

Country Women

HUMOR



THEME

Country Girl:
A 12-Page Parody
Emotional Life Insurance
Women's Comix

PRACTICAL

Building a Solar Collector
Sheep Shearing
Home Grown Meat
Snail Control



Ms. Teenage America

PUT YOURSELF IN THIS PICTURE
It's easy -- you're the least essential ingredient

Hair bleached, ratted and sprayed into good imitation of lacquer basket by Mademoiselle Beauty Salon -- hastily restyled by mortified owner -- destroyed by dinnertime by gravity

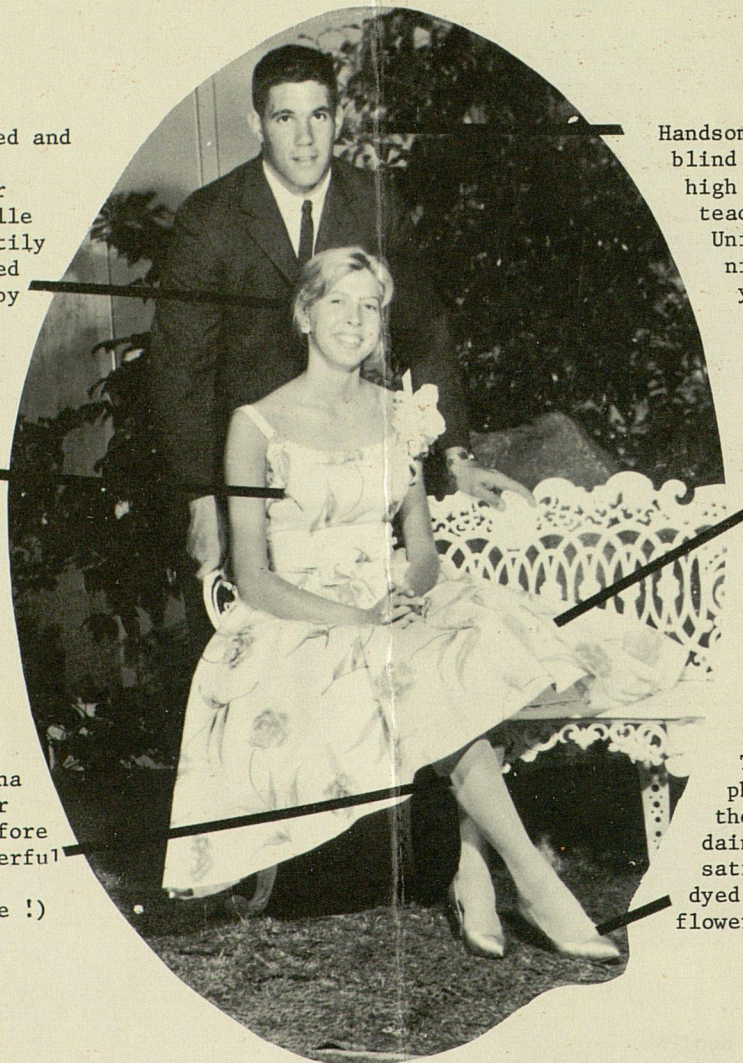
Bust almost entirely by Bali, also contending with gravity

Legs (with matching underarms) by Lady Schick and Princess Nylons and Prima Donna lace decorated garter belt (sorry, it's before the time of the wonderful freedom and comfort afforded by Pantyhose !)

Handsome, indulgent and blind date borrowed by high school English teacher from the local University just in the nick of time to save you from being a perennial wallflower

\$50.00 formal making its single appearance between the obscure shop it was located in after three weeks of frantic search, and its final destiny, the Salvation Army.

This black and white photo need not disguise the fact that these dainty, pinchy, pointy satin slippers have been dyed copper to match the flowers in the formal!



THE TEEN QUEEN DREAM SONG

Come on and walk awhile with me,
I'll tell you some sweet lies
I'd never dare to cut you down to size.
Come on and try to hold my hand
And get inside my pants
I'll act as if that's what we call romance.
And you can say how great you are
And all the things you've done,
You'll take me riding in your car, what fun!

I'll organize the cheers for you
while you play on the team
So folks around won't wonder why I scream.
I'll downplay sports I do myself
Attention I might draw
Won't be to my big muscles but my bra
The race for your class ring will be
the only race I run
I'll sit and paint my nails for you, what fun!

In the cafeteria
for the lunch hour social scene
I can be coy yet hip while you're obscene.
I'll nibble dietetic foods,
Hang proudly on your arm,
Impress your bigshot friends with all my charm.
I'll swear you're mighty clever
when you make a simple pun
I'll know just when and how to laugh, what fun!

Headed for the library
to get loose from the folks,
you say it's time to bare your soul, no jokes:
You say, "Let's hit the drive-in"
and you've brought your Trojan shield,
but I will stay and study,
I won't yield
'Cause when I get to college
on the scholarships I've won
I'll try to catch a better man, what fun!

BY SLIM

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Having a swell time...

BY ZEE ZELESKI

For what seemed like the millionth time, she leaned back into the pillow with a great, tired sigh and hugged her teddy bear tighter to her breast. "My Goddess," she thought dully, "this earth, this lifetime, out there," she waved her hand to the ceiling for effect, "What? What? We're blowing each other up, greed, hate, me with my own life too intense, and now we got pouring rain in the middle of May. All this and I'm supposed to feel laughter? Joy?"

Her head ached vaguely--she knew, floating around in the back of her mind, too much pot and not enough exercise. "Love yourself, love yourself,"--it was like dim Muzak benignly im-

printed in her system, pretty soon she expected to hear little bells and to begin salivating every time she caught herself in the act of self-negation.

"Alright, alright," she argued to herself, "come on, let's get the lead out. Ain't no use complaining. If I don't get to laughin' pretty soon...hmmmmmm."

Learning how to accept Planetary Neuroticism had seemed to abate much worry for her years ago. She had to learn it by cracking up first, and quickly becoming involved in a small group of women, likewise cracking up. "Screaming Bonkers"

they laughingly named their psyche support group. "You wanna talk about funny," she thought, "the stories I could tell!" But that humor was reserved for women on The Edge, and lots of times she didn't want to admit that she was even *near* those feelings.

"Ah well," she sighed again, her eyelids drooping half closed. "Here in the lap of Woomboomland, on a cosmic banana boat to an Unknown Shore, folded into a Cradle of Content, rocking her senses and wafting between Moody and Weird." She closed her eyes and pictured herself walking around with a large sign hung around her neck: I Love You But Please Don't Come Near Me!...Or on second thought, maybe she could just use red ink and print: scabies. Visions appeared of the day when propriety would rule that every woman should wear a Scarlet Letter emblazoned on her forehead--a big "W" for Worms, "B" for Blocked, "M" for Monogamous, and so on. Or how about fashioning a cardboard box over her head with little peepholes--maybe she could get people to think it was a hat. Or call it the latest in "alternative healing", a "Do-It-Your-Self-Meditation-Space", a little place all your own. That sort of thinking made her feel better about going into a restaurant at 8:30 in the morning with her hair still uncombed and her slippers on. "I mean, what the hell, right? The world is your living room." She secretly feared that the day was coming when she would report to work in her pajamas, with her beloved friend and confidante, Teddy Bear, tucked under her arm. "I'll just tell 'em like it is," she figured, "I didn't feel like changing."

O.K., O.K., enough meandering. Think "funny", but the headache began again, more like pressure on the left side of her head. She had already relived every "funny" episode in her life, and it had driven her to drink again. She had even believed, for a minute, she could convince the reading crowd out there how hilarious things can get when you become a serious drinker, but didn't have to push that one too far before she lost the fine strand of humor.

"It's funny out there," she pondered, staring vacantly out the window, "it really is. I mean, we all have our ups, our downs, hills, valleys... but everyone *knows* that it's all out of control! We're just grains of sand on the beach. We're nothings! Nothing at all!!" She had sunk down onto the bed and was curling up in the corner. "Funny," she mumbled to Teddy Bear, "because I got it better than a whole lotta people and alla time it's Struggle, Struggle. There's no peace! There's nowhere you can call Normal!" "So what is Normal?" the Teddy Bear asked. "Normal!" she cried, "You know! The kind of normal where birds are all atwitter and you have the best job you could possibly ever want, and your sprouts never get gummy! You know. Normal!! Where everything's gonna be all goddamn right for once!" The pressure was now in her chest. "I gotta lay off the mucous foods," she grumbled. "Second chakra bothering you?" Teddy Bear asked kindly.

"Ah hell," she sighed once again, rolling over and gazing at her drawing board. A few cartoons, a couple of sketches, and the typewriter set up nearby, ready for the least bit of use. Yes, here we go now, gonna leap on them keys and fire away, gonna let that inspiration really go now, here we go. "I just gotta come up with some laughs, y'know, and it never fails. As soon as ya *have* to do something you *wanted* to do four months ago but didn't ever really...I mean, ya gotta be in the *mood* to do that kinda... I just can't seem to finish...but I know if the deadline comes around...it's like high school when you waited till the night before and then poured out the best bullshit ya had..."

Tears began to sting her eyes. She forced them back. "Go on, cry," the Teddy Bear urged, "It's a rotten world and you know it." "It's *not* rotten," she answered earnestly, "it's just *sick*. Sick to the rotten core of the lousy apple, you can't be gay, you can't be straight, you can't smell like you smell, you can't wear horizontal stripes if you're 5'4" and hefty." "5'3"," the Teddy Bear interrupted. "5'3-1/2", she went on, glancing sharply at the little fuzzy bear, "and you can't even go crazy if you have to. Even when things are going great, you can't enjoy it because you know Dr. Doom is waiting around the corner! And me, with a Saturn return coming up! How am I gonna keep them laffs rolling off the teeth when my psychic reader tells me there's "a thick fog around my aura!" "Good heavens!", one of the cartoons on the drawing board exclaimed. "Why don't you go somewhere for a little vacation?" "I would, but my palm reader says travel ain't happening till I'm 40." The typewriter, having a piece of paper on the roll, suddenly clacked out a message. She could read it from where she was lying. "I tried it," she said to the room in general, "it gave me hives."

She pushed herself up heavily from the corner she had squished herself into. Sighing profoundly she raised her hands and said to all concerned: "Now, now, you all don't have to worry about me. I'm tough. I can take it." Suddenly she jerked her body upside down into a headstand, her head sunk partially into the dishevelled bedcovers. "Meher Baba used to be a favorite of mine," she quavered while attempting to maintain her stability. "Used to always be grinning that vapid look of his and have this "Don't Worry... Be Happy" motto written under his photo!" She chuckled. "I used to look at that guy and bust up laughing every time!" Just thinking about it made her feel a bubbly warm in her belly and tears began welling up in her eyes again. "Can you imagine that?" she started to laugh loudly now, her legs flailing in the air. Then she was gasping for breath between being hysterical and maneuvering her landing. She roared "Don't Worry! Be Happy! It's all...it's all so simple!!!" and tilting sideways, legs flying over the side of the bed, she crashed into the drawing board and landed in a twisted, maniacal heap on the floor, crying and laughing and grateful for the release. ♀

THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF EDWARD THE DYKE

BY JUDY GRAHN

Behind the brown door which bore the gilt letters of Dr. Merlin Knox's name, Edward the Dyke was lying on the doctor's couch which was so luxurious and long that her feet did not even hang over the edge.

"Dr. Knox," Edward began, "my problem this week is chiefly concerning restrooms."

"Aahh," the good doctor sighed. Gravely he drew a quick sketch of a restroom in his notebook.

"Naturally I can't go into men's restrooms without feeling like an interloper, but on the other hand every time I try to use the ladies room I get into trouble."

"Umm," said Dr. Knox, drawing a quick sketch of a door marked 'Ladies'."

"Four days ago I went into the powder room of a department store and three middle-aged housewives came in and thought I was a man. As soon as I explained to them that I was really only a harmless dyke, the trouble began..."

"You compulsively attacked them."

"Oh heavens no, indeed not. One of them turned on the water faucet and tried to drown me with paper towels, but the other two began screaming about how well did I know Gertrude Stein and what sort of underwear did I have on, and they took off my new cuff links and socks for souvenirs. They had my head in the trash can and were cutting pieces off my shirttail when luckily a policeman heard my calls for help and rushed in. He was able to divert their attention by shooting at me, thus giving me a chance to escape through the window."

Carefully Dr. Knox noted in his notebook: "Apparent suicide attempt after accosting girls in restroom." "My child," he murmured in fatherly tones, "have no fear. You must trust us. We will cure you of this deadly affliction, and before you know it you'll be all fluffy and wonderful with dear babies and a bridge club of your very own." He drew a quick sketch of a bridge club. "Now let me see. I believe we estimated that after only four years of intensive therapy and two years of anti-intensive therapy, plus a few minor physical changes and you'll be exactly the little girl we've always wanted you to be." Rapidly Dr. Knox thumbed through an

index on his desk. "Yes yes. This year the normal cup size is 56 inches. And waist 12 and 1/2. Nothing a few well-placed hormones can't accomplish in these advanced times. How tall did you tell me you were?"

"Six feet, four inches," replied Edward.

"Oh, tsk tsk." Dr. Knox did some figuring. "Yes, I'm afraid that will definitely entail extracting approximately 8 inches from each leg, including the knee-cap...standing a lot doesn't bother you, does it my dear?"

"Uh," said Edward, who couldn't decide.

"I assure you the surgeon I have in mind for you is remarkably successful." He leaned far back in his chair. "Now tell me briefly, what the word 'homosexuality' means to you, in your own words."

"Love flowers pearl, of delighted arms. Warm and water. Melting of vanilla wafer in the pants. Pink petal roses trembling over dew on the lips, soft and juicy fruit. No teeth. No nasty spit. Lips chewing oysters without grimy sand or whiskers. Pastry. Gingerbread. Warm sweet bread. Cinnamon toast poetry. Justice equality higher wages. Independent angel song. It means I can do what I want."

"Now my dear," Dr. Knox said, "Your disease has gotten completely out of control. We scientists know of course that it's a highly pleasurable experience to take someone's penis or vagina into your mouth -- it's pleasurable and enjoyable. Everyone knows that. But after you've taken a thousand pleasurable penises or vaginas into your mouth and had a thousand people take your pleasurable penis or vagina into their mouth, what have you accomplished? What have you got to show for it? Do you have a wife or children or a husband or a home or a trip to Europe? Do you have a bridge club to show for it? No! You have only a thousand pleasurable experiences to show for it. Do you see how you're missing the meaning of life? How sordid and depraved are these clandestine sexual escapades in parks and restrooms? I ask you."

"But sir but sir," said Edward, "I'm a woman. I don't have sexual escapades in parks or restrooms. I don't have a thousand lovers -- I have one lover."

"Yes Yes." Dr. Knox flicked the ashes from his cigar onto the floor. "Stick to the subject, my dear."

"We were in college then," Edward said. "She came to me out of the silky midnight mist, her slips rustling like cow thieves, her hair blowing in the wind like Gabriel. Lying in my arms harps played soft in dry firelight, Oh Bach. Oh Brahms. Oh Buxtehude. How sweetly we got along how well we got the woods pregnant with canaries and parakeets, barefoot in the grass alas pigeons, but it only lasted ten years and she was gone, poof! like a puff of wheat."

"You see the folly of these brief, physical embraces. But tell me the results of our experiment we arranged for you last session."

"Oh yes. My real date. Well I bought a dress and a wig and a girdle and a squeezey bodice. I did unspeakable things to my armpits with a razor. I had my hair done and my face done and my nails done. My roast done. My bellybutton done."

"And then you felt truly feminine."

"I felt truly immobilized. I could no longer run, walk bend stoop move my arms or spread my feet apart."

"Good, good."

"Well everything went pretty well during dinner, except my date was only 5'3" and oh yes. One of my eyelashes fell into the soup -- that wasn't too bad. I hardly noticed it going down. But then my other eyelash fell on my escorts sleeve and he spent five minutes trying to kill it."

Edward sighed. "But the worst part came when we stood up to go. I rocked back on my heels as I pushed my chair back under the table and my shoes -- you see they were three inchers, raising me to 6'7", and with all my weight on those teeny little heels..."

"Yes yes."

"I drove the spikes all the way into the thick carpet and could no longer move. Oh, everyone was nice about it. My escort offered to get the check and to call in the morning to see how I made out and the manager found a little saw and all. But, Dr. Knox, you must understand that my underwear was terribly binding and the room was hot..."

"Yes yes."

"So I fainted. I didn't mean to, I just did. That's how I got my ankles broken."

Dr. Knox cleared his throat. "It's obvious to me, young lady, that you have failed to control your P.E."

"My God," said Edward, glancing quickly at her crotch, "I took a bath just before I came."

"This oral eroticism of yours is definitely rooted in Penis Envy, which showed when you deliberately castrated your date by publicly embarrassing him."

Edward moaned. "But strawberries. But lemon cream pie."

"Narcissism," Dr. Knox droned, "Masochism, Sadism. Admit you want to kill your mother."

"Marshmallow bluebird," Edward groaned, eyes softly rolling. "Looking at the stars. April in May."

"Admit you want to possess your father. Mother substitute. Breast suckle."

"Graham cracker subway," Edward writhed, slobbering. "Pussy willow summer."

"Admit you have a smegmatic personality," Dr. Knox intoned.

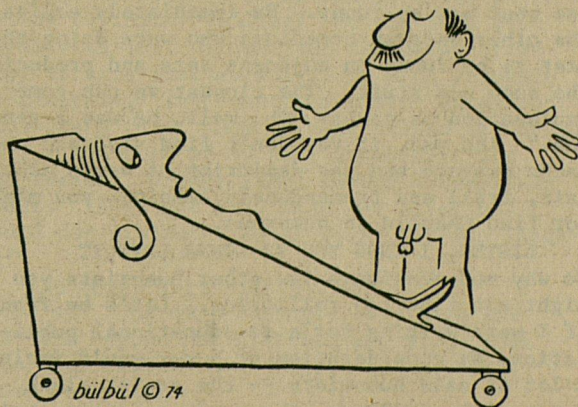
Edward rolled to the floor. "I am vile! I am vile!"

Dr. Knox flipped a switch at his elbow and immediately a picture of a beautiful woman appeared on a screen over Edward's head. The doctor presses another switch and electric shocks jolted through her spine. Edward screamed. He pressed another switch, stopping the flow of electricity. Another switch and a photo of a gigantic erect male organ flashed into view, coated in powdered sugar. Dr. Knox handed Edward a lollipop. She sat up. "I'm saved," she said, tonguing the lollipop.

"Your time is up," Dr. Knox said. "Your check please. Come back next week."

"Yes sir yes sir," Edward said as she went out the brown door. In his notebook, Dr. Knox made a quick sketch of his bank.

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NO DOCTOR, I DON'T ENVY YOUR PENIS!

What's The Use In Laughing ?

BY SLIM

What I wish to remind us all of in 25 words, more or less, is the fact that humor, like computers, modern technology, and yes, even the human spirit, is a form of energy that has great potential for both cosmic creative use and horrid and terrible abuse! It all depends on who uses it and how, and the distinctions are by no means limited to 'sexist' vs. 'feminist' chuckles.

But what, you may well ask, is humor? I'm certainly glad you asked that question. Let's begin our consideration of humor by attempting to define it.

BUT THAT'S LIKE TRYING TO DEFINE LOVE

I will simplify this effort by first acknowledging its futility. We can't say humor is what makes us laugh because it is possible to produce laughter even in poignant or tragic situations by stimulating the thalamus deep inside the brain with an electrode. I once read in a psychology text that laughter is an explosion of tension being released when suddenly confronted by a completely unexpected image. But there is plenty of material that is intended as humor, and would be called humor, that doesn't actually make us laugh -- like 98% of the comics in the Sunday paper. There's plenty of material that is not intended as humor that cracks us up -- from monkeys in the zoo to babies to you.

QUICK, SAY SOMETHING FUNNY

But woe to the one who thinks she can produce, or recognize humor through a formula. Old hand comedians will often tell you they don't really know which of their material is going to be funny until they try it in front of an audience. No one knows why, when Chaplin walked onto a movie set for the first time having hastily improvised his tramp costume in response to a sudden summons to fill in some dead space, his movie crew started to crack up and soon members of several adjacent sets had wandered over to see what was so funny. He immediately eclipsed the other veteran comedians who were doing their best to be funny on adjacent sets and producing the same old stuff. The closest we can come to explanation is to say "Oh, well, he was a genius." And yet, if you don't find violence and macho bravado and the depiction of women as the fair, frail sex tremendously amusing, you might not find Chaplin so humorous.

LISTEN, I KNOW YOU'RE GONNA LOVE IT

So why not mention a few other humorists you might not find too rollicking. Let's be frank, if I were writing for a co-educational publication, my consideration of humor would include a lot of male humorists -- the sexist black humor of Lenny Bruce, the corny neurotic sexist humor of Woody Allen, the bittersweet poignantly sexist humor of Kurt Vonnegut, the cynical sexist humor of Feiffer, the understated subtly

sexist humor of Gary Trudeau, the innocent (sexist?) humor of Walt Kelly, the sexist sexist humor of the Marx brothers. Each name conjures up a different image of humor, but since this is Country Women I won't even mention them. I'll just talk about women's humor. No, not even women's humor, but feminist humor, which leaves out everyone from Gracie Allen of "George Burns and..." (since she used most of her considerable intelligence to do a "masterful" parody of a truly dumb broad) to Betty Macdonald whose international bestseller The Egg and I is largely a parody of her own incompetence and foolishness for getting herself into traditional female jams. So what's new? Then there's Dear Abby, a good example of a dangerous comedian who uses humor surreptitiously. I think it's obvious that many people are truly desperate when they write asking Abby to solve problems that they can't even discuss with their own families and friends. She selects the most desperate, hence the most ludicrous to the unsympathetic eye, and responds to them with a clever quip that simultaneously strips the supplicant of all integrity and dismisses her or him once and for all. Lily Tomlin notwithstanding, it's clear there can be problems with producing humor that inspires.

THAT'S ABOUT AS FUNNY AS THE REAL WORLD

Humor can have a sharp edge, be used to thrust you back into confrontation with the unacceptable as much as to help you transcend and forget it. This is fine if you feel it's the unacceptable that is being mocked, and not your reaction to it. I thought of the topics that would probably not be bandied about in this issue -- rape, physical violence (wife beating, child beating), the newly fashionable decadence, sado-masochism, sexual fantasies centered around ever younger children (now the film, "Pretty Baby" with the 12 year old tomboy prostitute!), -- we can see these as tragedies, grist for anger, not jokes, yet they are considered good for laughs in other publications (!) as one woman discovered when she tried turning to National Lampoon for humorous inspiration. The underlying presumption in their humor was that people were foolish for being uptight about these things, not that the society that makes people seek satisfaction in those ways is foolish.

HEH, HEH, IT WAS ONLY A JOKE

Come on now, don't take yourself so seriously. How many of us have been gagged by that line and left defenseless? The put down is probably one of the commonest forms of everyday humor and the classic put down is glorified by its very title. By being sarcastic, people can avoid responsibility for what they're saying, can say "outrageous things they could never otherwise get away with." This permits a lot of hostile

humor, humor that presupposes the thickness of the audience or listener. Often the point of being a public nuisance and swinging from the trees at cocktail parties is "to stop all the polite chatter and see the faces register amazement or disgust or something behind the tinfoil masks." So you, the tinfoil mask, have just two options -- laugh with the person making fun of you or be laughed at. Be a good sport or a sourpuss.

Of course, if you can get the crowd to stop laughing, you can change this dynamic. The practical joker can be turned into the emperor with no clothes on if the brunt of his jokes acts more disinterested than shocked or annoyed. What feels dumber than telling a joke that's not laughed at? I've seen men misgauge the receptivity of a group of women whose feminism they've not even begun to fathom, and discover that their efforts to ingratiate themselves and break the ice merely afforded them a chilly dunking. Instead of keeping people from getting too uncomfortable, a joke that doesn't play on shared assumptions can make the fool who told it very uncomfortable indeed.

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREELY GIGGLING

So we should outlaw humor already? By no means. A friend suggested "I think it's funny when somebody gets up in front of a room full of people and starts telling the truth about human nature." We are so accustomed to the lies. At its best, humor need not have any human victims, but can attack the creator of those victims, as in the case of Harrison and Tyler who in their material attack "racism, sexism, organized religion, cock rock, homophobia, heterophobia, drugs and advertising."

"Through their victims, we get glimpses of the real culprit, the one who makes us look ridiculous in our pain, the one who reduces our loftier dreams to foolish fantasies, and places the banana peel in our path. That culprit turns out to be a social order predicated on a cost system in which everyone must oppress someone."

WE'RE NOT LAUGHING WITH YOU, DEAR, WE'RE LAUGHING AT YOU

Of course, keeping the enemy abstract is not so easy, and we find ourselves laughing at the people whose behavior we abhor oftener than at its cause. If it's making fun of a common enemy, we think it's a good joke. If it's making fun of us, we don't think it's quite so funny. You may think psychiatrists deserve to be made fun of, a little retaliation for all the pain they've caused with their phony authority. Many humorists seem to think similarly that women deserve to be made fun of. As soon as you ask yourself why, why any joke should be considered funny by the teller of those who laugh at it, you've discovered a great deal about the prejudices of those persons.

And just as importantly, the sensitive and painful places. Which is why oppressed groups have humor acceptable and amusing to themselves exclusively. Diane once painted a picture of her Jewish mother back in New York at her weekly Mah-Jong klatch with other Jewish mothers. Shirley announces proudly "My daughter Judith just had her third child, a son, and now she

and her husband are moving to Chicago where he'll be teaching at the university, head of the department already, and just 31, can you believe it, and of course Judy will continue working on her Ph.D." Murmurs of admiration. Ida shares news of her own young daughter's recent engagement to the conductor of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, in which her daughter is "second violinist and the eighth woman ever to be admitted into the orchestra." Ellen's mother joins in with cheery pride by relating that "my daughter's a lesbian living in a pygmy forest and she collects mushrooms."

IT ONLY HURTS TILL I LAUGH

We all thought that was pretty funny, in our all female, half Jewish, three-quarters Lesbian, unanimously disappointing-to-our-parents group. And I have begun to wonder, does all humor come from pain? Certainly, humor can teach us about ourselves. Much of it close to fear or anger. Consider how you can play with a baby peek-a-boo or rowaar and if you are a good friend of the baby and if you're not too abrupt or too frightening the baby will giggle with delight over and over. Go too far and amusement becomes fear and laughter dissolves into tears. Likewise with adults. It is a cliché that if you must be fat, surely you will comply by being fat and jolly. Fat and jolly, fat and jolly, ho ho ho. Is it fun "being made fun of?" Laughter quickly shades off into anger, into hurt, being offended is simply being hurt, being amused is simply being relieved. We laugh at high school, ho ho ho, wasn't that a funny time. Or are you a bit angry when you recall that era?

If humor is born of pain, it can also be the antidote, though it's not always clear if it alleviates the pain or skirts around it. If laughter is the best medicine, is it golden seal or aspirin?

I LAUGHED TILL I CRIED

Actually, I cried till I laughed. Used to be my best friend was a co-counselor, and I spent the best part of a year crying, being encouraged with "good, you're doing great" and congratulating myself for being on the long and curvy road to happiness -- the more I cried the closer I must be getting. This was really not such a joke, at the same time I was laughing, yawning and shaking, "discharging" old hurts. And laughter is just as effective a way to do that as crying or yelling! We can heal ourselves with joy, delight and the perspective humor affords just as surely as with struggle and analysis. There have been many cases that demonstrate this. Now my best friend is funny, and I spend much of my time laughing. For some reason I prefer that, though I sometimes wonder, "If we got very high and clear and beyond our distress, would we still keep laughing?"

AND DOESN'T IT FEEL DIVINE?

I hope so. One day Helen got very high and clear and beyond her distress and wrote some words that express how "humor" can actually become spiritual --

Spirit's laughter is as soft as the breath
of a small child

As loud as an earthquake

All sound is the laughter of God. ♀

CLOWNING AROUND

BY KAY RUDIN

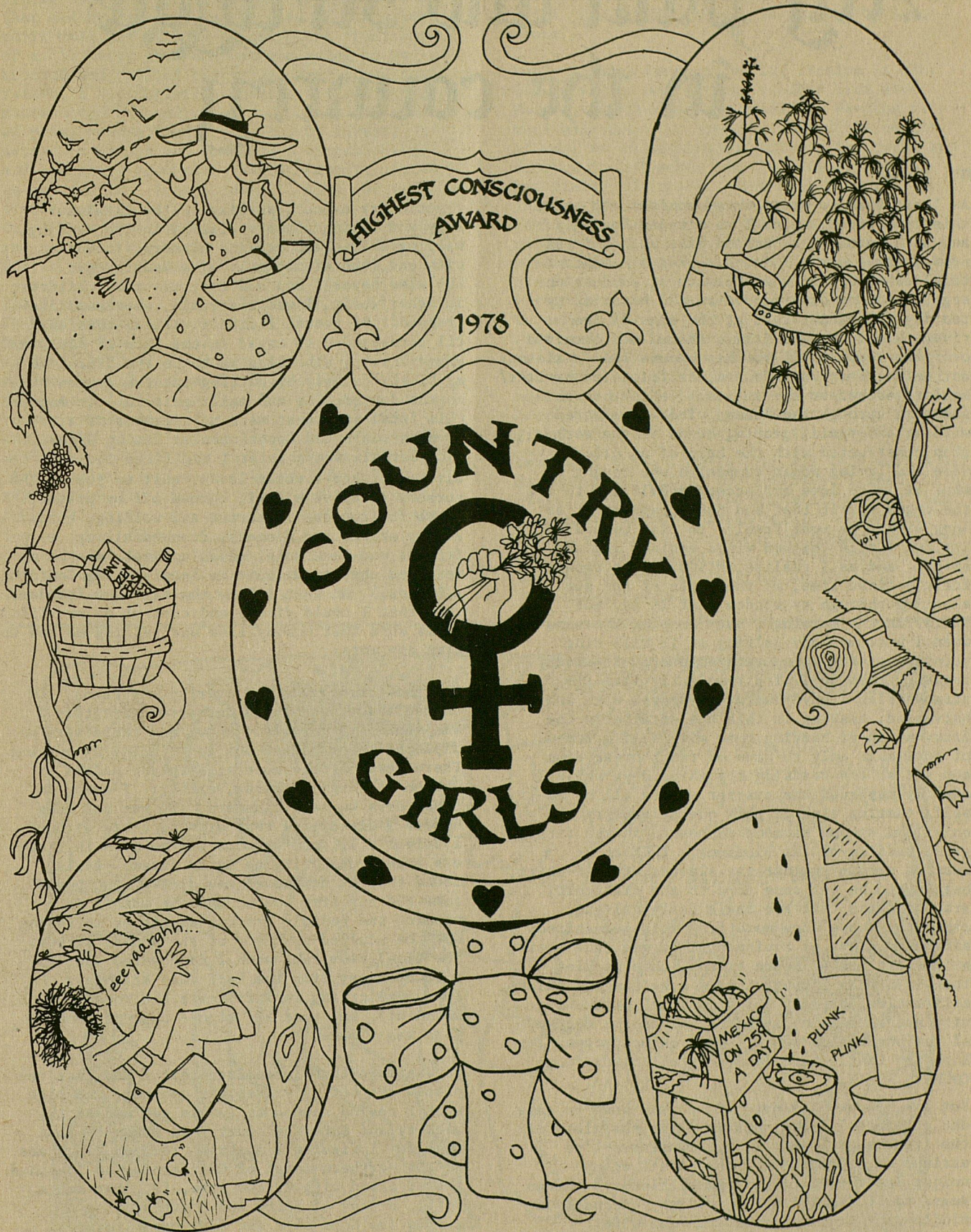


Just prior to July, 1976, I went to Cleveland, Ohio with my 5 year old son, to see Mom. I took along my clown persona: Moxie Axolotl, a calling (mime, approximately) that I've followed for years, much to the dismight and delay of friends and misc. Less than a week off the plane, and I get my chance to Clown. There was going to be a comicbook store coming-out party in a crystal'n'marble Arcade in downtown Cleveland--I'd be hobnobbin' with folks in Capt. America and Spiderman Suits. I tried in very vain to interest my friends in letting their kids accompany us down to this gala event, but Nobody, I discovered, who lives out in these telltale suburbs ever ever Ever goes downtown any more. The Reason...waaall, they all hem and hoohah and finally admit they is *asceered* of the muggers and thuggers and weird city Weirdoes (and someone heard tell that once at a shopping center opening Spidey was there and said Shit out loud), so it's been years since any of them have *actually* been Downtown. However, they believe their fantasies are more than true: like television. It's Fernwood Tonight every day: Mondo Condo....

