get a rich manure straw or compost mulch but don't feed during spring or they put out too many leaves and no berries. In spring put down newspapers with sawdust on top (they like the acid) and this will keep the berries from rotting on wet earth.

By turning in the old mulch each year the humus content of soil will be increased. After several years the decomposing mulch will keep the topsoil in prime condition for root growth. This year-round program is easy to follow; when the existing mulch has decayed and compacted, merely spread a new layer of mulch on to the soil surface. During the summer, several sheets of newspaper under the mulch material is the best way to stop weeds; an unwanted weed is easily covered by mulch and dies from lack of light, thus contributing to the soil as it decays.

During late fall the majority of my garden has the last of the compost, manure, etc. dumped on and mulched over. There are a few sections, such as my berries, which receive a winter mulch cover. Often I have a row or two of root crops such as carrots which I leave in the ground and cover with mulch. Because of our local mild winters I had carrots throughout a lot of winter last year.

#### A sample year-round plan:

In fall when all your plants are out, pull weeds (can be tilled under) then place your fall mulch on top. Mulch with newspaper, thick manure, and straw on top.

In spring till this mulch into the ground, add more compost or manure, or both, and then mulch again with newspaper and straw. (Straw could be the top layers from a barn cleaning.)

Even though I don't own a barn, getting manure doesn't seem to be a problem in my area. Barn owners will often be happy to let you clean out their barn once or twice a year, since it is a continual chore for them.

Year-round mulching means less back aches, practically a weedless garden most of the year, and makes tilling and planting much easier. Best of all, that extra-rich soil grows huge, healthy plants.

#### Reference books:

- (1) Sunset's Organic Gardening
- (2) Rodale's Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening
- (3) "Grow It" by Richard Langer
- (4) "How to Have a Green Thumb Without an Aching Back." by Ruth Stout ♀



# Growing Worms

The move from city to country involved decisions about many things. How to survive financially was probably one of the foremost on my list. I knew that I did not want to commute into town to work at a job that would keep me away from the land most of my waking hours. I wanted a way to make money that would allow me to deal with the patriarchy as little as possible and that would perhaps someday mean that I would not have to deal with male energy at all. Growing worms is allowing me to stay on the land most of the time and I envision that it will allow me to deal totally with wimmin. Hopefully, someday it will support me.

The idea of growing worms came on a visit last fall to WOMANSHARE in Oregon. They had just begun raising them. Their confidence made me want to look into them further. Dolphin, the woman who raises worms with me, and I began visiting worm growers in Northern California, seeing who had the best prices and offered the most services after you purchased your initial stock from them.

Worms for beginning growers are sold in bed-runs. A bed-run consists of about 4,000 worms (of various sizes) per square foot. The cost of a bed-run will be between \$350 and \$400, which is a very large investment and one I personally think is outrageous. There is no need for them to be so expensive except that the men who are in control of the worm businesses right now are out to make enormous profits. All of the worm growers we talked to delivered the initial stock of worms and some gave various other services. The man we bought our worms from delivered them, came out and helped us split the first time, gives classes on how to harvest and gave a buy back contract of \$2.50 a pound. The buy back contract is only a piece of paper and only as good as this man's word. We are now hearing many stories that he does not have a market to sell all the worms that he has promised to buy back from the people he has set up in business. We feel a real need this winter to find markets of our own. Worms are used in nurseries and organic gardens instead of chemical fertilizers, in zoos as feed for animals, and as bait for fishing people.

To raise worms you must build some sort of bin (container) to keep them in. This needs to be done before your worms arrive. Our first bins were made of 1/2" plywood. Now, five months later, we are realizing that these are not sturdy enough. We are now building our bins out of 2" x 12" utility fir. The size of a bin is usually 3' x 8'. Since we began with 4 bins, we built two boxes 3' x 16' for convenience. I have read of bins made out of cement blocks, bins with bottoms, (ours have only 1" chicken wire to keep out moles), bins with tops, bins that were only trenches in the ground, and no bins at all (just worms in piles). Wooden bins can be made of any type of unpainted wood as long as it isn't redwood which is toxic to the worms.

A worm's diet consists of manure. It is important to have a steady source of manure set up

before you begin raising worms. We use mostly horse manure though manure from cattle, rabbits, sheep and goats is also good. We are now getting our manure from a horse ranch owned by two wimmin. It's a good feeling to be getting our manure from wimmin's land, where they too are working towards self-sufficiency. I love working near the horses who come and nudge me to be petted as I'm shoveling their shit. The manure must be free from redwood shavings and animals whose manure you use must not have been wormed within the past thirty days. Worms get feed about every 2-3 weeks.

The only basic maintenance involved in raising worms, besides feeding, is watering. The bins need to be kept moist at all times. In very hot weather this means watering every day. When the temperature is under 80° it is only necessary to water every other day. When it rains you do not need to water at all. I do most of the watering and have developed a real rapport with the worms by having steady contact with them. I often sing or chant to them while I'm watering. I'm convinced that talking and singing to them does make a difference. During a week long rain this summer they began to freak out and leave the bins. (We later learned that this was because we did not have enough manure on the beds.) I spent a couple of hours out in the rain one night talking and singing to them and putting them back in the bins. In the morning they were all still in their bins.

A population of worms that are fed properly will double in 75 days. When this amount of time has passed, you split the bins. Splitting means that you work down the bins taking out every other three foot section. The worms that you take out go into a new bin. Then you spread the worms out and feed and water. We had originally planned to continue splitting our bins until we reached 64. Because we are not sure what the buying market is like and how many pounds of worms we'll get per bin, we have decided to harvest (take out the adults) after we reach 16 bins. The man we bought our worms from says we will get 10 pounds of worms per month per bin. We are hearing from other growers that we will only get 3 to 5 pounds. So we feel a need to harvest once so we can get an idea if raising worms really will support us eventually.

I want to live in the country and work towards the matriarchy. My vision is to grow worms on wimmin owned land, get manure from other wimmin's animals and sell to wimmin who will do organic gardening. This is a vision; I know it's going to take time and for awhile I will have to sell to other markets that we find. We don't, right now, advise wimmin to go into raising worms until we are sure there really is a market to sell them. Finding markets will be our main concern this winter. When we know more we'll do a follow-up article for Country Women. Other wimmin's places that are growing worms are Nourishing Space Cave Canyon Ranch, P.O. Box D-11, Vail, Ar. 85641 and WOMANSHARE, 1531 Grays Creek Rd., Grants Pass, Ore. 97526. You can contact us at 3100 Ridgewood Rd., Willits, Ca. 95490. ♀



# Quell those Itches

WHAT is the most aggravating and totally maddening predicament you could imagine yourself being in, health-wise? At a loss for words? You say you don't want to think negatively? OK--I'll do it for you! How about this:

Within a period of a few days you have discovered, much to your chagrin and discomfort, that you have crab lice cavorting around in your pubic hair and scabies burrowing under your skin. You also have a nice crop of pinworms making itself apparent and what feels like a hundred flea bites all over your ankles and legs! Add to this dismal picture the fact that you live at the end of 25 miles of bumpy dirt road and are 40 miles from the nearest town containing both a laundromat and a doctor. Therefore, it is not possible to take care of the situation immediately and, what's more, all your vehicles are broken down.

You've got a real problem! What are you going to do? If your living group hasn't noticed you hopping about itching everywhere wildly, you could try being embarrassed that you have all those afflictions and not tell anyone about it. You can just spend a lot of time shut in the bathroom picking off crabs and pinching them in two. Or boil all your bed sheets and clothes, explaining to family members that it's an ancient ritual. But maybe one of them is a veteran volunteer from some urban free clinic and will figure out all of your antics and confront you with it. You might as well talk about it, so you can take the necessary action to curb the little critters and protect yourself and others from future re-infestation. So--let's discuss these four problems now.

**FLEAS**, although associated with bargain and exchange markets, are also infuriating little parasites which suck blood and can cause nights of torment if they all decide to sleep in your bed because you're so tasty! They can live a surprisingly long time, over a year, without blood. Apparently they are now developing a genetically strengthened resistance to chemical insecticides. This coupled with current mild weather and lax pet owners accounts for an almost epidemic flea problem. One person I talked with observed that since fleas are finding it difficult to survive in the hills, they are migrating to more populated areas where they can feed on cats, dogs, and humans.

