

MAIZE

A LESBIAN COUNTRY MAGAZINE

FALL 9990



MAIZE IS BY AND FOR LESBIANS

MAIZE invites Lesbians to contribute articles, graphics, photos, interviews, letters, comments, news of Lesbians on the land. Cassette taped interviews and discussions are accepted for transcription. Transcriptions will be returned for editing. Editing on any piece will be done only in cooperation with the author. If you wish to have your work returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please note if the work you send has been submitted or published elsewhere. *Please include a biographical note.*

Letters to the editor may be published in whole or in part, unless specified "not for publication". Names will be used unless you request your name withheld, as well as place of residence.

The contents of MAIZE does not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the editor. Debate is encouraged. Editor: Lee Lanning

We will run free announcements of particular interest to country Lesbians and free classified ads by Lesbians especially for country Lesbians. Display ads: \$10 (4½h x 3½w)

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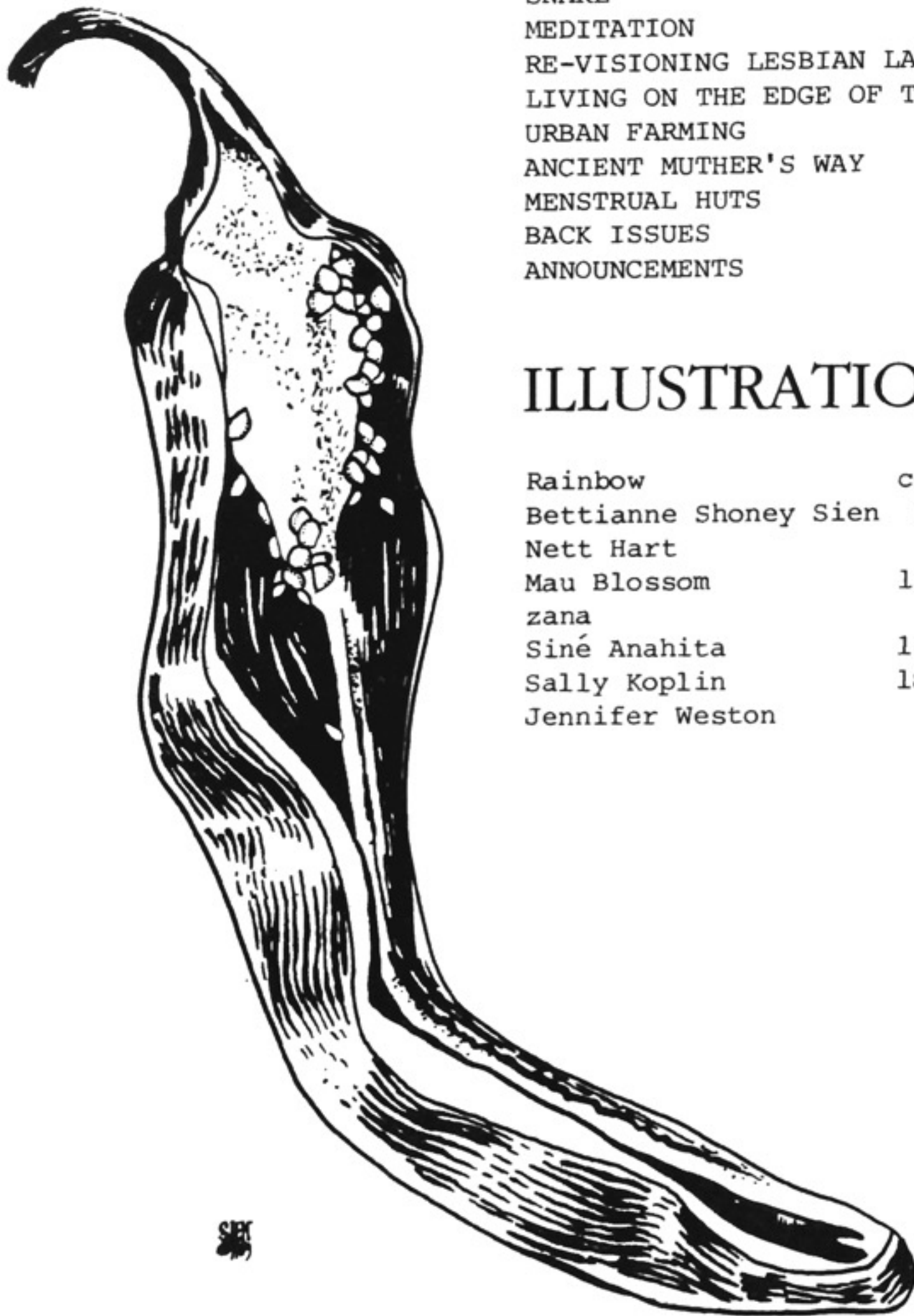
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SEX

Bettianne Shoney Sien
 Santa Cruz, California

WALKING THE DREAM

By Gitta Ridder

Lumby, British Columbia

Reprinted from the Waxing Moon Healing Village newsletter. Last winter the WMHV Society held a Healing Fair which raised \$760 toward their dream of womyn's land. Now this land is becoming reality: see the On The Land section in this issue.

The Waxing Moon Womyn's Healing Fair was a thrill for me; witnessing a couple of hundred womyn gathering with the focus of healing their lives. This symbolizes hope for our future as womyn, and it exhilarated me. If we can pull together for one day, that many of us, there will hopefully be several of us who are ready and eager to live and work in healing harmonious ways, in the light and in respect for Mother Earth. I talked to several womyn at the fair, and they shared the vision and longed for a space where we support our healing process and find our road back to nature. A sanctuary within an aura of certainty where we express methods of conflict resolution with a generous heart. A sacred Womyn's space where we grow old in a healthy way, living as relatives with the plants, animals and the Earth as a living organism.

Much of the Earth has been mistreated, exploited, abused, and entire species are lost. Many of us have become numbed and unaware of the most basic principles of life and living, such as where our drinking water comes from, or where the garbage we create goes, the effect electricity and power lines have on us, or where the food we eat comes from or what is added to it. Most of us are not in touch with the Earth as a living entity. To feel at home and part of the whole, we will need to rediscover and re-enchant our world. We need to sense and honor the pulse of the Earth's rhythm in our blood

and bones through the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. We want to caretake the Earth, not for profit or only within the boundaries of the land, but the bioregion and beyond, for the good of generations to come. As daughters of this magnificent planet, we have a responsibility to help her in her healing process, to attune ourselves to the planetary life force and needs at this particular point in time. She needs all the help she can get, and so do we.

We deserve to be loved for who we are and be supported in times of transition with loving care and total honesty. Our dysfunctional patterns of the past do not have to keep us in pain and in the darkness of isolation and lack of choices about our quality of life. Life is meant to be about Joy and Abundance. This damaged Earth and every living organism if given a chance will begin a healing process. No doubt, throughout history humankind has managed to lose balance in life. Nonetheless, nature provides for All in Abundance, we only need to open ourselves to the unlimited opportunities of inviting balance back to ourselves and the planet. It will not be easy for us to arrive at the Healing Village with our individual baggage of internalized (patriarchal) patterns of ego, pain, fear, guilt, scarcity and separateness. The future is a seed within our minds, will we choose to vivify the seeds of abundance, confidence, generosity and peace in our hearts and in our community? It may take time. We do have a chance of redeveloping our connectedness and harmony living as sisters closely with our life sustaining Mother Earth. We will make it a (never ending) joyous celebration of

COMING HOME!!!

ON THE LAND

WAXING MOON HEALING VILLAGE British Columbia, Canada

The Waxing Moon Healing Village has found a home in the Okanagan (central B.C. near Vernon). The goddess led us to a most beautiful, magic spot. 320 acres in Bear Valley (half of the Valley) with a lake(!), a hexagon shape Healing Centre (needs some roof work and finishing inside), a 4 bedroom house (interior needs finishing and outside paint job) and there is a cabin by the lake that needs some repair. There is a wonderful big open space in front of the centre with fire places, there is a play house for children, a fenced in hay field, about 4 overgrown gardens and many former home sites around the lake and elsewhere. There is running water in the Healing Centre and the main house from a creek. There is also an artisian well with a hand pump in front of the centre. There is no hydro, i.e. we will have to get solar power eventually. There is no phone, i.e. we will have to look into getting a cellualr phone in time.