Anyway, I'm in the upstairs bathroom of my Mother's condominium, built en masse upon this ex-pastureland in once rural Ohio, looking in the mirror as I transform my face into Moxie's--I use a rather conventional clown face for this character: red nose, mouth, blue third eye, eye-brows, on white, with big ears, curlywig, top hat (a beaut, gift of the late, grate Caspar Women's Commune), rasty tux and red star pants. My Mother, sitting on the clothes hamper, is watching me with this Horrorstruck Look--Mother, I say, you don't like my face? I didn't raise my daughter to be a clown, she pronounces. But Mom, this is my job, my...uh..calling (she's heard this before: crazy hippy talk). Mom, when I do this..work--people feel good, they laugh, it makes them HAPPY! What (a leading question) can I do, Mom, to make you happy? She looks at me and says: just wash your face before you come home, I don't want the neighbors to see you like that....

So what is Funny? What does it take to make my Mother laugh? I did get her to giggle earlier this month when I called on her 64th birthday and sang her a chorus of When I'm 64. She takes her, and my, life so seriously: all that whitewoman's lordgawd the whole western world burden. One other thing I did on that trip was read to its very finish, a monolithical book called *Atlas Shrugged*, by Ayn Rand: I flash on her image of Atlas laying down his burden, saying "feh...", walking away. Ayn Rand is not an especially humorous writer but my friend Liz is. Liz got busted across the street from the cop station, writing 'who is john galt?' in the new Bank's wet cement. The judge got the joke and let her off w/a laff.

This all ricochets obliquely off the Immense Political Rhubarb patch: Women/Humor/humour/wimmen--hopefully elsewhere in this or some other magazine someone (else) will examine this weighty and very important--serious--even political issue: That we have been taught to regard as serious bizniz, the lock, stock, and crock of cultural sex role stuff--giving us all these rather grim attitudes, with, as realists, fewer than fair choices, and unable to laugh at the moon and everything which truly is here to bring us joy. ♣



My pain and struggle in the country

BY SLIM

As I sit down to write these confessions on this typewriter, which I've cleaned lovingly and at a natural, unhurried pace with a treasured madrone sprig I found during a moment of total awareness of the presence of Goddess energy, a moment experienced as the heart of my ten day salamander fast at the edge of the river--whose changes I have shared and observed over the years until she has become like a sister/mother/daughter/lover/surrogate friend/counsellor/healer/teacher to me--and as I watch the sun slanting through the leaded window I created with my own timid, groping hands in the workshop constructed with the help of an older, wise and loving woman companion who taught me what it is to love and accept myself and to let the caged spirit that has been trapped for so long within me soar freely, to rise upward on its own little chicken wings egoless and unafraid; and as I realize, DISCOVER, as though for the first time, by the angle of the sun slanting through my window that it is, not "11:57 in the morning", but "nearing the time when I hear my body telling me it will sing joyous upon its union with some organic midday repast", then do I bite reverently into the strawberries I have nurtured, prayed with and harvested, tasting in this one strawberry the frustration of heading home with half a ton of goat shit only to have my truck break down and sit at the roadside for three days while I adeptly replaced the starter engine all by myself; tasting also in this one strawberry the quiet and solemn harmony expressed in the first green budding of the blossoms. THEN do my muscles strain against the sleeves of my t-shirt, begging to be set once more to the difficult, arduous tasks that are their daily delight, eager to escape once more from this mechanized, alienated piece of equipment that was once their only sport for 40 hours a week, this machine that is now an incongruity in a setting of nature, affirmation, harmony and high level productivity and success on my part, and as the nectar of the berries is sweet, sweet on my tongue, I know now that I have become a full-fledged COUNTRY WOMAN.

But the journey has not, of course, been an easy one. Before I let myself revel in the glory of the triumphant level of self-awareness I've arrived at, I want to expound a bit on my unique and fascinating personal history. Seven years ago I was just your average, unconscious-middle-class-college-graduate-housewife: attractive, intelligent, married to a gentle and sensitive man who worshipped me in a most

reactionary manner, working in the local nursery and taking pottery classes in the evening, wearing skirts and cooking dinners, friendly with and fond of not only my women friends but also several men and many assorted children; in other words, I was miserable, oppressed and trapped. Of course I didn't realize this until I responded to an ad in the back of *Aquarian Woman Monthly* exhorting me to be the "first on my block," simply by cutting out the coupon on the dotted line and mailing it in. It was this fatal step that made me a member of a computer-selected Consciousness Razing Group, and just six weeks later I had filed for a divorce, taken a woman lover, quit my job at the nursery to drive a taxi, thrown off my pottery class for courses in karate and welding, burned all my skirts and dinners, dropped all my friends who were male, given up meat, shaved my head and changed my name to Leaping Ling Cod (I'm a Pisces.) At last I knew the taste of freedom, knew that I could direct and control my own life. I was sure that nobody else was telling me how to live any more.

But the journey was not over by any means. Of course this was new and uncharted territory I was venturing into, you know, and there were no diplomas being handed out for finding my own way. There were no role models, airplane models or Orbach's charge-a-plates, either. I mean, in those days we were pioneers. It was not long before I discovered that driving taxis without a driver's license was costing me more in tickets than I was bringing in in fares. I also found that my new lover would never but never take off her army boots, and she wasn't into washing the rapidly graying sheets or scrubbing out the scuffed-up floor of the shower either. The final blow came when I discovered she was a counter spy for the hari dass krichnaly (who were trying to infiltrate the women's movement), and that her signed copy of *prairie fire* was a fake.

It was then that I realized that I had just replaced one set of values for another, and that what I really needed to do was get out of the sick-ty and into the country in order to find myself. I figured I might be located somewhere on the northern coast of California, so I headed there, armed with my two arms, (a right and a left), a copy of Helen and Scott Nearing's *Living the Good Life* and \$28 to capitalize a homestead and tide me through until I could find a job.

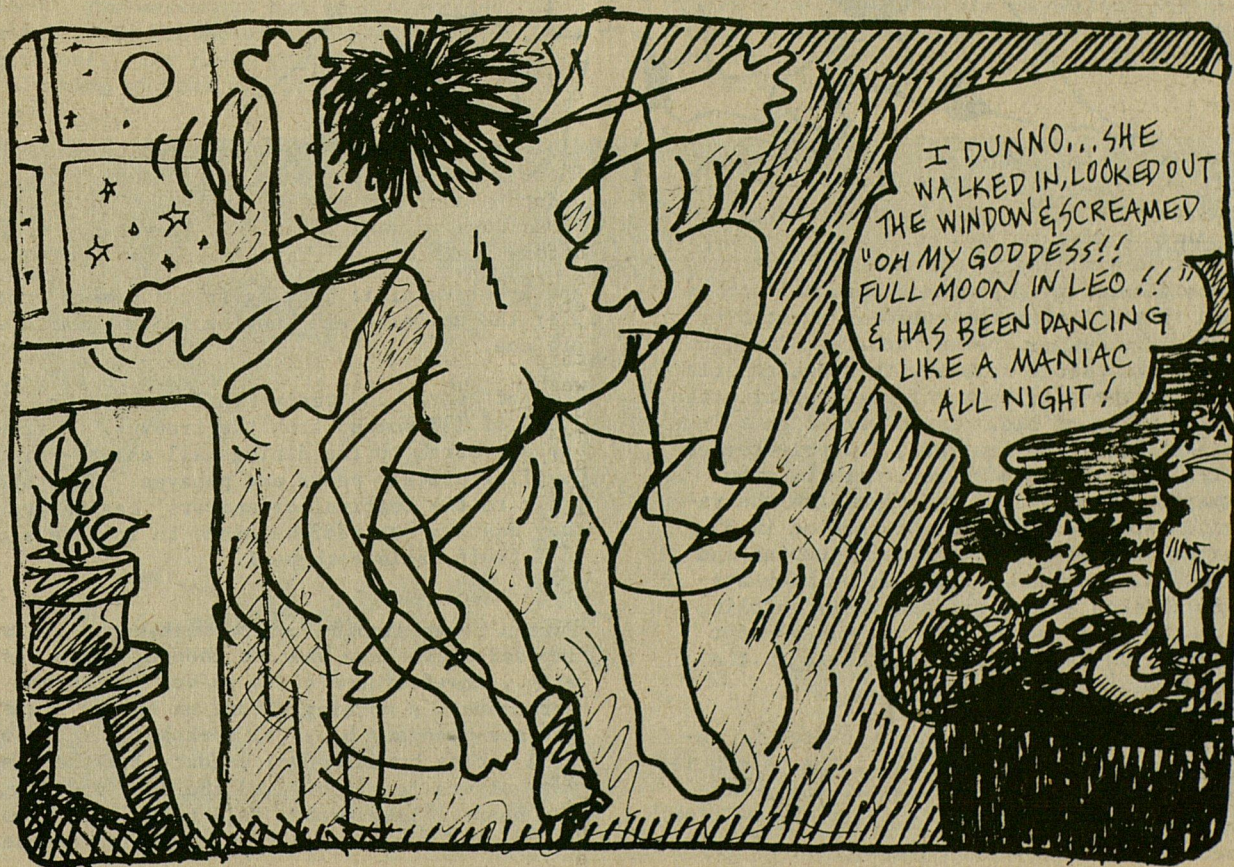
But of course the journey was not an easy one. When I reached the country I found that the only places available were the back seat of a VW bug that had broken down in the yard of a Russian music hall and whistle factory, the front seat of a '52 Chevy pick-up that was going to be bronzed and raffled off for a Jerry Brown fund raiser, a Zen Christian commune for sexist exurbanites who had found daddy, and 210 acres of prime meadow land surrounded by forest, dotted by brooks and boasting a mammoth barn and two story farmhouse that my parents wanted to buy for me. Impulsively, I chose the farm, little imagining the task I had let myself in for. There's a lot more to running a farm than the city bumpkin might imagine, and good help for no pay is so hard to find these days.

The first winter, the wettest this area has seen in sixty years, was especially hard. With the barn roof leaking badly, I was forced to keep my small herd of two dozen goats in the kitchen. Somehow, around the same time, I found myself going to a lot of meetings and writing about my country experiences for thirty-six journals and two TV plays in four languages. People kept asking me to tell them just what it's like to live a quiet, reclusive country life. Most vexing were the constant notes and phone calls from "a feminist secretary" of Hugh Hefner asking me if my friends and I would be willing to be featured in a Playboy article on "The very private love lives of the backwoods Playgirls." She kept signing herself "In struggle, a fellow

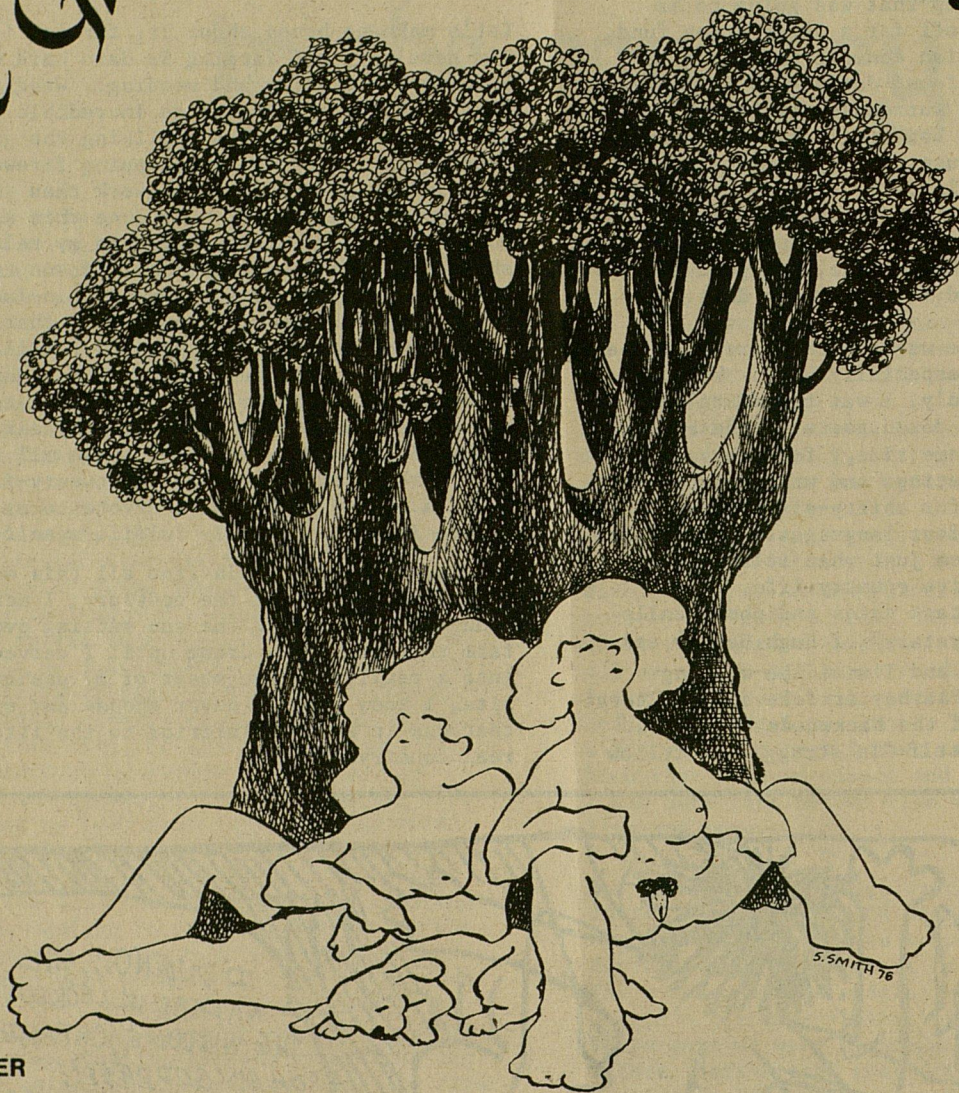
feminist" and begging me to let her come visit my Country Country Club (such was the media's distorted image of what was happening out here). And I just wanted to be a farmer and be left alone!

Let's make no bones about it, farming is what I'm here for, and farming is darn hard work. Farming and fencing and weeding. Weeding is hard work too. It takes an incredible amount of work to do canning and milking the goats and fencing in 190 acres and chopping firewood and fixing the truck. More work than *you* can imagine if *you* haven't ever done this kind of work. It's hard work working on my relationships too, much harder since I became totally honest with everyone I encounter, including the grocery clerk. And it isn't as if that's all the work I have to do by any means. I still have to earn a living. Out here in the country I must work much harder than my city sisters to eke out a subsistence living for myself and forty-five animals. And of course all this hard work hardly leaves me the twenty-five hours a week I feel I must devote to my personal growth in order to truly fulfill myself.

You might think I would find all this work a bit discouraging, but on the contrary, I mean, it's great. When I watch the sun setting over this farm that was but a dream until I carved it into a reality by the sweat of my unshaven armpits, I know I would never choose any other life that was in any way inferior to the life of a real country woman. ♀



The Great Country Womben Festival



BY SILVER

Like the gathering of the lost Amazons, wombun arrived from all over the world--some landing astride giant eagles' backs, others roaring up on mini bikes--whole tribes with drums and flashing cymbals canoeing up the river, chanting the gathering songs of old. There were high priestesses from the lowlands, low priestesses from the highlands and 95 goat milkers from Sacramento. The hills were alive with the radiant, carbonated sounds of sisterhood in 35 different languages. Wombun were jumping and hugging, laughing and snuggling, passing mysterious objects around and generally settling down in the piney woods. It was clearly our space--a truly serendipitous gathering...the festival was becoming a reality.

Everyone signed up for the daily chores of watering the sprouts and patrolling the boundaries to shoot at interlopers. Being at the registration desk was a wondrous experience, writing down names and addresses from Zwambili, Yahtazata

and Lower Martini; meeting tribal wombun from all over the universe and knowing in our hearts we are one.

Tons of exotic and tasty fruit arrived on the backs of 180 wombun from the tropics. A triumphant march to the dining hall ensued--sisters juggling prickly pears and papayas. This brought panic to the festival organizers' hearts and they hastily revised the menus to include sautéed fruit balls each meal.

Wombun began signing up for workshops. It was impossible to know what to choose, there was so much...an afternoon class on how to macrame horseshoes, a morning ritual on how to dispel the non-monogamy blues, a workshop on how to fell a tree by using voice control...these and many others fairly boggled the mind and frenzied the heart. Some wombun fell under the chaos of it all and took to speaking gibberish and sell-

ing souvenirs. The activities seemed overwhelming and they were.

During the day womben would dash from workshop to workshop, filling their hearts and minds with essential trivia and trivial essentia. The two favorite and most contented workshops were learning how to build a demonstration cabin by gluing together pine needles, and learning how to carve canoes with a nail file. With these necessary skills womben felt ready to go anywhere with confidence.

And the nights, oh the nights. The womben gathering under the stars to share their talents. There were large circles, small circles, squares, rectangles and the odd triangle. There were evening rituals to relieve the non-monogamy blues--each wombon holding the hand of the wombon on her right and rolling her eyes to the sky and asking the spirits of the ancients to guide her into true and flamboyant multi-relationships. The uplifting unity was felt throughout the gathering.

By Sunday we were all feeling like a community. The difficulties of 35 languages were overcome by the unifying diet and by the sparkling rose water which was sprayed from overhead twice daily, uniting us all in one common reality. Womben were constantly coming together in small groups to share towels and umbrellas during these sprinkling periods, a wonderful exchange.

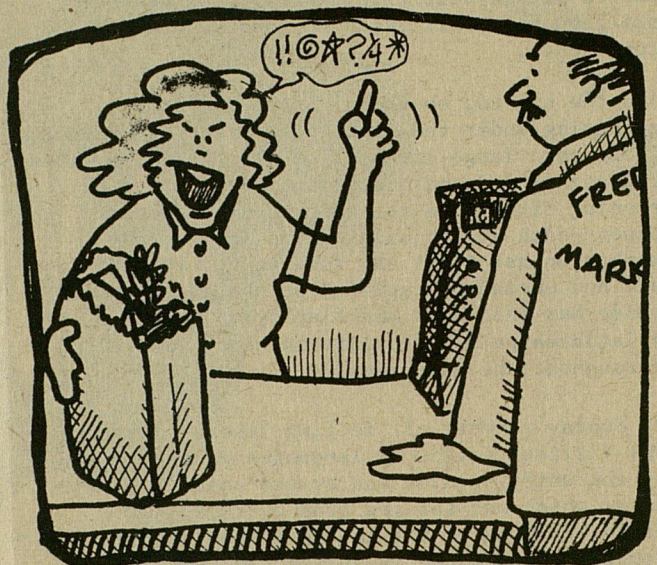
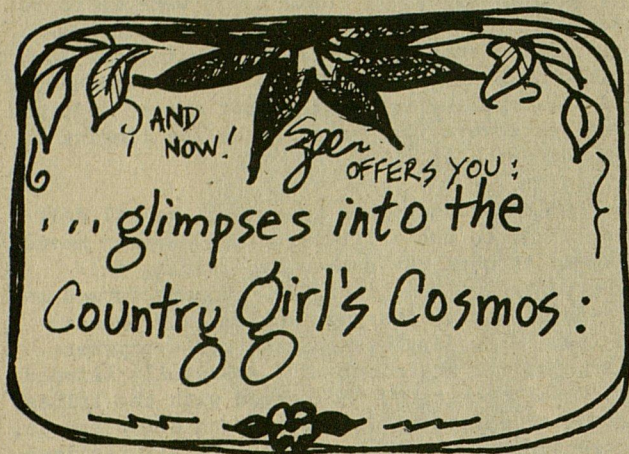
Sunday afternoon a few cracks appeared in our harmony. Two workshops had been scheduled simultaneously--shampooing of goats and plucking of chickens. The clean goat faction felt that the plucking of hens was politically incorrect

while the chicken pluckers felt that fricassee was more spiritual than soggy does any time. The festival mood fell into grave danger. A large circle formed, each wombon passing a rattle and singing her heartmost feeling about eggs versus milk. There was some digression into yogurt and a heartrending group of songs from the non-dairy eaters. We were in danger of losing our unity. Once again were we to be identified and separated by what we ate? As the rattle went around the circle for the 50th time, womben slowly realized that it was better to eat anything rather than not eat at all, and the controversy was resolved by the ringing of the dinner bell.

As the days and nights passed on, we all felt truly united and a little dizzy. Womben moved freely through the community, joining in abstractedly here and there. Groups formed and re-formed, each sharing problems and potato chips. A feeling of nonsense was everywhere. The festival organizers had gracefully slipped into the background and merged with the tribes, each one becoming translucent and effervescent, depending on the time of day. We all realized with a growing certainty that it must all end. We would soon be gathering up our macramed horseshoes, drums, and newly learned rituals and go back to the outside world, taking with us many tales of wonder and glory. None of us wanted to leave each other in the mystical piney woods, but leave we must. The morning finally came...this had become so exactly our home that it was hard for us to remember the time when we all had arrived separate and unresolved. As the womben slowly drifted off in various directions we gave thanks to the goddess that we all had our Country Wombon tee shirts to let us know it was real. ♀

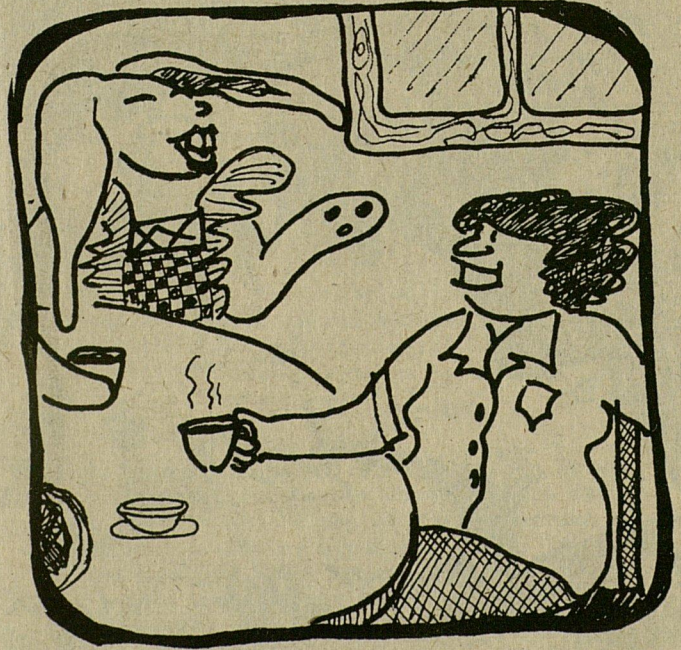
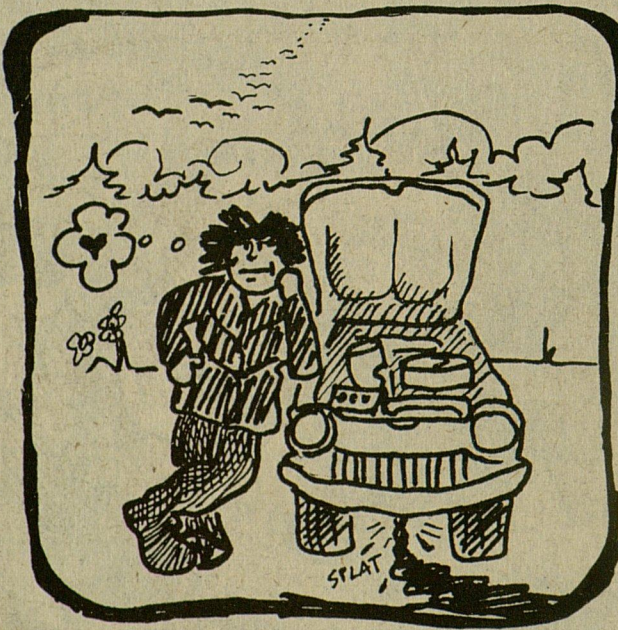


...marge, having completed a co-counseling class during Winter, begins to "discharge" freely.

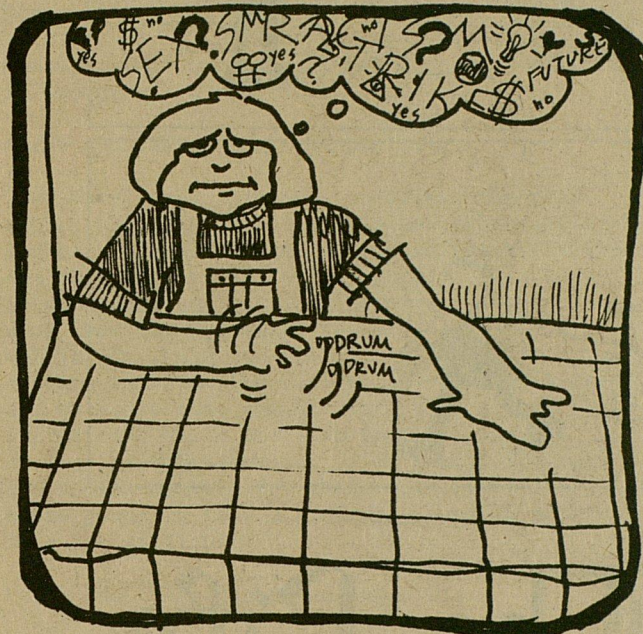


...thinking about her lover, "Cumulus Cloud" pours 5 new quarts of oil in her car & forgets to put the plug back.

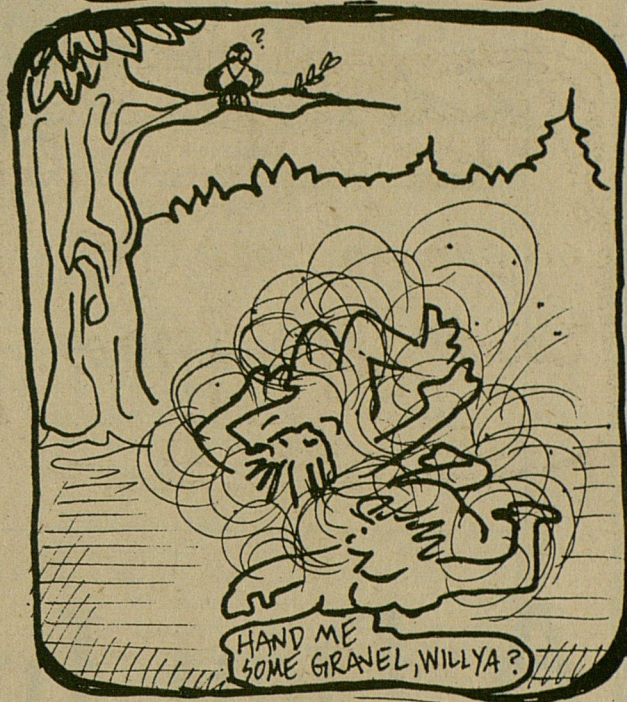
....friendly neighbors often get together over morning café and glib chatter.



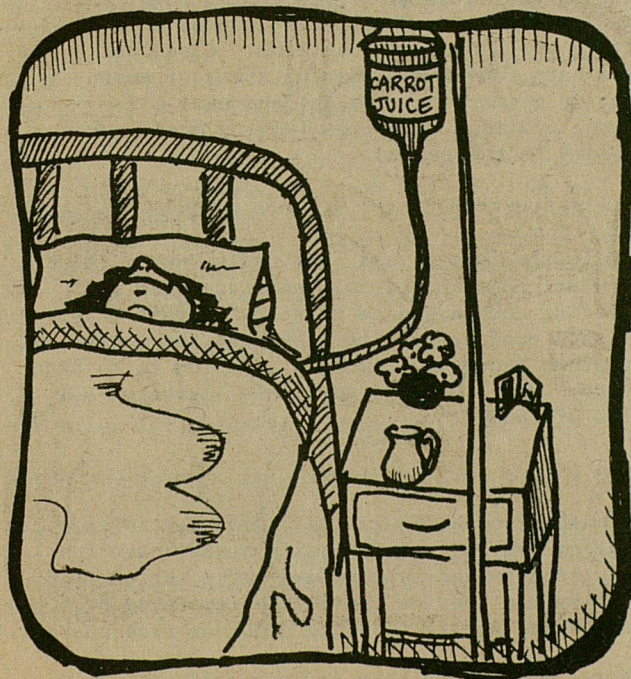
...fifi finds an elusive moment when she can be alone with her thoughts.



...the drought in her symbolic manner, taught us how to imitate our bird cousins and take dust baths.

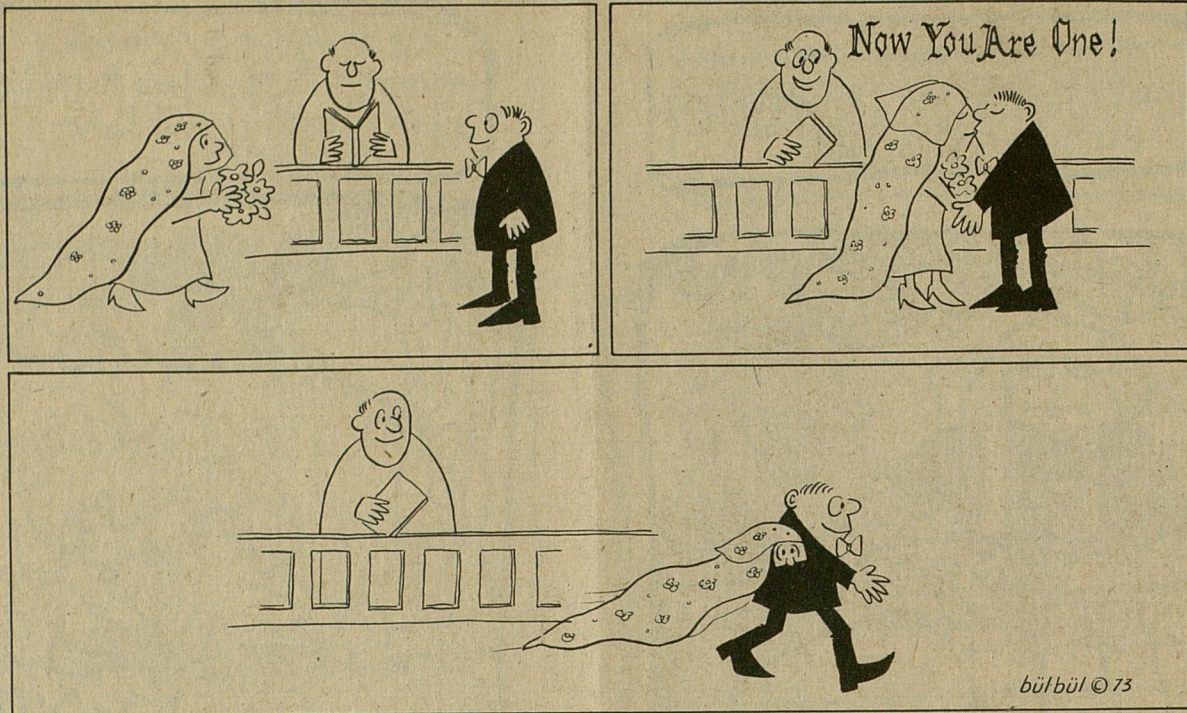


...the country girl has lots of alternative cures handy for "what ails."