You don't have to own a pet however, to be singled out as a victim for some flea's dinner. You can go over to a pet owner's house and sit around in the kitchen or walk in the garden and yes, the flea carried by the cat may jump onto your pants leg or sock and ride along back to your house where, after dining on you, it jumps off and under a floorboard, lays a lot of eggs which hatch a short time (24 to 48 hours) later. They exist there until they find out that there is a couch/bed above them and go exploring. They discover a visitor--friend of yours and some of them go home with her. She is very puzzled as to why she got fleas at your house--after all, you're a Virgo and keep the place spotless! So it goes.

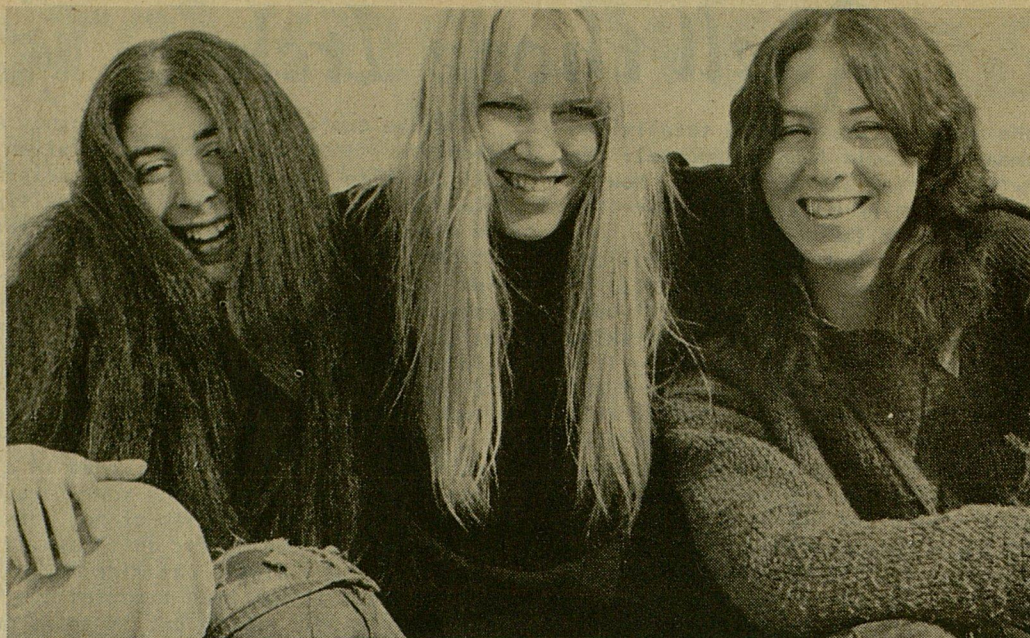
Fleas don't attack everyone--they are very selective. I've heard some speculation that they will not bite people with good Vitamin B complex intake, are drawn to clean, good-smelling people, and are attracted by the contents of perfumes and lotions. Some folks' remedies are: If you can find something so exotic in your area, Temple of Heaven Essential Balm (costs 35¢) takes the itch out of the bites. Plain rubbing alcohol on the skin and bites relieves the itching for awhile and will even do in a flea if it comes in contact with it. Aloe vera, either the broken-open leaf or a cream is soothing also. Something I discovered when I was ten and later read in a health hints column is that holding your ravaged ankle or lower leg under a stream of hot water really helps stop the itching for quite awhile afterward. There are always calamine lotion and chemical sprays. It has been reported that one drop of pennyroyal oil spread out in spots on your arms and legs really makes those fleas skidaddle! Oil of eucalyptus or rosemary might also be effective, but pennyroyal, according to a satisfied user, is your full-strength natural repellent.

About pets--people concerned about the chemical content of the plastic type of flea collars have tried a pennyroyal-soaked string (or eucalyptus pod collars) with some amount of success. The chemical ones work better, though they contain nerve gas which is somehow absorbed into the animals' blood stream. Simply putting a flea collar on your pet will not cure the problem. It is recommended that the pet's sleeping area be vacuumed, as well as the rest of the house, very thoroughly and then burn the refuse bag. Continuous shaking up of possible breeding grounds for fleas, such as pets' bedding, will help destroy the fleas' cycles. You might want to go so far as to air your blankets and sleeping bags out in the full sun or run them through a dryer. Giving your pet a shampoo/bath might also help. At least everything will be squeaky clean. However, even then you won't be totally safe! Fleas live quite nicely in the plain old soil around and near your house.

The flea does not inject a poison into your skin like a bee sting or spider bite. What causes the itch is the skin's reaction to the bacteria which was transferred during the "bite". To further reassure you, bubonic plague was actually transmitted by the bacteria-carrying fleas on the rats--not the rats. This would seem to account for the reason that some batches of bites are more potent and itch more than others--stronger bacteria and germs battling it out.

Now, if you're at your wit's end and have dutifully carried out all the preventative measures and you are still besieged and frantic, then go get a chemical flea bomb, remove anything living from the house, let it off and stay out for the time period recommended by the directions. This is reported to be a last resort for some and very effective--in fact, it will even kill flies. Just make sure to remember all your house plants! Now that we've conquered fleas, onto: cont.





SCABIES, the cause of more foul moods and untimely expensive measures to get rid of them. They are also not a favorite topic of casual conversation. Along with fleas, it is being experienced, in some areas, in wide-spread, epidemic proportions. It seems to be the hazard of a mobile culture/population and is a very transmittable and infectious disease of the skin caused by a spider-like microscopic mite. Since they are so invisible it's possible to be unaware they're present for from two to six weeks. After that time you notice some little raised red bumps which itch intensely, especially at night. The bumps are the burrows which contain the female and eggs.

I had never heard of scabies a few years ago and one week scratched at a couple of areas on my arm which I passed off as being my first reaction to poison oak from a weekend hike. I asked a friend to look at the bumps and she immediately identified it as scabies and advised me to go to the doctor. The treatment is fairly standard all over--Kwell lotion or shampoo applied to the body for 24 hours after a bath or shower and laundering and machine-drying of all bedding, clothes worn since infection, and towels used. After the Kwell has remained on your body for 24 hours you repeat the shower and shampoo and clean clothes. As an extra precaution, it is advised to Kwell again after 48 hours, leaving it on for another 24 hour period and ending with a final shower or bath, etc. In case of allergic reaction to Kwell, some other lotions are Topocide, Eurax or benzyl benzoate ointment.

In order to make certain of no lingering mites or eggs in blankets and quilts, you will have to dry clean those--very expensive and aggravating, but necessary nonetheless. Our local clinic states dry-cleaning is often not fool-proof; however storing dry cleaning items in a plastic bag for two weeks will enable all eggs to die and quilts or clothing to be safe. I had to de-scabie two beds, not one, and it was just an all-around big hassle as I'm sure everyone else will affirm who has ever had them.

It is extremely important that you wash or boil everything in super-hot water and then machine-dry it all, for if you merely hang your wash outdoors, you cannot be certain of killing all the offensive mites. Though you have used the lotion, itching may continue for a week, at which time the bumps should disappear.

It is so easy to pick up scabies--the transfer can occur in direct physical contact with someone who has them or from bedding or clothing contaminated by an infected person. The real problem is that they don't make themselves apparent right away and so you could be traveling to another state, stay over at a friend's house, where a few days before another friend left some scabies behind. You finally return home to discover your roommate pissed off and laundering and dry cleaning everything in sight, itching and telling you about scabies a friend of hers left behind. By that time, you've begun to notice bumps and itching since the eggs which you've been carrying around are beginning to hatch and burrow. The bumps will appear on hands, between fingers, wrists, legs and arms, genitalia, and under breasts.

You can try two methods of natural treatment, but if these don't seem to improve the condition, the doctor or clinic and a prescription for the lotion is in order. The first home remedy is using a few drops of rosemary oil in a bath and then applying it to the bumps. The second is a liniment which takes a week to make, so you might want to make some now to have on hand.