This land was formerly used by the HAILOS (wholistic) community, which folded about two years ago. The land seems to have a mind of her own. Many people have had their eyes on it for logging. It is surrounded on 3 sides by crown land, which cannot be logged without this access either. The present owners felt in a bind, because they cannot hold it (as buildings deteriorate and taxes are up) nor could they bear selling it to be logged. We can have an agreement to lease it for two years in exchange for paying the taxes (around 1500 dollars) and the upkeep of the buildings. After two years we have an option to buy. This gives us the time to feel each other out as well as the land. This gives us the chance to experiment with living in community, i.e. living and relating in a healing way.

This also gives us the opportunity and time to raise the necessary moneys to secure this little paradise for longterm.

Much work lies ahead of us now: clean up, repairs, painting, wallpapering and more. The work party is on!

from the newsletter
PO Box GD, Lumby, BC V0E 2G0 Canada

OWL FARM Roseburg, Oregon

Busy, busy, busy! The summer season is in full bloom. We have had two separate weekends of sixteen wimmin on the land, all enjoying ourselves, lots of laughter, conversation, good food, and plenty of work getting done. We are waiting for a new resident who will arrive in July and renovate the bus for a winter space. So OWL is bursting at the seams. As a collective, we've been learning how to respect each other's needs, while keeping focused on work that has to be done. Not always an easy task. With it all, there is a lot of respect and harmony among the residents at OWL, and that feels good. So come visit! The more the merrier!

Lots of work getting done these past months. We've taken down two large dead trees that were threatening two of the structures on the land. The work went smoothly, and these trees will provide the main house with winter wood once seasoned.

A new garden space called "the bog garden" has been cleared and planted. It is our first attempt to make use of the stream water that runs through the land. The Land Trust agreed to purchase fencing for this garden (330 feet at \$67).

Our summer projects include woodsheds for each structure on the land. We'll be gleaning dead trees from the forest around us for supports, thus cutting down on expenditures for lumber.

We are working toward renovating the south side of the coop into a pottery space. A donation of plexiglass odds and ends may have alleviated the need to buy plexiglass for coop roof space.

In March, our well was tested and found to have clean drinking water! YEA! At the June Land Trust meeting, we agreed to purchase a hand pump to have access to this bubbling source of H2O. The estimated cost of this aspect of the water system is \$60.

WE DID IT! We are tax-exempt. The federal government has accepted our application for exemption from federal income taxes. A final ruling will not be made until March of 1994, but in the meantime, we receive all the benefit of tax-exempt status. All donations made to us are now tax-deductible on your federal income tax returns and we are eligible for grants that are available only to tax-exempt organizations! Hurray! With this ruling, we can now apply for tax-exempt status with the post office which should cut our mailing costs in half and we will also approach the County for a decrease in our County property taxes.

from the newsletter

Oregon Women's Land Trust
PO Box 1692, Roseburg, OR 97470

SILVER CIRCLE SANCTUARY Holly Springs, Mississippi


Silver Circle has enjoyed a wonderful summer of vegetables and flowers. The drought of the last two months is taking its toll on the trees and vegetation. The feelings we are getting here from the Devas is that the Mother Earth is in the mists of making big changes. Our city friends are trying to accommodate the earthquake predictions and we are earthquake "proofing" our buildings' contents as much as we can.

We are planning a major building project for the fall and winter (see announcement if you are interested in coming for a while). We envision a 34' x 16' addition onto our present living space which usually also serves as a communal gathering space. We also plan to finish our composting toilet as soon as it gets cool in Sept. We are hoping for several visitors this fall

and winter after the hot weather breaks the middle of Sept. We will keep you posted on the success of the composter.

New developments in our area have kept us busy in town some this summer. Audrey and Vickie are opening a bookstore in Memphis and we have been helping build bookshelves, etc. Also, we did some traveling during July networking with wimmin in Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. A new cat joined the family in sad condition: injured, starving (worms) and pregnant! Gwen's nursing has done wonders for her in just a short time so we hope to have healthy kittens within the month. Spirit Guide indicates that one may be my next familiar. That is an exciting prospect since I lost mine back in the Spring.

An early planting for the fall garden has been hard hit by the drought but the sugarsnap peas seem to be holding on and chinese cabbage are struggling. Soon, rain, soon. I honor the Mother's need to do what she must even as I ask.

Since I wrote the above, we had 1.1 inches of rain on Labor Day. The night before our neighbor Fran taught us the Cherokee ritual of drawing the turtle in the sand. (If you don't want rain, you draw  in the turtle's back.) Our ritual ended with a loud clap of thunder. The next day we were blessed with this wonderful water. Blessed Be!

Gwen and Gail

Silver Circle Sanctuary
Rt. 5 Box 100, Holly Springs MS 38635

A MANUAL BLENDER?

A friend of mine used to live in Arkansas and has told me of a blender someone had there that used no electricity. It was made to run by a series of gears. A wheel was turned and the blender whizzed.

I live without electricity and I want to keep it that way, but I would like some modern conveniences. I'm sure there is a way to have some of these things without doing a lot of harm to the environment.

If there is anyone who knows how to do this or knows who does, I'd appreciate any information.

Earth
12150 W. Calle Seneca
Tucson, AZ 85743



Nett Hart
Foreston, Minnesota

WOMAN'S WORLD Madisonville, Louisiana

The activity around here has tripled and my muscles ache and my soul soars higher! The old pond was overgrown, broken open at one end and generally a mess. Now it is recut, clean, levee-banked and waiting for packing and seeding! Wow!

The old garage (tin) has its doors off and on the ground awaiting new hands to rebuild one end of the frame. After that we will start making it into a small workshop to house all the woodworking tools. Although I'm still here mostly alone, the women who come on weekends and occasionally for weekday help really keep my projects moving at a hectic but fun pace.

Some questions have arisen that I would love to hear answers from you readers. Some women have suggested that they buy some of the land now instead of living

and working on the place for 5 years first. Other women want to come and work for the "community" but their "help" is short, aperiodic, more play and social than useful and often drains our limited resources instead of adding! How do you communicate to women who want to "be on the land" that there is a price to pay to be privileged to enjoy the benefits? Some town women have an attitude of the place being FREE!!! Somehow they ignore the expenses associated with property taxes, insurance, utilities, repairs, fuel, garbage, cleaning, laundry, replacements, etc. I mention all this mostly for future reference because I have been very fortunate recently to have received primarily *gracious* women who not only come out and work 4 to 6 hours a day to help, but who also take care of their own food and laundry, otherwise I couldn't afford the help! Ha! I hope all this doesn't sound too petty for readers because real living in the country is so invigorating that most of the time women really *forget* the costs to the caretaker in time, energy and money!! What do you think? Anyone experience working all day only to find that without that helper you would have accomplished even more with less stress and expense? Am I alone? Unaware?

Well, the good news is that I am still getting inquiries about Woman's World from the spring issue of MAIZE 9990 and am thrilled with the "readiness" of the women who write! Two have visited!

I am still interested in hearing from women who have a passion to live in the country on clean land, free from addictions with open loving women who are responsible and independent. Being able to support themselves at present is vital to the beginning of Woman's World as we presently have no industry started!

Shewolf

Shewolf is a crone on 100 acres of magic spaces manifesting "a nation of Women with wings" to build and live in Woman's World! 1990 is the year of conception and birth. I am a passionate carpenter-teacher-witch-traveler, who has lived in West Virginia, Ohio, Arizona, Texas, California, Florida and Louisiana!
PO Box 655, Madisonville, Louisiana 70447

SIMPLICITY IS NOT SCARCITY

By Lea Matthews
Pasadena, California

These are excerpts from my first two letters to Shewolf at a Woman's World in Madisonville, Louisiana, where I may very well be living soon.

April 22, 1990 Earth Day

Dear Shewolf,

I was very excited to read your vision of Woman's World in the Spring issue of MAIZE. I am in a period of reflection and decision myself at the moment. So I was especially interested in your description of isolation and forested, healthy land but still close enough to New Orleans to have some other opportunities since I am not yet ready to be able to make a living just living on the land.

I was born in Jackson, Mississippi because my mother had been staying with her parents while my father was in the service. (His parents were from Siloam Springs, Arkansas). They came back to California, where they had met, when I was five months old.