...now & then, every girl finds the need to seek out a special hide-away where she can be alone.





A Day In The Life

BY BOBBI JONES

Ah--it's 6:00 again--the aroma of ammonia diapers always awakens my nostrils--it's such a help to get me going in the morning. While I nurse the baby I'll plan my day--

Crumble the newspaper, chop kindling, bring in the tree I chopped down yesterday. Chainsawing at 6:00 a.m. always causes such fuss with the neighbors...

Gently tap the family on the shoulder to awaken them to this glorious morning and warm toasty house. Nurse and change baby and pop pill. Go to the greenhouse and pick a pineapple, oranges and bananas for fruit slices, collect the eggs for the omelette; start the biscuits, waffles and pancakes, ham slices (bacon for little Harry - he doesn't like ham) and get yesterday's strawberry and raspberry jam. One hundred sixty pints of jam just doesn't seem to last a minute around here. Whoops--mustn't forget to gather the bees' honey and mix it with yesterday's homemade yogurt--must have our yogurt daily(digestion is so important!). That gives me fifteen minutes to clean the dishes, ceiling, walls, cupboards, sink, stove, refrigerator, floor, and the crystal chandelier. Even living in the country I do like nice things!!

Ah--finally I get outside--let's see, raincoat,

hat, boots,(damn, that left shoe really does have a big hole--oh well, two pairs of socks should help). Feed the chickens, geese, ducks, sheep, goats, cows, horses, cats, dogs, and milk the goats. Brush, clip hooves of all forty goats and milk the cows. Clean out the barn (oh, the wonderful aroma of ammonia; my midmorning wake-up) and haul all those precious droppings (eighty wheelbarrow loads) to the garden.

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Go to the lumber yard, get nails, wood, chickenwire, plastic and roll roofing. Lay roll roofing out in sun to flatten for this afternoon's roofing project. Then do the south pasture fence mending, and addition to chicken yard. Oh, I do love my little clukkers--all 100 of them...

Pop pill.

Remember to hand-turn the 3 acre section of the garden for celery--build plant boxes for the zinnias and nasturtiums--move the artichokes and berries, mulch the remaining 8 acres and weed around the precious rose bushes...

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Vacuum carpet in outhouse, put a vase of fresh flowers on marble commode, and try a new air freshener...

Finish roofing all eight structures, do land clearing and burning near workshop, then take shower and get ready for doctor's appointment.

Pop pill.

Clean up shit under couch--find cat and drop off in woods, miles from here.

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Load baby's bed, playpen, stroller, changing table, blankets, bottles, clothes, shoes, diaper bag, plastic coated spoon and yogurt (Everyone must have their daily yogurt). Also load in sick goat and cat for their vet. appointment, and the hot water heater (good ole Sears mailed the wrong one again). I've had such fun boiling water on the wood stove--it really dried out my house this summer, the paint's even peeling off the walls and I do love playing the country primitive again. I am glad I splurged and bought my Semi for these town trips--it makes going to town a pleasure, even if packing is a bit difficult.

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Take the children to the shoe store, let John get the pink and green striped socks and red patent leather shoes, Harry gets the boots with spikes, and little Mary gets the 3" heels with glitter toes.

Pop pill

Go to the doctor's appt. Tell him how marvellous you've been feeling since he gave you those little pills--you just can't imagine having a nervous breakdown again--those pills just make the day float by. Yes, modern medicine is wonderful. Explain it may take a little while to pay the doctor's fee because you're still paying the \$3,000. hospital bill for running over the pharmacist when he wouldn't refill your prescription, but everything will get paid as soon as you find another job. Get the doctor to write your former employer explaining that you're well now and wouldn't even consider throwing a type-writer out the front window again.

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Be sure and pick the last 16 lugs of fruit from the trees for tomorrow's canning.

Nurse and change baby and pop pill.

Seat all 30 family members--hold hands--give prayer--half hour of gospel singing--"Om" three times--silent prayer for 20 minutes--raise hands--Dig In. ♀

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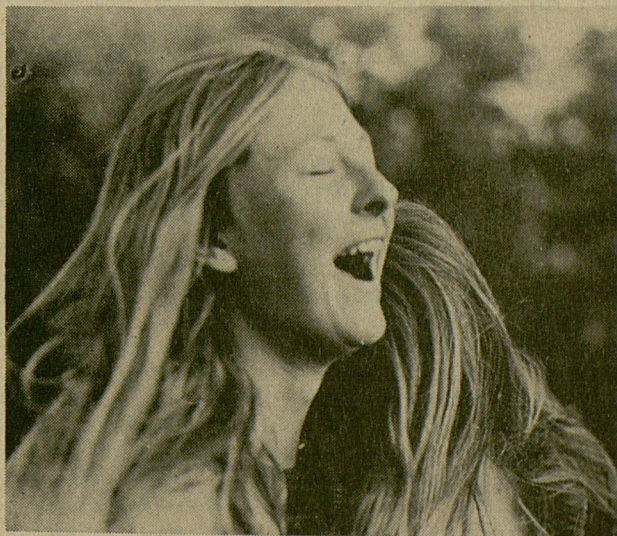
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ELLEN CHANTERELLE

DOLPHIN



How I Built My Own hovel

HARRIET BYE

Ever since I was knee high to a rafter square my one consuming desire was to grow up and build my own hovel. Not that I really thot that I, a mere female mortal earthling, a passive potato, a weak unskilled sissy, a a... girl could ever do more than construct a split level for barbie and ken. Yet, when I was seven and other children would be out playing hopscotch, kickball, and doctor, I would go off by myself to what then seemed like acres of garbage but were in reality only vacant lots and alley ways. So with mommy's words still ringing in my ear - Henrietta don't go play at that corner it's dirty dirty dirty there - I found myself on my hands and knees searching for what I knew would be the smallest component of my future hovel. A nail, a nail? Why I collected hundreds, thousands of them: bent rusty 8 pennys, straight as an arrow 10s, big headed roofing nails and screws with worn threads. Nails, Nails, Nails, I kept them in coffee cans under my bed. By the time I was eleven I had glued magnets to the bottoms of my shoes so I could get off my hands and knees. It was so consuming that I stopped talking to everyone. I'd ditch school and go to new neighborhoods to find more vacant lots. I didn't mind the garbage, the beer cans, the used condoms. For want of a nail a queendom was lost. History would not repeat her/him self. My hovel would have thousands of nails all of which I had collected from the great mother herself.

My not so great mother however, began to worry. I confided in her. I told her my dream. I would build a woomins hovel. It would be Square, of course, the Square being the perfect manifestation of energy forever flowing from corner to corner to corner. The form most natural to wombin; wombin instinctively know that the four corners of a Square not only represent the four stages of wombbloomhood but the four seasons, and that sacred shape made when you draw a line from the right breast to right knee to left knee to left breast and then back again to right breast. In what other shape could you be off the wall and know it. I was institutionalized immediately. I was placed in small round rooms and seen by small round doctors till soon I forgot all my connection with the great mother.

When I was 21 they finally let me out. Actually I escaped, for the patriarchy was so caught in their own circular thinking that what goeth out must cometh in that I merely opened the door and wenteth, forever altering their statistics on the return factor of mental patients. I returned to my mother, collected my 734 cans of nails, my pregnant cat, my tarot cards (our foremothers, those sagely Egyptians surely knew what was happening or they would have made round cards) and hitchhiked to the country. There, perhaps my early dreams, those small pips would bear fruit.

Building my hovel wasn't easy. First I found the perfect site. Then I camped for four years on that site, watching the patterns of the sun and moon so that when the time came to let those rusty little tin soldiers be recycled I would know exactly where each one went. When the day to start came I borrowed a shovel from the septic tank service down the way (my closest country neighbors.) Then I began to dig. From morning till night I dug till I had a perfect 14 x 14, 6 feet deep pit. Then I took my cans of nails and began to weave intricate walls of iron. Using a basic x pattern, I cross hatched and hatched, always remembering the sacred square. I made each wall 3 1/2" thick to conform to local building codes. When I finally reached the top, I stretched 4 mil plastic, available at about 85 cents a yard at your local hardware store, from corner to corner. I then cut out a hole so that I could see the stars each night from where I lay on my bed of...yes, you guessed it. The rusty tones of the wall blend perfectly with the rich organic orange of the earth. I also left small opening in the walls so that the moles and gophers could share my space, and I would stay in contact with all of nature's creatures. It is with great pride and pleasure that I now enter my home and I am glad to share these confidences with my sisters. You too can build your own hovel! Plans available from:

ON The Same Plane
Where Else, California 90037

RHAPITOCUM ORGASMIOSA

BY HELEN JACOBS

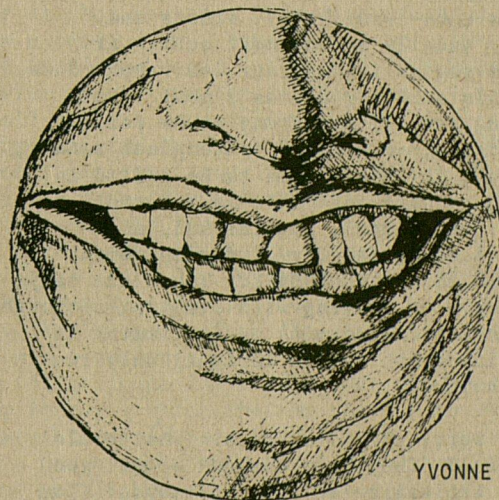
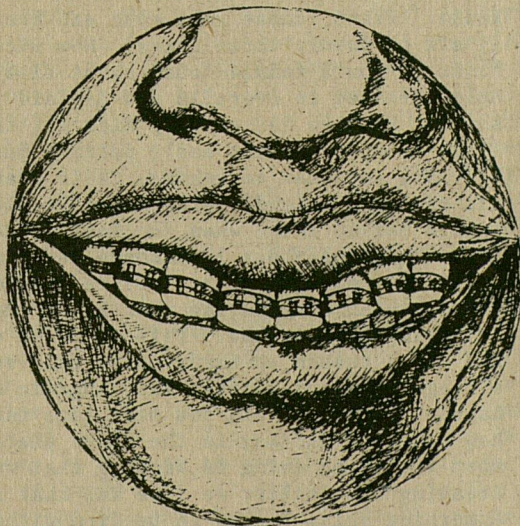
One of my favorite country pastimes is stalking the wild herbs, especially Rhapitocum Orgasmiosa or, as I affectionately call it, Rhappie. Rhappie is an easy to find, useful herb adored by its' devoted ecstatic gatherers.

The plant is tall, two to three feet with a varied and diverticulated leaf structure. The small umbrella shaped flowers vary in color from a delicate gold to a deep manure-colored brown. The plant flowers in November, in perfect harmony with the earth, the season and the filtered sunlight. And it is at this stage that the harmonious medicinal properties of the plant are at their peak (this provides somewhat of a difficulty as the plant is not visible to the human eye at this time, but using auric sense and a special pair of harmon-eye sunglasses (available from me at a mere \$35 a pair), you should have no difficulty in finding Rhappie.)

I usually go out and pick rhappie when the plant is vibrating with rhythmical, organic, radiant natural health. I always ask its permission to harvest it because I've been reading in my feminist ladies home journal that plants really do communicate with people. "Rhappie," I ask, in a reverent, harmonious and awestruck voice, "Would it be O.K. with you if I harvested some of your leaves, flowers and roots to use as natural, wholesome, centered, organic medicines to heal myself and my friends?" Although I have yet to hear a reply, I always assume that rhappie

says yes and I proceed to rip the leaves off and pull up as many plants as I can.

And what, you might be wondering with bated breath, are the medicinal properties of this glorious healing natural herb? Rhaponticum cooleth the liver and warmeth the entrails. It is used in all manners of debility and insanity because of its soothing calming healing properties. An infusion of the leaves can be drunk to relax your muscles and nerves. It is deterrent, subversive and distractive. A decoction of the seeds can be inhaled through the nose for a quick rush. When applied as a poultice to the head (just grind up rhappie's root and mix it with enough urine to make a paste), it has been successfully used to cure brain tumors. The results have been startling and immediate. In the case of a 30 year old woman suffering from a severe case of halitosis and underarm odor, an infusion of the seeds was used successfully to help her become more popular (in fact, she is really one of our success stories as she was last year's winner in the "Ms. Happy Homesteader" Contest). An infusion is also used in severe cases of acne and toe jam and has the additional advantage of dyeing the skin a brilliant vermilion, making a fascinating, more alluring you. The middle leaves, when put in a cloth bag and worn around the neck, add a new and vivid hue to the aura. And, an infusion of the uppermost, ostrich-shaped leaves acts as a means of natural organic birth control. More than any herb I know, Rhappie puts a twinkle in your eye and adds a little bounce to your step. ♀



YVONNE PEPIN

Bug Off!

SLIM

I have been living on a commune now, the Last Resort, for over 17-1/2 days with 3 other men, one girl who just turned 38, 61 pigs, a miniature kumquat garden, half a goat, 11 sinks, 4 cabins, one resort hotel, two mortgages and a 92 year old agent from the IRS who got stuck here when her car got a flat tire and she kept trying to get a man to help her change it. Being one of the old timers here at the resort, I have suffered dozens of cases of the kinds of "social diseases" that are bound to happen among groups of people living together even when they are not dirty. Which we are not.

I am not talking about the kinds of diseases that come from nudity, sex and drugs combined. Nudity, maybe. Sex, maybe. But not nudity, sex and drugs combined. I mean the kinds of diseases your own grandmother probably had quite often (and if she denies it she's probably lying), to wit, scabies, lice and crabs. Far from being ashamed of and secretive about these occurrences, we here at the Last Resort have actually developed a ritual to welcome the arrival of these little critters, who are, after all, a part of the great All-one. Since I have come to see them as individuals rather than in categories, (belying the notion that "if you've seen one, you've seen them all") I would like to talk about each of these "little guests" or "invitados pequenos" separately, and to share ways you can make their stay pleasant for both them and for yourself.

SCABIES

Scabies are the most subtle and mysterious of the three types of visitors, and are almost invisible to the naked eye. They can also be the most interesting, given proper awareness. They burrow just beneath the skin on the smoother parts of your body--your belly, wrists and thighs. They usually become most active at night just as you're laying your weary body down to sleep. This activity causes a most interesting itching sensation and may cause persons of short patience, or men, to contemplate murder, or "scabocide", as it has come to be called in scabies' rights' circles. This is, stated bluntly, the traditional, patriarchal, male-dominated, AMA supported way of dealing with scabies. THIS IS NOT NECESSARY. There are many alternative ways of dealing with scabies, although space in this article permits me to examine in depth (and with great female insight) only two of these techniques.

METHOD ONE; Befriend the scabies. What could be more natural? They have already sought you out, why not capitalize on their presence? You can then choose your human friends from among those who either already have the disease or those you would like to share it with. We have

found our sauna to be a great help in this respect. Usually one sauna is sufficient to initiate a newcomer into the circle of those who like to enjoy a good "nightscratch" before going to sleep. As the scabies proliferate, tell-tale scratching will leave no doubt as to who is on the inside and who on the outside of the scabies clan. Old veterans who are no longer allowed to sleep in their parents' homes (ironically, mothers are notoriously unenlightened about the benefits of being a host body, and my own mother often awakens me at odd hours of the night to wash the sheets I am using) can stay at friends' homes as the circle widens. This also helps widen the circle.

METHOD TWO; Diet: eat only food until the scabies spontaneously disappear. I'm sure this method is self-explanatory.

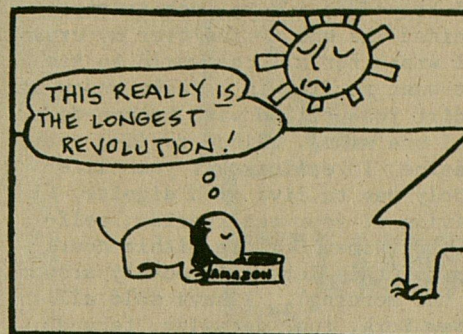
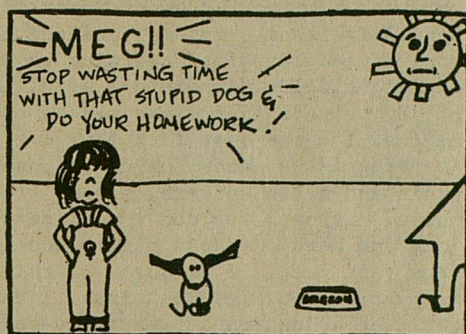
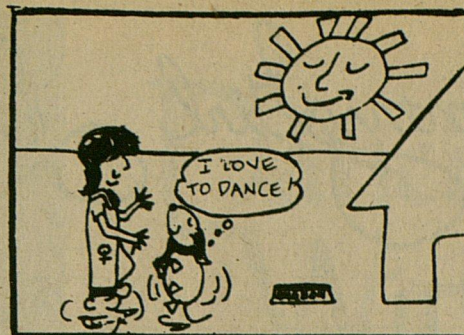
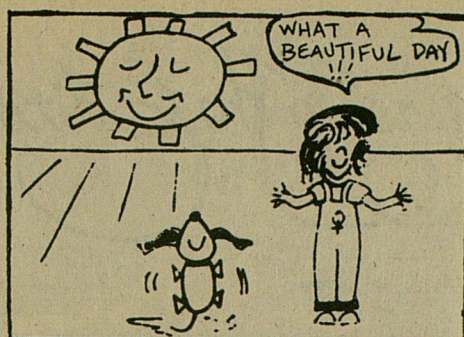
CRABS

These are really my favorite of the three kinds of midget pets being considered here, as they are actually large enough to be seen with the naked eye and will tumble around in your pubic hair just like little children in a playground or at the beach. It is actually possible with great care to paint little dots of various colors on the crabs of a friend, thus identifying them and making it possible to even give them names. This is also a good activity to engage in with someone you want to get to know better, and it can be the basis for a long and lasting friendship.

LICE

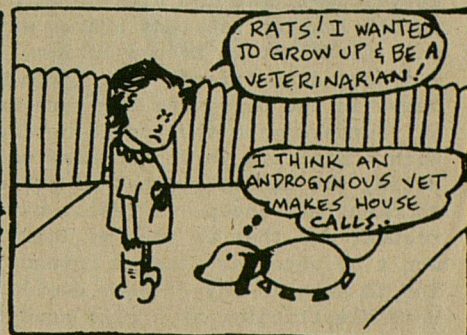
"Lice are nice." Stop scratching your scalp and visualize the daily life of an average louse. First, close your eyes and breathe deeply six or twenty-three times. Now picture in front of you a female louse about five feet tall, dressed in overalls and a plaid flannel shirt. Picture her getting kids off to school (just above your left ear), putting mascara on her long antennae to enhance their beauty, exchanging a friendly greeting ("Hi, louse!"). Invite her to leave when she feels ready. Continue this for about 12 seconds each week. Do not be discouraged if you notice a gradual increase in itching during your first year of following this method. This is to be expected, and is no reason to throw aside this very promising technique. After all, organic cures don't happen overnight, and you must take into account how you got that way in the first place. The most important thing is knowing that we are creating the reality we live in, that it is not something being forced on us from without.

If you continue to be bothered, I suggest a gallon of Southern Comfort, taken internally. ♀



ETIEN ALFORD

© 1976 ETIEN ALFORD



WILMA KNOX

My Darling,

I have just come from the mailbox and my heart is heavy because there was no letter again today. We look forward to your letters because you come to see us so seldom. I'm sure that you don't realize how hurt your father is that you come only three times a year to see us, and when you do come you're here such a short time. Your father has given you the best years of his life in back-breaking, hot, hard work; and, of course, you know that I almost died when you were born. My spine-problem stems from the pregnancy and I have been to doctors all over the country and they tell me that age will worsen my condition. I wouldn't mind the sacrifice if I thought you *appreciated* our sacrifices for you. Our friends' children are with them all the time, and I know that your father feels badly that you never think of us. My friend said to me, at the Wednesday Prayer Meeting, that she just told her daughter, "Never mind coming with flowers and tears to my deathbed. I want you with me when I can enjoy having you. Don't bother with trying to impress your friends (and making up for neglect) with a fancy coffin and funeral for me, and I guess that was putting it pretty straight alright. Well, I guess you do the best you can -- but you will realize too late that your love for your parents should come before the social engagements. We are not pleased with your friends, and it is plain as can be that you're ashamed to have them see us. Vivian's daughter has her friends in for lunch and bridge when she goes there, but -- of course -- I disapprove of cards in any form. I think that my spare time should be spent in *service* to the church; there are always those in need, and besides playing cards leads to gambling. It starts with playing for a box of notepaper and before they know it Satan steps in, and they're in trouble -- Mark my word! We're having pork roast and turnip greens for supper, wish you were here.

Love, Your Mother

Country Girl Letters To The Editor

Dear Country Women,

I must apologize. After a brief trip to Mendocino, during which I stayed in a very posh tourist hotel and agonized the whole time over my crumbling love affair, I wrote for all the world to see that I did not want to live in a leaky shack at the end of a dirt road filled with broken-down automobiles. I was wrong. Since reading your wonderful magazine, I realize that your life style is the only way to live with dignity. I should be arriving at your egalitarian, self-sufficient Country Women Commune within hours of your receipt of this letter (probably around one or two in the morning). I have sold all my things in New York, that decaying, fecund hotbed of Urban sexism, and have purchased a marvelous little '58 pick-up with no first gear, an oil leak and dubious brakes which I'm sure will fit right in around Albion. I am bringing two very dear friends whom I could not bear to leave in the city, and they are bringing their St. Bernard whom they could not bear to part with. She is a very gentle animal, and we are hoping she can be trained to protect your chickens and sheep. I really have only one request and that is that my leaky cabin (this won't be necessary for my friends, they are willing to stay in any of your dwellings) should have electricity, as I will need to plug in my typewriter somewhere.

In sisterhood,

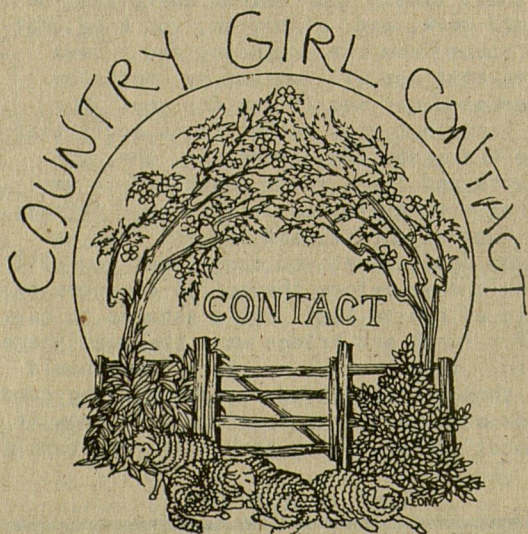
Kate Triticale

Dear Editors,

Naturally I was aghast when you rejected my article "Coming in concentric circles" for your Sexuality issue. But my patience gave out when you refused to print "Learning to come in concentric circles," (wherein I actually shared many of the secrets that cause men to constantly tell me that I'm the best fuck they ever had) in your Learning issue, and "Coming in concentric circles again and again and yes, again," for your Cycles issue. Perhaps you don't realize that I worked long and hard on those pieces and I thought they were very good. I am sure you rejected them only because of your lesbian bias. I thought I would be doing you a favor: you don't really ever seem to have authors of the caliber of someone who has been interviewed by *Playboy* and wooed by Hollywood. You will go bankrupt if you continue your narrow-mindedness. I have learned from my very wide range of sexual experiences that you will never catch the man of your dreams unless you start learning to use feminism to your own advantage. I would still like to write something for you if you would be willing to pay me, because a lot of you isolated, lonely, rural women seem to need real help in saving your own lives.

Vivaciously,

Arlica Mah Jong



Small, trashed out, run down commune of 11 adults looking for woman to share half the work load, learn new skills (like doing our laundry on an old washboard), help raise 5 children, and explore new ways of relating as equals in evolving, revolutionary lifestyle. Prefer white, wealthy, young, strong, healthy, cheerful, talented, energetic, 72% vegetarian, rather gay. Write Land 'o' Leisure, Box Number, Isolation, Idaho.

Desperately lonely woman seeks same. 'Selly bassy'.

Have room for rent to womben 21 to 21 3/4, into meditation, fasting, biodynamic composting. Must be open to sharing room w/200 free-flowing Tribal members who appear quarterly. Must be into medieval healing arts and show understanding of all facets of loquat tree cultivation. No fanatics please.

43 King Place,
Brooklyn, New York 15437



Dancing With The Funny Bone

BY CYNTHIA ORR

*When the collective broke up
in 1973, the only thing I had
left was my sense of humor.*

--Rita Mae Brown

The Telephone Company offered comic Lily Tomlin a quarter of a million dollars to do Ernestine skits that were *pro*-Phone Company. The Phone Company's attempt was a small scale variation on a standard patriarchal ploy: gagging women's humor. For centuries men have told us we have no sense of humor and asserted women comics aren't funny. (I remember my own father telling me these two lies.) They limit the expression of humor by telling us when and how to laugh. Laughter in formal settings is tabu, and if a woman is going to laugh, it had better be in a "dainty" way.

At the same time men are telling us we have no sense of humor, they are using humor as a weapon against us. Mother-in-law jokes, "dumb blond" jokes and farmer's daughter jokes perpetuate stereotypes and encourage women hating. Through "humor" we are told we are inconsequential and a bit ridiculous. I still remember a cartoon series depicting a young couple on a sailboat. The woman rejects the man's sexual advances several times--in the last frame she is floating in the ocean, looking a little silly, while he sails off.

Men use humor not only to ridicule us but to socialize us to "appropriate" roles. Women who do not meet their criteria are the butt of jokes--the "nag", the "bitch" and the "loudmouth" are fair game. Since men are afraid we will claim our anger, it isn't surprising they depict angry women as silly and ineffective. A perfect example is a cartoon of a male doctor bandaging a woman's rather large breast. He says: "Next time you get angry, don't slam doors."

All of us know what it is to be laughed at because we are women. If sexist jokes, cartoons and comics vanished, newspapers, magazines and books would be filled with holes, and radio programs, T.V. shows and movies would be shorter. Taverns, locker rooms and other men-filled rooms would be quieter, and a national sport, woman-hating, would be handicapped. Since this magical event is unlikely, we must learn to use humor as thoughtfully and as skillfully as it is used against us.

The first and most obvious step is confronting people who tell sexist jokes. The next step is using humor as a weapon against the patriarchy--something the Suffragists knew how to do. The witty repartee of women like Susan Anthony,

Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton often drew larger crowds than did the justice of their cause. Because they were witty, they were heard. Alice Duer Miller consistently tickled audiences with her gently ironical "Why We Oppose Votes for Men," a turn-around of the arguments used against the vote for women.

1. Because man's place is in the armory.
2. Because no real manly man wants to settle any questions otherwise than by fighting about it.
3. Because if men should adopt peaceable methods women would no longer look up to them.
4. Because men will lose their charm if they step out of their natural sphere and interest themselves in other matters than feats of arms, uniforms and drums.
5. Because men are too emotional to vote. Their conduct at baseball games and political conventions shows this, while their innate tendency to appeal to force renders them politically unfit for the task of government.

The witticism or bon mot is not only brief--and therefore more likely to be repeated--it is devastatingly effective. One of the finest arguments I've seen for abortion rights is a cartoon drawing of a man piously placing his hand on his apparently pregnant belly. The caption reads: "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament."

Humor is an effective indication of strength. The woman making the joke is in touch with her power--she can *make* laughter, she has the power to be irreverent, outrageous, or simply wry. I still chuckle about the fraternity boys who saw two women getting out of a car. "Oh look, Joe, a blond and a redhead," one shouted. The blond woman looked at her friend and said, "Oh look, Nancy, two pricks and four balls."

The feminist media can encourage women's humor by soliciting and publishing comic strips, cartoons, jokes and graffiti. We can support humor magazines like *Albatross* (Box 2046, Central Station, East Orange, NJ 07019). Satire is a fine political weapon, and since men are terrified of appearing silly, we ought to be thinking more about it.

We can also use humor to form strong and lasting ties with women. It was laughter that bound me to the feminist movement. I had read many serious feminist books, but *Rubyfruit Jungle* delighted and exhausted me--I was sore from laughing. I laughed with and *identified* with that OUTRAGEOUS LESBIAN. That laughter gave me a much stronger sense of myself as woman and as lesbian.

Humor not only bonds, it validates. Women's music exudes this kind of validation. Songs like "The Bloods" and "Leaping Lesbians" consistently draw strong audience responses. "The Bloods" by the Berkeley Women's Music

Collective gives us a humorous positive approach to the curse: "There's a new day coming when/You got the bloods, again " and "Leaping Lesbians" by Meg Christian pokes fun at homophobic fears. "Ode to a Gym Teacher", also by Meg Christian, brings the house down. These songs confirm our reality and show our situation in a perspective totally different from the male vantage point. We can take the power to define and name our reality, and we can laugh as we do it.

Humor, however, goes beyond this. It is a deep response to the world, a healthy and energizing response that is crucial for our well being. The writer Christopher Fry said:

"Comedy is an escape not from truth but from despair: a narrow escape into faith. It believes in a universal cause for delight even though the knowledge of the cause is always twitched away from under us, which leaves us to rest on our own buoyance."

Such buoyancy is found with mothers and children. Often a mother will play with a child, making faces and cooing, touching and caressing, and soon, with "nothing to laugh at", they are both laughing and expressing joy of almost cosmic proportions. This kind of laughter is energizing; it grounds us and makes us more resilient. It guards our spirits and protects us. It is too precious to lose.

As a professional storyteller, one of my most exhilarating experiences comes when I tell the story "Follow What Fascinates You." A woman suddenly finds herself in a valley filled with women, and the refrain, "Follow What Fascinates You", is everywhere in the valley--on a huge banner stretched across the valley, in fortune cookies, on a bumper sticker of the car driven by Gertrude Stein and Alice B., in huge letters left by sky writer Amelia Earhart, on the lips of Mother Nature herself. When hearing this story, women laugh deeply and softly, they glow, not because it is "funny" but because there is joy and delight and wonder.

The ability to extract delight from the cosmos is something we need to foster. I feel gratitude towards people who succeed in doing it, no matter how they do it.

Celeste LeBlanc, a fabric sculptor, makes monsters--small winged things and huge ones, big as small donkeys. Some of the monsters vacuum up bad dreams, others simply cast baleful glances on the world. All of them delight, they are unexpected, outrageous, imaginative forms that make me laugh. Potter Dara Sorgman has combined technical skill with a whimsical sense of design. She states simply, "If a pot doesn't make me laugh, it doesn't work."

Supporting such women, we are supporting ourselves. Laughter is a contagious response to the world, an escape hatch and a form of assertion. Men developed authority to frighten and subdue us. It is time for us to develop humor. ♀



One of the reasons I wanted to write about women's comics is that most women's bookstores do not carry them because: "They are too dirty," "They are too violent," "They do not further the revolution," "They don't uplift women's ideals", etc. Or, as one East Coast Women's Bookstore owner put it: "Women have better things to spend their money on than that trash." If I had not been living in San Francisco I might never have come upon this rich and varied area of women's creative energy. Many of the comics done by women do deal with sexuality and anger as major themes. They also deal with coming out, future visions, communal living, transsexualism, foremothers, abortion, herstory, loving men, loving women, self loving and the use of vibrators. Their themes have roughly paralleled those of the alternative women's press magazines and sometimes predate the popularization of those issues by a year or more. They also function as a place for women artists to develop their skills and share who they are and who they are becoming.

HERSTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a vehicle for humor, comic strips have been around for about a century. Individual cartoons have a somewhat longer history. Women's comics have been a reality for eight years. They are scurrilous, shocking, informative, proselytizing, supercilious and sometimes off the wall. They have grown up with the new wave of feminism and caricature and characterize aspects of many of our lives. Some draw heavily on the biography of the artists involved and could be considered as another dimension of journal writing and the confessional novel. Others use history, herstory, political theories and fantasy as a springboard for their imaginations and ours. Of the 59 artists involved in the publications I discuss in this article, 49 of them have had work published in *Wimmen's Comix* at some time in their careers.

Comics By Women

TEE CORINNE

Some of the published work by women cartoonists was created by artists who were exploring illustrated storytelling for the first time. Others have styles they have crafted over many years. Comics by women are another aspect of our woman culture; one where humor, often in the form of exaggeration, parody and satire, has found imaginative expression.

FOREMOTHERS

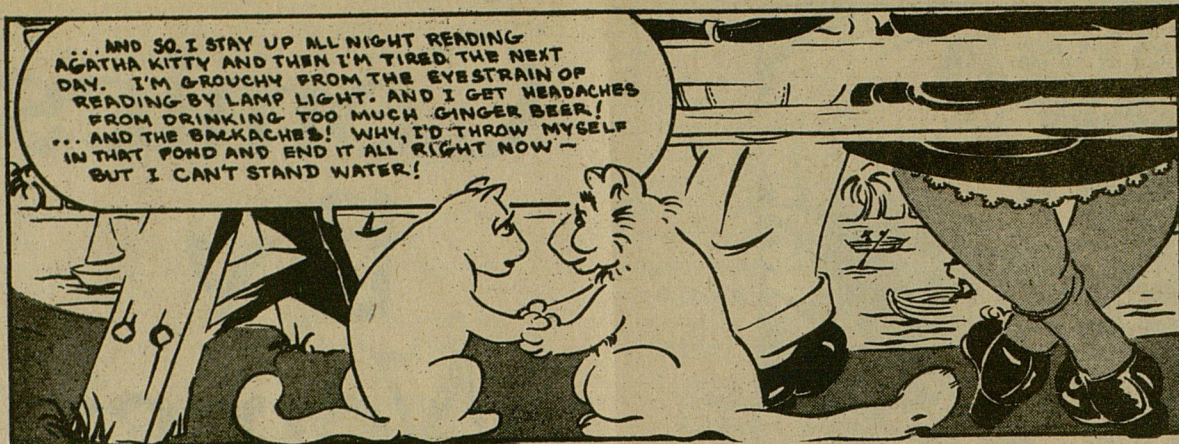
Marie Severin was an early and possibly the only woman artist to make it in the East Coast "aboveground" comics world. She illustrated *Doctor Strange* and *KULL THE CONQUEROR!* in the 1960's, sometimes working with her brother Dan and sometimes alone.

Underground, often dirty, comics flowered along with the Love Children in San Francisco's mid 60's. Joyce Farmer and Lyn Chevli of Nanny Goat Productions were the first women cartoonists to publish women's comics. In 1972 they began publishing *Pandora's Box*, *Abortion Eve* and *Tits and Clits Comics*. There is a marked development in feminist content in the later issues of *Tits and Clits*. As Joyce Farmer says: "You know, we did that first comic seven years ago. Women think that because it is new to them that it just came out. We've all changed a lot since then." Issues 3 and 4 include work by Roberta Gregory whose masturbation story called "First Lover" is a sex education classic.

WIMMEN'S COMIX

Also in the early 70's, The Wimmen's Comix Collective in San Francisco produced *WIMMEN'S COMIX* #1, a rowdy mixture often influenced by and done in reaction to underground male cartoonists.

The early issues of *WIMMEN'S COMIX* often seem to illustrate "How a group of women artists learned to write a story line and got their drawing act together." Issues No. 1-3 deal with the problems women have in relating to



Persephone discusses her problems with Lewis, the probable father of her third litter.

FARMER AND CHEVLI, Tits and Clits

their families, to men and to their own histories. Issue No. 4 introduces what may well be the first lesbian originated cartoon strip to appear in a predominantly heterosexual comic: Roberta Gregory's "A Modern Romance." Also in this issue is "Ms. Gazzolina Tindent" by Clothilde (Melinda Gebbie), combining stream of consciousness dialog with excellent drawing technique to depict psychic nightmares.

Issue No. 5 contains Trina Robbins' illustration of the story of Julia Pastrana, a bearded woman. Shaaron Rudahl recreates her grandmother Eva's flight from persecution in Russia in the eighteen eighties. The cartoons by Cathy Millet originally appeared with French text in European comic books.

Violence was the theme of WIMMEN'S COMIX No. 7, which featured a strip by Rae Page Stimler based on the lives of the infamous pirates Mary Read and Anne Bonny. Joey Epstein's horror story "Petite Morte" is beautifully drawn.



RAE PAGE STIMLER, *Wimmen's Comix*

Mary Read and Anne Bonny reacting to their crew's disinterest in defending their ship.

The Wimmen's Comix Collective rotates editorship of each issue so that individuals will develop coordinating (and probably diplomatic) skills, as well as graphics and storytelling. The Collective has consistently sought work by previously unpublished artists, making it a forum for a variety of ideas and backgrounds.

Trina Robbins and Lee Marrs were involved with WIMMIN'S COMIX from its conception and they have continued to produce separate books made up of their own work. Marrs created three issues of *THE FURTHER FATTENING ADVENTURES OF PUDGE, GIRL BLIMP*, a very funny comic indeed.

Trina Robbins is probably the most prolific woman cartoonist working today. Her adventure stories, which feature a multi-racial cast of heroines who win over or survive against the forces of evil corruption or mediocrity, have been regularly appearing in print since 1966.

OUT FRONT LESBIAN COMICS

Although Trina Robbins was treating lesbian themes as early as 1972, *Come out Comix* by Mary Wings was the first full length comic to deal with an individual's awareness of her own lesbianism and what the world looks like from that vantage point. This comic has been a best seller in women's bookstores and has been reprinted several times. It gives a warm and caring treatment to situations which occur in the lives of many women in the process of recognizing and validating their love of women.

In 1976 came two more woman-loving comics. With *Dynamite Damsels* Roberta Gregory created a whole book of memorable personalities, one of whom is Becky, who sets about raising the feminist consciousness of her first grade peer group.

*Becky
at school.*



ROBERTA GREGORY, *Dynamite Damsels*

Pricella Pumps by Barba Kutzner covers the adventures, misadventures and fantasies of an irreverent dope smoking bluecollar worker as she gets fired from her job:

Boss: "...so I want you to know that your bad record of strange sexual behavior, ain't got nothing ta do with it, cause that ain't none of the company's legal business..."

P. Pumps: "I didn't know I had a sexual... eh...behavior."

Pricella contemplates suicide, watches the roller derby on T.V. and transforms herself into *Star Buckwheat*, *Typical American Post-Suicidal Unsuspecting Closet-Heroine*. As S.B. she cruises the back streets of Milwaukee and in several strikingly illustrated pages demolishes a pimp's car with her psychic energy and roller-skates.

In *Matriarchal Comix* (1974) Max Xarai has created compelling tales of the origin of the Amazons and of one woman's exploration of an earlier life juxtaposed with images of her 20th century body being dealt with in a hospital. This comic was printed by the Women's Press Collective on buff paper with brown ink. Some sections seem to have been drawn with pencil or crayon. The over-all effect is soft, powerful and warm.

CARTOONS AS A MEDIUM FOR DISSEMINATING INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE

Far Out West by Even Eve bills itself as "The First Utopian Comic Strip." Gathered in book form it unfolds Polly M.'s physical and intellectual search through the communal counter culture for a lifestyle that satisfies her needs. This is a well drawn strip meant to stimulate thinking rather than tickle the reader.

An illustrated pamphlet called *GRAND JURY COMIX* "Just a Few Easy Questions" details how to cope with the F.B.I. and Federal Grand Jury Investigations. This publication, drawn by Kate Jackrabbit and researched by Tina Vensoza, covers the material thoroughly.



Role
Reversal.

TRINA ROBBINS, *Girl Fight* comics

The following are available from Nanny Goat Productions, P.O. Box 845, Laguna Beach, Ca. 92652.
PANDORA'S BOX, Farmer and Chevli
ABORTION EVE, Farmer and Chevli
TITS AND CLITS #1-3, Farmer and Chevli
DYNAMITE DAMSELS, Gregory
PUDGE #1-3, Marrs
THE COMPLEAT FART, Marrs
WIMMEN'S COMIX #1-7, anthology
WET SATIN, anthology
GIRL FIGHT #1-2, Robbins
TRINA'S WOMEN, Robbins
SCARLETT PILGRIM, Robbins
COME OUT COMIX, Wings

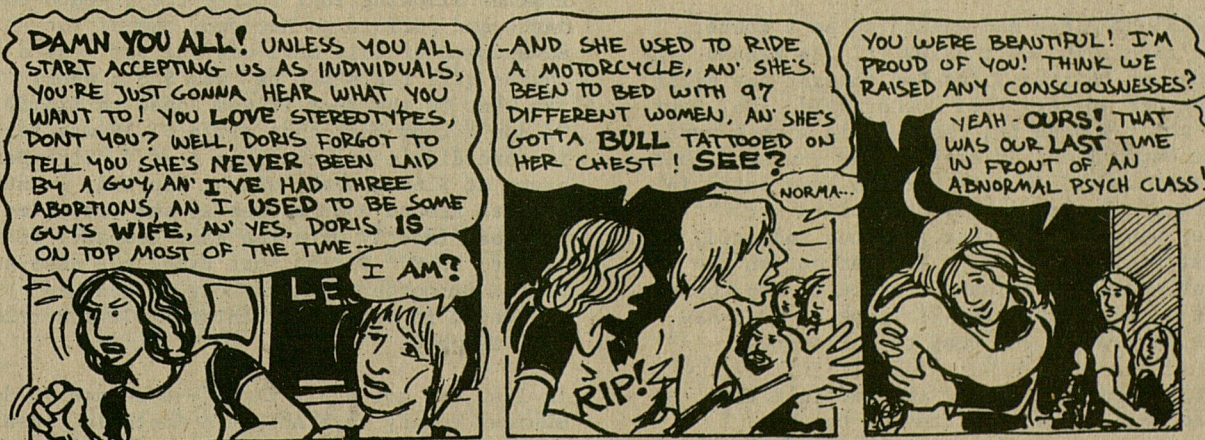
PRICELLA PUMPS AND STAR BUCKWHEAT, Kutzner, Persephone Press: A branch of Pomegranate Productions, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, Ma. 02172.

MATRIARCHAL COMIX, Xarai, Women's Press Collective, 5251 Broadway, Oakland, CA. 94611.

FAR OUT WEST, Eve, The Storefront Classroom, P.O. Box 1174, San Francisco, Ca. 94101.

GRAND JURY COMIX, Jackrabbit, Edge City Comix, and *COME OUT COMIX*, Wings, Portland Women's Resource Center, are distributed by Amazon Reality Co., P.O. Box 95, Eugene, Ore. 97401.

ROBERTA GREGORY, *Dynamite Damsels*



Doris and Norma react to hostile questioning by a class in Abnormal Psych.



LONG ISLAND TO LEISURE LAKE

INTERVIEW BY ZEE

The question that I was seeking an answer to was: How the hell does a woman manage to make herself vulnerable enough to go onstage and touch an audience enough to produce shared warmth and laughter? I always figured just keeping 'em amused was pretty admirable. T'was the luck of the Polish that guided me to Red Halem, a 61 year old comedienne who, in a few pleasant hours, considerably enlightened me on this subject.

Red Halem and her husband, Alan, live in a small semi-rural mobile home park called "Leisure Lake." I was greeted at the door by an aging but vociferous dog named Schnapps. Red was just as I had pictured she'd be. Bright, in her colorful muu muu and deep auburn hair pulled up on her head--and energetic, as she served up lunch: a decorative plate of tuna salad, matzo crackers and hot coffee. I was comfortably stuffed and already conscious of Red's knack for relaxing friend or stranger by the time we pulled a couple of chairs together in the living room and sat down to explore the herstory of a woman who, con vivace, puts on her best gown and performs stand-up comedy at Lions Club and Knights of Columbus engagements, catered affairs, an occasional club date and, when she's in the mood, a living room party.

Rather than focus only on show business, Red has followed several paths, as confident in one as in the next. Her talents include a shrewd business sense, but her art is in entertaining. "None of it (entertaining) was ever really hard," she told me, "because I always had something else going. It became an avocation. If it was a matter of life or death, maybe it wouldn't have been as pleasant and as fun as it's been. But I love doing it and I do it well, and you can see that I love doing it. I'm not up there, chop-chop-chop, doing anything automatic, it's on a one-to-one basis."

Since childhood she had wanted to be a dancer, but her father wouldn't allow it. He passed away when she was thirteen, and Red thought she might persuade her mother. Her mother said, "No, your father never wanted it," and so his wishes were carried out. Then, at sixteen she ran away, but her mother caught up with her ten days later in Pittsburgh. Realizing how determined her daughter was, Red's mother relented and said, "Do what you want to do." Red set out on the job hunt and quickly found a place in the chorus line at a club called the El Tinge on 42nd Ave. At last she was on the road to burlesque.

Red still emanated the joy she had felt then, as she told me, "I was so bitten by the bug, I didn't even take off my make-up. It was like cake on my face! I wanted the whole world to know I was in show business!" Unfortunately, the

other women in the chorus were an unsympathetic and discouraging group to have to train with. After six weeks of 'negativity' difficulties, the owner of the club, Max Rudnick, called Red into his office and gave her notice, and some advice: Go on the road. "The road show people were friendlier and stuck together more," he said. Red had, by then, picked up most of the dance routines, so Max gave her a letter to another producer whose "wheel" (i.e., road show circuit) started in Philadelphia. She was hired on. With her on that tour was Bud Abbott and his wife, Betty, a well known stripper named Anne Corio, and a handful of other rising new stars to burlesque and vaudeville.

It was at this point that Red took her first stage name. "I took the name Toni Lurrey. In those days boys' names were pretty popular--you know, Jackie, Joey, Johnny--so I chose Toni. My own name was horrible--it was Gladys Lipschitz and when I went to school they used to call me Happy Bottom Shitlip--it was enough to warp my personality." A young woman, visiting Red's school from Kansas, had the last name Lurrey. "I couldn't believe that a Jewish girl could have such a beautiful name while I was stuck with Lipschitz, so I became Toni Lurrey." She adopted the name "Red-Hed Halem" later on when she began stand-up comedy, and still uses it today.

Noticing Red's progress with the show, her bits with Bud Abbott and her dancing, Anne Corio decided to take her under her wing. It was a time when Gypsy Rose Lee was just leaving burlesque to go into legitimate musical comedy, and Anne Corio was pulling in a phenomenal \$900 a week + percentage of the house. Anne taught Red some gimmicks and tricks of the trade, and helped her to get a wardrobe together to kick off her proud new role as a stripper.

Besides allowing Toni Lurrey the freedom to dance and perform on her own, one of the advantages of this move was the pay. As a chorus girl the stock pay was \$25 a week. If you went on the road it was upped to \$26.10. "I don't know what that extra \$1.10 was for... it sure didn't pay the room rent." Strippers began at \$165 a week, which, for Red, eventually grew to around \$400 a week as she travelled on the road (mostly with the same company) from 1933 to 1940. During that time, she also supported her mother back in Long Island and succeeded in bring over thirteen Jewish relatives from Germany.

In 1940 Red got a big thrill--a chance to do a musical comedy with Abbott & Costello, opening at Loew's State in New York City, as the protegee of Kate Smith. They rehearsed for six weeks.

At the very last minute, the "Angels" (backers of the show) backed out. Furious, Red walked out of the theater and never returned. She would walk past it sometimes later on and wonder what might have happened if she'd gone back. But since a decisive part of Red's philosophy has always been: "don't look back", this chapter in burlesque was finished.

So what happened next? "So, I went into a little diner, very depressed, and ordered a hamburger and coffee, and I says to the guy behind the counter, "Do they have girls workin' in these places?", and he says, "Yeah. You wanna join our union?" Red joined the union and went to work as a waitress.

Fresh off the stage, and the first day on the job at a small greasy spoon across from N.Y.U., Red ad-libbed as she never had before. Luckily, one of her first customers recognized her lack of experience. "He says to me, 'Fry two, french toast for,' and I said, 'What did you say?', and he says, 'Just yell it out.' So I did and I'm thinkin', 'What the hell is gonna come out?', and it's two fried eggs, french fried potatoes for the order." She was rolling along pretty smoothly when lunch hour hit and the place filled up with hungry students. Again, a kindly customer slipped her the piece-by-piece instructions for preparing a chocolate malted. She got all the proper ingredients in and put the shaker on the machine..."and I've been in the business for thirty years and never saw anything like that again: that shaker took off and flew across the store, there wasn't anyone at the counter who didn't have chocolate malted on 'em. One hour in the biz and I got fired."

It was, indeed, an unhappy start, but another part of Red's character is an indestructible sense of independence and an instinct for survival. She was able to land another waitress job right away on the waterfront in Upper Manhattan. "Are you experienced?" the manager asked. "Sure," she replied confidently. "So, at 12 o'clock comes every longshoreman in New York, every steward off every ship, and from around the corner all the garbage guys come...Somehow I got through the day (and did pretty well in tips, too). Afterward the owner offered me a lift to the subway. I'm in the car and I'm ready to belt him because I figure he's gonna make a pass at me. He says, "You're a goddamned liar, you never waited on tables before," and I said, "That's true," And he says, "Listen, I just fired my counter-man, how are you on the counter?" and I said, "That's where I shine."

I'm sharing these break-away-from-theater episodes because a real spark that is Red Halem and has brought her full circle back to the footlights is her good-natured acceptance of the credo: It doesn't matter what you do, so long as you do it well.

Red was a veteran in the food service business by the time she met, and within three months, married Alan. They became partners with another couple in a hotel/restaurant, which is when "Red Hed" Halem began "polishing up various

bits, nothing like I was doing in burlesque." "I found I had a talent for Jewish dialect humor and in New York I did a great deal of it. I still do a lot." When they catered a party that was looking for entertainment, "I was perfect for it."

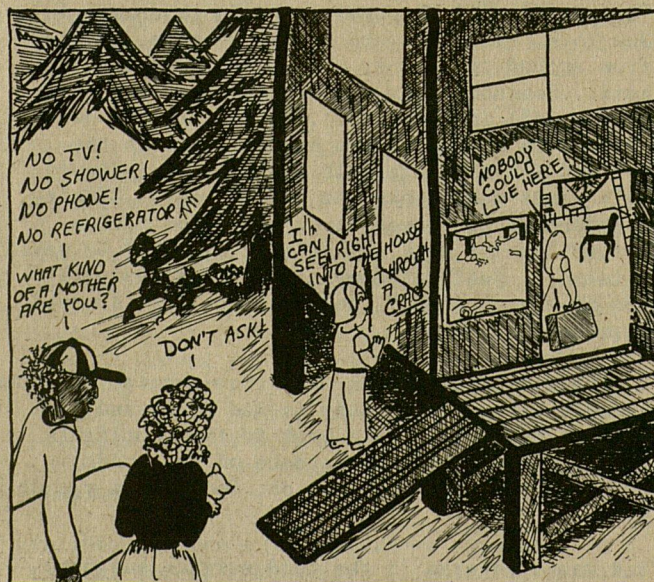
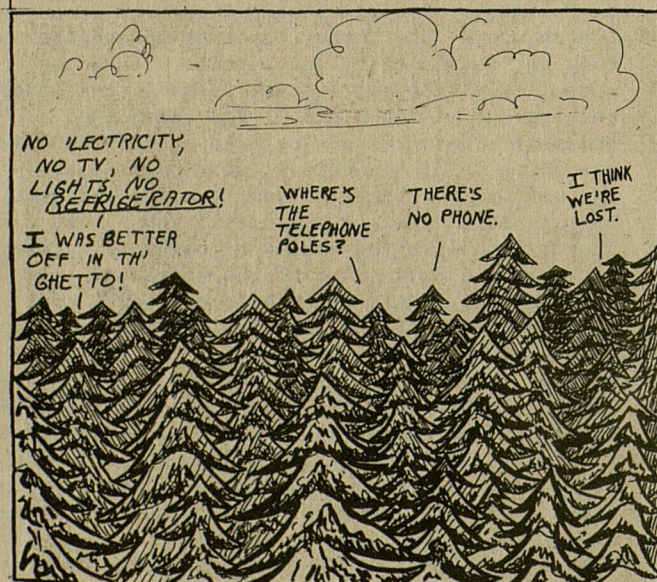
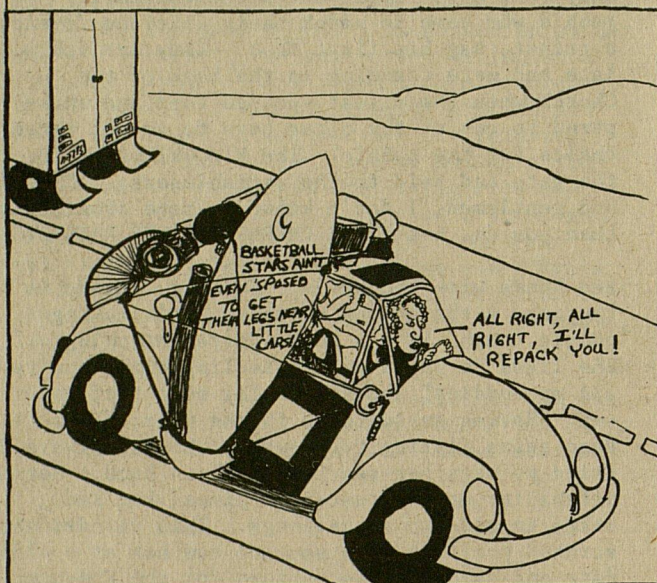
Red Halem is an accomplished story teller. As we talked, quite often she would accentuate her narrative with a "f'rinstance" and follow it up with a humorous story. Once she gets going she becomes a glowing entity, capable of producing laugh after laugh. The jokes and stories she told me inside of a couple of hours are too numerous to repeat here. Red's material is primarily aimed at her individual audiences: The Lions Club and Knights of Columbus get more of the priest/rabbi stuff, while Jewish audiences hear ethnic stories about a righteous individual named Cohn. Club dates get a little bit of her blue material, though Red prides herself on being "in good taste. I don't do Polish or Italian jokes or anything like that." One story she told is the one about the three rabbis who came to watch their lifelong friend, a priest, say his first Mass. They arrived late and were standing in the back of the Church when the priest spotted them and whispered to one of the altar boys to go get three chairs for the rabbis. The kid walked up to the gate and said to the parishioners: "Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know any more about this than you do, but THREE CHEERS FOR THE RABBIS!"

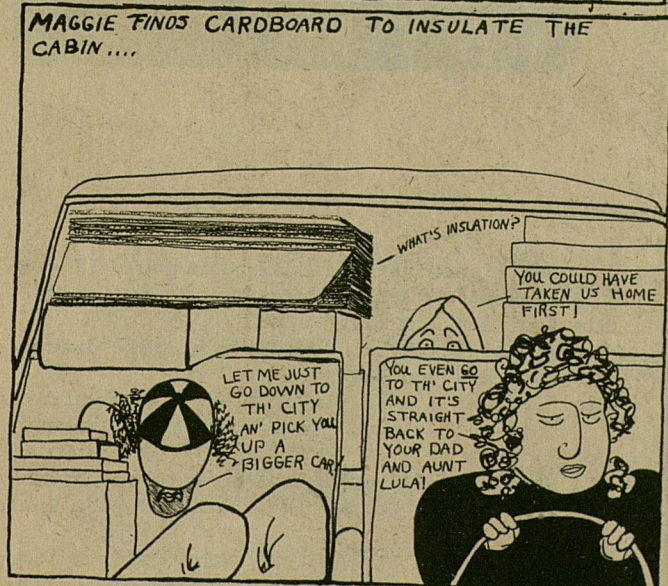
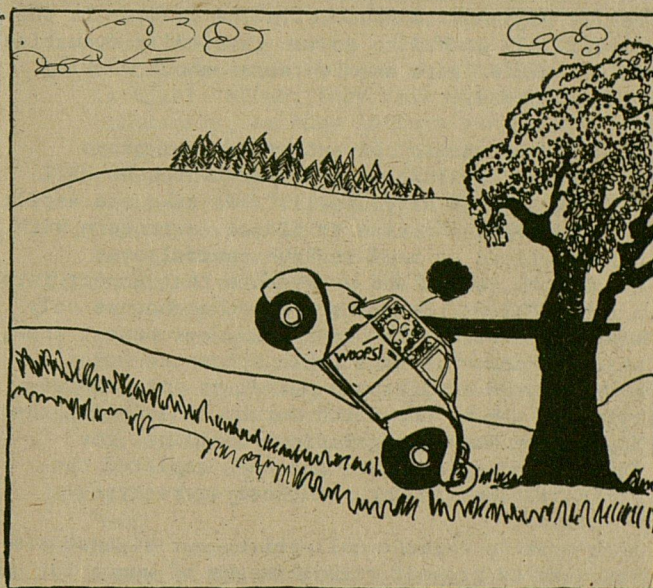
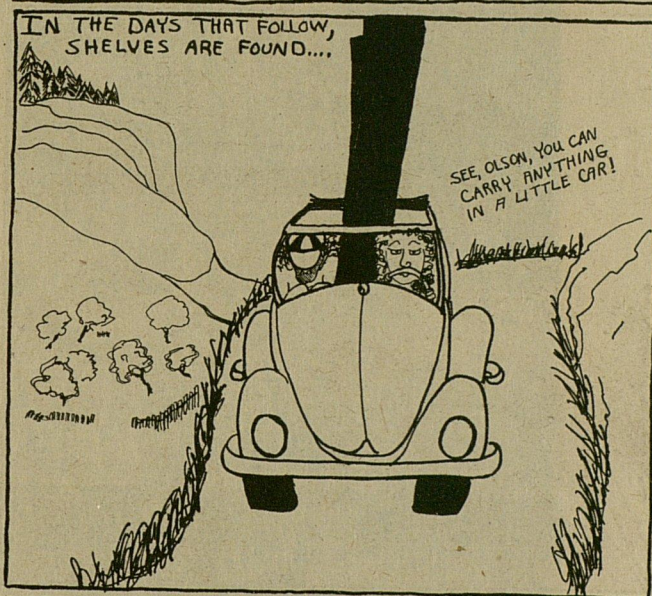
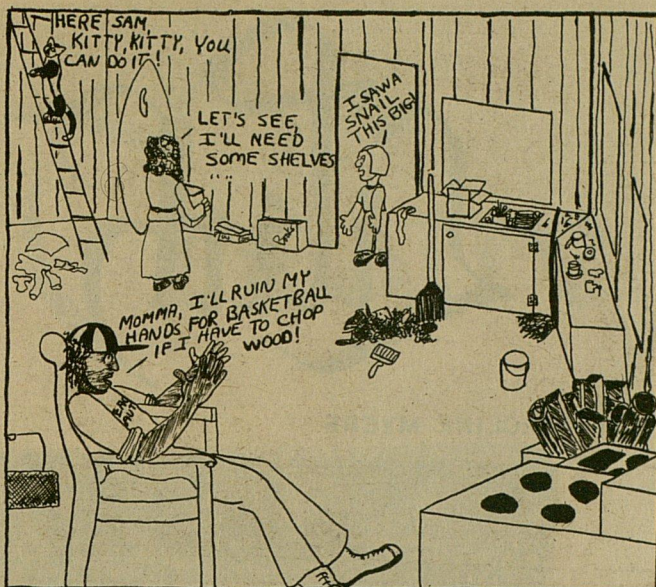
Red bends with the waves. For her, comedy is "as good a therapy as anything, it's making people laugh, it's a whole different thing..." She likes to build up the feeling that "you're all my buddies" and she really does feel that way. Having an audience in the palm of her hand seems fitting for a woman who has always tried to keep her own life well in hand. Her affability may be tested at times, but Red likes to rise to a challenge. This was demonstrated one time when someone saw her at a club date and asked her to perform for the Knights of Columbus. Red accepted and arrived at a Church where "the Mother Superior opened the door for me and there was a table with these cute little nuns sitting all around. I started backing out of the place." For once, the somewhat blue material she used at the club was not going to fit in here. Alan, who helped her set up, told her, "Clean it up." Red went back in and, "Well, I wanna tell you, I did a laundry job like you wouldn't believe; I pulled 'em out of a hat! Some of the stories I told that night I hadn't told in forty years!" Her audience loved it and once again Red had succeeded in making a solid connection.

I asked Red about Hollywood and the glamour/star schtick. She said, "Hollywood never appealed to me. I had a chance at London, but I backed out. I have a very bad quirk in my make-up--I fight success; I guess I'm afraid of it. Whatever I do I do very well, and wherever I go I'm very well accepted--and then I back down. I had the potential to do much more than I did... I don't know why..." "But of course," she adds with her direct look and warm smile, "I'm not at all unhappy with anything I've done." ♀

Tombs

A black and white cartoon illustration of a crowded car interior. The driver, a man with curly hair and a worried expression, holds the steering wheel. A speech bubble from him says, "WHEN ARE WE GONNA EAT?". Behind him, a woman looks annoyed, saying, "OH! HE SHIT! SAM SHIT IN MY LAP! OH GROSS". To her left, another passenger complains, "MY LEGS IS GOIN' TO SLEEP!". In the foreground, the back of a person's head wearing a baseball cap is visible, with the word "BEACH" partially seen on their shirt. Several cats are present: one sits on the roof rack, another is perched on the driver's shoulder, and a third is curled up near the front passenger. On the far left, a partial speech bubble reads, "try and her she who". The artist's signature "Tombs" is at the top left.





Since its beginning in 1974, *Lilith*, a Women's Theater Collective, has produced four plays in the San Francisco area. Each one has explored feminist issues in a humorous vein, using a wide variety of theatrical techniques--from a show on birth control where frisbees and ping pong balls represented diaphragms and birth control pills, to a "Housework Ballet" in the style of the heroic Peking Opera, with actors dressed as a sponge, a steel wool pad, and a broom battling their archenemy "household dirt".

As a collective, we've always valued our ability to laugh at ourselves. Much of our material comes from actual, often ridiculous, incidents in our own lives. "The Speedwriting Interview", "Fixing the Toilet", scenes from *Moonlighting*, our play on women and work, were all based on things that really happened to someone in the group. In the latter, all we had to do was physically dramatize this woman's fears and fantasies about working with machines.

To arrive at comic characters for our plays *Lilith* has developed a technique which we call "making a clown of yourself." We take one aspect of ourselves: a desire to please, a concern with being noticed, a need to have control over situations, etc., and exaggerate that aspect into a total "clown" character, someone who has only that one desire. In *Sacrifices*, our newest show, which we describe as a fable about the women's movement, we exaggerated ourselves into stereotypes of women: the Earth Mother, the Cynic, the Hippy, the Man-hating Radical Feminist, the Bubble-headed Teenager, and then explored the contradictions in each of those stereotypes.

As a women's theater collective, our highest aim has been to present strong images of women for our audiences to see and remember. We have found that, in the theater, as in life, a sense of humor enables us to speak to people who might not normally understand or support our feminist concerns and visions.

Scene from Sacrifices
(in the garden)

Gorga: I give up.

Sin Semilla: What's the matter?