Combine:

1 ounce powdered myrrh  
1/2 ounce powdered golden seal  
1/4 ounce cayenne pepper  
1 pint rubbing alcohol (70%)

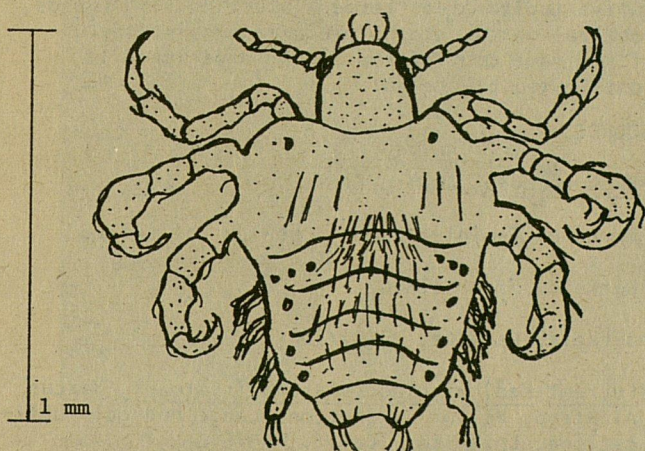
Mix together and let stand 7 days, shake well every day, then pour liquid into another bottle, (just the liquid, not the sediment) then cork.



I really don't know about the effectiveness of these two methods, but the liniment is also good for aching muscles, strains, soreness, sprains, swellings, bumps, hits, bangs and falls. Let's move on to:

**CRABS**, another contender for the prize for the Biggest Hassle and Aggravation of the Year. From personal experience and the stories of others, I can say that having crab lice or even considering the possibility that you could have them can so overtake your consciousness that you are plagued with real or imagined itches beyond all reason. Just doing the research for this article started a whole wave of psychological itching. L. told a story about how, at one time, practically everyone at her farm had crabs but she had escaped the ill fate. One night she was embroidering on a shirt and out of the crab consciousness popped a large embroidered version of a crab louse.

Crabs are rather bizarre with their six little legs sticking out of an almost transparent round little body. Since they are sort of white they are difficult to see on the skin until they have had a meal, after which they are more brown since they feed on blood. This is actually what the itch is caused by--they adhere to the skin rather tightly to tank up and may also carry some minor bacteria. In the past, lice were transmitters of the dangerous disease, typhus, but now they are only a huge bother. They are spread in much the same manner as scabies, except that they are capable of staying alive away from the human body for up to two days. This means that you can



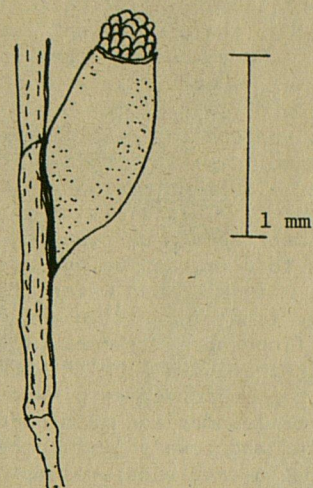
CRAB LOUSE (PHTHIRUS PUBIS)

get them from upholstered furniture, clothing, rugs, toilet seats and bedding, as well as from physical contact.

So crabs, with their little hooked legs, swing from shaft to shaft in a hairy jungle (causing another type of irritation--that of the crabs' tickly motion). They lay eggs usually at the base of hair shafts and nits (egg cases) are white and visible to even an untrained eye. If the lice cannot find a human hair shaft they will settle for a substitute in cloth fiber such as in underwear, socks, shirts, rugs, bedding, etc. The eggs hatch about two weeks later and a new crop begins. This is the reason that in addition to

using Kwell insecticide lotion or Pyrinate A-200 (available without a prescription but not always effective) according to directions, you also launder all clothes and bedding and use a dryer for at least 30 minutes since heat above 135 degrees will kill both the lice and their nits.

EGG CASE  
(NIT)



Let me again state emphatically that you'll just keep giving them out and getting them again if you don't make the situation known to your intimate partners or the rest of your family or living group. Social customs and attitudes have contributed to more people remaining silent about a condition which is almost as easily transmitted as flu and cold germs. This silence causes crabs to spread rampantly at times, cutting across all classes and culturally imagined boundaries. Now we proceed to another problem parasite which remains hush-hush as well:

**PINWORMS**, also called threadworms, are tiny white worms a little thicker than a thread and approximately 1/2 inch long. It is very possible to have a mild case and not be aware of it. The important thing to remember about pinworms is that they are a very common affliction, not rare. They are more prevalent among children but adults do get them. They may be as easily and frequently caught as the skin parasites mentioned above, especially in rural areas, because of the fact that they live in dirt and sand. You may even eat some inadvertently in the salad you picked from your garden. Or you could carry some under your fingernails from working outdoors and then fail to wash your hands later. The list of possibilities is endless. A woman in one community reported a pinworm episode involving her entire collective plus others--a total of nine women. She speculates that they were transmitted partly through physical contact between a few of them and then just ordinary daily life for the rest. Lack of verbal communication helped contribute to the widespread attack.

The common symptoms are an itchy anus, usually more intense at night and around the full moon when the worms become more active and come out of the colon to lay eggs in large numbers. The females die after laying the eggs and the eggs themselves become infective within a few hours. It takes about two months for an egg to develop into an egg-laying female pinworm. The

cont.



symptomatic itching is also sometimes accompanied by insomnia, restlessness and irritability and possible intestinal upset. The test for pinworms is taken by wrapping a piece of scotch tape around your finger, sticky side out, and touching it to the opening of your anus. If there are any eggs present, they will cling to the tape. The tape can be put on a slide and examined under a microscope, where they will be visible. They do not necessarily appear in your shit.

Once you know for certain that you have pinworms you can secure from a doctor a prescription for a medicine in liquid or chewable tablet form called either Antepar or Anteminth.

This kills only the live worms and the treatment should be repeated in a week. Other measures to use are: being super careful to wash hands with soap and water after shitting and again before food preparation and eating meals, keeping your fingernails trimmed close and clean, don't scratch! and DON'T PUT FINGERS IN MOUTH!

Upon discovering pinworms, it is also a good idea to launder and machine-dry all bedding, clothes and towels just to be safe. You can also try out a couple natural methods of treatment, which may not totally rid you of the nuisance but perhaps control it some.

1. Garlic: try eating a clove of garlic everyday for three days. On the third day, drink a cup of senna and peppermint leaf tea. The garlic somehow weakens the worms and the senna acts as a laxative to wash them out. Repeat in a week to get rid of the larva which will probably have hatched by this time. Repeat in another week to be safe.
2. Tansy: swallow one teaspoon of mashed tansy seed, followed by water. Also, drink nettle tea--three cups a day for three days. Boil three cups of water and one teaspoon nettles and simmer ten minutes. (Tansy should not be used by pregnant women or by people with a tendency to hemorrhage.) Repeat this treatment in one week.

When women get pinworms, they sometimes get into the vagina, causing even more agony. A remedy for this is to sit in a tub of hot water (Sitz bath) with 1 1/2 cups of Epsom salt per gallon of water to draw the worms out. Also, application of zinc oxide (prescription) to the openings of vagina and anus is helpful. One resource cautioned that you not eat sugar when afflicted because the worms thrive on it.

It should be stated once again that if one member of a household or living group has pinworms, all members should be tested and given treatment since the parasite is so easily and innocently spread. In researching all of this, I ran across some info about:

PUBIC HAIR ITCHING, which occurs sometimes and is not caused by lice but rather from dryness or whatever, sort of like an itchy scalp. When you are absolutely certain you haven't got crabs and do have "just" an itch, you can try these:

1. Stinging nettle: boil one cup of water, add two heaping tablespoons of stinging nettle, and simmer for 20 minutes. Let cool

and strain, then splash on the area.

2. Slippery Elm Infusion: instructions are the same as for stinging nettle.

3. Apply wheat germ oil to the area, rubbing it well into hair and skin.

We are sometimes quite alarmed when we hear of or contract these pests and parasites and that tinge of middle-class moralizing creeps into our thoughts. But bear in mind that many of us were raised in rather germ-conscious and almost sterile clean urban or sub-urban environments where knowledge of these things was often nil. So, placed in a more natural, rural environment where these problems are more common, we who are unaccustomed to the situations have an understandable cause for alarm. But the most effective way to deal with them is just to communicate and secure the proper treatment.