Later I spent a summer on a subsistence level farm in the Ozarks near Harrison, Arkansas. This was very primitive, with no running water, no electricity and an outhouse. I loved it. Then I spent a summer in Atlanta where I totally fell in love with the contradictions of the city. The sophistication of the arts community with the down home friendliness. Walking on the bricks that General Lee marched over during the war between the states to go into the fancy department stores on Peachtree.

In general, I love the abundance of vegetation that the warmth and the rain makes possible in the south (and I can tolerate the bugs and love the heat). Certainly there is a history of strong women, creative women, in the south. I

have been thinking more and more of the south since I heard about the National Lesbian Conference coming up in 1991. The timing certainly seems to be right.

My dreams for my future certainly include living in women only space. I foresee growing my own food for health and economy. I want to be in an area for a long time where I can see the seasons change and the birds come back year after year to nest. Where each corner of the land has its special memories and I know where and when the flowers and plants will come up.

I see a life where simplicity is not scarcity, where physical work is necessary but where it is not the only thing. Where there is time to meditate and create art and music. Where decisions are made for the good of the group without the oppression of the individual. Sonia Johnson talks in Wildfire about the economy of women being gift giving and sharing rather than commerce and consumerism. About plenty coming from everyone being able to do just what they want. I think these things are all possible with some unlearning of our own fears and feelings of limitation, and in a place where we are safe from threat of attack that is always present when men are around.

Many of my ideas about living on the land came from the books Louis Bromfield wrote about reclaiming wornout farmland with large scale organic farming methods. At that time, during and after the second world war, presidents and educators and members of the UN came to see the miracles he accomplished. And only now, nearly fifty years later is the establishment willing to look again at those methods, when the end is so near after all the time of raping and poisoning the land.

I have taken college courses in animal science and love animals especially goats and geese, and taking care of them. I

have quite a few veterinary and obstetrics skills acquired in the classes or in the times I have lived in the country. I raised, trained and showed Afghan Hounds for 10 years, wrote and edited for dog fancier magazines, (I also showed goats briefly at fairs for friends.)

My ideas for making a living either for myself or in community are just beginning to formulate. It will have something to do with bartering among lesbians, being able to keep our money as much as possible supportive of ourselves (I especially see networking among city and country lesbians, where women who are making good money can recirculate books to lesbians in the country, and where they can receive home-canned goods and visit friends in healthy country homes in exchange). Organic farming, with local or mail order sales of products (like nuts and fruit or goat cheeses). Writing magazine articles or novels and desktop publishing and public relations. I am not sure yet exactly how it will go, but I have felt for a long time that making a living from several different endeavors at a time along with growing food and living simply is more satisfying than earning a lot of money at one skill and paying for the rest. I see in a community that at any one time there will be some people who are completely on the land and spending all their energy there; some who come for vacations or summers, some who work partially on the land and partially in some other endeavor.

I feel that in some way whether formal or not, that women in the city who are making a lot of money should help support women's land; and that in turn, women's land should be able to be a refuge for old or disabled or burnt-out women or women driven crazy and harmed by the sick, women-and-children-hating society that we live in. To be able to shelter and be role models for the children who are thrown away because they are lesbian.

I think it is very exciting that you are a contractor and builder. I feel very strongly that even though communal living and economy is the way to go that there must also be space and privacy for those who want it. I have participated in various types of communal living situations, but always felt that the ideal would be to have each person have

their own cabin for living and work space and then have communal kitchens and recreation spaces. That way you could be social if you wanted or private if you wanted. Giving workshops to teach other women who wanted to form other communities would be a way of bringing in money, extending contact between communities, and also empowering women.

May 30 already!

I, too, was extremely happy to see how many of our dreams were similar. I was especially pleased to hear about your co-counseling experience. I certainly feel that the concepts of discharging energy built up by repeated negative experiences is a way to finally finish some of these patterns and not be doomed to constantly repeat them. I also like the give and take of it, the feeling that recovery is in our own hands and not dependent on an authority figure who is presumed to be "weller" while we are "sicker". And I do feel that for a successful community effort to occur that there needs to be some structured way of dealing with communication problems or differences in style to keep misunderstandings and resentment to a minimum.

I have also been doing a lot of reading about New Orleans and the St. Tammany area and about the bayous. I was really interested to hear about all the horse farms in the area and the nurseries and the artists' colonies. It sounds really lovely there!

My feeling is that in a community the ultimate goal would be, as Sonia Johnson talks about, to detach from the patriarchy as much as possible emotionally, financially and with withdrawing of our energies, but at first there would need to be a considerable infusion of funds from outside to pay for land improvements and set up industries (agricultural or otherwise) that would begin to pay their own way. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you; I'm real interested to hear what other responses you have had that seem viable. It seems like having several people working in N.O. would give a stable cash influx at the beginning so that things could move forward quickly and give a real feeling that progress was being made.

Some of the ideas I have had, have to

do with the resurgence of the organic farming movement. In California, farmer's markets have become extremely popular and growers bring their crops to a central location one day a week. Buyers can come to pick out their own produce and establish a relationship with the people who provide their food. Very popular are free range brown eggs. No farmer's market I have ever been to has ever had enough to meet the demand. Free range chickens are not very labor intensive and have few health problems unlike commercial layers. Honey, nuts and nut butters, dried and fresh flowers and bedding vegetable and herb plants are also in demand. Some growers are dealing directly with restaurants to provide top quality produce that the restaurants are willing to pay well for and without the middle man there is more profit for the grower. Is there a food co-op or health food store in the nearby area? I have been saying for several years that this is the time to get into farming, and a new book, "Investing in Farmland" by Wise is agreeing with me. He is actually talking about people investing in farmland instead of stocks or other real estate and forming partnerships with the farmers. Some of this wouldn't apply in the kind of situation that we are thinking of, but much of it would. I think it could be an attractive package for well-to-do lesbians who need tax breaks and enable women actually living on the land an influx of capital to work with.

I am enclosing some info on grants. I know this is a controversial area. Opinions range from "let's rip off the government for all we can get because whatever money we take isn't being used to build bombs." To a near paranoia about drawing the government's notice in any way. This would have to be carefully considered, but low cost housing is one of the area that there is a lot of money, not only public but also private money (like churches and the united way). Since a large proportion of the people who need low cost housing are women and children it would provide a way to be useful to the outside community as well as to ourselves. Another big money item is job training, and we could work that to our benefit as

well because the women you were training for jobs could be members of the group living on the land.

Also I wonder about the possibility of setting up as a building/contracting school. Since you have the education and licensing to teach in Louisiana, I wonder if there would be advantages either tax-wise or ability to get funding, or even being able to charge women who came to learn the skills who didn't want to stay in the community to help pay for the residence while they were there. Another idea that has occurred to me is, can we use a similar type of contract that is used in condominiums and coop housing in a rural area? This could make it possible for some of the benefits of ownership, like tax deductions and building of equity, but it would put a form in place to insure that the major goals of everyone were similar and that those selling out would be bound to sell to those who would still fit in the rest of the group.

I don't know if you have heard of Co-op America. It is kind of a loose network of somewhat counter-culture business. They provide things like a credit union and insurance plans. They publish a catalog of items manufactured or sold by their members. In general they are interested in environmental and social values. I have just joined and gotten on some other interesting mailing lists. There is a women's cooperative in North Carolina that manufactures natural fiber clothing and imports them from third world countries. It is employee owned and everyone has a say in managing.

Mail order is becoming very big. I enclose a catalog of agricultural items that is very old and very famous. I feel that with networking and bartering and using mail order we could establish a way to bring money in from lesbians who are in cities and making more money and who would rather have their money go to other lesbians.

I hope this will be a dialogue that will enable us both to find the paths we are going to travel, whether they turn out to be the same path or only paths that cross each other on our separate journeys.

In Sisterhood,
Lea Matthews

SNAKE

By Linda
Loranger, Louisiana

Snake, oh beautiful snake
As you twist around my arm,
I feel your wisdom, your power,
Your silky cool skin.
You are not evil or repulsive.
You are the giant snake circling
The Earth, your movement giving
Birth to the planets and stars.
You are lightning,
Flying across the sky.
You are a rainbow,
Touching the earth.
You are immortal
Being reborn, again and again!

Linda: I am 24, mother to a girl child. I am currently "emerging" as a Lesbian. My life path is moving towards Lesbian separatism. I am hoping to make my dream of living on Lesbian land a reality. I am currently homeless, isolated. Write me: Star Rte, Box 10x, Loranger, LA 70446. Please be discreet when writing as I am not out to my family at this address.