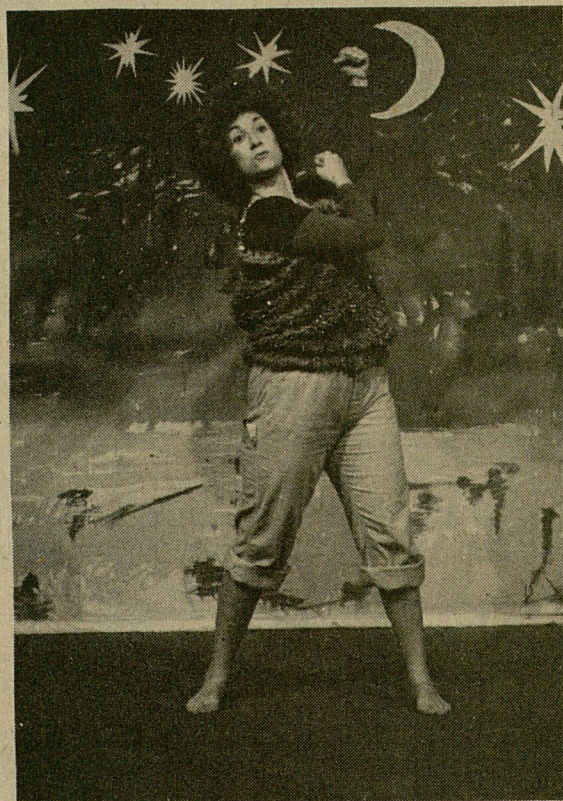
Gorga: I revised Part 2B of my revolutionary harvesting plan for equal distribution of labor and no one even wants to have a meeting about it. It's no use trying to get the women politically united.

Sin Semilla: Don't worry Gorga. You'll unite us someday.

Gorga: I try to start study groups. I try to

Lilith

BY CAROLINE MYERS



set a good revolutionary example. If women aren't working together, where are we?

Sin Semilla: I'm right here.

Gorga: (noticing Sin Semilla's strange dance) What are you doing?

Sin Semilla: I'm patting the earth down after I pull each plant. To prevent earthquakes.

Gorga: Great.

Sin Semilla: I'll make up a poem to make you feel better Gorga. What kind of poem would you like?

Gorga: I'd like a poem that was a call to women to organize against the oppressive society that surrounds them.

Theatre



GAIL SMITH

Sin Semilla: OK, what rhymes with oppressive?

Gorga: Regressive, progressive, suppressive, aggressive, possessive.

Sin Semilla: How about caressive?

Gorga: I give up. (going over to BiLauren) No, BiLauren, you're forcing the seeds.

BiLauren: Where'd you learn all this stuff about gardening, Gorga?

Gorga: Oh, I used to have this little garden in the city with this greasy kid who lived down the block.

BiLauren: What did he look like?

Gorga: I don't remember what he looked like, BiLauren, he was a reactionary.

BiLauren: He must have been ugly then.

Taboo: (coming over from her work on the compost pile) Oh, you'd be surprised, BiLauren, some reactionaries can be very good looking.

Gorga: I can't stand it. When are you going to manage, manage, wait a minute (she takes out a little book where she keeps track of all words that have "man" in them) I mean, when are you going to get it through your thick skull that the fundamental, fundamental? Oh boy, I mean god, I mean goddess, it's so pervasive, this sexism in our language. Let me start again, when are you going to learn that men are not just like other people, they're the problem and they're the enemy.

BiLauren: I'd just like to talk to a couple.

Gorga: You don't know anything.

BiLauren: I don't know anything about men because I've lived out here all my life where there are only women. Is that my fault?

Gorga: OK, you want to know what talking to men is like? Either they talk about themselves constantly, or they lecture you on some philosophical bullshit, or they go on and on explaining something you already know how to do... or they're too tired to talk, that happens a lot after sex. Believe me, you're not missing a thing.

Taboo: Oh, I don't know. I do sort of miss that occasional conversation with a man that makes understanding between the sexes seem like a metaphysical impossibility.

Gorga: Come on, Taboo, what do you know about men?

Taboo: Oh, I was married once. But, it seems so trite; I'm embarrassed to say it... I ran off with a younger woman.

BiLauren: Did you live happily ever after with her?

Taboo: Of course not. You see, for me, men weren't the problem, per se, as they were for Gorga. Romance itself was, including romance with women. Like every other thing in that glorious free enterprise system, romance was a product ... it's a civilized plot, like a prepaid grave. You're raised all your life to desire it, once you find it you briefly recognize it, then you keep making payments on it long after it's all used up.

Gorga: But, but, but... physical love with your sisters is the natural outcome of a committed realization that women have to put each other first.

Taboo: Yes, yes. Well, I've never experienced these glandular reactions to my political convictions, so I don't understand them.

BiLauren: Well, I think everyone should have a lover.

Sin Semilla: Everyone does have a lover.

Taboo: Oh, we know, woman spirit lovers.

Gorga: The Great Goddess who loves us all.

Sin Semilla: No, I mean themselves, everyone has themselves for a lover.

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By Penny House and Janet Meyers
From *DYKE: A Quarterly*, available from Tomato
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Farm Notes

Datura Stramonium, or jimsonweed is quite common in California and around the country as well. It was used religiously by many groups of Indians in California and the Southwest -- young males ingesting it, under guidance, at puberty as a means of inducing visions of a spiritual guide. Its use in sorcery was also known.

But, *Datura* is also extremely poisonous. While I have no knowledge of its use as a smoking material, the plant, in general, is not something to experiment with. It contains toxic alkaloids and ingestion of leaves, root, seeds (or most often, tea made from one of these) has been known to cause convulsions and even death. (Some people have also been known to contract dermatitis from touching the plant.) Even a small amount (4-5 grams) of leaves or seeds can be toxic to a small child.¹ For this reason, I seriously question the advisability of cultivation of this plant and hope that any who choose to utilize it do so with extreme caution.

¹ Hardin, James and Arena, Jay, M.D., *Human Poisoning from Native and Cultivated Plants*, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C. 1969, pgs. 113-114.

By Diane Rivermist



Something that I wish fell more under the realm of veterinary medicine is the mental health of a horse. Every day in my practice of routine physical care, I see gross neglect of mental care and thorough misunderstanding of the nature of the horse.

An animal made to run penned in an eight by twelve corral for days on end is surely deprived of good mental health. Poor mental health leads to and aggravates poor physical health.

I find among my clients, that those who adjust for their horses moods and attempt to understand them, and feel that their horse is an inherent part of their life have the healthiest horses. Consistency, repetition with patience and gentleness with a horse seems to bring the highest rewards: a well trained animal, a sound animal, and a healthy animal.

Take time to get to know your horse by observing, especially the eye and the mouth and the ears. They can tell you a million moods, likes and dislikes. A regular client called the other day to discuss several maladies of the chestnut he owned. One problem was that the horse started dancing around every time he went to put the saddle on. I had my ideas as to why, but he insisted I should have a look. I had him bring out his saddle and saddle up the big horse. Two things I observed; first the horse rolled his eyes, put his ears just a little back and began his dance, and secondly, the owner was making a beeline for the horse's back unaware of the horse's expressions. He put the saddle on the chestnut's back and at that point I made him stop, step back and observe while I cinched up. The horse did not disappoint me. As I slowly tightened up the cinch the horse flinched, moved sideways, rolled its eyes and put its ears back. The owner was amazed. He had never bothered to look past the middle of the back and notice that his horse was communicating with him. At that point he confessed to being a little strong with the initial cinching up. Perhaps he could have nipped the problem in the bud if he had noticed a grimace on his horse's face quite some time before.

Many mental health problems I see are brought about by the relationship of the owner and her horse. A nervous, confused, and inconsistent owner seems to own a nervous, confused, and inconsistent horse. I often see horses being punished because of a misconception by the owner as to what the horse is doing. An example is the difference between a frightened horse and an undisciplined one. Many horses I treat are frightened of me, and they must be handled with gentleness and slowness. Many, too, are used to having their own way and are desperately in need of being put in their place.

From my observations in dealing with horses daily, I've come to conclude that good food, consistent and regular health care, and daily exercise (I can't over-emphasize that), combined with understanding the mind of the horse you have chosen to take care of are the basic factors in a lasting relationship with your horse.

Cynthia Standley, D.V.M.

Part of the fun of wood and field is the wealth of wild fruits offered so freely. Blueberries, strawberries, and plums, and the king of all, the good tasting blackberry. Blackberries of one species or another are found in every part of the country. Some trail along the ground and are then known as dewberries. Others, with arching canes, offer delicious berries to every passer by. Blackberries are good for jellies, jams, juice, pies, cobblers, or cordials. They are good eaten fresh with cream and sugar, or piled over vanilla ice cream.

Modern freezers permit us to keep all this goodness of summer fruit for winter's use. The only work is that of picking the blackberries, and who can call this work when we are out enjoying a deep blue sky, and all the bright colors of the season.

Blackberries were used and enjoyed by the American Indians long before the first white man came to this land. In the Algonquian calendar, August was "ah-tab-dah-gah-go-mi-kis", or "the moon to pick ripe blackberries". When these Indians gathered the first ripe fruits they would hold a Blackberry Dance, a combination celebration and feast of thanksgiving to the Great Spirit who gave them the fruit. During the dance they would pause to drink blackberry juice and eat noodles made with the berries.

The Cherokees also used blackberries for food, and tell this legend of their origin. Once a Chief married a daughter of the sun. They had a quarrel and she started to go back to her father's lodge in the sunland. To stop her, her husband put service berries in her path. She paused to snatch a few but hurried on. Then he put huckleberries in her path and these tempted her for a while but she then went on. Finally he put ripe blackberries in her path and she stopped to eat the blackberries. She was so pleased with these that they made up the quarrel. The blackberry has been one of their seven sacred branches since that time.

The blackberries were not only food to the Indians but a drugstore as well. Ground bark was used in a poultice for sore eyes. Tea of the leaves was used for lung troubles, and tea of the roots for women's ailments. Early settlers learned the medicinal use of the blackberry from the Indians, and also used it for herbal remedies once made with European blackberries. It was called "goutberry". Leaves were crushed in boiling water, then cooled, and used for summer complaints. Effusions of leaves made a mouth wash. Bramble leaves dipped in spring water were applied to festering wounds.

Look for blackberries at wood's edges, along roadsides, and in old fields. Some blackberries vary in the length and sweetness of the fruit. Birds and animals know the best kinds and flock to the berry patches to feast. Make berry picking a part of your vacation, and feast on blackberry bounty.

By Marie B. Mellinger

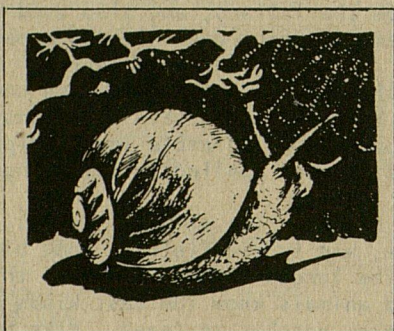


MEREDITH FOYLE

MANAGEMENT OF THE

BY HELGA OLKOWSKI

One of the major pests of gardeners along the Pacific Coast of California is the common garden snail, *Helix aspersa*. This animal was deliberately introduced from France into the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1850's as a potential source of food. As with most invaded pests, it left its natural enemies behind and, released from restraint, populations were free to spread and grow to damaging numbers wherever sufficient moisture and food was available.



Keeping down the numbers of snails can become a full-time occupation if you want to raise any young, tender seedlings or other succulent plants during the rainy season. Constant use of a poison bait only results in the creation of a local population of snails resistant to the material, since the susceptible ones die and only those that can de-toxify the pesticide live to breed the next generation. In any event, the snails are good travelers and will soon migrate into any environment suited to them no matter how thoroughly they have been cleaned out of the area previously.

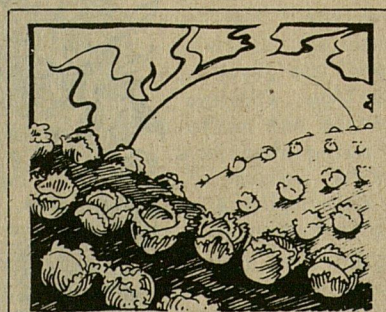
What is needed is an integrated pest management approach in which a variety of tools and strategies are combined through the use of a decision-making process that includes a *monitoring system*.

Start by surveying your overall garden environment. Are you encouraging snails to breed in some areas while fighting them in others? You may need to begin your snail management program by doing some *habitat manipulation*. Some plants such as ivy and certain succulents, especially when used in massed plantings as ground covers, provide particularly favorable breeding areas. The soil surface remains shaded and moist; the plants themselves may provide unusually good food. You can tell if this is the case by observing the large numbers of snails, particu-

larly young ones, in a suspected area. Such plantings can be replaced, or reduced, the latter either in terms of total area, or by thinning, to decrease the amount of favorable habitat. Thinning may have the desirable effect of increasing aeration, simply drying out the stems and ground surface around the plant.

Snails like to breed under wooden boards that are in contact with the soil. Their large transparent eggs may easily be seen there at certain times of the year. Wood should be picked up and stored off the ground. Or, in wet weather, if the boards are used for walking on in the garden, dry sawdust placed underneath the wood will very effectively reduce snail breeding in those areas.

Fine dry sawdust makes a very effective snail *barrier*. This is the next strategy that should be considered. Hydrated lime and fine wood ashes are two other common materials used as barriers. Ferrous ammonium sulphate, which degrades into useful plant nutrients, is sold for the same purpose. All such barriers work on the principle of being caustic or an irritant to the snail's mucous membrane. Each material may inhibit plant growth if large amounts are placed close to growing plants, thus it is best to use these materials as borders to the beds, if at all. Sawdust makes particularly good



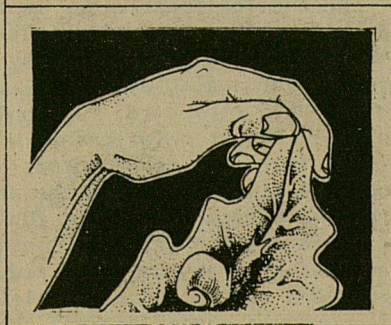
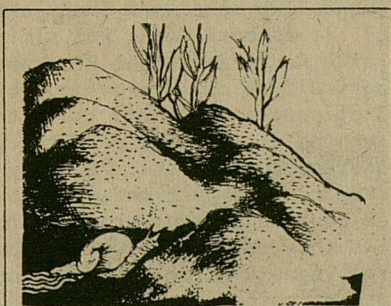
PEST GARDEN SNAIL

GRAPHICS BY ANDREA THRAMS

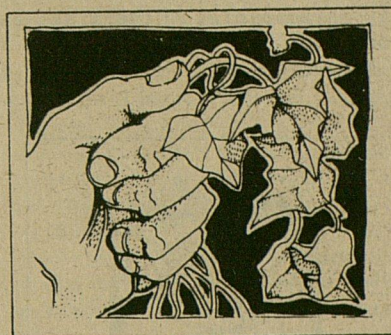
pathway material, since when placed two or more inches deep, it will help to prevent compaction where you walk. While it slowly decomposes it will act as an effective herbicide, starving weed seedlings for nitrogen. Yet once decomposed it can be incorporated into the soil, improving the soil structure just as other decomposed organic materials do.

Another kind of barrier may be created by sinking tin cans, open at both ends, into the soil around young vegetable seedlings. Snails can climb up and over the cans perfectly well, of course, but they frequently do not do so. Preliminary experiments seem to show they are less likely to discover the succulent seedlings protected inside.

Physical controls should always be considered when the pest is large and the area is small to medium in size. In this case, hand-picking is the best method to use. The most effective job can be done at night, with a flashlight. After crushing them, the snails may be fed to the chickens or used in the compost pile. A bed of young vegetable seedlings can be bordered by a walkway of fine dry sawdust and the area within checked in the evening once a week. After watering the garden, or heavy rains, the sawdust can be renewed and the area hand-picked clean of snails in the evening once again.



Cultural controls also may have an effect on the size of the pest population. In this case watering techniques may need to be modified, since the drier you can keep the soil and plant surfaces the less the overall humidity of your garden and the less favorable to the snail. Of course you can't do anything about the frequency or duration of the winter rains, but the rest of the year water your garden as infrequently as you can. When you do water,



do so long enough to wet the deeper layers of the soil. Then the plant roots will travel downward into the soil and be less susceptible to drying or other damage at the surface.

Compost mulches at the soil surface between the plants will help to retard evaporation from the soil surface and reduce the need for frequent sprinkling. Grouping plants in the garden according to their greater or lesser need for water may help to avoid any unnecessary irrigations.

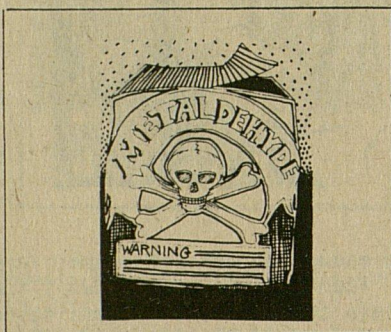
Traps are another strategy that should be tried. Overturned clay flower pots are quite effective for this if the soil surface of the beds is uneven enough to permit them to climb inside through spaces under the rim. The pots should be set close to the plants the snails have been known to feed on, placed on the shadiest side. During the day the snails will leave the plant and fasten themselves to the cool inner sides of the clay flower pot. Periodic inspection of these pots will allow you to find and destroy the snails inside. They can be crushed inside the pot with a stick or the handle of a trowel, stepped on, and fed to the chickens or put in the compost.

There is some evidence that the dead and decomposing snails give off an odor that attracts other snails to the spot. It may be the yeast that is acting as the *bait*. It is the yeast

cont.

odor that draws the snails into stale beer. Unfortunately, beer is not only an expensive bait, it is only effective when used as a pit trap, that is, when the container is sunk into the ground so that animals actually fall into it. This means, of course, that you may be trapping a lot of beneficial organisms such as earthworms and ground beetles as well.

More reliable as bait, but having all the disadvantages of a true pesticide, is Metaldehyde, a common component of many commercially sold snail baits. It is regarded as relatively less objectionable than arsenic -- the old time bait still sold for this purpose, which you should avoid at all costs since it is directly poisonous to people, remains unchanged in the soil for a long time and can be absorbed through the skin (while weeding, for instance). Nevertheless, Metaldehyde should be used with caution, kept away from food plants and used as infrequently as possible. Otherwise, as mentioned before, you will simply breed a local population of snails that is resistant to it.



It is best to use such a poison bait just to protect newly transplanted seedlings or particularly susceptible, valuable plants. Once the seedlings have grown to the size where they can sustain some damage, one should stop using the baits and rely on handpicking and trapping. That way the poison will be effective the next time you need to use it.

Also, use the pellets, rather than the powdered form of the bait, as you can control the placement more accurately and are less likely to breathe the stuff while applying it. If there is a chance that a pet or child might be attracted to the pellets, try placing them inside a semi-flattened tin can that is partially buried among the plants so it is inconspicuous. Metaldehyde has been known to make dogs sick if they eat it.

So, there you have your integrated pest management program for the garden snail:

1. *Monitoring* or regular checking to see when and where the damage is occurring and whether the damage is serious enough to warrant treatment.
2. *Habitat modification* wherever possible in the form of reducing or eliminating favorite breeding places of the pest.

3. Use of *barriers* to reduce the migration of additional pest individuals into the area or onto the plants.

4. *Physical controls*, in this case in the form of handpicking in the evening to eliminate a portion of the pest population.

5. *Cultural controls*, reducing frequency of applying water to the garden.

6. *Traps* placed in strategic places to reduce pest numbers.

7. As a last resort, the use of a poison, choosing the *least toxic* one available, (Metaldehyde), in the best *formulation*, (a pellet bait), and *timed* to be most effective and least likely to cause the development of resistant populations -- only when young seedlings or extremely susceptible valuable plants are likely to suffer intolerable damage.

There is another component to this program. It is not directly available to the individual home gardener, but should be followed up by those involved in pest management research. It is called *biological control* and involves finding out where a pest originated and then searching its native area for parasites or predators that were left behind when the pest was accidentally, or, as in the case of the garden snail, deliberately introduced. If organisms can be found that are specific natural enemies of the pest, and incapable of feeding upon anything else, efforts can be made to import them and an attempt made to re-establish them on the pest population in its new location. When such biological control importations are successful the solution is a permanent one and the populations of the pest will drop so low that they will cease to be a problem (unless the newly introduced beneficial insect is accidentally wiped out in a particular locality through indiscriminate pesticide use).

Does it sound like more work than just using a pesticide? It *is* more work, and similar kinds of Integrated Pest Management Programs in commercial agriculture could provide jobs for thousands of people who could train themselves to work for the farmer on a per acre basis as pest management specialists. A study of farmers who use such trained pest managers to develop integrated pest management programs for their crops shows that they do as well or better than farmers relying exclusively on chemical controls, and the use of poisons is greatly reduced. The appeal of the chemical pesticides is that they seem like such a simple solution, but of course they are not a solution at all. They must be used over and over again, eventually causing more problems than they cure. The only sane answer to managing our relationship with other forms of life that seem to be competing with us for food and fiber, reducing the aesthetic value of our landscape or causing public health problems, is to develop effective integrated pest management programs that can reduce the pest populations safely, such as this one you can use in your own garden against the common garden snail. ♀

SEEDLING BOXES

BY ABIGAIL

We garden without poisons in Texas, where the insects grow tall and strong, and to protect vegetable seedlings against insect damage, we have built and use screenwire boxes. Ours are built of scrap lumber and are various sizes, but we recommend two sizes as good examples. Size should be determined by the strength of the gardener and whether one or two persons will handle the boxes.

1) Fashion from 1 X 6" stock, 30 X 96 X 6". The sides are the 6" lumber. Make crosspieces, top and bottom at the center, for support, from 1 X 4's.

2) Use 1 X 3's, with screenwire sides, 30 X 80 X 15", with center crosspieces and diagonal corner braces. (See illustration).

Glue and nail the corners using 6d nails and bend the ends of the nails for added strength. Attach the screen wire with a staple gun. Ideally, boxes would be made of cedar (not redwood) or paint the lumber to preserve the wood.

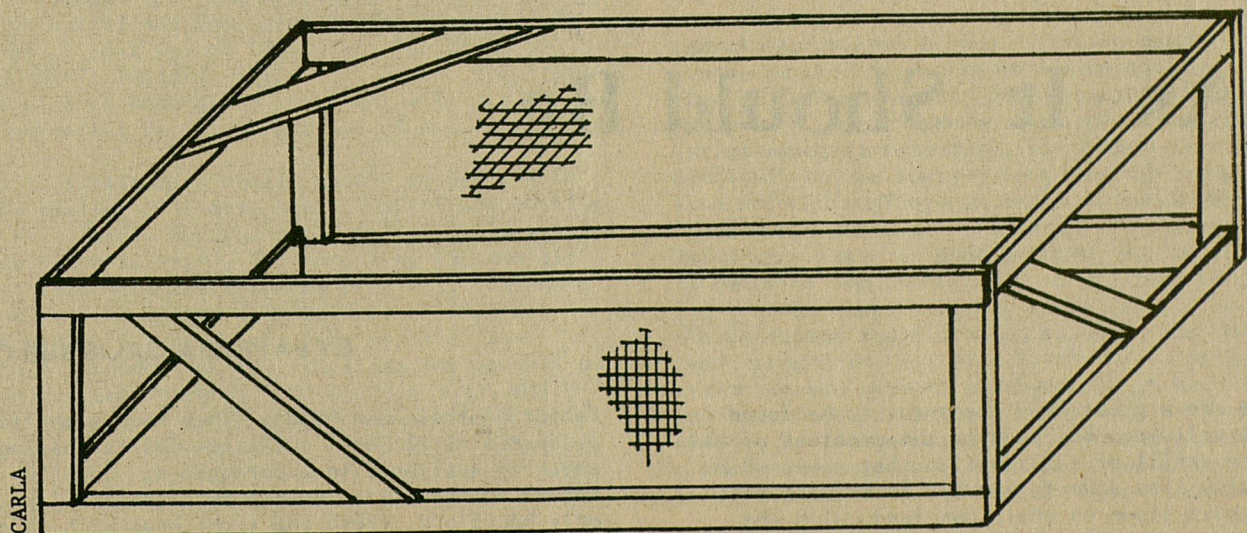
After the garden bed is prepared and the garden layout is planned, mark off the row where the seedling boxes will be used with string and stakes. Set a box in position, leaving room for it to be tilted up on its side. Use a stick to prop it up.

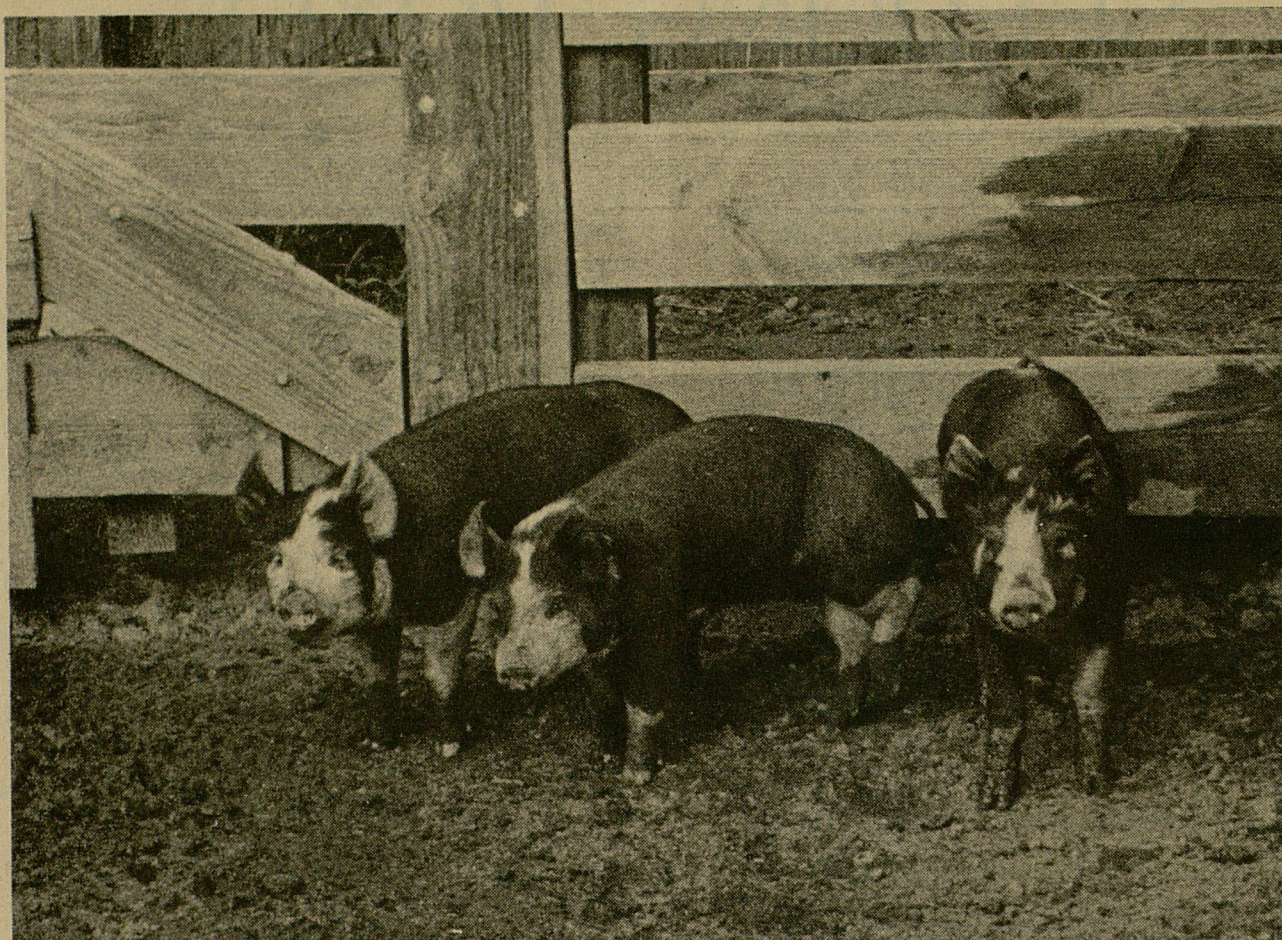
The box can be removed, after marking its location on the dirt, for ease of planting, or you can plant with the box propped up. Plant seeds within the area marked by the edge of the box, lower the box, and tamp dirt around the edge to keep the insects out. Keep the seed bed moist, as usual, by watering through the screen wire.

When the plants grow tall, remove the boxes. The taller box is good for broccoli and other tall plants. We have occasionally left tall boxes on top of lettuces all season, to keep them perfect, but normally we remove the boxes when the plants are grown and they can handle moderate amounts of insect attack.

The boxes are utterly essential for our fall gardens when the insects are so numerous and so hungry. It was the frustration of losing an entire planting one fall that inspired the boxes. We keep lettuces and chard going all winter if we can, and the boxes help for we mulch against the freezes by covering the vegetables with huge mounds of hay, and if there are boxes on top that keeps the hay off the plants which makes washing less work. The boxes also protect against hail damage.

During the months they are not used, store them someplace where they are protected from damage. Screenwire seems to be less sturdy than it used to be and is more easily broken than repaired. ♀





SALLY BAILEY

Home Grown Meat

As It Should Be

BY PATRICIA SALISBURY

There are a great many pleasures to be found in country living, but perhaps the greatest of all is the thrill of satisfaction that comes when a family sits down to a table laden with food they have grown on their own land, with the

labour of their own hands. They know such food possesses nutritional qualities far surpassing anything available in supermarkets. And the appeal to the senses speaks for itself: milk only hours old, fresh and rich; eggs with thick,

clear whites and firm, golden yolks; fruits and vegetables that are bursting with colour and filled with the taste of sunshine; platters overflowing with meat that is...well, let's face it dear, this home-grown meat isn't all it's cracked up to be.

And that, unfortunately, is the all-too-frequent experience of a great many newly established back-to-the-land families. And it's a truly crushing experience, almost enough to make a person hop in the car and drive to the nearest MacDonald's for a Big Mac.

Now, anyone who has compared home-produced milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables with their supermarket counterparts will readily agree that the home-produced stuff is better. Naturally. The road to the supermarket is a long one, and it's downhill all the way. The food you see there has had to go through a great deal: picking or gathering, sorting, crating, shipping, perhaps a period of storage, possibly the addition of preservatives or other chemicals, more shipping and handling and passage of time. Not to mention the production methods. Even a rather disinterested home gardener really can't help coming up with superior produce.

But with meat, we find that the tables are turned. It is the supermarket product that has shaped our opinions on the way food should taste, and no matter how much we may disapprove of feedlot beef, and hormone growth drugs, and chemically fertilized feed, we have to admit that supermarket meat is moist, tender and flavourful. So how come that hand-raised calf turned into such tough, stringy, gamey-tasting beef? Ignorance. Or, to put it another way, there is a right way and a wrong way to every project, and most beginning farmsteaders don't know from nothing about producing good meat.

Don't know, for instance, that the flavour of the meat depends upon the sex of the animal, the food it consumed prior to killing, the expertise of the butcher. Or that tough or tender depends upon the age and condition of the live animal and the aging of the carcass. Or that ... but why go into that side of it any further? Instead, let's look at the right way to produce home-grown meat that will put the supermarket variety right out of the running.

Most farmsteaders wisely choose to begin with the smaller critters, like chickens and rabbits. I say wisely, because these particular meat animals are as nearly fool-proof as you can get. But even here there can be problems. Chickens and rabbits intended to be used as fryers should be butchered at eight weeks of age. Those intended for the roast pan may be left as long as twelve weeks. Older than this, while the flavour is still good, the meat tends to be tougher. In any case, it is important that no green feed be given for several days prior to butchering. The process of killing, skinning

or plucking, and cleaning should be carried out as quickly and cleanly as possible, with great care taken that no urine or fecal matter comes in contact with the flesh of the animal. The fresh carcass should be thoroughly washed and chilled in cold running water, wrapped in plastic, foil, butcher paper or freezer paper, and refrigerated or frozen until used. When cooking rabbit, it is important to remember that this is a delicate meat with no skin to retain moisture; use low heat and a covered pan, except during browning.