Hopefully, this discussion will help to inform and assist you to be more vocal if you discover any of the above pests and parasites. If you have any humorous incidents or further information, technical or home-remedy type, please pass it along by sending a note to: Country Women Health Info, Box 490, Albion, Calif. 95410. I am considering the possibility of creating a sort of health forum where you could send in your experiences, tidbits of information and also any questions you might have which I would be glad to research and then compile in another article. Your input and feedback is essential for this, however. The next few articles' tentative topics are: herpes infection, hemorrhoids, venereal warts, staph infection and impetigo. If you have any information or experience to contribute, please do! ♀

#### SOURCES:

\*Back to Eden, Jethro Kloss

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\*Berkeley Free Clinic

\*Berkeley Gazette, 10/21/76

\*Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment, Marcus Al Krupp, Milton J. Chatton; Lange Medical Publications, Los Altos, Calif. 1975.

\*Healing Yourself, Joyce Prensky, ed. 402 15th Ave. East, Seattle, Washington, 98112; 6th revised edition, 1976.

\*A Manual for the Control of Communicable Diseases in California, compiled by California State Dept. of Public Health, 6th ed., 1971.

\*Mendocino Coast Health Services

\*Oakland Feminist Women's Health Center

\*Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, F.A. Davis Co., Philadelphia, Penn., 9th ed., 1963.

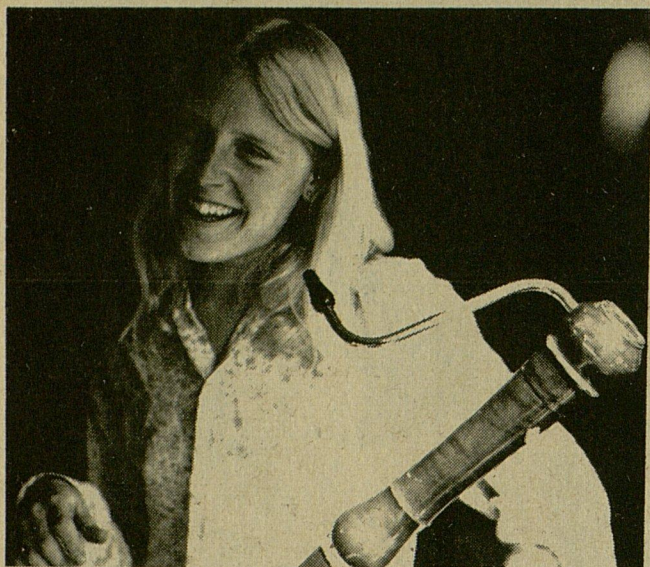
\*Various women's experiences and information.







# Songs of My Sisters



BeBe K'Roche. Olivia Records.

BeBe K'Roche is a women's band from the San Francisco Bay Area. Their music is a sensual, rhythmic blend of Latin, rhythm and blues and jazz. Good dance music.

Arlington St. Women's Caucus. Honor thy Womanself: Songs of Liberation. Rounder Records (4006)  
This album is a product, not of a singing group, but of a women's group. The music could be described as "uninhibited folk" - a product of what happens when friends come together to make music - feminist music.

Berkeley Women's Music Collective. Distributed by Olivia Records.

All songs written and arranged collectively by the all lesbian group. The music excellently documents the pain and struggle of being a woman in this patriarchal society.

Meg Christian. I Know You Know. Olivia Records. Music that speaks honestly and realistically to women about our lives: our needs, our strengths, our relationships with each other, our anger, our love.

Casse Culver. Casse Culver in Concert. Hera Audio Productions. Distributed by Sweet Alliance (cassette only).

Eight songs recorded live at Casse's concert at the L.A. Women's Building in 1974. Good feminist folk.

Deadly Nightshade. Phantom Records. Distributed by RCA.

A very "professional" album, but contains songs of liberation that feminists and non-feminists alike can relate to. Strong country-western tones; a real foot stomper!

Alix Dobkin. Living with Lesbians. Women's Wax Works (A002). Distributed by Project No. 1. According to Alix, total connection with her music requires a lesbian ear, mind, body and everyday lesbian experience. I agree.

Carole Etzler. Sometimes I Wish. Sisters Unlimited.

All songs written about personal aspects of and events in the artist's life - a musical journal.

Nancy Fierro. Premiere. Avant Records (AV 1012). Recorded performances of keyboard works by women. Becoming acquainted with women's best compositions can only give us a fresher awareness of the music we've listened to for so long.

A Few Loving Women. Distributed by Lesbian Feminist Liberation.

Eleven women came together to produce this album of songs about women loving women. All proceeds from this album go to Lesbian Feminist Liberation.

Kay Gardner. Mooncircles. Urana Records. Distributed by Olivia Records.

"While the album openly resonates with echoes of classical tradition, Kay Gardner skillfully integrates these sounds with the material, modes, instrumentation and rhythms of our obscure female heritage which she has lovingly excavated." (Kirsten Grimsted). Beautiful flute instrumentals. If there is an album of women's spirituality, this is it!

Hazel and Alice. Won't You Come and Sing for Me. Folkways. Hazel and Alice. Rounder Records (0027).

An integration of country-traditional and pop-classical. They do a wonderful job of bringing country music to the feminist community, and feminist politics to country music.

High Risk. Sister Love Productions. Distributed by Olivia.

A 45 by four women (Bobbi Jackson, Virginia Rubina, Cyndy Mason and Sandi Ajida) which includes "The Common Woman" with words by Judy Grahn, and "Degradation", the background music from the film "Woman to Woman" by Donna Deitch.

Elizabeth Knight. Songs of the Suffragettes. Folkways (Fh 5281).

Captures the spirit of the suffragist movement. Album includes a brief history of the women's suffrage movement.

Lavender Jane. Lavender Jane Loves Women. Women's Wax Works.

An album of true lesbian music by Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Patches Attom. The music comes from and belongs to women experiencing women. The first album recorded and produced by women.

Rita MacNeil. Born A Woman. Boot Records. Many of the songs on the album are the expression of a powerful political conscience; Rita's unique gift is that she is able to write about the struggle for peace or the equality of women without sounding heavy handed. Includes echoes of the reels and Scots ballads and all night country-western stations.

Holly Near. Hang In There. Redwood Records. An album of the Vietnam War that dreams of world peace, sexual and racial equality and ageless understanding.



Holly Near. A Live Album. Redwood Records.  
Reflects more of a feminist consciousness than  
her first album, and is an integration of her  
personal life and politics.

Holly Near. You Can Know All I Am. Redwood  
Records.

Songs about people's lives turned into wonderful  
musical theater. Certainly the most "produced"  
of Holly's albums.

New Miss Alice Stone Ladies Society Orchestra.  
Harmony Club Records.

A fun, feminist record of Scott Joplin music;  
also includes original compositions in the same  
style.

Malvina Reynolds. Malvina Reynolds. Century  
City Records. Malvina. Cassandra Records. Held  
Over. Cassandra Records.

Malvina is a long time feminist and folk singer  
responsible for the well known songs "Ticky  
Tacky" and "We Don't Need the Men."

Linda Shear. A Lesbian Portrait. Distributed  
by Old Lady Blue Jeans. (Cassette and Reel to  
Reel tape only).

This tape is a thoughtful combination of Lesbian  
voice and piano. Linda seeks out our spiritual  
and earthly presence through startling musical  
images.

Virgo Rising: The Once and Future Woman. Thun-  
derbird Records.

Seven women bring you an album that reveals our  
diversity and reflects our own worth. They sing  
our growing awareness of what is - and of what  
can be.

Willie Tyson. Full Count. Lima Bean Records.  
An album of feminist folk. "Ballad of Merciful  
Mary" is a moving account of the injustice shown  
rape victims. Willie has a deep, captivating  
voice that pulls you into her songs.

Cris Williamson. The Changer and the Changed.  
Olivia Records.

Cris is concerned with spirituality and her music  
reflects that, as well as her roots - the wide  
open country. She plays piano and guitar and  
sings her own music as well as the music of her  
contemporaries.

The Women Folk Song Project. Work of the Women.  
Educational Activities.