© Blossom

Mau Blossom
Doniphan, Missouri



MEDITATION

By zana
tucson, arizona

morning

i listen to the day

cicadas, birds, hammering

in me, hammering

fear

fearing the conflicts

started in motion

on this land.

we are wimin just learning

how to move with each other

sometimes. sometimes

we move in opposition

scrape and burn.

three of us made motion together,

now await reaction.

we did not aim to hurt

yet some will be hurt.

goddess move us in love

through our anger, fear and pain.

cicada-spirit, bird-spirit

cactus-spirit

stone-spirit

strengthen me

i belong among you

imperfect, learning

living life as it comes.

when i trust

nothing harms me

nor fear consume me

in earth arms

i rest

i trust.

zana: i'm 43, disabled, jewish, living in the desert with other dykes (adobeland). seeking to start a land trust community of disabled dykes and allies. my book of poetry and art, herb womon, is available for \$7 from me at 12150 W. calle seneca, tucson, az 85743

RE-VISIONING LESBIAN LAND

By Raven
Santa Fe, New Mexico

The weekend of August 10-12 a group of wimmin met in Ojo Caliente, New Mexico, about an hour's drive from Santa Fe, to discuss wimmin and land. Tho I want to report some of what took place, it is not my intent to give a journalistic account of this retreat. I want to tell my experience. I'm sure each womyn who attended has a slightly different story.

As I drove north from Santa Fe thru Friday rush hour traffic, I felt excited and apprehensive. I was tired, not feeling well, concerned that my limited energies would not carry me thru the gathering. I wanted my mind clear of fatigue so I could express myself clearly and absorb the words of the other wimmin. I was happy to arrive to friends already present and more wimmin arriving in vans and pick-up trucks, which for many of us provided our sleeping spaces. Soon there was a spread of pot-luck dinner. I realized I was gathered with some wimmin I'd known since my early days on land in the 70's, some newer friends, a few wimmin I'd known casually for a long time, and wimmin I'd met just this summer.

After dinner 16 white lesbians and one girl child of color gathered in a circle to discuss why we had come. Several topics had been scheduled for the various time slots of the days. The advance planning made it possible to move quickly into ideas and issues. During the weekend we were 13-16 wimmin and one child circling to discuss why we had come, our priorities

on land, money ownership, power and control, and the practicalities of how to make our vision happen. We shared pot-luck meals while a few local wimmin joined us to share food.

In the Friday nite circle I talked of starting on land in the early 70's. None of us knew what we were doing but we created open wimmin's land without knowing that term. I related that I have remained on land or involved with land, and that my present life in town in no way reflects this vision I've held for almost 20 years. Other wimmin felt frustrated with living in the country and commuting to town for work. Wimmin expressed the importance of coming together to build something new, to not grow old isolated and alone, to live free of city violence, to raise our own food. One womyn said she felt the vision of wimmin's land has not matched the reality. Another suggested we talk in specifics about what didn't work in the past. The discussion moved to stories of a wimmin's land in Denmark that didn't seem to have the same problems of open wimmin's land in the U.S.

At this point, tho we had agreed to go around the circle in turn a second time, the talk became free-form. Some wimmin were upset about spontaneously changing the structure. We took time to hear wimmin's needs and to decide to return to passing the rattle. The issue of structure seemed to reflect what comes up on a larger scale in land communities. I was glad for everyone's honesty, that we were talking about what was happening at that moment rather than intellectual-

izing about some future community. I was also very tired and was quite ready for sleep when the circle ended for the night.

Saturday after breakfast we met outdoors under the comfort of large shade trees to talk of our priorities on land. Wimmin had given much thought to how they want to live. Ideas were varied, but with many common threads. Wimmin expressed wanting to live with others who have a political commitment to community. We discussed the need for diversity and flexibility, as well as knowing our bottom lines of what just doesn't work for each of us. The common vision was of a large land place with room for differences, such as some wimmin living with domestic animals, while others have space to be away from pets.



"Q Will" Brand Saw

Siné Anahita

McLeansville, North Carolina

Wimmin also talked of wanting to live with agreements and structure to unify the community and enable our daily lives to flow peacefully. One womyn suggested the idea of rotating decision making groups, so that each womyn on the land would not have to deal with every problem. For example, a group of wimmin would make garden decisions for a specified period of time. We also discussed the need for a mediation process and the possibility of dealing with

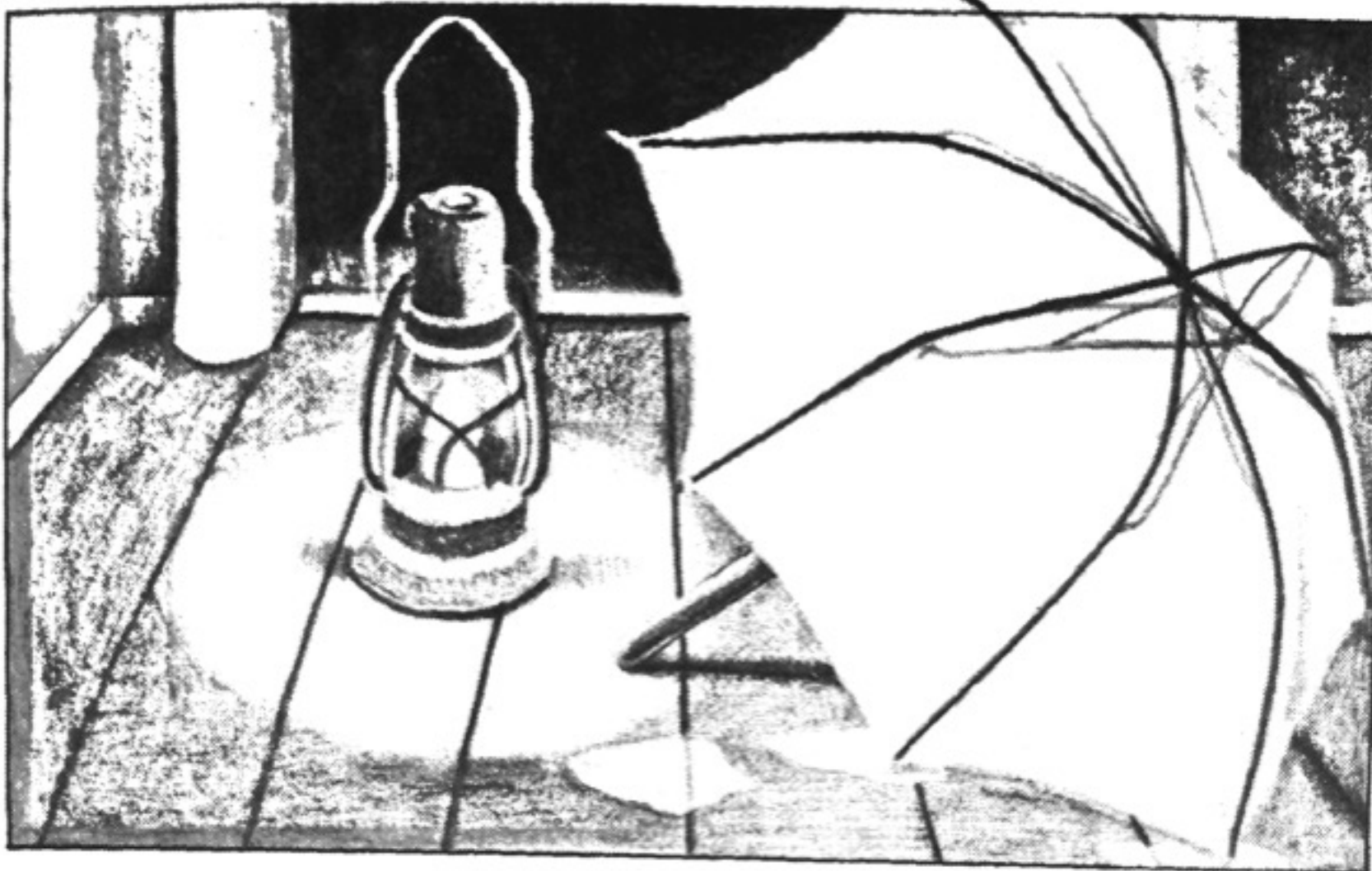
problems between lesbians on a spiritual level. Spirituality was also mentioned as providing a unifying force in our daily lives.