With all other meat animals, it is best not to do the butchering yourself the first time around. I am aware that an arbitrary statement like that can provoke a lot of argument, especially when made to people eager for self-sufficiency, but I stand behind it nonetheless. Amateur butchering can ruin good meat, or even disguise the fact that the meat wasn't that good to begin with. Don't be put off by those scare stories to the effect that all custom abattoirs are dens of thieves where you will lose the best part of your meat. I'm not saying it never happens, but in most cases those stories are just so much hot air. The men employed in custom-work abattoirs handle dozens of carcasses every day, without time or opportunity for petty pilfering. In those rare cases where theft is more or less routine and according to management policy, the establishment is generally avoided by local people. Anyone who has one or two beasts butchered every year soon learns to tell if anything is missing, and how much. So, at least in the beginning, arrange to have your butchering done by the experts.

That hand-raised calf we mentioned earlier needn't have turned out gamey and tough. The very best beef comes from young steers, properly finished and fattened, and adequately aged after butchering. The simplest method of turning a bull calf into a steer is with the castration clamp; this operation takes only a few seconds, is completely bloodless, and usually the calf has forgotten all about it by the next day. Castration should be done before the calf passes four months of age. Plan on having him butchered when he is between eighteen and twenty-four months old, depending upon his breed and growth rate. Feedlot beef has a bad reputation among farmsteaders, and indeed it is difficult to see how anything good can come from animals confined in small, crowded paddocks where exercise is severely limited. Raise your steer on good pasture, but be sure to restrict him exclusively to dry feed for at least three weeks prior to butchering. This is the fattening and finishing period. The "dry feed" should consist of a fairly heavy grain ration in addition to an abundance of hay; its purpose is to prevent any gamey flavour from showing up in the meat, and to give the animal a chance to acquire the extra fat necessary for moist, tender meat. A further step in ensuring

cont.

tender, flavourful meat is the correct aging of the carcass. In aging, the beef sides are hung in a specially refrigerated room with temperature and humidity conditions controlled. Your beef should hang seven to ten days, depending upon age and amount of fat; a younger animal requires less aging, while one that is too lean will tend to dry out too much if hung the full ten days. It is bacterial action coupled with the force of gravity that breaks down the tough connective tissue in the flesh. Fat young heifers also make very good beef.

Baby beef comes from steers or heifers eight to twelve months of age. It is difficult to put much fat on an animal this age, since extra feed seems to be converted to extra growth. Follow the same dry feeding plan as with the older beef, but remember that this younger, leaner animal should hang only five to seven days.

Veal is the meat of calves under four months of age, still being fed milk. It is not necessary to attempt extra fattening of veal calves. The carcass should age no more than four days. The cooking methods are most important, since overcooking or using too high heat can dry out this lean and delicate meat.

Most people, if they think about it at all, assume that older cows become beef only for pet food purposes. This is not necessarily so. A cow being culled from the breeding stock because of age or decreased production can be turned into beautiful beef, with the proper handling. The finishing process must be taken one step further, as it is necessary that the cow become grossly fat. This will require heavy graining over an extended period of time, with limited exercise. The carcass is aged for up to four weeks, depending upon just how old the cow was. Don't worry about spoilage of the meat; under the controlled conditions in the cold room, the worst that will happen is the formation of mold on the outer layer of fat, and a darkening and drying of any meat not covered by fat. These outer layers are neatly sliced off when the meat is ready for cutting. In the finished product, the fat will appear yellow and the meat may be darker than regular beef, but it can be cooked in the same way and is really delicious.

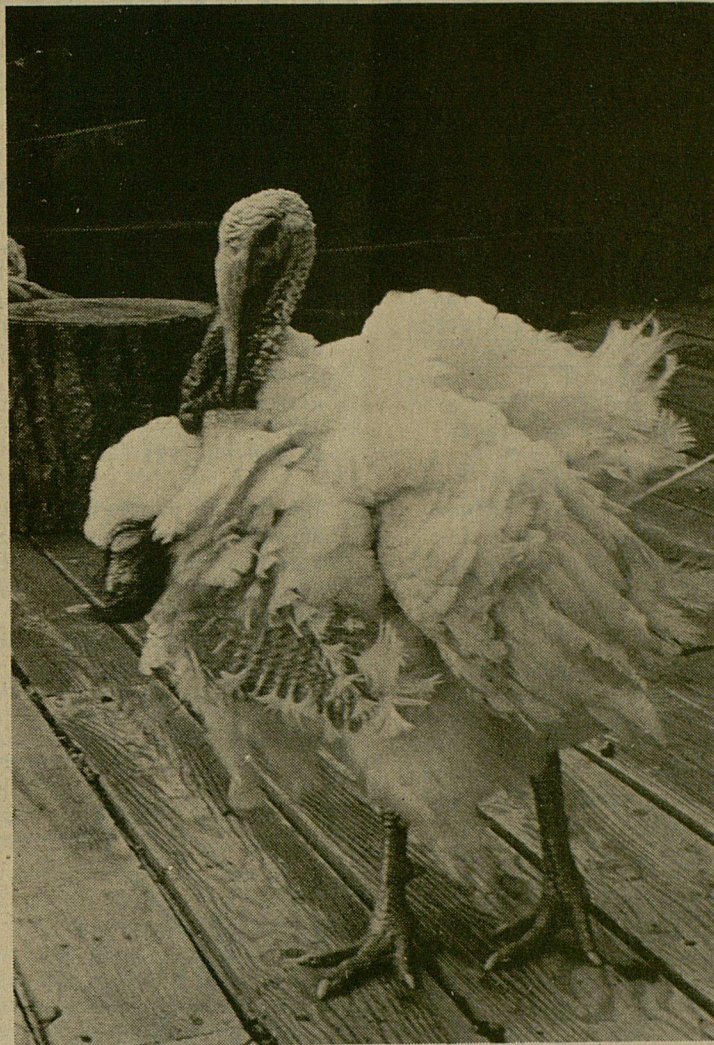
One last word on beef: it does not have to come from breed cattle. The beef breeds have been developed over a number of generations to yield a carcass with a high meat to bone ratio and a good feed conversion rate. But for the farmstead family a dual purpose or even strictly dairy breed animal may be the better investment, since these calves can often be purchased for next to nothing. We have raised several Holstein steers for beef, and the meat is every bit as good as that which comes from Herefords.

Good pork is produced somewhat differently than beef. In commercial pork production, the animals may be fed exclusively on grain-based concentrates, and butchered at about six months of age, when they weigh approximately two hundred pounds. The farmstead pig is more likely to be raised on surplus milk, table scraps, and whatever he can forage in field and bush. This type of feed program may well result in slower growth, but should not adversely affect the meat flavour, provided that no green feed or strongly flavoured feeds are permitted for two to three weeks prior to butchering. Don't worry about trying to fatten the pig, as pigs on an adequate diet tend to acquire plenty of fat naturally. Butchered near the six-month age, the carcass should not require aging. One important point: never raise a boar for pork.

Goat meat, called chevon, is usually not as readily accepted by farmstead families as is goat milk. That's a shame, because the flesh of the goat is a truly delicious meat. It should be handled much the same as beef. A buck kid intended for meat should be butchered or castrated before he reaches three months of age. If he is to be castrated and raised as a wether, feed milk for as long as possible. Plan on butchering at about age one year. Dry feed to fatten and finish for about three weeks prior to killing. The carcass should not need to hang more than four or five days. A young doe to be culled from the herd may be handled in much the same way, while an older doe should be fattened as much as possible to permit longer aging. Goat meat is fine-grained and delicate, and careful cooking is required to prevent dryness or stringiness. The flavour is indescribably delicious. If a mature buck is to be used for meat, it is imperative that he be castrated at least four months and preferably six, before butchering.

The same basic rules should be followed in producing lamb and mutton. Ram lambs not intended for breeding purposes should be castrated at an early age. Lambs are best butchered when they reach about 100 pounds, and require very little if any aging. Older sheep intended for mutton probably will not need any deliberate fattening, but two or three weeks of dry feed will result in a more mildly flavoured meat. The hanging period must depend upon the age of the animal. Mature rams do not make good mutton; like buck goats, they should be castrated for four to six months before being butchered.

This may all seem like a lot of complicated nonsense to someone with a mental picture of great grand-dad whipping out his trusty six-shooter and banging away at a passing rabbit, and shortly thereafter licking his fingers and belching with pleasure. And it's true that in earlier times meat processing was handled differently. There was no such thing as a temperature and



SALLY BAILEY

humidity controlled cold room, and so meat was eaten promptly after killing, or was preserved by drying or home canning. The only opportunity for aging occurred if the killing took place during cold weather, when the carcass could be hung for a few days without danger of spoilage. Even then, the effect was not what we have today, since there was no way to prevent fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Further, with all farm crops having to be harvested by hand, there was little likelihood that precious hay and grain would be used for fattening and finishing of livestock. But people were accustomed to meat with a flavour we would call gamey, and since boiling was the most common method of cooking, toughness was not much of a problem.

Today, let's face it; we are a little more fussy. We don't like to have unusual flavours showing up in the meat we have worked hard to produce. We want our beef to taste like beef; we want all our meat to be tender and moist.

And why not, when it is after all, so easy to accomplish. The basic rules are simple:

1. Never use a sexually mature male animal for meat. Such meat invariably tastes strongly gamey or even musky.
2. Butcher the animal at the correct age. Remember that older animals require special treatment.
3. Remove the animal from green feed prior to butchering. Any beast taken straight from pasture to abattoir will yield meat with a peculiar flavour bound to be classified as "too strong" or gamey. This is the reason for the positive emphasis placed on "grain-fed" beef.
4. Be sure that the carcass is aged the correct length of time: long enough to tenderize the meat, but not long enough to dry it out.
5. Use cooking methods suited to the meat, keeping in mind the age and condition of the animal it came from.
6. Be prepared to enjoy the best meat you have ever eaten! ♀

SOLAR COLLECTORS

BY PAMELA ANN MARSHALL

Throughout herstory, womyn have identified with the moon and her phases of luminescence despite the somewhat patriarchal concept of "the man in the moon." Evelyn Reed in Woman's Evolution, From Matriarchial Clan to Patriarchial Family speaks of the females' connection with the moon planting cycles, the harvest and the preparation of food, tools and clothing from plants and animals. Yet, although the sun, I'm told, is of male nature, harnessed only by those gods who thrashed across the skies in their golden chariots, I suggest that anyone can learn to harness the sun. In this technologically patriarchal society, the sun's power has been gravely underestimated.

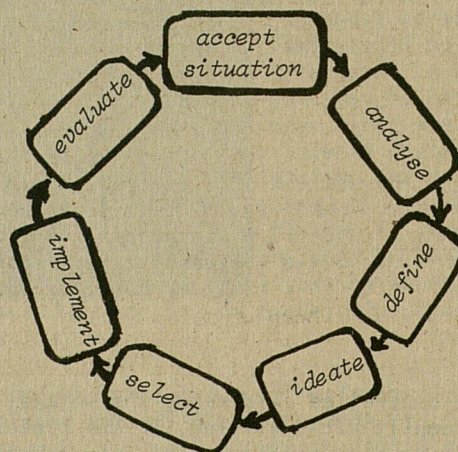
As recently as a decade ago, the whole idea of directly tapping solar energy was considered by many to be little more than a permissible form of idiocy, despite the fact that centuries ago, the Indians utilized passive solar design in heating and cooling pueblo construction and principles of refrigeration for storing their corn harvest. Six years ago the Federal Government budgeted a mere \$1 million for solar energy research; in 1976 that figure was almost \$180 million. Due to the increasing fossil fuel depletion, the price of oil has quadrupled in the past five years and can only climb higher. The prices of natural gas and oil have also escalated, due to the dwindling supply, and all of us can look ahead to the day when these energy sources will be unavailable to us at almost any price. Furthermore, the hazards, to both people and the earth, in collection of fossil fuels from the earth, are destroying and defacing Mother Earth faster than some might like to admit. Although the credibility of solar energy was established eons ago by civilizations far more in touch with the ecosystem than we today, capitalism and increasing ecological awareness about the dangers of tapping nuclear power for energy use, are paving the way for the growing popularity and acceptance of solar energy usage.

Solar energy has many attractions: It produces neither pollution nor radioactivity; it is inexhaustible and abundant, though sometimes diffuse and difficult to collect. The amount of solar energy reaching the earth averages 126 watts per sq. foot. Even in a northerly location like Madison, Wisconsin, the amount of solar energy striking an acre of land is equivalent to 10 barrels of oil per day. Sun hitting a roof or wall provides, in most cases, enough energy to meet the needs of the basking

building below... Solar energy is being tapped in many strange and simple ways, even where the sun is seldom shining day in and day out. These systems involve concepts of PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN, simple technology, low cost recyclable materials, and your time, faith and patience with the undying warmth of the sun.

DESIGN PROCESS

The design process can be viewed in a variety of ways. Some peoples' perspective is linear, others circular. Since circular frameworks stress the process, while linear ones often emphasize the end result, I will move ahead within the following framework. Try to approach your energy needs with this diagram in mind:



In the past, energy transformations have invariably produced far-reaching social change. During the 18th century, substitution of coal for wood and wind in Europe accelerated and reshaped the industrial revolution. A later shift to petroleum altered travel characteristics by shrinking the planet and remodeling cities. The influx of both coal and petroleum has had strong impact upon the environmental quality and the mental health of anthropos (anthropoids).* The approaching energy transition, what most people refer to as "alternate energy sources," is essentially a return to utilizing the earth's original energy sources: the sun, the wind, and the water. Our past/present/future perspective(s) of energy use and abuse profoundly affects our world. Further-

*anthropos - androgynous term for 'humanity'

more, the quantity of energy available will probably, in the long run, prove much less important than where and how this energy is obtained. Thus, I have pursued study in the field of solar energy, making my way into the realms of conceptual receptivity and teaching myself how to live on this planet.

After caretaking two different pieces of land, carrying my water, foraging for my wood, lighting my study with kerosene, and burning propane and/or wood in my kitchen, I slowly came to realize the dynamic concept of energy, water, bio-mass and sunlight. Solar sources add no new heat to the global environment, and make no contributions to atmospheric carbon dioxide, (when in equilibrium). Furthermore, solar technologies fit well into political systems that emphasize decentralization, pluralism and local community control. The sun's inconstancy is regional and seasonal, true, but not political or arbitrary, and therefore it can be planned for and anticipated. Since sunlight is ubiquitous and can be used in decentralized facilities, solar options dispense with the expensive transportation and distribution that characterize conventional energy systems.

The most important element in successful solar strategy is the appropriate matching of sources to uses. There is a direct correlation between the quality of energy sought from the sun and the costs of collecting, converting and storing that energy. The higher the desired quality, the higher the costs involved. Thus, it is important that sources and uses be considered in design and construction of your solar hydronic (water) system. For example, since most hot water used in households remains at temperatures under 100 degrees Fahrenheit, it would be ludicrous to build a parabolic focussing mirror collector to heat water for your bath or kitchen use. Cheap unsophisticated collectors can easily provide temperatures up to 140 degrees. (I have monitored those that collected and heated water to 170 degrees on bright, sunny days, and 70-90 degrees on overcast, hazy days.)

The accepted situation is your decision to transform your energy source from a primarily electrical or fossil fuel (propane, kerosene, gas) heating system to a solar one.

The analysis begins with the study of basic solar concepts, designs, and materials that are available and practical for you to implement. You need to analyze your present dwelling and surrounding acreage: trees, landscape, roof or ground space, location of present heating systems, pipes, water source, etc. All these facts need to be collected first, so that you will be able to design and construct the solar system that will be the most efficient for you.

Natural progression brings you to defining the parameters of your needs and situations. Now is the time to ask yourself such questions as: How much hot water do I/we use per day, per week?

How much water is there to begin with? (Well, spring, city...)

How big is the existing storage tank (if there is one already present and you are retrofitting)?

How is the water presently moved to the dwelling (gravity flow, pump, etc.)?

How is the water being heated now?

How can I retain an existing system as a back-up in times of rainy weather and to pick up the remaining heat needs?

Usage needs and conservation talents are important here. Before you 'go solar', please consider ways of saving energy and money in heating hot water. The following are some wise suggestions:

1. Reduce water use.
2. Reduce water temperature.
3. Improve heating efficiency by insulating pipes, tanks, and/or installing more efficient boilers.
4. Remove heat from waste water. (Watch for future articles on how to do this yourself.)

The next step is to install solar apparatus. Be honest with your needs and usage, after being honest and fair with this earth and her resources. Consider excess energy to be equity, and the interest, if deposited back in the earth (recycled) will create a natural reserve bank. If this interest is continually and carelessly spent, an imbalance in the environment is created. It takes time, energy and care to interact harmoniously with the environment. If you underestimate your usage, it's not a total disaster, but you may find yourself building a few more square feet of collector surface to increase your hot water quantities. If you underestimate at this phase of the process, the most encouraging aspect is that your second collector will by far improve upon your first flat plate, and you may even get brazen enough to try another design for comparative purposes. Once you get hooked on utilizing the sun for heat, it's easy to become a solar freak overnight.

You can use these figures as rough guidelines in designing your system:

1. 10 lbs. or 1.2 Gal. of water per sq. ft./per. hr. circulate through a flat plate collector.
2. A 4 x 8 flat plate collector will roughly circulate 60 gallons of water per collecting day (average 6 hour peak collecting time: 9am-3pm).
3. 1.5 times your daily consumption needs provides for a storage size of optimum economy.
4. 80 gallons of water weighs about 650 lbs.
5. A 4 x 8 collector weighs under 100 lbs. This is mostly the construction weight of the collector and the few gallons of water that circulate at any one moment.

Thus a 4 x 8 collector equals 32 sq. ft. x 10 lbs. per sq. ft. equalling 320 lbs. of water over one hour, or 5 1/3 lbs. total water at any one moment. These figures obviously depend upon the construction materials used in your collector, insulation factors of tank and pipes as well as of the collector box, and the weather. Your local solar association or any of the sun people listed in Alternative Sources of Energy Magazine reference pages can help you out with these specifics.

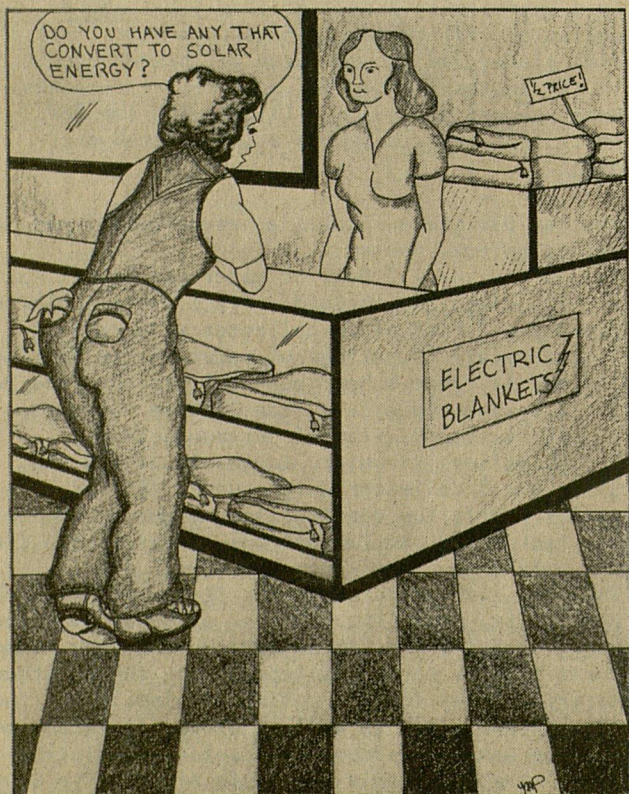
The next step is ideation. There are many types of collectors you can build, using a variety of materials. To list a few -- trickle, bread box, sandwich, flat plate, focussing, greenhouses, passive solar dwellings. The list goes on and on. As long as we continue to apply and re-apply the same basic principles of radiation, absorption, conduction and convection of the sun's energy, we cannot lose the wealth of this earth. Trickle collectors eliminate the need for manifolds, since the water is simply directed down chutes over metal and then covered with a glazing (glass, plastic, fiberglass tedlar) while it heats. Although trickle collectors have the advantage of needing no pipes, only corrugated aluminum roofing, headers with holes drilled in them for the water to run through and down over the troughs, they have the following disadvantages: 1) Large heat loss through evaporation and condensation of water (off of plate and onto glazing), 2) Maintenance required to reduce and eliminate build-up of salts on plate and in the pipe holes. Black hoses, water beds, (or solar pools, as they are formally called) and breadboxes all work in a similar manner, although the amounts of water they supply vary. The sun's radiation is absorbed by the black surface (rubber/hypalon, metal), heats the water inside, insulates it and traps UV radiation (if it's a breadbox) and then, when "turned on", dumps the HOT WATER wherever you wish. The Japanese have used black pillow roof or ground collectors (Batch) for centuries to heat the water for their ritual soakings each night. The "Breadbox", the most sophisticated of these three options, is so called because it collects the largest amount

of water while simultaneously insulating the heat and increasing the amount of sun's energy collected with the aid of reflectors and absorber plates incorporated into the design box. Designs for a "Breadbox" can be gotten from ASE or from me, or from local solar energy associations. Because this article is primarily about the design and construction of the Flat Plate Collector, I will not go into the details of these other types. However, they are all viable plans, and perfectly good ways to start heating your hot water. I choose to explore flat plates because they 1) continually circulate the water, thereby increasing its heat and allowing for a larger supply to be heated, 2) collect in diffuse sunlight and, 3) are easy to design and construct.

The problems of a flat plate confine themselves to material durability. Factors such as 1) corrosion from the environment and the working fluids, and 2) temperature effects (if outrageously high with poor materials) can create a stagnation temperature. At 300 BTU/Ft²/Hr., glass will suffer from stagnation effects when the collector temperature reaches the ambient (outside) temperature plus 140 degrees fahrenheit; fiberglass - the ambient plus 215 degree fahrenheit. As you can readily see, these problems are relevant to large industrial manufacturers, who design and construct assemblyline collectors for both domestic and industrial use, and are attaching long term guarantees on their apparatus to qualify for homeowners tax cuts.* For the self-reliant, low-cost, low technology system(s) you can design, these temperatures are not a major concern. It is sufficient to state that excessive temperatures can cause materials to decay and place expansion stress on the system. Primarily, I would be concerned with the accepted knowledge that aluminum corrodes over time. Because the selection phase of problem solving does involve the choice of which type collector to build and design, it also involves decisions about what sorts of materials you wish to employ in the design, and therefore, the costs that you are capable of assuming. For a simple low cost, flat plate collector, I suggest the following materials. Substitutions, wherever possible, are listed also. Obviously, the more money you spend, the better your collector will absorb and conduct the sun's heat. However, it is wise not to get too carried away with dreams of maximum efficiency, remembering that you are not attempting to heat The White House, boil yourself in your bath, or steam heat your house! Keep in mind that collector efficiency is defined as the:

$$\frac{\text{output of energy collected}}{\text{input of energy falling on surface}} \\ (\text{withing a specified period of time})$$

* Write Calif. Dept. of Energy, 1111 Howe St., Sacramento, Ca. for free tax info. brochure.



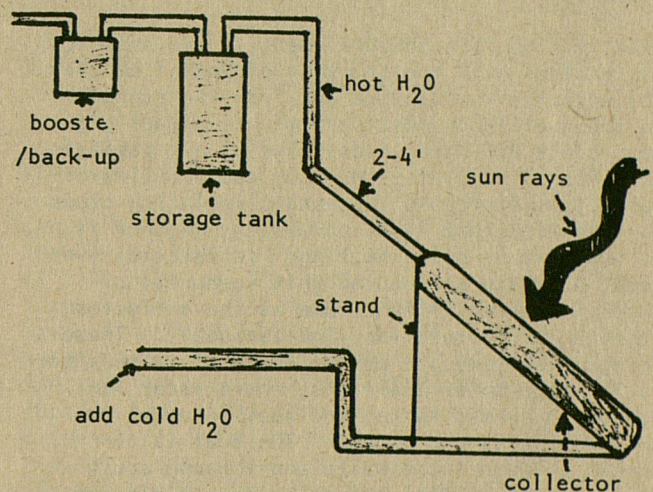
You need to know that the solar constant, the amount of solar insolation reaching the Earth is 442 BTU/FT²/Hr for a perpendicular arrangement. You will also need to know a bit about R factors: measurements assigned to materials in relation to their conductivity. Materials with a high R factor will resist conductivity of heat out of the collector box and retain (insulate) heat which will increase water temperatures. Tables for some of these materials follow (from the Solar Home Book, pg. 65). Finally, to get some idea of the average temperature/weather of your geographical area, you need to be aware of the term degree days. Standard practice uses an indoor temperature of 65 degrees as the base from which to calculate degree days because most buildings do not require heat until the outdoor air temperature falls between 60 degrees F. and 65 degrees F. If the outdoor temperature is one degree below the indoor temperature of a building for one day, it can be said that one degree day has accumulated. If the outdoor temperature is 40 degrees F. for one day, then 65-40 results in 25 degree days. If the outdoor temperature is 60 degrees F. for five days, then 5 x (65-60) results in 25 degree days again. Although these figures are important for figuring heating losses/needs for solar homes, Weather Service publishes degree day information in special maps and tables (Climatic Atlas) which can help educate you about the specific weather in your area. Should you decide to heat your house with solar collectors (air or hydronic), degree days and hours help you compute the total conduction loss during the heating season. (Watch for future articles on Passively Solar Heated/Designed Dwellings.)

The three components of a solar system are 1) Collection, 2) Storage and 3) Distribution. The collector apparatus is designed to absorb the solar insolation and convert it into usable heat energy. Most collectors are either flat or focused heliothermic. Focused collectors operate at higher temperatures due to optical concentration of solar rays, whereas flat plates reach only temperatures of 140-170 degrees F. and are capable of collecting in both direct and diffused sunlight. Collectors work on the principle of the "greenhouse effect", which captures the solar energy by the use of a glazing material (plastic, glass, mirror, fiberglass) that enhances collection capacities. Thermal principles of conduction, absorption and convection are basic to the working of a collector, no matter the type. Basically, the solar insolation (amount of BTU's falling on a given area per hour) strikes the collector glazing and is trapped inside the collector, and then absorbed by the metal surface. The absorber plate conducts the heat to either the air or water in the collector box through a system of piping (manifold) or ducts, and directs it out into the storage tank. When the sunlight strikes the collector surface, the ultraviolet rays (UV's) and the visible (short wave) rays are absorbed (.3 to 3 microns) to be used as a source of heat, and the longwave

and infrared rays (3 to 30 microns) are re-radiated out the glazing into the atmosphere. The portion of wavelength that is absorbed by the collector and trapped inside the box by the glazing cover, is absorbed by the metal in the box and conducted to and through the mediums of either air or water. If the collector is hydronic (water system), a manifold contains the water flow. This is a simple series of parallel pipes, ('risers') usually copper tubing, soldered together with a 'header' (top and bottom).

The principle of thermosyphon is acting in a passive solar system as the hot water or air, being lighter, less dense than the cooler air or water, rises naturally, without the aid of pumps or fans, through the collector manifold and up into the storage tank.

SCHEMATIC OF A FLAT PLATE COLLECTOR APPARATUS



The second component of the solar system is the storage tank which contains the heated water (or air). It can be constructed of wood, metal or fiberglass, but ought to be insulated to prevent heat loss. For thermosyphon systems (passive) to work efficiently, it is imperative that the tank be placed above the solar collector panel(s) (from one to four feet minimum). The heated water/air is then available for household use by gravity flow. Old recycled water tanks, electric or gas ones found at the dump/recycling center, laundromats or plumbing supply stores, are ideal for this purpose. The storage tank is filled with water in a hydronic system, and air and small rocks or chemical salts for an air system. It can be a separate entity, or it could be the house itself, if the house is a passively designed structure, built for maximum collection, distribution and storage of heat. However, for

purposes of a hydronic solar system, the storage and collector will be separate if the water is being used directly and not for heat (indirectly). As long as the water at the bottom of the collector is heavier than the water at the top, it will continue to circulate. Reverse thermosyphon occurs when the heavier water accumulates at the top of the collector due to improper tank placement, lack of insulation, or a constriction in the pipes. (For example, a serpentine manifold with too sharp corners will do this.) For four people, an 80 gallon tank ought to be enough. The shape of the tank or how it is positioned is important because of the tendency of the water to stratify in the tank according to where the hot comes in and the cold goes out. If the tank were turned sideways, and some are, the water might tend to mix more unless pipes were adeptly soldered in at respective layers. However, I have seen systems like this one, so it is possible, if not plausible. It is also important not to install any check valves with a thermosyphon system, and to estimate the structural load of the water (120 gallons - 1300 lbs.) in both the collector (minimal) and the tank, especially in earthquake zones.

Distribution, the third element in the system, is involved with the transfer of heat from the collector to the storage and from the storage to the dwelling. Most systems are copper piping, black PVC hose, steel pipe or air passages. In component systems, the combined entities of collector, storage units, and circulating pipes form the complete function-system, whether it be hydronic or space heating. In integral systems, a single structural unit (concrete or water filled wall) functions as the collector, storage and circulation simultaneously. These integral systems are primarily found in passively designed solar dwellings, where water is stored in drums, tanks, and heat in adobe or concrete walls and gravel. The heat is absorbed through these walls and through south facing windows, designed as collector glazing, for the structure, which then becomes the collector box itself. Whatever your storage be constructed of and whether or not it be separate or a part of the collector, it is imperative that both the storage tank(s) and pipes for distributing the hot water be insulated well. You can either wrap fiberglass matting around the pipes or buy a ready made insulating sheath that fits right over the pipe. Also, remember that the further the water has to travel, the longer it will take and the more chance there is for heat loss from collector to tank. Therefore, try to minimize this distance for both heat retention and costs.

A final entity of solar systems is the control unit which can be either passive or active in nature. If your system is passively designed the heat moves through the collector and into the storage and house by thermosyphoning; if the system is active, a network of valves, pumps, thermostats and fans with various adjustments need to be additionally installed to

regulate the heat flow transfer. Circulation and distribution of heat involves the transfer of the energy among the various components of the system: the collectors, the storage, and the dwelling as conditions of need warrant or dictate.

CONSTRUCTION OF FLAT PLATE COLLECTOR

The components of a solar flat plate collector are: 1) the collector box, constructed of wood, metal or fiberglass, 2) the insulation of fiberglass, polystyrene or anything that has a high R factor and won't burn, 3) the absorber plate, of aluminum, steel or copper, and 4) the manifold, which is an array of tubing of steel or aluminum, copper pipe or rubber hosing, and lastly, 5) the glazing, which can be glass, fiberglass, fiberglass impregnated tedlar, plastic or even fluorescent light bulbs with the white paint removed. The following chart indicates materials and specifications needed for the proper operation and efficiency of these components in a solar hydronic collector.

MATERIALS *** TOOLS

Collector boxes -

3/8-1/2" exterior grade plywood; 1-1/3 sheets, 4x8 (per box)
alternatives: metal extrusions
fiberglass shells
masonite backed

Glazing -

3/16 tempered glass, 34x76
glass sliding doors (good buy for 4x8 box)
smaller sheets - less breakage
alternatives: recycled windows, broken glass shipments, fluorescent bulbs, fiberglass impregnated Tedlar Calwall, corp. 48" widths x 50", yellows in five yrs. 40 thous. thickness, 95% to 85% as efficient as glass

Metal Absorbers -

.025 aluminum sheeting
.016 copper sheeting, 16 oz.
.010 selective surface black chrome Copper (Barry Solar Products, New Jersey)
30-40 thous. steel sheeting
non-galvanized corrugated roofing (for soldering purposes).