A repertoire of songs describing the history  
and experiences of women from "The Death of  
Mother Jones" to "Amelia Earhart".

Women's Works: Works by Famous Women Composers.

Two record set containing three centuries of  
works by eighteen European women composers.  
Music ranges from piano vocals and piano solos  
to various combinations involving voice, strings,  
piano and harpsichord.

"...but the women rose..." Voices of Women in  
American History. Folkways (FD 5535).

Includes the voices of Lucy Stone, Susan B.  
Anthony, Anne Hutchinson, Sojourner Truth,  
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# Women in Print

"Dear Sisters,

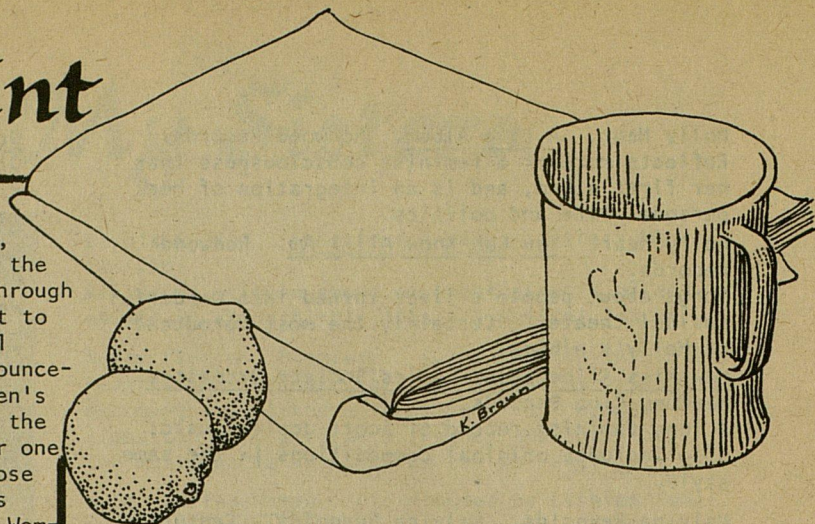
A number of women from feminist presses, journals and bookstores have been discussing the advantages of having a national conference through which we could share skills and problems, get to know each other, and strengthen our political network of feminist communication...This announcement is going to every known independent women's press, journal, bookstore, or distributor in the United States...The conference is planned for one week in late August through Labor Day, as close to the geographic center of the country as is practical." --from the first mailing for the Women In Print conference.

"Only women are crazy enough to come to a beautiful place from all over the country and work the whole damn time."- anonymous.

Every once in a while I remember that there is no women's movement. That is: there are lots of health clinics, bookstores, concerts, pamphlets, letters-to-the-editor, discussions of certain ideas and dreams, buttons and posters and political diatribes. But there is no headquarters, president, five-year plan, membership list, or any of the other things usually associated with people who want various types of power and have every intention of getting it.

Remembering that, the Women In Print conference in Omaha this past August becomes more significant than a gathering of female word-freaks, a trade convention, or a sharing of ideas. It becomes the beginning of something that feminism's second wave has never had and is more than ready for. It becomes the building of a network of women who are committed, serious; who appreciate one another and are building trust; who have already independently begun to reach thousands more. A network; that is, a structure in which the component units have integrity and independence, but are purposefully interconnected and mutually reinforcing. A network that can include respect for diversity as well as acknowledgement of mutual goals. It is not a political party, nor does it have party lines. It is a flowering. And it is incredibly exciting.

Eighty groups were represented by 132 women, perhaps a half or a third of all the groups that might have come. The diversity of finances, modes of operating, size of groups, areas represented, emphasis and aesthetics at the conference were astonishing - the more so because they did not seem to divide us. It did not seem to matter, to the bookstores for example, that some of us take in \$5,000 a year in sales and some take in \$120,000; that some of us work with two people and some with twenty; that some are volunteers and some well paid; that some are very specific about their politics and some are not. Or perhaps it was simply much more important that we all love and care about what we are doing, that we all want to grow and reach out, that we all need money and time and energy, that we all share a passionate desire to spread the word. The di-



versity meant, to many of us, the relief of discovering that there exists no one "right way" to do what we're doing. And also there was the relief of finding people who have shared the same experiences, who have been through the fights in the collective, the panic over deadlines, the money crises and the pride of doing it. As one publisher sighed, "until now, I thought everyone was making it except us."

"10-11:45 Anyone: Taxes. Presses: Binding. Newspapers: Investigative research. 2-3:45 Publishers: Discussion of content and ideas presented in our books. What exactly do our books have to do with the women's movement? Presses: How to decide what should be printed? How to make sure your work is revolutionary, not just appealing to a small "alternate" group. Printing material for underground groups. Newspapers: News judgment; politics in deciding what news to print and what not to print. Magazines: Integration of art and politics. Is there a feminist aesthetic? Bookstores: Political and community responsibility. Separatism. How do we avoid becoming either too rigid or coopted? How to get women to read class conscious material? Anyone: What is the relationship between "cultural" and other "political" forms of feminism?"- from Tuesday conference schedule.

Skills sharing was an important aspect of the conference, and the easiest for everyone to relate to. Perhaps for that very reason, skills were the topics of the first morning's workshops and of all mornings thereafter. But it was political energy that was the true current of the conference, and the issues were those circulating in the feminist movement as a whole: contradictions of being anti-capitalist businesses; accountability; alternate culture vs. revolutionary movement; class and race. Many of the discussions could have gone on between any group of feminists anywhere, but it was the question of "feminist business" that was of particular concern to the conference participants. Because the Women In Print conference participants were all worker/owners of small businesses, there was, not surprisingly, little support for the anti-business side of the question. Most were especially vocal about their desire to get paid. The awareness of the challenge to justify ourselves made marked the emphasis on community



services, serving poor and working class women, on non-hierarchical structures and non-traditional ways of operating, and on how we can be most politically useful.

For most of us, a comfortable entrepreneurial niche hardly applied; operating in the red, on volunteer labor, borrowed resources and small miracles, most echoed the woman from Albuquerque who said simply, "I'd like to learn how to make money." Very few knew even the most basic business skills when they began their project; many admitted that they still did little in the way of bookkeeping, distribution, advertising, or fundraising, because all their energy was being reserved for the product or service itself. As there are no real models for anti-capitalist businesses, we were eager to create some rules that worked for us. Some of the questions included: What is our time worth? How can we go through re-evaluations of our process without folding? How do we set salaries, prices, discounts, in such a way that no one gets ripped off? How do we avoid destructive competition? How can we both survive and support each other?

"Madison Avenue publishers, now owned by such as Kinney Rent-a-Car, Gulf and Western, and RCA, are really the hard-cover of corporate America, the intellectuals who put the finishing touches on patriarchal politics to make it sell; what we can call the finishing press because it is our movement they intend to finish. They will publish some of us - the least threatening, the most saleable, the most easily controlled or a few who cannot be ignored - until they cease publishing us because to be a woman is no longer in style... the first thing any revolutionary group does when taking over a government is to seize control of communications, and we have already set up our own..." - June Arnold, "Feminist Presses and Feminist Politics," in Quest; Kaleidoscope One

Along with our need to find ways of functioning within the feminist-capitalist contradiction, was a recognition of our opposition to the corporate publishing world, the literary-industrial complex. Much of our critique is implicit in our very existence as feminist presses, publishers, journals, distributors, bookstores - i.e., we do not trust "the boys" to continue printing or making available feminist literature one minute longer than they can make a fat profit off us, and we recognize the necessity of having our own communication systems outside their control. In turn, this led to commitments to strengthen each other; to pay women's groups before the boys when money is tight, to accept higher prices from other women when necessary, for bookstores to carry and display more women's press material, for publishers to use women printers as much as possible and for magazines and papers to review women's press books. The sense of our connectedness to each other and our mutual needs was strong and positive.

Commitments around money are not easy to make; most of us are used to being too broke to even think about doing things any way other than the cheapest. One publisher said flatly that

she could not accept a price from a women's press which was more than 7% higher than a male press's price. But many of us were coming to new realizations about the necessity to recycle money to women, to make sure we all survive and grow. Some have made commitments to recycle money in other ways - giving "seed money" to help other feminist enterprises get on their feet, doing "benefit days" in which all sales go to specific feminist projects, giving discounts for women on welfare, or doing work free for other political groups. Others are planning to move into these activities if and when they have the funds.