During my turn with the rattle I talked of the need for accessibility for disabled wimmin. I feel that accessibility on land requires a truly revolutionary approach to what we are creating. As I write this, I think that this topic will be my next article. In the circle under the trees on that Saturday I could not tell how my statements were received. No one commented directly or expanded on what I said. I felt isolated around this issue, though I was much in harmony around other ideas. I hope as this group grows, other disabled lesbians will provide input.

Following one round of the rattle we changed our structure to an open discussion with the facilitator taking names and calling on wimmin in turn. We talked of the need for ways to bring new wimmin into the community, and of ways to work with wimmin in crisis. The issue of wimmin in crisis was emotional. One womyn reminded us that all we have is each other and we need to create community that acknowledges this. We also brought up the question of alcohol and drugs. Wimmin felt that rules against use don't work, that we weren't comfortable with substance abuse, but that it's hard to draw the line around someone else's behavior. We knew there was much more to say on all these topics and the weekend itself was an enormous beginning in creating our vision of community. We ended as we grew hungry and ready to stretch our legs.

The afternoon discussion covered money, power and control. This topic was much less heated than I would have expected. There were many thoughts about money bringing power in this society. Some wimmin questioned whether it was possible to change this while others challenged our dynamics of inequality based on money and star worship. We agreed we want to live on land owned by a land trust and that the land be in trust before wimmin move there in order to eliminate struggles around private ownership. We talked of remembering to use magic to manifest land.

Talk of power imbalances somehow moved on into the work ethic and grew animated and emotional. I feel the work ethic is



Chores Go On

Siné Anahita

a major issue to explore when considering access for disabled lesbians. We closed after one womyn's statement that she would like to eliminate the ideas that work is love made manifest and that work defines a womyn.

Our energy was scattered on Saturday evening. Some of us gathered after dinner to make music. I needed sleep and left the circle early. The long day was a push for my body. After I stretched out in my little van, my mind did not quiet down for a while. I enjoyed knowing other lesbians were going to sleep close around me.

On Sunday the topic was practicalities--where do we go to have land to create this community. One womyn told us of 20,000 acres about an hour east of Santa Fe. The land has three rivers and is for sale for three million dollars. Wimmin were very captured by this idea and before we ended for the day we did a ritual to envision this land coming to us. I have a wait and see attitude. This isn't the first time I've been part of a group who were wanting to create a village on a large land place. I would like to make magic for this vision, but to also look for other options. 20,000 acres is the size of a spread out city. Lesbians deserve all the land we want, but we can also create village on much less space.

Sunday morning we also made plans for our next gathering. Wimmin will gather for

a potluck in Santa Fe in September to continue to get to know each other. Another retreat weekend is planned for early October. A group of wimmin volunteered to plan the next retreat. Some wimmin will write down the ideas expressed in this initial gathering in order to provide new wimmin with this information. The next retreat we want to share more of ourselves personally, to deepen our connection.

We discussed that our process should reflect what we want to create and that we need to do outreach to wimmin of color. We also need more mothers with children. We have not yet addressed the issue of boy children. I need more disabled wimmin involved. The place we are meeting, tho wonderful in many ways, is not accessible. I don't know of a better alternative, which is a sad commentary on society. I'm appreciative of the wimmin who opened their home and healing center to us so this process of making community could begin. When we are not able to have our process reflect our vision, I want to acknowledge this and work toward change.

In writing this I have given only an overview of the many thots and feelings expressed during the weekend. Relating our ideas does not capture the openings created among us as each womyn spoke from her heart. Wimmin were gentle with each other and were attentive to each other's words. I look forward to our next weekend together and to the new wimmin who will join us.

LIVING ON THE EDGE OF THE WOODS

By Nett Hart
Foreston, Minnesota

I live on the edge of the woods. My wild self ventures there to walk, to pick berries and mushrooms, to glimpse other wild things, to smell flowers and simply sit and watch. I may cook over a fire, sleep out in the woods, feel completely my wild dykey self in this place, but inevitably when I say I am going home, I come to the house.

My garden reflects my uneasy peace with cultivation. I enjoy the rabbit who eats at the end of the patch I am working as much as I enjoy the fruits of this gardening. I resist fencing though I know I work far too hard in this place for the fruits I harvest and those harvested by deer, woodchucks and rabbits.

This place is my solace. If I must go to the city to work, to find dyke community, to procure the goods and services in which I am not self-sufficient, then this place must be wild, must nurture the heart that rebels at schedules and limits and sequence. In this place which is just enough home to be recognized as such I come inside only to answer the phone, to make links to a world I despise but holds my connection to all dykiness I do not contain: my friends and lovers, periodicals and books, dyke gatherings.

I live on the edge of the woods. I know I am a woodland creature, that to dig roots and dry berries, to wonder at the happenstance abundance of the woods feeds my spirit more than the most fruitful of gardens. As one who always believed I had to take care of myself and did, to garden is on the receipt side of the equation of self-reliance. If I fall into the providence of the randomness of nature, I must believe myself beloved enough in this world to receive what I have not earned. This goes counter to every experience and emotional construct.

But I go half way. I do not provide well for myself to the exclusion of this natural community nor do I rely on this natural community. I garden with enthusiasm beginning when the earth is bare with the best intentions of creating order. I make schematic drawings of the garden, carefully rotating plantings. I create woodchip paths and deeply dug beds. I make rows and patches and beds and near-fields. I even "weed" for a while, selectively, always leaving a few companions or something that is edible or has great flowers or I've never seen before. By the time it's harvest I'm the only one who can find the "actual" garden. Maybe it's like a hidden find, a wild trove of fruitfulness. Always there is more than I can use immediately. But I still reproach myself for the way the "weeds" take over.

I mow a bit of lawn. It always looks better before than after, but mosquitos eat fewer of my friends when I mow. Pruning trees is almost painful. It's as if every domestication were my own.

I keep asking who weeds and fertilizes and prunes the wild that just outside my marked territory blooms with growth? How did all these seeds we treasure as traditional foods grow and thrive in such proficiency as to become staples if they were not self-hardy? Before our need for order caused single plant species to appear in a row were there diseases and insect outbreaks? Who worries over the weeds that they do so well in all years while garden plants have their ups and downs?

If I become wild do I become real? Is the ability to take root in place the sign of truly belonging here while the much fussed over vanishes without that care? If I live in a way that is sustainable through storms and drought and energy crises can I become as secure as the dandelion?



Bettianne Shoney Sien
Santa Cruz, California

I do not need to flourish under adversity but I do need to live on my own terms, to be able to know my preservation is contingent on relationship not fake social structures. It is like the difference of living under a bridge homeless and sleeping in an open field, scarcity on one hand, abundance on the other. Yet if I know this, what keeps me on the edge of the woods instead of *in* the woods? What tie do I have to the familiarity of controlled scarcity? How much is a need for approval

by other tamed beings and how much is my fear to really live wild?

I have a recurrent dream of being a deer, panicked, enclosed in a house, finding no escape. My movements are too big for the confinement. Instead of bouncing off the walls, one night I will gracefully walk out the door.

I live on the edge of the woods. I gather the courage to leave all cultivation behind, follow the seasons as the bear does and be wild.