Insulation -

4-6" isocyanate foam to meet fire code standards & health codes (Celutex)

Piping -

materials compatible with absorber plate
PVC, steel, copper (type L or M)
copper comes in 20 ft. lengths

Paint -

Nextel Flat Black, 3M
Tabor selective surfaces, Meromit Co.
Dupont Tedlar surface

Solder - 50/50 solid core

Flux -

For copper pipe and fittings

Wire - Rebar the wire

Paint - 2 coats latex/fiberglass resin

Gas - Propane for torches

Miscellaneous -

wood glue and wood putty

1x1 wood for glazing framing & stops

carbide sandpaper for copper prep.

putty for glazing, Butil caulking tube/

Silicon alum. caulk

CONSTRUCTION OF THE FLAT PLATE

Now, with your materials in hand, you are faced with the procedure of building the collector. The process is fairly straight forward and simple for the construction of a low cost, low technology flat plate. Following the guidelines below, your collector should manifest itself within a few days of steady work.

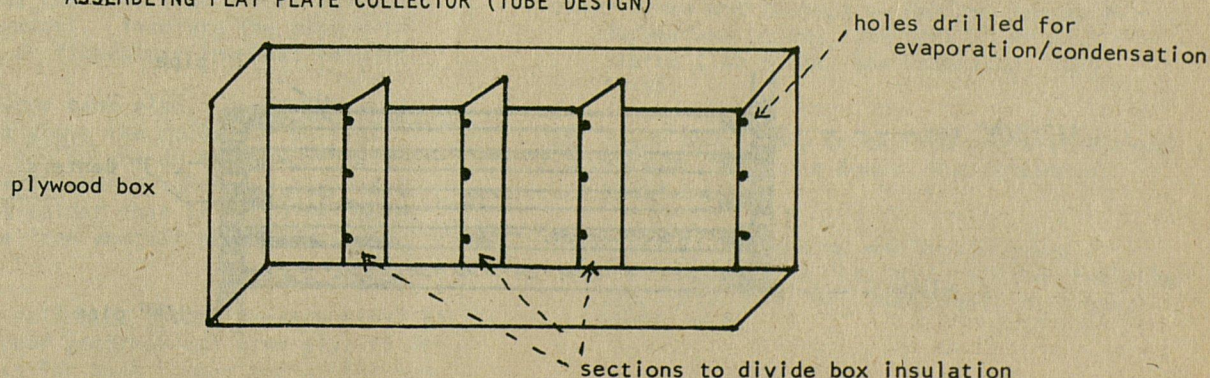
1. Build a box, choosing a size that meets glazing size availability, space and storage needs. To be economical, try to size the collector to glass size you can obtain inexpensively. Wood is the cheapest medium for the box, but fiberglass would be nice to design and experiment with sometime. Allow one and one third sheets of 4 x 8, 3/8"-3/4" exterior grade plywood. Our boxes were built with a depth of 12". This could be less but allow space for 4" fiberglass insulation, absorber plate, and piping (1/2-1"), two inches minimum of air space, box stops and thickness of glazing material.

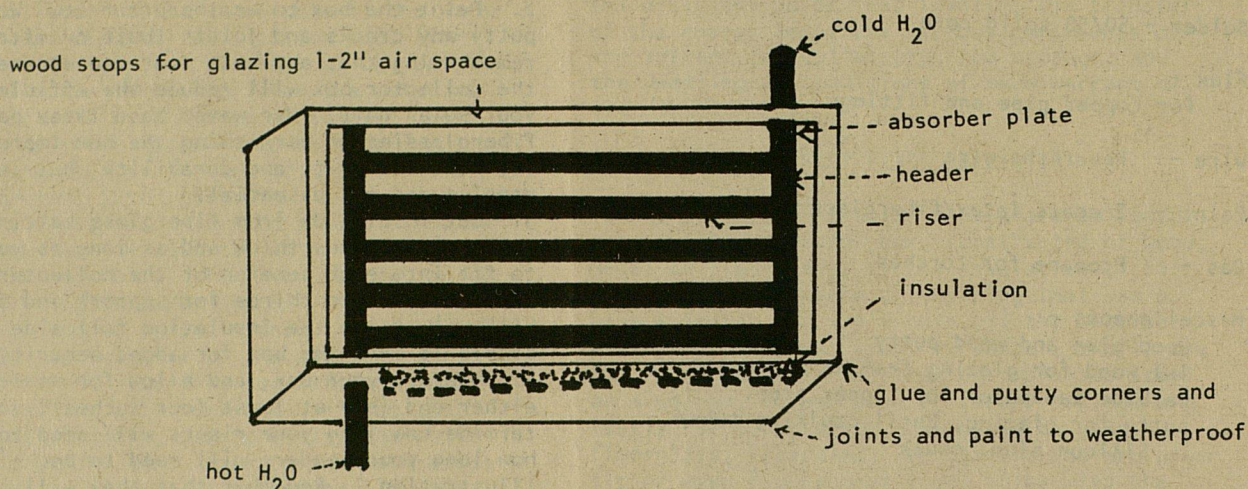
2. Paint the box to weatherproof it. Wood putty any cracks and joints (butt or mitre), remembering that any heat that can escape from the collector box will reduce the efficiency of your solar unit. Use water base latex paint. Fiberglassing or varnishing the box improves its weatherability and durability, but is expensive and not essential.

3. Cut insulation from fiberglass batting rolls, 4-6 inches thick and as long as you need to fit into each section of the collector box. (Divide box into thirds for support and durability.) Place the insulation foil side up, staple it into the box for added security.

4. Measure your box, and allow for space on either end (say at least four inches), to determine how long your risers will need to be and how long your headers will need to be. (See illustration.) Remember that they will need to extend a few inches outside of the box to allow for piping connections to the storage tank. Decide how many risers you are going to use and how far apart you wish them to be. Rule of thumb: 3 1/2" - 4 1/2" centers, six to nine risers depending upon the diameter of the tubing used. The wider the diameter of the piping, the less risers you need and the further apart they can be. The narrower the tubing, the closer together they need to be and the more of them you will need to heat the same amount of water to the same temperature. This is because the conductance is improved when the metal is closer together. Consider also pipe costs in determining number of risers. Copper pipe usually comes in 20 foot lengths. In a 4' x 8' box, I would suggest 6-8 risers of 1/2" pipe, on 3" centers for good distribution of water. The headers can be wider to enhance flow, say 3/4" pipe. Each riser will be soldered to the header with a T-joint, 1/2 to 3/4 tee, if those are the tubing diameters you chose. Pool collectors are usually 3/8" in diameter risers with one inch headers (9-18 risers). Many risers are required, fairly close together for increased conduction and volume of water. Remember, in a pool collector the goal is to heat large volumes of water to fairly low temperatures, while in a hot water system for the household there is more need for higher temperatures and less water.

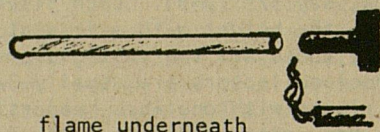
ASSEMBLING FLAT PLATE COLLECTOR (TUBE DESIGN)





5. To solder the manifold together, assemble your risers, headers (cut to size), your elbows (one for each end of the box), and your tees. If you have access to a drill press, you could drill holes into the headers and solder the risers into these holes directly, eliminating the need for costly tees, but increasing the statistics for leakage. Before soldering, each section of pipe needs to be reamed and sandpapered at the ends and then painted with solder flux (to chemically clean it) before placing the pipes together and brazing. Clean all units first, flux and then put in place.

ream inside w/knife, paint on flux and insert

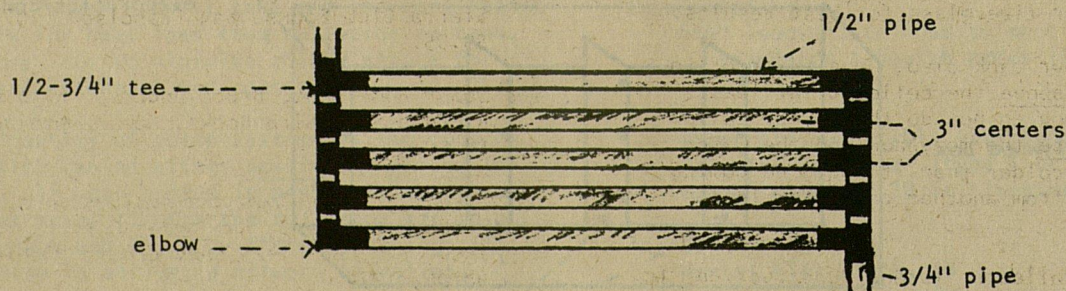


flame underneath

6. Soldering the manifold is fun and easy, but must be done in a specific order! This is because heat is conducted along the pipes and could re-heat a joint you've already soldered

(and melt it) if you were to go backwards a step or two. If you do need to retrace your path, wrap joints in wet rags or paper towels to keep them cool. Turn on the propane torch and adjust the flame to a blue center tip, placing this under the joint you are brazing and begin to heat it. When you see the flux start to flow into a puddle, begin to touch the solder stick (which you are holding in your other hand) to the joint, starting at the top of the tee joint, with the flame still underneath. Slide the solder back and forth over the top of the T. If the joint has been well cleaned and fluxed, the heat of the torch flame should be conducted throughout the pipe and the flux painted on the inside of the T joint will suck the solder through and around the joint, creating a good, solid bond. Move from one end of the manifold to the other in order, brazing all joints.

7. When the manifold is completely brazed together, cool it. Then it needs to be tested for leaks with air or water pressure tanks to withstand the number of pounds of pressure your water system maintains. Check your city water supply for limits if you live in town (approx. 150 lbs.). Obviously, this is much less if you live in the country and your water is gravity or pump fed.



8. Attaching manifold to absorber plate can be achieved in a number of ways, the simplest of which is to press and wire and/or solder pipes to the metal 2 x 4 planks to press grooves into the absorber plate. You don't need to have a fancy press machine at your disposal. Nails (for punchers) and a hammer can be used to punch holes into the absorber plate alongside each riser; stick Rebar wire sections through the holes and wrap around the piping every few inches or so. Soldering can also be done to increase the CONTINUITY OF CONTACT of the metals (pipe to plate) to enhance heat transfer. Remember that copper will not solder to galvanized aluminum and that copper will not solder to metal sheeting. Copper on copper sheeting is ideal, but most expensive. In soldering, be careful not to warp the absorber plate excessively. Apply heat from the bottom of the plate always. If you first run a bead of flux along the absorber plate forming a grid pattern, closely aligning that which your manifold will rest upon, the solder you add when brazing will naturally seek the solder already laid down and aid your efforts to bond the two metals together.

9. Paint the absorber plate and attached manifolds flat black or Nextel to enhance absorption of sunlight.

10. Set the absorber plate with solder manifold on top of the insulation, either with piping face down or face up.

11. Nail on the wood stops -- moldings -- to the side of the box, providing a ledge upon which the glazing can rest if it is glass. If it is fiberglass or plastic, it can be screwed directly into the sides of the box.

12. Place on washed (no soap) sheet of glass or fiberglass. Screw or nail, putty (if glass), just as if it were a window. Lay down moldings and nail in very carefully so as to not break the glass. CAUTION: THIS PART SHOULD NOT BE DONE UNTIL THE COLLECTOR IS IN PLACE ON THE STAND.

13. You are now ready to plumb collector to storage tank. Solder pipe sections from cold water source to bottom of collector manifold into the header and from the top header to your storage tank, entering about one-third down from the top of the tank (for proper heat distribution in water). Insulate the pipe with rubber tubing or fiberglass for best results.

14. Insulate your tank also. Don't forget to place the tank above the collector at least 2-4 feet. If you do not do this, your collector could reverse thermosyphon and the water would come out colder than it would be coming in (if it came from another collector in a series).

15. Tilt your collector (stand construction) to latitude for your geographical area plus 15 degrees to adjust for both summer and winter sun

collection. If you are particular, make slots on the stand that allow for movement of collector so you can change the tilt for summer and winter. However, latitude plus 15 degrees is the standard rule of thumb for this procedure with a flat plate.

16. Consider freeze protection of your collector if you live in that type of climate. Your options are to 1) drain your collector, 2) heat your collector, or 3) use anti-freeze which will require a heat exchanger and lower collector performance by about 8%.

17. Sit down and rest. Smile, enjoy, watch the sun heat your water. You are finished. Congratulations and thanks for treading more softly over this planet. Your rewards will be more than monetary...

NOTE: To monitor your system, insert a pyrometer ("pete's plug") in each end of the collector tubing at the fittings (special valve allowing for the thermometer to be inserted) top and bottom of collector piping, and watch the temperature rise at different times throughout the day.

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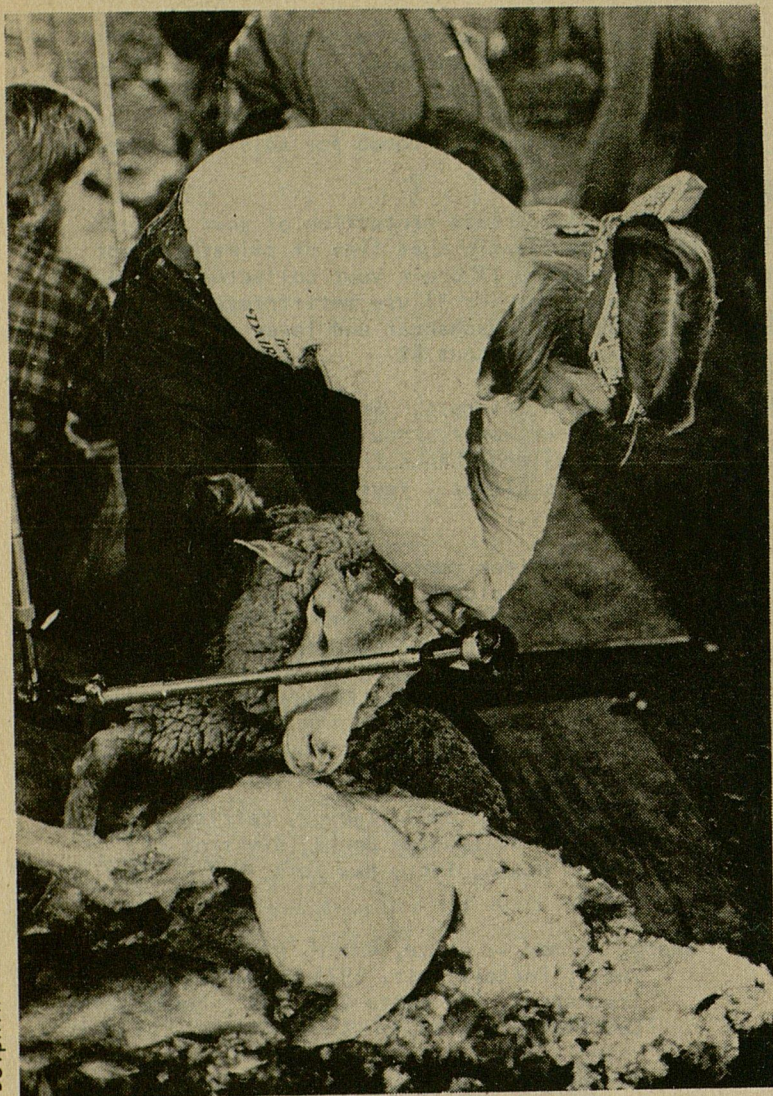
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SHEEP

Sheep are usually shorn once a year, in the late spring or early summer. The best time will depend upon your location, more specifically, the climate. The most important thing is to wait for warm weather with no really cold nights. A shorn sheep is very susceptible to catching cold and even possibly pneumonia.

The only necessary equipment you need for shearing is shears. In this article I will deal with mechanical/electric shears (machines). Unless you are dealing with only one or two sheep, I have found machines to be far more efficient than hand shears (blades). However, I have known several friends who had up to twenty sheep and still preferred using hand shears. With the proper knowledge of technique and practice, a sheep can be completely shorn in five to ten minutes with a machine; better plan on an hour per sheep with blades.

Of course cost is also another consideration when choosing which type of shears you will use. Blades average about \$12.00. There are also electric shears that are similar to dog clippers in that they are a self-contained unit

with the motor cased in the handpiece. The disadvantages of these are that the cord often becomes tangled around the sheep, the motor is in the hand piece so that they heat up quickly to the point of being very uncomfortable to hold (especially when doing many sheep), and the amount of power available is limited. However, a pair of shears such as these can be had for about \$80.00. The shears I prefer are the kind used by the professionals. They consist mainly of a handpiece, a flexible down-tube with gut core drive enclosed in a 2 section shaft and a motor with an "in and out" gear that, via a one-pull rope control, allows you to disengage the handpiece between sheep. The disadvantage being the cost, with most of these units costing from \$350-\$500.

In addition to your shears, I have found a few other items indispensable in making my work easier and more efficient. Ranchers with large flocks usually shear in a special shearing room with a clean wooden floor. I shear in a special pen built in one of the pastures (this keeps the other sheep from butting me or bothering the sheep being shorn). In order to keep the fleece off the ground I work on a 4'x8' sheet of plywood.

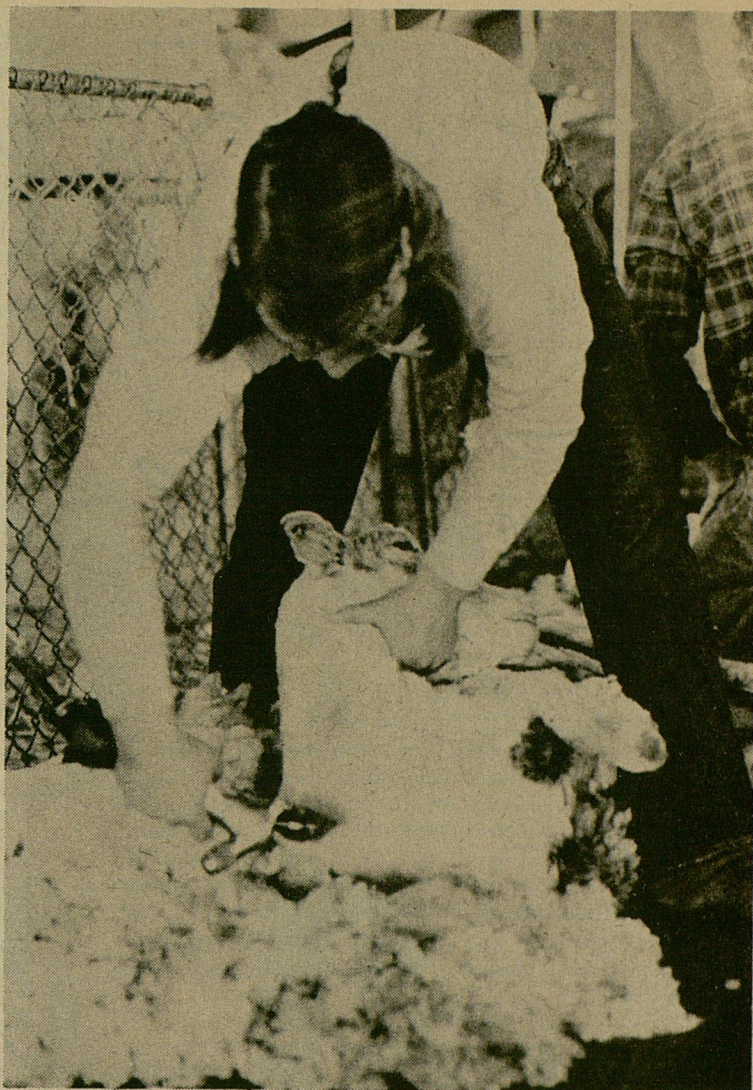
SHEARING

BY TAMMY TYLER

Many first time shearers have no realization of how important one's clothing can be. It is important to wear clothes that will absorb the grease (lanolin) from the sheep. This is especially important if you will be doing large flocks. If sheep's grease, being slightly poisonous, enters the pores of the skin, grease boils and other skin troubles may arise. I have found wool, although very warm on hot days, to be the best. The fit of your pants is important. Too tight of pants won't allow for much movement and if they're too loose, they're apt to interfere with the sheep. I also wear a special wool "sweater vest" that pulls down low on my back, thus preventing soreness at the end of a long day's work. Finally, your shoes are of utmost importance. Rubber soles are a disaster. Your shearing board will soon become slick with lanolin and you will soon be slipping with every movement. Even my work boots with Vibram soles were a disadvantage. I shear in special shearing moccasins made from old burlap feed bags; the burlap absorbs the grease.

The materials required to make two pairs of moccasins are: one good sack, five lengths of twine, a packing needle and blade shears.

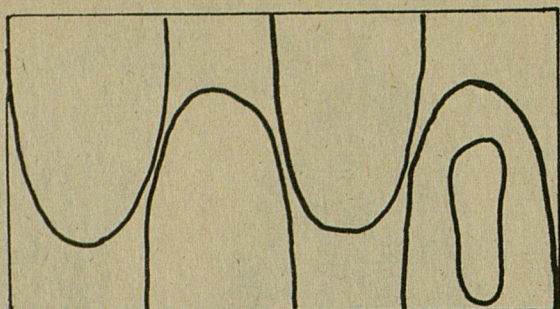
Laying the sack on the floor, cut it as in Figure A. Use both thicknesses of sack for each



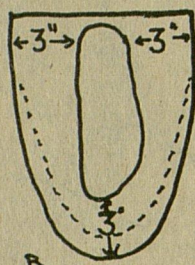
foot. Now take the cut piece of sack and, place the foot on it, with heel one inch in from the back of the sack. Trim as in Figure B at about three inches off the foot all around. The inside layer of the sack is next cut closer in to the toes, approximately one and a half inches out. This allows the bottom layer to fold over the top layer at the toes, thereby making a neat toe to the moccasin.

The straight back of the piece of sacking is next folded in half and stitched up to within three-quarters of an inch of the bottom as in Figure C.

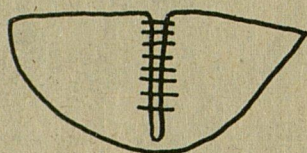
Now, placing the foot in the sack with the heel hard back into the stitched part, gather the sack around the toes in four tucks, as follows: First place a full length of twine in the needle, using it double. Now, as in Figure D, fold the bottom layer of the sack over the top, and, starting on the right side, fold into a neat tuck and push the needle straight through the formed tuck. From here make tuck 2, tuck 3, and tuck 4, going round the toes, taking up the slack or loose sack.



A

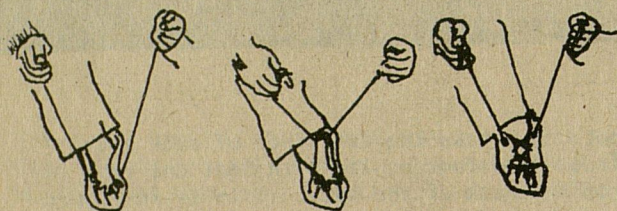


B



C

When the four tucks are threaded, pull the twine through half-way, and then pull it up tight and tie in a knot, as in Figure E. Now thread the twine across the top of the foot through the side of moccasin and back again through the other side. Cut the twine close up to the needle, thread the other half, and put it through the opposite sides to form cross laces, and the completed moccasin is as in Figure F.



In my shearing box I keep an antiseptic spray for any accidental shearing cuts, extra combs and cutters, tools for my shears, a wire brush for cleaning the combs and cutters and special wool twine for tying the fleece before bagging it.

The fleeces from my sheep are sold primarily to hand spinners. Therefore, it is important to me to have as much lanolin in the wool as possible. (The lanolin makes spinning easier and provides water resistance in unwashed yarn.) For that reason I usually shear in the late morning or early afternoon when the fleece is greasy from the sun. But for the most part, the time you shear can be fairly flexible. The important thing to remember is not to shear immediately after feeding. It is impossible for them to regurgitate and chew their cuds while on their backs. For the same reason, don't shear sheep who have been on lush, green

pasture. The green grass causes gas which the sheep can't expel while on their backs. Too many flocks have died from bloat after shearing.

A fleece that has been well shorn will come off pretty much in one piece and there will be few second cuts necessary. A second cut is when 1/2" or more of the fleece is left on and the shearer must go back and recut that area. Second cuts are obviously undesirable as they are unspinnable and the staple (length) of the fleece in that area has been shortened.

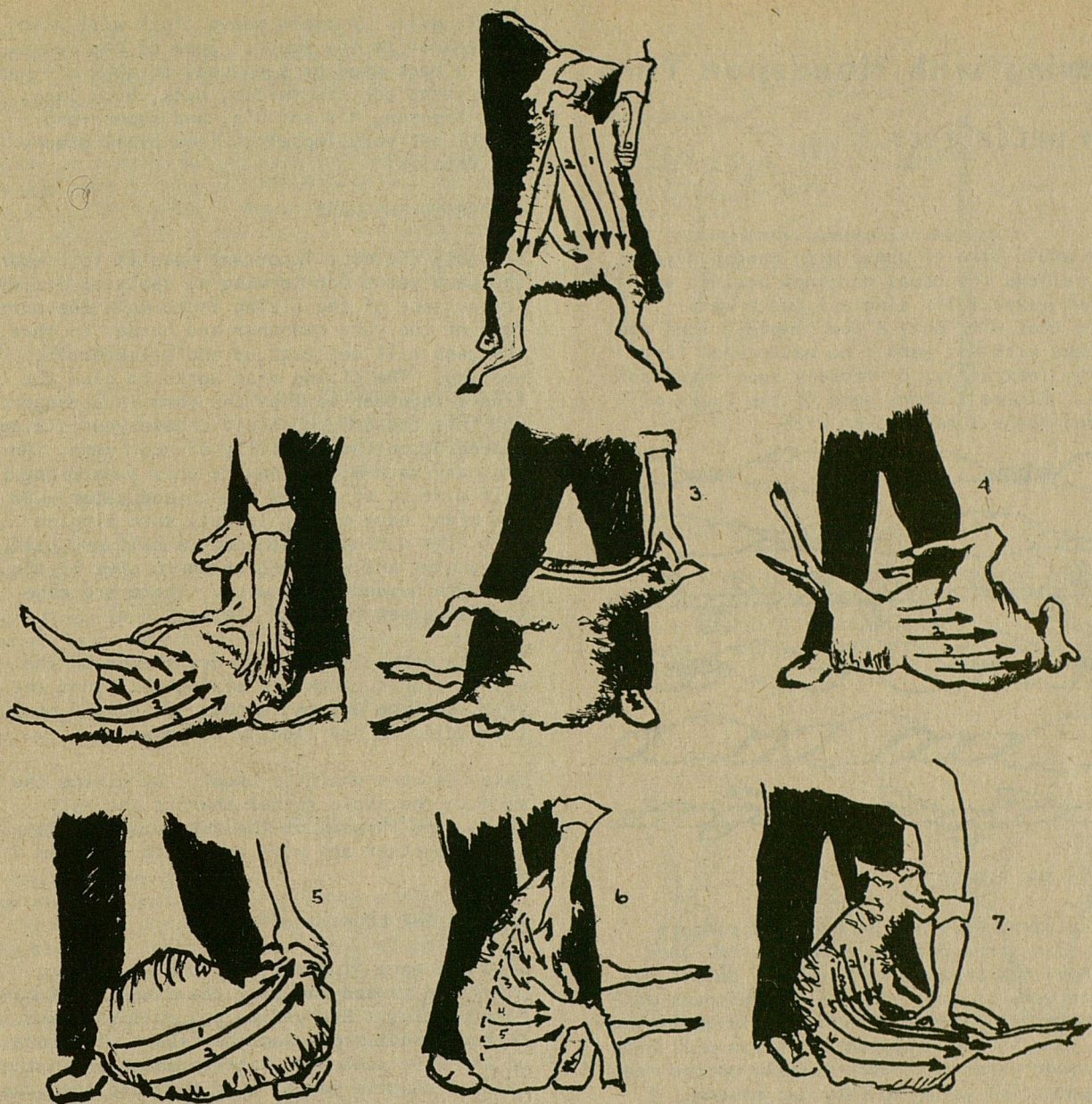
Accidentally cutting the sheep while shearing is common, especially with beginners. They are usually caused by holding your shears at the wrong angle or pulling up on the fleece as you are shearing. If this happens, check to be sure it is just a nick and not a deep wound. Treat any cuts with some kind of antiseptic (iodine or gentian violet) after you have finished shearing and the fleece has been removed. If possible, check again in a few days to make sure that it hasn't become infected. Again, a few nicks are common and nothing to be upset about.

The first part of shearing is to catch the sheep and get it on to the board in the correct starting position. To do this, I stand behind the sheep, with one foot on either side of the sheep's hind feet, and catch it under the throat. With an upward lift, I raise the front of the sheep off the floor, and walk back quickly keeping the sheep held out at a 45 degree angle on its hindlegs. In trying to sit down, it will move its hind legs and walk out of its own accord.

1. Sit the sheep on its rump with the body between your knees. Holding the sheep's right foreleg across the left side to tighten the skin, make the first stroke down to the left side. The second stroke runs parallel. The third stroke runs down the right side. Remove the remainder of the belly wool by shearing parallel with the first two strokes as far as the middle of the abdomen, then pull the skin towards the brisket and shear from right to left across the stomach, being careful not to remove either teats or the penis on rams and wethers. On rams, stretch the skin of the scrotum as tightly as possible and shear carefully. Shear the insides of both legs and up as far as the dock with strokes from right to left.

2. Turn the sheep slightly, so that it is resting on its right hip, with the upper half of the body resting against your leg. Pull the skin of the flank towards the head and shear the legs. Then, still stretching the skin of the flank, begin at the dock and shear three or four strokes toward the head.

3. Step between the sheep's legs and, while holding the head, with your left hand so that the neck is extended as much as possible,



start at the breastbone and shear up to and including the cheek. On the second stroke shear parallel and trim around the horn and the ear. On the third stroke finish behind the ear. Continue until front leg, shoulder, and back of the neck are clear.

4. Step back with your left foot and shear the remaining wool from the left side of the sheep.

5. Roll the sheep onto your foot, holding its head down with your left hand, and take a few more strokes past the backbone to start off the right side.

6. Step over the sheep with your right foot and bring the head back so that it is braced against your knees. Shear down the neck to the shoulder in three strokes, then clear the front leg with strokes from the backbone.

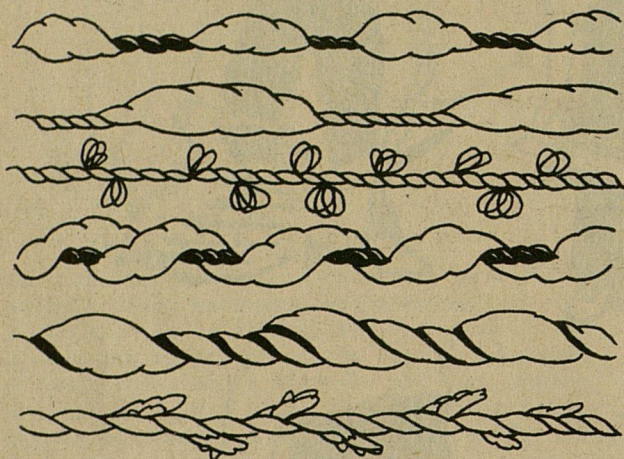
7. Swing your left leg across the sheep to a point even with its hip and roll the sheep over onto its left hip, again resting the upper portion of the body against your legs. Shear the right side with strokes from shoulder to flank, continuing down the leg in a smooth line, finishing at the dock.