One very well attended workshop was the one on taxes, in which I particularly appreciated one speaker's pointing out that no moral significance attaches to being set up as profit or non-profit; that is, that profit and non-profit structures are simply ways of presenting ourselves to Uncle Sam, each with specific advantages and disadvantages. They have nothing to do with whether we are doing good work for the movement or have pure intentions. And certainly no legal status exists that reflects our politics or our process.

"Obviously we wouldn't be classist or elitist if we knew we were doing it." - Publisher of a highly criticized magazine.

Perhaps the most encouraging part of the conference was the emphasis from everyone on their desire for criticism and feedback from readers, business people, everyone they contact. Many felt they often operate in a vacuum and need desperately some reactions, particularly as so many were trying out things for the first time and had no idea why certain things did or didn't work. However, there were some qualifications to this openness: criticism needs to be specific and thought out, as the woman quoted above went on to say, "it's not helpful to be told you're being classist and not how you're being classist." Very few presses and journals were at all receptive to criticism around prices. They knew only too well that women do not have much money. Most of them had come to painful pricing decisions balancing that awareness with the realities of small press economics and their own need to survive. And many are finding it necessary to raise their prices again.

I have no grand conclusions to offer. The welter of information and opinions presented at Women In Print defies a summing up. There will be a book coming out of the conference notes, edited. There will be ongoing communications among conference participants, and, I imagine, everyone will be buying everyone else's newspaper's next issue to see how they wrote up the Women In Print conference, 1976. There will also be a 1977 Women In Print conference which may or may not include women working in mixed groups, women from other media and women whose products are not yet off the ground. There was experience shared, giving us, as one woman put it, "a chance to make new mistakes." There were solid connections made to other working groups. I know that all of us went home exhausted, with a lot of ideas, with new respect for each other. The process will go on. ♀



# Country & Women in Print

After answering the many mailings, arranging for friends to care for our gardens, children, animals and responsibilities, Sherry Thomas and I found ourselves part of a caravan of eleven women from the West Coast heading to Omaha for the first Women in Print Conference. As representatives of Country Women magazine, what would we find there, and what could we offer? I was excited and my mind was full of questions. Would we be trashed for not being political? Would we be seen as country bumpkins? (Certainly not, after we diligently mended all our clothes and stopped at San Francisco's finest second hand store so as not to be out-spiffed by the East Coast sophisticates.) It seemed like a wonderful opportunity to meet women from other magazines and newspapers whose work we admired; to talk to the staffs of bookstores that sold Country Women; to get a different perspective on some of the problems that plague a magazine collective; and to understand what the Feminist Media was.

What struck me in reading Jesse's article on the conference was her definition of the Feminist Media as a network. Country Women itself had been started with the idea of creating a network of support and information for women living in the country. Because we shared a commonality of life style and a desire to master country living, practical articles, written by and for women was one of the legs the magazine stood on. But because we were also seeking to discover how to use our bodies and minds in ways that were not endorsed by current culture and how to create a society where all individuals would be socially and economically less oppressed, the other leg was Feminism. How did our network of country women fit into the larger network of Feminist Media? As individuals our lives had been directed and changed by what we read, and the ideas in Country Women fed and were fed by other women's publications. But beyond that, what?

The first night of introductions (seven hours worth) brought many realizations. We found we are one of the oldest publications still going and, with a circulation of 11,000, the second largest. I estimate probably 40,000 readers, but other more conservative collective members think that is rather generous. Because many many women who read Country Women see no other feminist publication, we discovered the important role we play in introducing the women's movement to our more isolated sisters. Because our circulation is so large and diverse it became obvious that we were one of the few publications doing major outreach work and that we take that responsibility seriously. Just as the

movement needs a magazine like Quest or Second Wave as vehicles to develop theory and encourage debate amongst committed feminists, it also needs magazines like Country Women which can spark the imagination of women who are just beginning to change their lives. To have a healthy, effective network, we shouldn't all be doing the same work.

During the week, there were many chances for consciousness raising around the city/country question. The energy going from city publications to country publications was obvious, but we began to realize the importance of reversing some of that input. Part of what Sherry and I felt after being confronted once too often about the "country club set" was that many people who live in cities had little idea what country life was about at all or how they were dependent on the country for sustenance. It was almost as if the "real" world was Los Angeles, Chicago and New York and everything in between was irrelevant. As country women we have much to share about self-sufficiency, living harmoniously with the earth's resources and doing hard work that is meaningful and sustaining. After all, our goal is not just to prevent oppression but to strengthen and develop another vision of life.

"You aren't pressured. You don't feel the urgent necessity for change or you couldn't be living in the country," one sister said. Reflecting on that, I realized that pressure and urgency come from within, too, and from concrete knowledge that things must change now. As editors of Country Women, we want to be more responsible in educating ourselves and our readers to the harsh realities of 1976. We can do this by reaching out and interviewing women who might not consider themselves writers but whose perspective is relevant. Being at the conference strengthened our desire to present stimulating political material in a way that was not rhetorical but honestly explored the subject. We wish to become a more powerful link in a network dedicated to political change.

Another area of consciousness raising that was opened up for me at the conference was around business. I began to see bookkeeping, billing, filing and office work as necessary and important survival skills. These are skills that we weren't really on top of, and if we were going to run a magazine or an effective farm, they were just as important as chain sawing or compost turning. This work, like other "women's work" was called "shit work" and deemed insignificant. Whether our distaste for business stems from math blocks, associating finances with power (it is!) and money (how corrupt), or a middle class



belief that someone else should do the bookkeeping (you know, those kids that weren't going to college), it is time to take the blinders off. The thought of really understanding all the financial aspects of getting Country Women out and then using them effectively became an exciting and scary challenge. So for a week in our Omaha Camp Fire Girls camp, it was breakfast at 7:30 and workshops at 8:00; talk, talk, talk and more talk.

A network is "purposefully interconnected" Jesse wrote. Over a year ago Country Women made a commitment to share with our readers the work of independent feminist presses. But was it enough? We heard Diana Press of Baltimore say they sent out 200 review copies of their new books to feminist publications and got few reviews. "If you don't support us, who will?" was what they asked. Certainly not the establishment newspapers. So we resolved that Country Women would continue its policy to review books published by women and urge its readers to support the feminist media.

Part of the conference that was most meaningful was an all day talk with Ann and Margaret from Women: A Journal of Liberation and Dusty from Second Wave, both East Coast magazines. After describing the structure, purpose, layout procedure and business of our magazines in larger, more formal workshops we finally made time to stop and ask about what the work was really

like. Who are the people you work with? How does each one function in the collective process? Why are you doing this? How does your collective deal with unequal power? What are some of the problems that come up after publishing for five to seven years? Much that we shared that day has been useful in the reorganizing we are presently doing with Country Women. But lest you think it was all work and Jill got dull, let me quote the smiling old man behind the counter of the package store in the small town nearest the camp. I innocently asked for a bottle of brandy and he laughed, replying, "Shucks, I'm plumb out. Why, I haven't sold so much brandy in years. Your friends must have bought it all up."

Driving towards the West Coast, through the alfalfa fields of Wyoming, the question became how do we bring it all back home. The excitement, inspiration and energy that we got at the Women in Print conference was needed to revamp Country Women, and the power of experience has stimulated other members of our collective. Since returning, we have had a series of meetings to re-examine our goals and visions, improve the quality and aesthetics of the magazine, reorganize the work loads, and hopefully get us out of yet another financial crisis. The results of these meetings we will report on later, but the direction is clear - becoming a more effective member of that feminist network. ♀





# women

## A Journal of Liberation

Women: A Journal of Liberation was the first national women's liberation magazine to be produced during this wave of feminism. Reading the journal for the last seven years has consistently been an exciting adventure into the world of woman life, woman thought, woman creativity. Seen as a body of work, it is a conscientious excellent illumination of our deepest and most pertinent questionings. A glance to the available back issues below will show you the ground they have covered. Each issue, like Country Women, is based on a theme which is then explored in graphics, photography, poetry, fiction, interviews, and personal reflections. These different voices blend together to give a deep and rich exploration of the subject.