URBAN FARMING

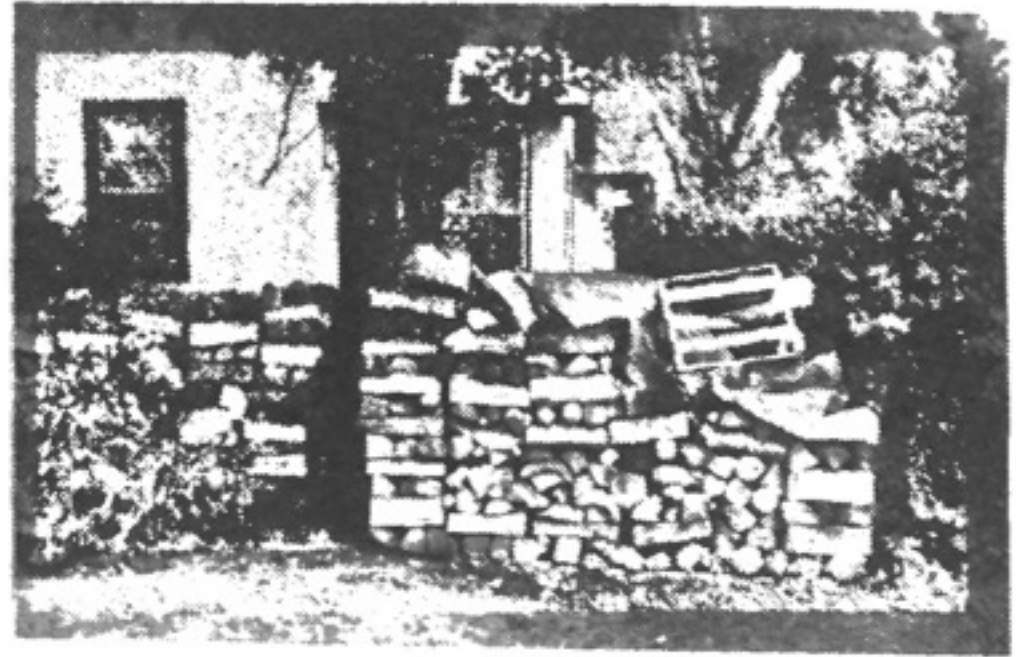
By Sally Koplin
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Urban farming--a contradiction, and yet I do think of myself as an urban farmer. Of course there are the considerations of the amount of land under cultivation and of my living in the inner city rather than 15 miles from the nearest neighbor. And, urban farming is necessarily part-time, as is most rural farming in these times of agribusiness driving small farmers into the city or into near-financial disaster. But the crucial parts of my self-definition have more to do with a certain degree of self-sufficiency and with my relationship to the earth and the world I live in. As an urban farmer, I do my best to integrate growing things with other aspects of self-sufficiency and with my overall values, in contrast to what I think of as urban gardening.

Two bicycles--winter and summer--are my main form of transportation. The seasons are marked for me not only by the transition from one bike to the other, but also by the transition from the growing season to wood heat. Growing flowers, herbs, and vegetables in the warm weather, heating with wood in cold weather, and riding bike year round keep me more connected to the food I eat, the seasons, the weather, the phases of the moon, and the earth (and healthier) than most city dwellers.

It all came about gradually. When I bought my small house in the central city a little over five years ago, it came equipped with a wood furnace/forced air system and a relatively large yard with a plum tree, raspberry bushes, a Concord grape vine, and a sour cherry tree. There were also two flower beds with tulip bulbs in the front and back yards. On one side of the house and front yard there are a giant blue spruce and a huge sugar maple. In the fall, people come from all over the neighborhood to look at the maple which does have beautiful fall color. The space under the maple, which is too shady for vegetables, is my wood storage space. I buy about three cords in the late winter, when

it is green and less expensive, stack it under the maple, and by the following winter when I have run out of seasoned wood, it is dry enough to be burned.



Photos by Sally Koplin

I began making growing space by tearing out some of the sod in the back yard, where the previous owners had had a vegetable garden and I was therefore somewhat reassured about the quality of the soil. I can't remember now how much I removed in preparation for my first full growing season, but after a couple of years had gone by I decided that more space was needed. The plum tree seemed expendable, as it produced tasteless fruit with lots of worms, so I cut it down and expanded into the area where it had been. During those first years I also put in a strawberry bed along one edge of the back yard, 48 plants which marched across the yard, making a bed several times its original size. This fall I plan to dig up the original strip to make room for the vegetables that were crowded out by strawberry expansion.

The back yard is now totally under cultivation except for paths, some of which I built myself from sidewalk blocks and flat limestone pieces. The front yard is more of a problem, and I'm still experimenting with it, the soil being pretty resistant to growing much of anything except certain kinds of flowers. This hasn't stopped me from digging up all the grass and trying to convert the space into something either edible and/or nice to look at that doesn't require mowing. This year I put in a lot of

perennial flowers and was pretty successful with collards, cauliflower, and kale, in spite of earlier failures with vegetables. I have a source of manure at the agricultural campus of the University of Minnesota. I have vastly improved the soil in the back yard by adding manure every season, so I hope that over the years I'll be able to evolve good growing soil in the front yard by this method.

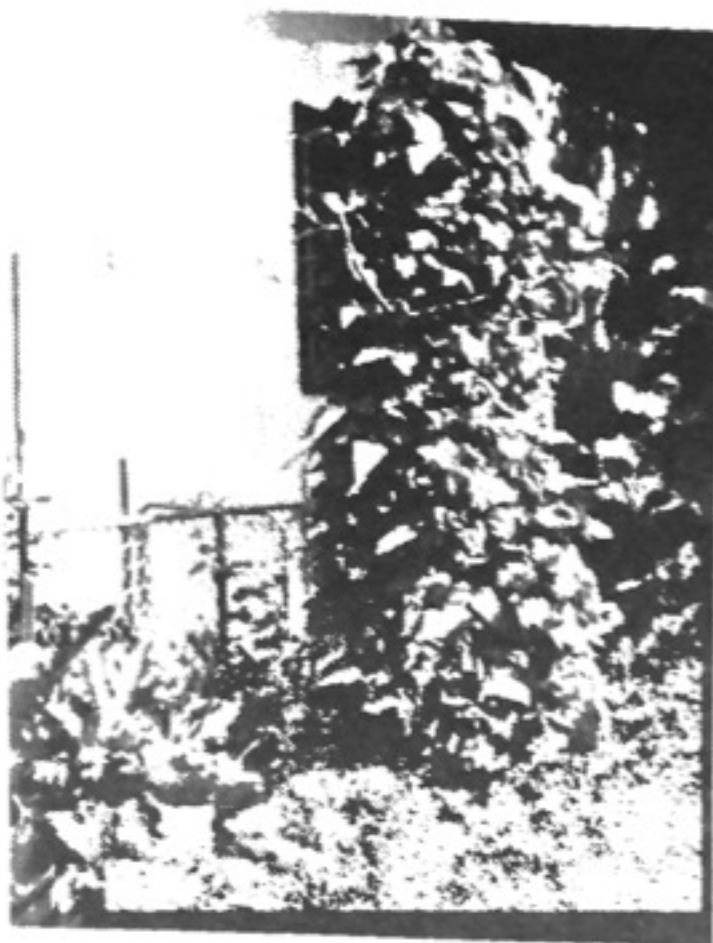
One of the most gratifying aspects of an "integrated" operation is the amount of recycling you can do and how you almost never have to throw anything away. Each summer I prune the raspberries when they have finished bearing and make a pile of the old canes. The next spring the sturdy ones can be used as supports for peas to grow on. The grape vines are pruned in February, and those cuttings can also be used for crop supports and for marking rows. Some years I've found it necessary to surround each seed bed with a little fence of sticks to prevent urban cats from digging holes in the newly sown rows and later rolling on the seedlings. Any too-small or leftover sticks from the various prunings or from the sugar maple in the front yard are perfect for kindling, and one of my main outdoor tasks is putting together little bundles of various sized sticks to use in starting fires in the wood furnace or the wood cookstove.



Other vegetable matter gets recycled, too--weeds, leaves, overgrown vegetables, the remains of plants left after the first frost. I've set up a number of different compost piles, rather unsystematically, but categorized somewhat according to how long it's going to take the contents to break down into something useable.

The trend toward larger size has built-in limitations in the city. I get around some of these by maintaining

a community garden plot, a city version of tenant-farming, for my year's supply of potatoes. There are also possibilities for land acquisition: a couple of years ago a friend moved into a nearby house next to an empty lot, and she and I subsequently bought the lot from the city. Getting the lot into shape for serious growing is going to be a long-term project, but we've started small with some squash vines and two major compost piles.



In my own yard, expansion necessarily requires elimination of something that's already there--grass, shrubs, trees. My feeling is that the city is already such a bizarre use of land that those of us who live in it might as well make our little pieces as useful and pleasing as possible. So I had no problem about cutting down the flavorless-plum tree in order to grow lots more vegetables. And I recently just as casually took out a hedge of spirea which I intend to replace with blueberries, even though I'm not sure they'll thrive. Another hedge in the front of the house will be removed and replaced by currants and gooseberries. I've also begun creating a rock garden out of the existing grass bank next to the public sidewalk.

I can testify that urban farming involves a lot of time and work, as well as creativity in the use of space, but I've also found that there are lots of rewards for the farmer-at-heart who finds herself living in the city.

Sally Koplín is a wild rícer.