After finishing, I usually use this time to trim hooves too. Once you've finished with that, carefully roll the sheep off of the fleece and let it go. Before tying and bagging the fleece, spread it out and pull off all the tags (dirty, matted areas), second cuts, leg and belly wool. Then fold the fleece into a square, tie with special paper twine and then stuff into a clean burlap bag for storage. In order to more easily decide about types of feed shearing dates, etc. it is a good idea to keep yearly records of weight and quality of each fleece.

Weaving with Handspun Yarn

MARY BELLE FREY

If you would like to weave with handspun yarns, don't believe the usual warnings against using handspun (especially singles) for a warp. I believe that with only a few simple tricks you can weave with any yarn - no matter how irregularly, inexpertly, or loosely spun - and enjoy it. Figure 1 shows some of the types of handspun yarns I have woven with.



PLANNING THE PROJECT:

Handspun yarns will not behave like commercially spun yarns because they have not been spun under the same heavy tension. Unless they are very tightly spun, your handspuns will fluff out when relaxed. To show this quality of the yarn in the finished cloth you will have to set your yarns much more loosely on the loom than commercial yarns so they can expand. I always make at least two samples before I weave the cloth. The set for the first sample is determined in the usual way by wrapping a bit of yarn loosely around a ruler and counting the number of threads needed to cover one inch, the yarns just barely touching (for example 15 threads). Two-thirds of this number (or ten threads per inch in our example) should be a good start for your sample. With handspun I always make a second sample set more loosely - about 80 % of the first sample. If the second sample is definitely nicer in feel or appearance or shows off the yarn better, I make a third sample set a bit looser. This sounds like a lot of bother, but much of the time you will prefer the second or third sample.

If you want a hard-wearing cloth, you'll probably choose plain weave. But if you are looking for a weave to show off your yarn to best advantage, you will be happier with some other weave. Plain weave will not let your yarn have its own life as any of the weaves with

floats will. A plain weave cloth will also be harsher to the touch. Some of the weaves that I have used or seen used to show off handspun yarns are the twills, huck, huck lace, spot Bronson, M's and O's, and summer-and-winter set very loosely. [see bibliography for details]

PREPARING THE WARP:

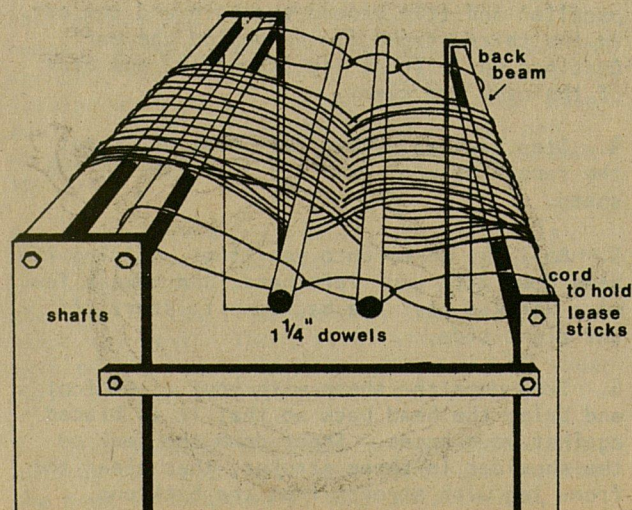
Probably the most important step is to prepare the warp yarns for weaving by applying a sizing. The purpose of the sizing is to make the surface of the yarn smoother and harder so that the warp will not fuzz up and stick during weaving. The sizing also works to glue the fibers together so that the yarn is stronger. For this reason you should choose your sizing depending on the fragility of your yarn. An ordinary yarn might require only a half and half mixture of liquid starch and water. Or you might have a very loosely spun singles yarn like a cloud that needs a half and half white glue and water solution to give it the strength needed for a warp. There are also special glues for warp sizing.

To size yarn, immerse the dry skeins in the sizing liquid, work the sizing well into the yarn, squeeze out the excess sizing and hang the skeins to dry lightly weighted.

Make the warp chain as usual. By sizing the yarn in the skein rather than in the warp chain, the threads of the warp will not be stuck together and will roll onto the beam easily.

WARPING THE LOOM:

Wind the warp directly onto the warp beam. Only then thread and sley the yarns - not before beaming. Every time you pull the yarn through heddles or reed the fibers will fuzz up and be a source of later problems. In the case of fragile yarns, wind the warp onto the warp beam loosely. The only tension necessary is supplied by two large polished dowels used as lease sticks and held about six inches apart. (figure 2) If the yarns are very un-



even or bulky, you may need to make string heddles with large eyes. Thread, sley, and tie-in as usual. Then enjoy weaving your handspun web.

If - in spite of the sizing - your warp fuzzes, sticks, or breaks during weaving, it is easy to apply more sizing to the warp with a sponge. Also a direct tie-up - where you can raise each shaft individually - may help by allowing you to open the shed gradually, one shaft at a time. Weave with as little tension as is necessary to give a clear shed.

FINISHING THE CLOTH:

To remove the sizing from the finished cloth soak it in cool water for half an hour. Wash it with soap or mild detergent. You can wash by hand or for 3 to 6 minutes on the gentle cycle of the washing machine.

If the yardage is to be tailored, you need to remove all the stretch from the cloth by ironing - yes, ironing - the wet cloth until it is dry. Press hard on the iron and force the stretch out. Other types of cloth will need only a light pressing after drying flat.

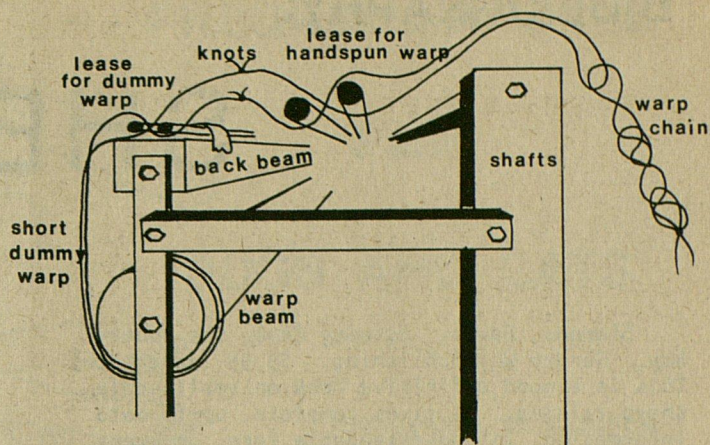
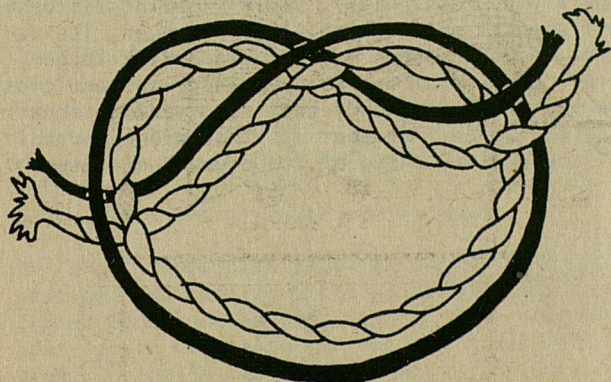
I hope you are started on years of enjoyable weaving with handspun yarns.

HINTS TO SAVE ON YOUR PRECIOUS HANDSPUN

1. Use a 'dummy warp'.

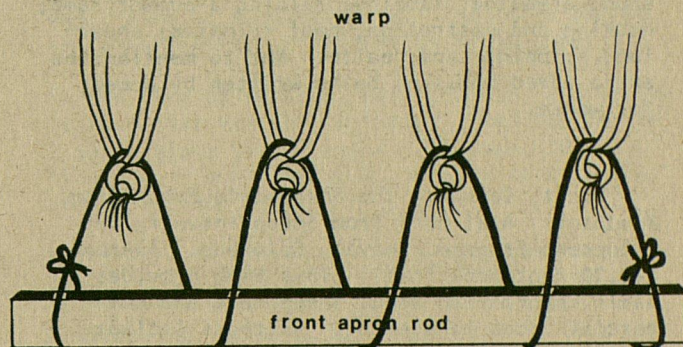
With a 'dummy warp' you can weave almost up to the end of your handspun warp and waste only about 10 inches of your special yarns.

Tie the handspun warp onto the ends of a warp already on the loom - either the end of the warp from the previous project or a one yard warp of some cheap yarn. Hold the lease sticks of the dummy warp to the back beam with masking tape and suspend the lease sticks of the handspun warp between the back beam and the shafts. (figure 3) Tie the ends together with an overhand knot. (figure 4) This knot is less time-consuming than the weaver's knot. Its bulk is unimportant, as you will not be pulling it through the heddles and reed. Beam the warp as usual.



2. Use the lashing tie-in.

Knot together groups of threads about 1 inch wide and lash the bundles to the front apron. (figure 5) With this method you waste less than six inches of warp to tie-in and spread the warp.



BOOKS AND MATERIALS

Basic weaving:

Harriet Tidball, The Weaver's Book.

Patterns:

Marguerite P. Davidson, A Handweaver's Pattern Book.

Handspun yarns:

Paula Simmons, Spinning and Weaving with Wool, Pacific Search Press, 715 Harrison Street, Seattle, WA. 98109.

Glue sizing for warp:

Robin and Russ Handweavers
533 North Adams Street
McMinnville, Oregon 97128

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

SHEEP

COMPILED BY TAMMY TYLER

Simmons, Paula. *Raising Sheep the Modern Way*. Garden Way Publishing. \$5.95 (paperback). This is a good definitive book on small-scale sheep raising. It gives complete, up-to-date information, in understandable form, on every phase of sheep raising. It covers what sheep to buy and why; how to feed and care for them; how to fence them; how to keep them healthy - and what to do when they are not. The book also includes ways of cooking the meat, step by step photos of hand shearing and many excellent photographs and diagrams.

Thomas, Sherry and Jeanne Tetrault. *Country Women*. Doubleday. \$6.95 (paperback). Includes an excellent reference section on sheep. Covers raising sheep; building a sheep shed; breeding; lambing; raising a bumper lamb; docking and castration; hoof trimming; shearing; spinning; and health. Not to mention the extra added bonus of being written by women, for women.

Scott, George. *The Sheepman's Production Handbook*. Available from Sheep Industry Development Program, Denver, Colorado. Approx. \$10.00 (notebook form). This book provides basic information about sheep care and commercial flock management. Sections include Genetics; Reproduction; Health; Nutrition; Management; and Marketing. The Health section is excellent for diagnosing and treating sheep diseases.

Ensminger, M.E. *Sheep and Wool Science*. The Interstate Printers and Publishers. \$15.00 (hardback). Definitely the textbook on sheep raising and geared towards agricultural students, large scale ranchers and feed lot managers. Certainly not worth your money if you are raising sheep on a small scale. The best chapters are those on Breeding; Feeding; and Range Sheep Management. The section covering health is one of the poorest I've seen.

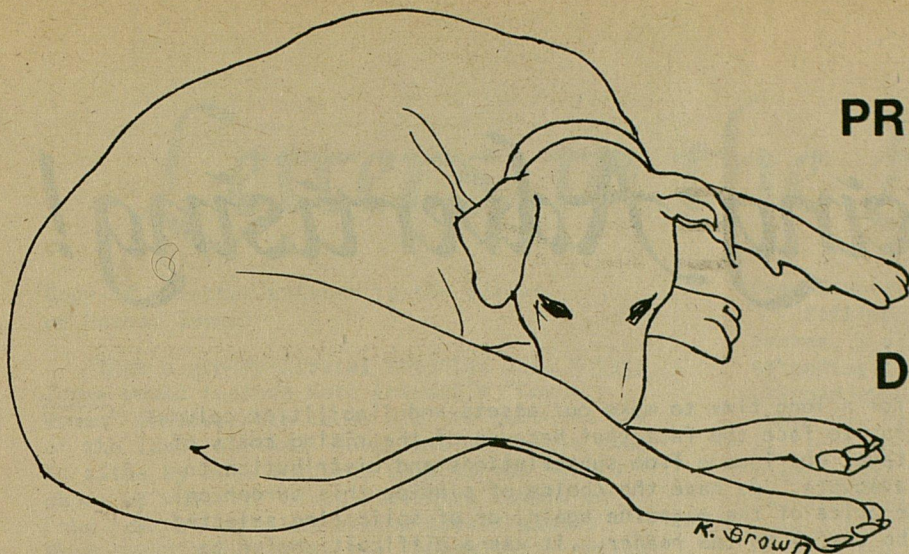
Bradbury, Margaret. *The Shepherd's Guidebook*. Rodale Press. \$6.95 (hardback). Another excellent book with the small flock shepherd in mind. In addition to sections on Starting a Flock; Housing; Equipment and Fencing; Breeding; Lambing and Flock Management; Health; and Feeds and Pasture Management, Ms. Bradbury shows how sheep are not only thrifty, but can provide you with income as well. The author shows how meat, skins and wool can be prepared for market with little difficulty: there is a course in home butchering, a novel way to tan skins so that they may be washed, and sections of spinning, dyeing, and weaving your own wool.

Bundy, C. and R. Diggins. *Sheep Production*. Prentice-Hall. Part of the Prentice-Hall Vocational Agricultural Series, this book is an excellent general reference book. It covers the breeds of sheep, feeding, breeding and lambing, grading your wool, and so on. Well written and very useful.

Bowen, Godfrey. *Wool Away*. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. An excellent guide to the difficult but essential art of shearing. The New Zealand "tally-hi" shearing method is clearly and carefully presented and is illustrated with an exceptional set of photographs and diagrams showing step by step procedures. A must for any serious shearer.

The Shepherd, (monthly magazine). Sheffield, Mass. 01257. This magazine discusses all aspects of sheep raising. However, its recent focus has been mainly towards the large-scale commercial operation. There are articles on breeding, pregnancy testing, feeding, shearing and so on. Breeder listings are a source of top quality sheep of the breed you choose. ♀

PREGNANCY CARE FOR DOGS AND CATS



BY DONNA DEN BOER

Pregnancy in the dog can be detected as early as 28 days after mating by the experienced veterinarian. This is done by palpating the abdomen. From the 45th day of pregnancy on, the puppies can be seen by X-ray.

It is recommended that during pregnancy no medications such as de-worming compounds, aspirin or tranquilizers be given. All vaccinations against disease should be given before the anticipated breeding time. If the animal has been bred accidentally, no vaccinations should be given until the last two weeks of pregnancy.

If the pregnant animal is in good health, and in a proper state of nutrition at the time of mating, then she can be fed about the same number of calories per day as before, so that she does not gain excess weight during gestation.

For dogs over one year of age, and weighing less than twenty pounds, the number of calories per pound per day to be consumed should be fifty.

Dogs weighing 20 to 50 pounds should receive forty calories per pound of total body weight. The large breeds of dogs weighing between 50 to 100 pounds should get 30 calories per pound per day, and finally, dogs over 100 pounds should be fed 20 to 25 calories per pound of body weight per day. During the last two weeks of pregnancy, and all during the time that the mother is feeding the puppies, you may double the calorie figures.

The same generalization applies to cats. After the fourth week of pregnancy normal figures for calorie intake can be doubled, and this diet should be maintained all during the time the mother cat is feeding her kittens. Adult female cats require 40 calories per pound of body weight per day when non-pregnant.

The diet of pregnant cats and dogs should consist of high quality protein, and because some canned foods may be deficient in water-soluble, heat-labile vitamins, and the dry foods deficient in the fat-soluble vitamins, you should

add vitamin supplements.

Eggs that are cooked, raw muscle meat, and small quantities of raw liver will also fill in the deficiencies that may occur using the commercially prepared diets.

Remember that the water-soluble vitamins consist largely of B's and C, while the oil-soluble vitamins are A, D and E.

Gestation will vary more in the cat than in the dog. The dog will carry her litter for 63 days, give or take two days. The cat's period of "time" can range between 57 to 63 days.

As the time of parturition, or birth, approaches be sure that you have prepared a bed for her in a quiet place in the house. However, SHE may find a spot more suitable, such as in a partly opened dresser drawer, or your hat.

A few days to a week before birth, the mammary glands will swell with milk. At this time the animal will be seen to be actively engaged in nest-making, often dragging children's toys and dolls into her nest.

When she is ready to deliver, you will see her lying down, eyes closed, brow wrinkled, and then you will notice active muscular contractions of the abdominal muscles.

Although dogs and cats often deliver their first young within 20 minutes of the initial onset of contractions, longer periods of time will not be abnormal for that individual animal.

It is not unusual that the large breeds, such as Collies, will take 12-24 hours to deliver 8 to 12 offspring. The small breeds of dogs will average one to 3 puppies per litter. Cats, on the other hand, will take a shorter amount of time to deliver their litter, that is, under 12 hours, and their litters will average 4 to 6 kittens.

My next article will deal with emergency home care at the time of birth. ♀

Announcing Advertising!

Country Women has tried for a long time to make our assets and liabilities columns balance. Now we are having to face the fact that because of the rising costs of printing, paper, and postage, our income from subscriptions and distribution to bookstores is no longer adequate. We have the choice of placing this burden on the reader by raising the price of the magazine again, or of soliciting selected advertising which would be useful to the reader. It was a difficult choice to make, but after much deliberation and discussion we chose the latter alternative. We believe that the present price of \$1.25 is a fair one, and we want *Country Women* to be available to as many women as possible.

We plan to add eight pages for this purpose, so the actual content of the magazine will not be diminished. We will also have a classified ad section, the rates for which are listed below. We will continue to run the Contacts section (at no charge) for communities and farms seeking additional members.

DISPLAY RATES

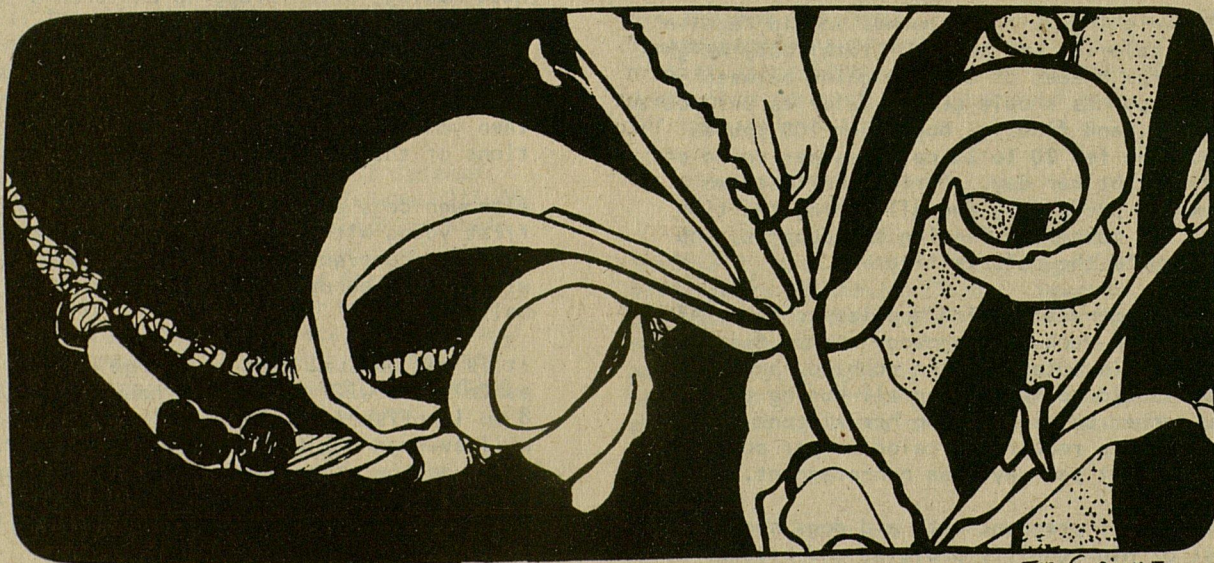
1 column inch (3-1/2 x 1") - \$15.00
Business card size - \$30.00
1/4 page - \$65.00

CLASSIFIED RATES

35¢ a word

Discounts - 20% discount for any ad running in three consecutive issues.

For additional advertising rates or information, write to *Country Women*, Box 431, Albion, Ca 95410.



THE CORINNE

Letters to the Editors

Copy of a letter written to the editor
of Mother Jones:

That a groovy-liberal magazine like Mother Jones would include Kate Coleman's "Country Women" demonstrates to us all the cultural law of the land: sexism. Sometimes so subtle that it slips by even inspired editors who vow to shore up whatever civil liberties remain to "the rest of us", but sexism nevertheless. What could possibly be the journalistic rationale for publishing a woman writer who trashes (and trashes and trashes - talk about role reversal gone berserk) a community of feminist women because they have chosen an offbeat and irreverent lifestyle? What's in it for them to revere patriarchy anyway? The Albion women, it should be pointed out, seem very clear about what they're about. Perhaps a more culturally significant question to ask is what's in it for Kate Coleman to (feel the need to) come to the aid of all good American men.

The article's distortions and nonstop put-downs of a group of American individuals whose existence and philosophy would undoubtedly have been supported by Mary Harris Jones herself are indefensible. I implore Kate Coleman to go back and take a deeper look at her favorite, The Dialectic of Sex. Kate has the prerogative to be confused about her own place in society. However, as Elizabeth Kubler-Ross beautifully stated it, none of us has the right to attempt to find herself at the expense of others. If Kate Coleman can honestly categorize the Albion women as "less cerebral" than "feminine and maternal" women (with whom she herself identifies, and in the best possible personal and social terms), if these kinds of "distinctions" can be seriously drawn - and drawn sharply - in your pages by a woman writer from Berkeley about women writers/farmers from up the coast in Albion, I find myself fearfully concluding that an external standard like the ERA is needed more now than ever. It seems our pro-life instincts about one another can no longer be relied upon for the support each of us so desperately needs. When Mother Jones decides to acknowledge that a feminist/egalitarian magazine title isn't enough, I would be glad to reconsider renewing my subscription. Until then, please cancel.

Jinx Houston
Ukiah, California

Editors note: This letter refers to an article written in a recent issue of Mother Jones which was supposedly about Country Women magazine but in reality was a politically insensitive scandal sheet.

Dear Country Women,

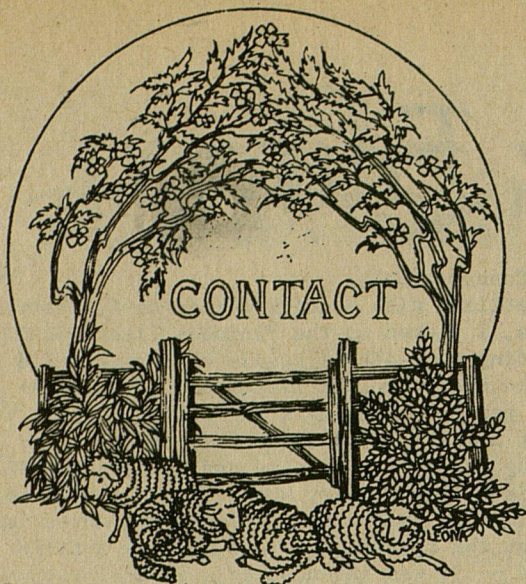
Settling with a quick cup of coffee between chores, I picked up the "Animals" issue of CW, intending to read the couple of articles I'd skipped over when the issue came. The first of these was Fran Ransley's "Horse Training". To put it mildly, I was SHOCKED to find myself reading all about training and handling COLTS... Is this really Country Women??? I re-read to make certain that a particular young horse (male) was not the specific subject of this article and no -- it was intended as a general introduction to horse training. To find an article in CW that accepts such a sexist and inaccurate use of language is truly surprising. I trust that future writing on horse training will include instruction for the other 50% of the young horse population: the FILLIES.

It may have been very bad timing, but the next article I turned to was the "Solar Energy--A Beginning" by Joanne Doerr. This article tells me that "A built-in-place component system allows the builder to select HIS components." (capital letters mine) This assumption -- that builders (and farmers and workers...and do-ers in general) are MEN is OUTRAGEOUS AND UNTRUE. Perhaps it feels as though I am nit-picking to jump on this one sentence, but I don't believe I am. I believe that such "slips" in language are inexcusable in a feminist publication. I should like to think that they are inexcusable in any publication. One reason we have started our own magazines, our own journals, our publishing houses and all systems of feminist communication which we create and control is to be able to re-assert some control over our common language -- and the assumptions and images and ideas that it reinforces. So please -- more attention to the editing, the final typing, and the final proofreading of Country Women!

In ♀ strength
Jeanne Tetrault



MAGGIE PUTMAN



I am writing a book for a major publisher, based on interviews with older women (50-90) who have spent their lives farming. I will spend Sept. through November traveling around the country doing interviews. I need suggestions from *Country Women* readers of women in your areas to interview. And I would appreciate the chance to stay with any readers who could put me up for a night. Sherry Thomas, Box 54, Albion, Ca. 95410.

We have an operating sheep ranch in Mendocino County and are looking for other lesbian women to help us in all phases of ranching, either part time or full time in exchange for room and board. Write: P.O. Box 326, Hopland, CA. 95449.

Amazon Work Camp -- Live in a women's community this summer and learn new skills - cabin building, fencing, yoga and meditation, etc. Pyramid community house on 45 acres overlooking the ocean, 2 hours from San Francisco. \$100 a month. Write Pyramid of Amatarasa, P.O. Box 67, Jenner, CA. 95450. 707-632-5474.

A Woman's Horse Farm vacation: we're located in Solana State Forest in northern Minnesota and are welcoming women to come and learn assorted skills including horsebackriding, woodlore and rural survival. Write for brochure: Ravenna Refuge, Rt. 2, McGrath, MN. 56350.

We at Wolf Lake Refuge, a small (25 people) rural community in Northern Minnesota provide social services to a variety of clients. Our largest ongoing program is with adjudicated juvenile offenders. Our other programs include both winter and summer camping with a variety of groups, and a recycling center. We are committed to wholistic, organic lifestyle. We need more people to achieve our goals; particularly a school teacher, a counselor, carpenters, and a kitchen administrator. For more information call or write: Wolf Lake Refuge, Rt. 3, Box 325, McGregor, Minnesota, 55760 (218-426-3845).

Wanted: One or two strong, stable women, able to live primitively in a small trailer, to help develop an organic farm and center for consciousness-raising. AGBOG, Rt. 2 Box 100C, Bertram, Tx. 78605.

We are looking for people to come to live and work with us on our farm in Colombia, South America. We grow coffee and cocoa as cash crops on our 100 acres. The farm and surrounding area is mountainous, 3,000' altitude, remote (a 3-hour walk to the nearest road) and very beautiful. Wildlife - especially birds - is abundant. If interested, please write: Jackie, Jim, Meredith. Finca Los Guaduales, A.A. 118 Cartago, Valle, COLOMBIA.

In 1978, just after the monsoon season, a group of American women will attempt to reach the summit of the tenth highest mountain in the world, Annapurna. There are also three lower treks planned for supporters of the expedition. If you are interested in a trek or in supporting the trip write AWHE (American Women Himalayan Expedition), 846 Lathrop Drive, Stanford, CA. 94305.

I am a female agriculture student looking for experience on a working farm. I will trade labor for room & board. I will be available when school gets out (July 1). Write me: Ayn Perry, 3020 A Whitewood Dr., Carmichael, CA. 95608.

I am looking for people to come and caretake my farm in Columbia, South America for a three month period. This farm is a separate farm from the one in the above contact, although it has the same mailing address. If you are interested, write: Cathie Riess, A.A. 118, Cartago, Colombia, South America.

Sisters in the Movement: We are a small, isolated wilderness retreat and organic farm and information center located 1 hour northwest of Austin. If you send us information concerning your personal habits, skills and interests, and preferred dates of visit, we will design a program that meets your special needs and ours. Reservations required. Women's Organic Farm and Sanctuary (Abigail and Carla), Bertram, TX. U.S.A. 78605.

We are collecting samples of feminist humor for an anthology on this subject. Send any contributions to Gloria Kaufman, 305 Wakewa Ave. South Bend, Indiana 46617

FUTURE ISSUES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

We want to solicit material primarily from women outside the United States. What issues face feminists in other countries? How are they organized? How do they relate to the problems of employment discrimination, child care, abortion, aging, health care, violence against women, class differences, environmental issues? What part do international feminists play in their national government, national issues? International issues? What are international lesbian communities like? Examples of female bonding in other cultures. If you have contacts outside the U.S. please encourage them to write. If you know of periodicals we might use to solicit material from, let us know. For further information, or to offer suggestions, contact: Terry, Box 220, Albion, CA 95410. Deadline is JULY 30.

FARMING WOMEN: Who are we? Young and old? What are the realities of our lives, our history, our farms? Even if you are not a farmer yourself, here's your chance to interview a woman farmer and write an article about her life. Let's make sure our history is not lost this time. Consider writing the interview in the first person narrative rather than question/answer form. Of the skills or knowledge you brought with you to the farm, which has proved most useful? Do you sometimes have fantasies about other ways you might

spend your life? Was farming your choice? If country life was your fantasy, how closely has the fantasy corresponded to the reality? Deadline

September 15.

UPCOMING ISSUES

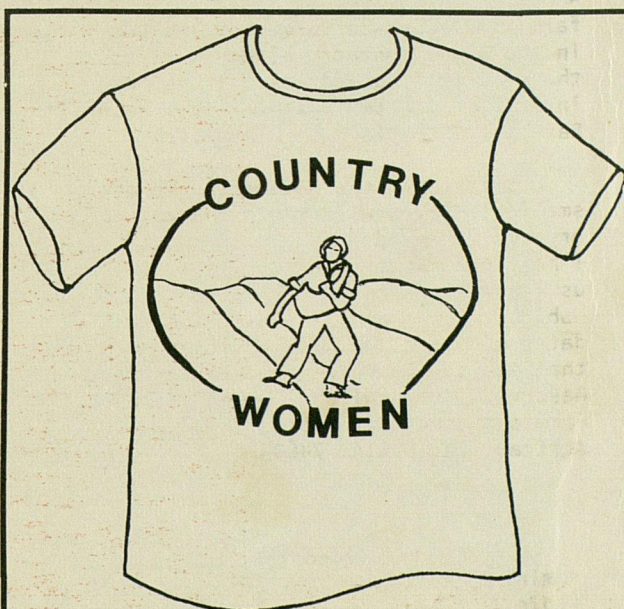
WOMEN AS MOTHERS: WOMEN AS DAUGHTERS

FEMINISM AND LESBIANISM

RACISM

A MESSAGE FROM THE POETRY COORDINATORS

In order to speed up the handling of poetry manuscripts submitted to *Country Women*, we are now asking that all poems be sent directly to our Poetry Editor, Lynda Koolish, 1802 Channing Way, Berkeley, Ca 94703, rather than to our box in Albion. We also ask that women submitting poems include a SASE (a self-addressed, stamped envelope) capable of holding all the poems submitted, in case they are all returned to the author at once. In addition to saving us postage, this will probably mean more immediate feedback on the poetry. Since *Country Women* prints about twenty-four poems a year maximum, please don't feel discouraged if your poem is not selected. We are not primarily a literary magazine!



COUNTRY WOMEN T SHIRTS

BACK ISSUES

Choose any 5 copies of back issues #10 - 21 for \$3.00 plus 50¢ postage. Single copies of issues 10 - 22, \$1.00; #23 - 26, \$1.25.

- #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
- #22 Country - City
- #23 Class
- #24 Personal Power
- #25 Fiction
- #26 Violence and Anger

COLOR: GOLD with BROWN

SIZES: S,M,L

PRICE: \$5.00 + .50 postage

100% Cotton

Country Women T Shirts. Box 431, Albion CA

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I THINK
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FUN OF US



BELIEVE ME,
SISTER, THERE'S
SOMETHING IN HERE
TO OFFEND EVERYONE