The articles express not only great diversity in style, content and political theory, but also in the ages, classes and racial backgrounds of the women represented. In this diversity Women has done better than any publication I know and this makes reading each issue a learning experience that takes one beyond their own cultural limitations. For example, the latest issue, Women and Children, contains articles by a six year old girl examining life as a writer, a black single mother talking about what she gives and gets from her three children, a beautiful exploration of a woman's relationship with her mother expressed through comments on an old family photo journal, and a report on women and children in Chile. It not only accurately reflects the heavy emotional contradictions involved in living with children (for all participants) but explores positive alternatives to what is a socially oppressive situation. As a mother, it was a valuable mirror, and the articles that I shared with children provided the base for some lively discussions.

One of the purposes of Women has been to present an overview of the social forces that affect women's lives, and how women, in turn, have been affecting these forces. The Cost of Living issue was a splendid successful example of this process. Here again, diversity and non-rhetorical language created a convincing human picture of the way our economy works and how it affects how we feel about ourselves. Parts of the tapestry are: an interview with a Puerto Rican woman seeking to integrate her class/cultural background with her now internalized middle class expectations; women in a New England town fighting the power company that is spewing soot and oil over it; a look at women in unions; and Appalachian women talking about the difficulties of health care. My descriptions are hollow compared to the life-filled words of these women. Also included is a perceptive editorial that focuses on this difficult subject. I think I learned more reading this issue than from all the government and poli-sci classes I took in school.

As a country woman, Women has provided an invaluable way for me to keep in contact with women whose lives are radically different than mine; to realize and respect the differences but recognize the connections. It is a magazine grounded in the lives of all women.

Now, although this review presents itself as a stab towards objective truth (which it is), I must also say that Women has played an irreplaceable part in my life and the lives of many women I know. Words can be like a stockpile of bombs, someone once said, and certainly How We Live and With Whom (Vol. 2, # 2) rocked the minds and marriages of the good women of Albion, loosening the energy that later produced Country Women. For years, that issue, along with Sisterhood is Powerful, was the first reading material given to any new consciousness-raising group or friend seeking support. Likewise articles in Sexuality and Androgeny have spurred me to make many of those leaps in personal growth (you know, the risky ones when you aren't sure where you're going to come down) that I so desired.

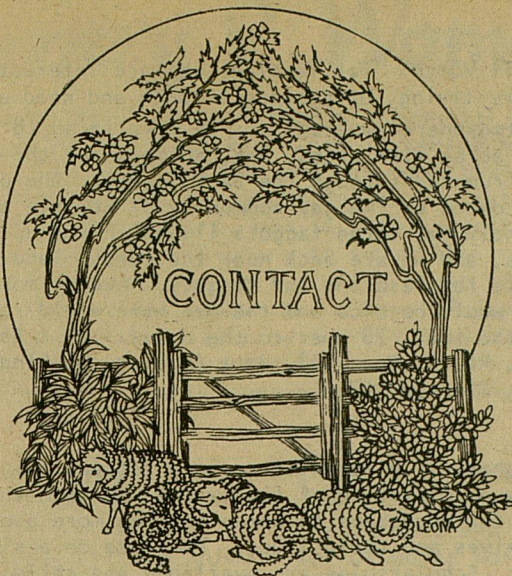
I haven't said that with a circulation of 15,000, Women: A Journal reaches more women than any other feminist publication, or that their layout design is exciting and easy to read, or that their graphics and photography are of an unusual high quality. But it's all true. If you were going to subscribe to one magazine besides Country Women, I would in perfect conscience recommend it be Women. You will not be disappointed.

Current rates are \$5/volume and \$15/volume for institutions. Back issues are \$1.00 each. Order now. Rates will go up with Volume 5.

Available back issues are:

- Vol. 1 #1 "Inherent Nature and Cultural Conditioning"
  - #2 What Is Liberation?
  - #3 Women In History
  - Vol. 2 #1 Women In the Arts
  - #2 How We Live and With Whom
  - #3 Women as Workers Under Capitalism
  - #4 Power and Scope of the Women's Movement
  - Vol. 3 #1 Sexuality
  - #2 Building A Women's Culture
  - #3 Women Locked Up
  - #4 International Women
  - Vol. 4 #1 Androgyny
  - #2 Cost of Living
  - #3 Women and Children
- Upcoming themes for Volume 5 are:
- #1 Humor and Fantasy
  - #2 Women Alone
  - #3 Lesbians





The editorial collective policy with respect to the priority given notices to appear in the Contact section is the following sequence: we print, first off, places in the country looking for women to join them, then people looking to get resources, like land and money, together with other women in order to live in the country, then announcements of events and publications of interest to country women, and finally notices of services offered to country women, though we can not publish prices or fees of such services, due to postal regulations.

Black female college professor seeking people interested in forming an urban/rural interracial, intercultural, nonsexist extended family community in the Pittsburgh area. Our emphasis is on day care, foster care, group home, school, adoption, institutionalized children and self-sufficiency though co-operative businesses. For more information or to join us write Ann Tucker, 1653 Laketon Road, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221.

We have bought 80 acres of beautiful wooded land, 2,000 ft. elevation, 14 miles east of Garberville, Ca. We are looking for two women to buy 30 acres. The land has never been lived on, so you must be willing to build from the ground up. County road maintained year round, springs running, black rich soil, building sites cleared, remote mountain range views are fantastic. Call or write Karen and Annette, 365 12th Street, Montara, Ca. 94037. 415-728-7458.

Older Women in Oregon are exploring the idea of developing a community in the country and wish to be in contact with other women who also seek a change in lifestyle. In addition, we are eager for information from older women living in the country in order to share ideas through a publication of a newsletter. Tentative plans are to have our next Older Women's Workshop in Tucson in December. Write to Elana and Elizabeth, 3502 Coyote Creek Rd., Wolf Creek, Oregon, 97407.

Earthwork is an educational support center for people working on concerns related to land and food. For the past few years people in the city have become more involved in understanding food production and distribution. Earthwork facilitates outreach and furthers these efforts in the following ways: a library, buying club/community store resource center, children's educational program, urban gardening, farm apprenticeship program, bus trips, classes and workshops. Contact Earthwork, 1499 Potrero Avenue, San Francisco, Ca. 94110. 415-648-2094.

Land Trusts for Women is an effort to give women control over their own destinies. Two groups of women have researched the concept of land trusts, and formed groups to acquire land for all women and children at all times. This would promote the spiritual, emotional, physical, cultural, and economic well-being of women, and preserve the land. Financially poor women are unable to buy rural property. Private ownership creates hassles anyway. Putting land in a land trust removes it from the speculative market. It would be available to all women and children, whether they want to live there or just stop for a short time, camp out, and relax. We can help women set up local land trusts, or they can join us. Oregon Women's Land Trust has bought 145 acres in southern Oregon. Write OWLT, Box 1713, Eugene, Oregon, 97401 or California Women's Land Trust, c/o Carole and Yolanda, 1538 N. St. Andrews, Hollywood, Ca. 90028.

Feminist women going to Europe are welcome to contact me if they want to stay. I can also give other connections in Europe. I work on a small alternative paper in Germany and am into massage and healing for women. Please write, don't just come. Contact Uli Poschmann, 8043 Graz Maria-troster--Str. 1, Austria.

Found at Country Women's Festival: a new Swiss Army Knife--if yours, write Laurie Hauer, 2154 Harrison St., San Francisco, Ca. 94110. Be sure to describe the holder so I know it's yours!

Merlin Press is accepting contributions to an anthology of the work of contemporary California women poets which is to be published in spring, 1977. Rules governing the submission of material are as follows: (1) Only unpublished material may be submitted, (2) Poems must be typed, (3) A maximum of ten poems may be submitted, (4) The poet must be both a woman and a resident of California, (5) A stamped, self-addressed envelop must be enclosed for return of unused material and (6) Poems must be submitted no later than January 15, 1977. Address manuscripts to Merlin Press, P.O. Box 5602, San Jose, Ca. 95150.

We would like to help create a "Woman's Resources and Skills Directory", (based on the S.H.A.R.E.--Sisters Have Resources Everywhere). The directory, hopefully, will be a listing, alphabetically and by states, of women offering skills, resources, trades, living situations etc. to other women. If you have ideas or are interested in helping, write: Leanne & Bonnie, 469 41st, Oakland, 94609.

cont.