ANCIENT MUTHER'S WAY

By Medicine-Bird
Serafina, New Mexico

Greetings Lesbian Sisters on Land. I call myself Medicine-Bird and I received the blessing of this new name while currently living and working on Desert Dyke Land in Northern New Mexico. This special blessing among many came from prayerful meditation and journey thru the Sweat Way.

On August 30, 1990, two Lesbian Sisters, Sun Hawk and Miguela, came to help create and gift this magnificent land with a Sweat and Meditation Hut. Steeped in Native-Womban Culture and according to the way of Sun Hawk, the Sweat is like a temple...a sacred place. Miguela told of Womban's Cultures across time and space who have created Sweat chambers for cleansing and releasing prayers and songs to our Great Muther Earth for her healing and ours.

Lee, Jae, Jewel and I shared with Miguela and Sun Hawk the building of an adobe hut filled with Lesbian's working-together spirit. On the completion day of Sept. 4, 1990, we prepared for a Full Moon Sweat. Making ready, we made a Great Fire Circle, gathered wood and lattice posts to layer ancient lava rocks to bake in the huge fire. Sun Hawk would be Firetender and Miguela would lead the Sweat. We separated, making our individual preparations to participate in four rounds of sweat.

As twilight quickened, we came together again. Laying our clothes aside and placing our jewelry together near the altar created from the womb of the Sweat-Hut, we saged and blessed ourselves and approached entrance by the Spirit Path into the cave-like Earth Place.

From here, Sisters, I can only share my personal experience; for each of us the turns inside were connected yet separate. The following is from my journal:

By Candlelight:

As military jets zoomed in the sky, I was releasing prayers and sweat... sweat as I have never known leave my body. My body crying, both tears of pain and joy, thru every pore of my being!

I prayed 10 thousand prayers, moaned and howled for peace for our Great Muther-Earth. I felt her pain; her anguish; her crying out for Peace: Bring It In the Now! And she smiled seeing her reflection in Everywomban's face who courageously Loves in the Now regardless of the war boys and their horror games of greed and possession!

For 3 hours we sent prayers, song and sweat release. For 4 rounds a Circle of 6 came forth out of herself in Spirit and Healing expression. Quietly, loudly, whispering, howling, Singing River songs, Earth Muther songs, Beauty songs, Sacred songs and finally Laughing songs!

We crawled out of her womb away from her breast into the cool night bright with Full Moon. Young as new spirits; Strong as Amazons. One by one we bathed naked washing away the mud from our bodies where we sat or lay in the cave-hut. A final rinse away and refreshment: a joy of completion...until the next time of Lesbian Spirit Circle!!

Medicine Bird: I am of Mestizo (Spanish-Indian) and Anglo Her-itage. I currently reside and build with my SisterFriends on Desert Dyke Lands in Northern New Mexico. Here my visions of Lesbian Spirit Land take shape and form as we honor our Great Muther-Earth. For my whole life left, I honor the importance of the practice of the Ancient Muther's Way 'to pray, sing and release!

MENSTRUAL HUTS

By Luisa Francia
West Germany

An Excerpt from
*Dragontime: Magic and Mystery of
Menstruation*
translated from German by Sasha Daucus
edited and with herbal notes by
Susun Weed
Ash Tree Publishing, POBox 64,
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\$9.95 + \$3 shipping

My first menstrual space was the spare room of a city apartment where I lived. It was carpeted making the floor warm and soft, the way I wanted it to be. All my favorite stones were there, figurines of different goddesses and some little clay figures of women given to me by friends. Besides that, a few shells, candles and soft pillows.

Every now and then, I'd withdraw to this room with a blanket, hot water bottle, and mug of cocoa, to find peace, read trashy novels, and ruminate undisturbed. Later, often, I needed to seek out this sacred little room at other times than menstruation so I could meditate.

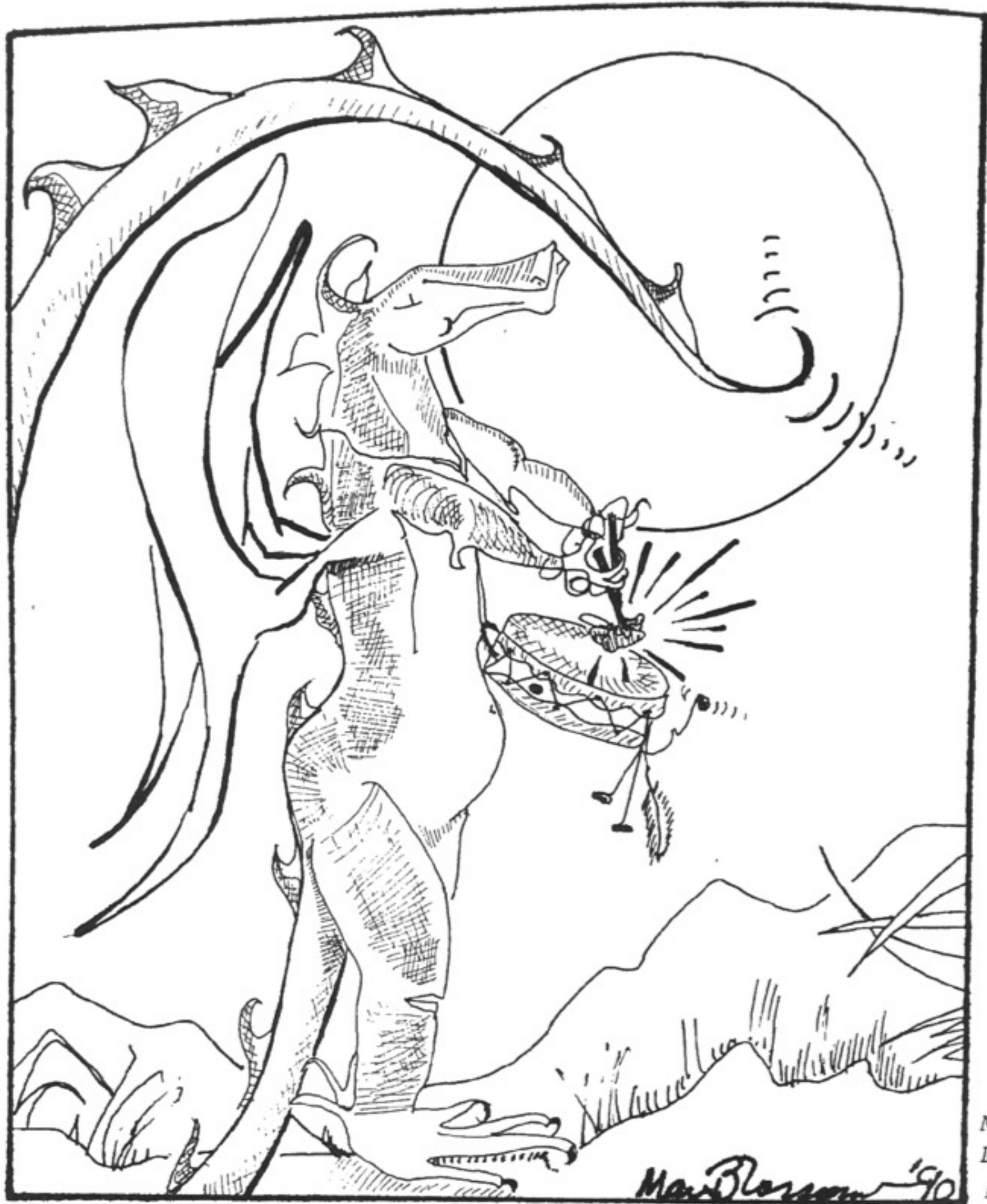
When I moved to the land, I built myself a teepee, seven tall wooden poles, with blankets and cloth thrown over to make a sort of tent. The floor is covered with crone wort (mugwort/*Artemisia vulgaris*). Inside I can make a little fire and, with a nice mat to lay on, I can sleep there even on damp days. Sometimes, I just want to have a place that reminds me of the power of my menstruation. I don't always do a ritual, but sometimes I go into a trance. Afterwards, I write down the visions and images; often I can develop these into real plans and later weave them into my daily life.

During menstruation, I'm especially drawn to a few particular holy springs (or springs dedicated to Maria or other women). I won't name these places because I don't believe in giving "travel tips", but you'll find them or ones like them on your own. They're springs near little chapels or by caves. They often have folk names, like "Mary's" or "Women's", keys to the ancient use of these holy places. Also the words "Hells" or "Witches" are indications of ancient women's places of power. I've also experimented with bowl-shaped stones, and drawn the conclusion that at least some of them were used in the context of menstruation. For fear of making good anthropologists howl, I still must confess that it's very exciting to carry out little taboo rituals in places already enlivened by folklore.