Women on Land has "secured" 80 acres of land in northwest Arkansas as a beginning for a women's land trust. We are investigating and researching the details of how to form a land trust. We will live only with dykes. We wish to relate to female children only--male children would be too sexist an influence on a developing women's environment. We want to stress farming on this land to raise food to feed the women on the land and support sisters in the cities. There are no buildings on the land, just 80 acres of beautiful trees, a waterfall, a creek, and lots of painful bugs. We need to share the responsibility for getting money to pay off the land, for gathering tools, building materials, seed, horses, windmill. We are open to any woman who wants to relate to this land, whether she wants to stay full-time, work for the summer, camp and work, spend the weekend, or stay here on the way cross-country. We do want to emphasize the need to work. When you write, describe yourself, your politics, what you can offer and why you want to come. (No dogs please.) Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Women on Land, P.O. Box 521, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 72701.

Another Demention is opening soon to accomodate women who are seeking a space on the land working together with other women in areas of recreation, farming, and general growing. Seventy acres will be available for camping and/or year round living in beautiful wilderness area of Oklahoma near Tishomingo, capital of the Chickasaw Nation. Womancraft can be sold in distribution outlet store on roadfront or consigned to be distributed by the Magic Ferry to the Ferry Dykings and other contact points across the country. Women in residence will maintain their own shelter and be responsible for their own life-support needs. A community garden will be the major food source operating on cooperative energy. Financial priorities are pressing now--money is being raised to expedite the negotiations and be on the land within 30 days. We are a non-profit association and any donation is tax-exempt. Send any contributions to: Sisters of Dianna, Inc., RRI, Box 42A, Tishomingo, Ok. 73460. Loan contracts also honored.

Sappha Survival School is a small lesbian farm in the eastern foothills of the Cascade mountains in Washington. This summer they planned on more structures including a children's space scaled to their size, and an outrageous playground scaled to everybody's size. They also planned an herb garden, a festival in June, and workshops on health. To find out more, write: SSS, Box 4D, Aeneas Valley Rd., Tonasket, Washington 98855.

A Woman's Place is situated on 23 acres in the Adirondacks; there is a main house where the collective women and their children live, four large nearby cabins and a recreation facility. The rates are on a sliding scale. Due to reservation demands, A Woman's Place needs a definite commitment on specific dates. Along with your reservations, please send a small deposit. Write to Mary Deyoe, A Woman's Place, Athol, NY, 12810.

Dearest Womyn: For lesbians who are interested in country living, or passing through and need a mellow atmosphere to stay in. We live in an 18' tipi on 78 acres with trees, hay, animals and the Elwha River running through the back meadow. The property is owned by the gay community of Seattle and presently has three faggots living in the up front houses, and we are back near the forest land. The land is for lesbians and faggots, however more lesbians would be nice and the men here would rather turn the total 78 over to the dykes. KD & Barb Ahle, Rt. 3, Box 1708, Port Angeles, Washington 98362, 206-452-2435.

Womanshare is a feminist country retreat. It is run by a collective of five women who open their house for workshops to women seeking more about themselves and their lives. Fees are on a sliding scale. Scholarships are available and child care is negotiable. The Womanshare Collective says, "We would like you to come and relax, join in discussion groups and workshops, enjoy home-cooked food, and get to know us. We feel that being in the country, having a good time with other women can be a very high experience." For more information, write Womanshare, 1531 Gray's Creek Road, Grant's Pass, Ore. 97526.

Women's Ways Retreat is a place in the country for women to get in touch with our many ways of doing things. It is a special place where women may come together away from the daily hassles of the patriarchal society and experience the strength of a woman's culture. It is not a resort. Each woman who comes to the land makes a commitment to herself and other women thereby accepting responsibility for herself, as well as respecting and supporting other sisters who are there. Women's Ways is located in the rolling Berkshire mountains in Craryville, New York. There is a large A-frame house built solely by women. There are ten pasture acres for camping and access to 90 wooded acres for hiking. At present there are two permanent residents. As for accommodations, it is possible to rent the A-frame on a nightly or monthly basis. Camping is available and access to the house and utilities is available. Work exchanges are also possible, as there is never a lack of projects around. Write or call for reservations or information: Women's Ways, Andrews/Mulholland, Rd. Box 375A, Craryville, NY, 12521.

Nourishing space for women is located on 160 acres 25 miles southeast of Tucson that a woman has bought to be used by any woman interested. There is space for women and children to rent (there is an A-frame and plenty of land to camp on) on a nightly or monthly basis. They need a lot of financial support so for every \$2 a woman donates, she is entitled to one free night of camping available any time in her life. In return for a donation they will send information and directions. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Cave Canyon Ranch, P.O. Box D-11, Vail, Arizona 85641.



# Country Women needs your support

Country Women is in a time of financial difficulty. We will have trouble paying our current printing bill and salaries. This is caused by a combination of bookstores owing us money, rising costs of paper and postage, and our commitment to pay some minimal salaries to the women who do the business work of the magazine. We are exploring long term ways to solve these problems, but we need you, our readers, now to help us increase our circulation and sell our back issues. Please ask your local library to subscribe to the magazine. If there is a bookstore in your town, or several in your city, which might sell Country Women, please send us the names and addresses. Better yet, show them a copy of Country Women and ask them to order it. About half of our subscriptions expire with this issue. If yours does, please renew promptly. Also, contact friends who might enjoy reading the magazine. And, if there are any back issues you don't have and have wanted, please consider ordering them now. It is important to all of us that this magazine stay solvent.

We also have a continuing need for photographs and graphics. Because we shoot the whole magazine at 80%, photographs need to be larger than standard snapshot size. We can only use black and white photos, with clear focus and good contrast. In particular, we need photographs of all types of farm animals (or of women working with farm animals). We would also like more photos of older women, long-time country women, and third world women.

In graphic arts, we welcome pen and ink drawings, block prints, etchings, engravings, sumi brush drawings, and pencil drawing with clear lines and shading. Xerox copies are only usable if they completely and accurately reproduce the original.

All artwork and photographs will be returned after they have appeared in the magazine and we are happy to send complimentary copies to contributors.

We also want to encourage you to write for Country Women. Most of the women who write for the magazine are not "writers". If you're not comfortable writing an article, you might tape record and transcribe a conversation with a friend about the theme or go out and interview a neighbor. We also continually need practical articles. Almost every woman who reads the magazine and lives in the country could write at least one practical article about something she knows well (for example, dyeing wool, raising ducks, compost privies, or plumbing). Won't you do it? The magazine is here to help us share these skills.

## future issues:

**CLASS:** How are your behavior, attitudes, prejudices shaped by your class background and affected by your class experiences. What is working class consciousness and how is it denied in this culture? For women of working class background, how has that affected you? For middle class women: how do you have privileges; how do you use them; does class privilege change with changes in in lifestyle or economic situation; how can you validate the positive aspects of your class background? How has it proved stifling? We are also very interested in more analytical articles on how class functions in this society and in country communities. Do class relations change in the country with an influx of ex-urbanites? Are women a class? What is and should be the relationship of the women's movement to class? If you have been part of a class consciousness study group, what were the results? (Deadline is January 1)

**PERSONAL POWER:** What is it? How do we manifest it in ourselves? How do we react to it in others? What is the relationship between creativity and personal power. How does your feeling of personal power affect your images of success and failure. What methods or paths do we use to gain access to our power? Does women's sense and use of power differ from men's? Does personal power imply also being powerful in groups or exercising control over others, being "powerful"? (Deadline is March 7)

## past issues:

Back issues available from Country Women, Box 51, Albion, Ca. 95410. All back issues are \$1.00.

- #10 Spirituality
- #11 Older Women
- #12 Children's Liberation
- #13 Cycles
- #14 Foremothers
- #15 Sexuality
- #16 Women Working
- #17 Feminism & Relationships
- #18 Politics
- #19 Mental and Physical Health
- #20 Food
- #21 Woman As Artist

Subscriptions are \$4.00 for one year (five issues) and start with the current issue.

Library and institutional subscriptions are \$7.00 a year.

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