How wonderful to actually have menstrual houses or huts, or at least rooms in women's centers/women's spaces that are there for the use of menstruating women, as a haven, a meeting point, a safe space to work on whatever comes up during one's own period. Such spaces are comfortable and cozy, with lots of pillows and blankets on hand. There are things for making tea or cocoa, (but not coffee, as it stimulates and intensifies bleeding). Soup simmers in a big pot.

Menstrual huts/spaces are well heated, when necessary, for warmth is often very important. An open fire is especially nice: outdoors, even a small one; indoors, in a cookstove or fireplace.

Decorations change and flow like the women's menses. There are things around that are strongly connected to menstruation: cloths and goblets the color of the sea and blood; pictures of goddesses connected to blood, fertility, and healing; wonderful vulva-like stones and pieces of wood; shells, and bowls of water...



Mau Blossom
Doniphan,
Missouri

"Women drum the rhythm of blood. Heartbeat. Womb-beat."

Women who come there write in menstrual diaries. There's a collective book where every woman can add her menstrual feelings, dreams, and problems. There are regular meetings at other times than menstruation, where women talk about their bleeding, share their difficulties and good times, and now and then celebrate together to change the dynamic of their menstruation.

DRAGONTIME DANCE CELEBRATION

Meet on a wonderfully hot night in the open or on a cold night in a big private room which can stand up to some active dancing! Ask each woman to bring

her menstruation amulet or a power necklace or a rag dress, or something which represents or contains the power of menstruation.

The women who dance in this ritual don't all need to be menstruating. The chief object is to celebrate this power.

In the middle of the circle an altar is built. Feathers, stones, woven baskets, flowers, buds, fruit, seeds, pictures, dragon dolls, clay figures, bloody rags, and other menstrual power objects are added by each woman. Each woman has painted and ornamented herself and has brought something with her to eat and something to drink. You'll certainly get thirsty.

When all the preparations are finished, the food laid out nicely, and the altar erected in the middle, then the painted and ornamented women form a circle. All join hands. Each woman calls out the energy she brings in, important thoughts, strengths, weaknesses.

Four women in the circle have planned in advance to call directions of the compass. One woman turns toward the east and calls out: "I call you, woman of the east, clear air, wind, intuition, guardian of thoughts."

One woman turns to the south and calls: "I call you, woman of the south, heat, fire, brewing and boiling, guardian of the cauldron."

One woman turns to the west and calls out: "I call you woman of the west, soft energy, water, the depths of the ocean, guardian of the bitter waters and the sweet springs, and of blood."

The last woman turns to the north and calls out: "I call you, woman of the north, darkness of the night, earth, warm shelter, guardian of caves and mountains."

Now all the women call in the four elemental sisters (air, fire, water, earth) with screams, chirps and twitters, growls and snarls, barks and purrs, howls, hisses and hums.

Then everyone waits.

Now one woman begins to stamp, left, right, left, right. The rest of the circle joins in stamping, and the rhythm is intensified with voices and hands. One or more women drum the peaceful, even, dependable rhythm of blood: left, right, left, right. Heartbeat. Womb-beat.

When the rhythm is established, the circle moves slowly left. Now any woman who wants dances however she wants. She may dance to the four elements, the altar, the drummers, the other women, herself, menstrual mysteries.

The dance comes to an end as women get tired. The circling to the left stops, the drumbeat ceases. Women stamp quietly left, right.

Then comes the celebratory meal.

The celebration draws to an end, night comes, night goes, and the women change slowly, almost imperceptably, but ceaselessly.

Luisa Francia lives on the land with her daughter near Munich, W. Germany. She's a filmmaker and author and says, "Dragontime has been brewing in my cauldron for years."

Sasha Daucus is a lesbian living on the land in the Missouri Ozarks. "I look forward to celebrating the power of wimmin's blood with other Ozark land lesbians. I hope one of our 'event organizers' might be inspired soon!"

Susun Weed lives on the land in New York and runs the Wise Woman Center where healers, witches, herbalists and countless other wise women gather each year for workshops and celebrations.

Sasha writes:

I'm so happy to be finally able to write you with an excerpt from *Dragontime*, a translation I've been working on for the past six months. The hard work is over and now comes the fun, sending it out to my friends to read!

It was real hard to pick out just a few pages to send for MAIZE; the whole time I was translating, I kept thinking chapter by chapter, "Wow, MAIZE women would really like this!" Especially one on how the moon affects menstrual cycles/ menstrual power, and another on menstrual magic, and one on rituals.

I finally chose this one as a kind of thanks to Jenna Weston who first introduced me to MAIZE. She also talked to me about setting up a menstrual hut, maybe even at Midwest Women's Festival, and as I worked on this chapter (the one I'm sending you) I often thought about her.

Mau Blossom also did a number of illustrations for the book, and I'm sending one with this, another of my favorites.

I hope you enjoy this excerpt. I certainly send it with joy in my heart to be sharing it with my sisters on the land.

Sending you green blessings from my heart and this bountiful land, Sasha.



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Saving Seeds

Metaphors of Lesbian Growth

By Jennifer Weston and other gardeners

**SPECIAL
ISSUE
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE AT SILVER CIRCLE are planning a major building project for this fall, winter and spring. We are offering a building apprenticeship to wimmin who want to learn carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills. We will provide room (shared space most likely) and board in exchange for work. We are experienced builders who believe in creating new ways of being and working together. If interested write Silver Circle Farm, Rte. 5, Box 100, Holly Springs, MS 38635 or call 601-564-2715 between 5pm and 8pm central time. Come south for the winter and learn valuable life skills. Come early and learn to lay out foundations for post and beam.

WOMAN'S WORLD: Have a passion to live in the country on land of your own? Write and tell about yourself and your dreams! Shewolf, POBox 655, Madisonville LA 70447

LAND LOVIN' LESBIANS: I have taken a job that will keep me away from my 100 acre hill farm about 4 days a week. Am interested in sharing my home and land with a non-smoking woman who will tend the animals, do regular farm maintenance (patch leaks, mow grass, fix fences), and pay her share of the (cheap) utilities. Must be compulsively orderly (though tolerant of dust and friendly spiders) or confine her disorder to her own room. This is not woman-only space, as my son comes home from boarding school occasionally. Farm is 45 min. from M'boro (MTSU) and Cookeville (Tenn. Tech), 1 1/4 hr from Nashville. Beautiful, safe, healing environment with sisters close by. Call or write Mary B-J, WIT's End Farm, Dowlletown, TN 37059. 615-536-5356.

Jennifer Weston
Ava, Missouri

CREATING COMMUNITY: Looking for Dykes with long-term commitment to Lesbian land, to living separate in every possible way from patriarchal culture. Need, in our initial stages, Lesbians with desire and ability to work hard to create and build this Dyke space. Belief in Love, Lesbian spirit, and Lesbian culture essential, along with commitment to mutuality and accessibility. Chem-free, vegetarian, non-smokers. No pets or domesticated animals.

Ready for a close intentional community, for a home, for country life in the high desert? Write Jae and Lee, POBox 130, Serafina, New Mexico 87569

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED: Cancer as a women's issue. An anthology by women for women. Third Side Books, 2250 Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625-1802

WANTED: Writings by lesbians in bi-national and /or bi-cultural partnerships. Kate Pickford, #204 European Haitsu, 15 Ban-Kan Shinade 21, Yawata, Kyoto 614 Japan.



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NUMBER 26



MAIZE

A LESBIAN COUNTRY MAGAZINE

FALL 9990



MAIZE IS BY AND FOR LESBIANS

MAIZE invites Lesbians to contribute articles, graphics, photos, interviews, letters, comments, news of Lesbians on the land. Cassette taped interviews and discussions are accepted for transcription. Transcriptions will be returned for editing. Editing on any piece will be done only in cooperation with the author. If you wish to have your work returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please note if the work you send has been submitted or published elsewhere. *Please include a biographical note.*

Letters to the editor may be published in whole or in part, unless specified "not for publication". Names will be used unless you request your name withheld, as well as place of residence.

The contents of MAIZE does not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the editor. Debate is encouraged. Editor: Lee Lanning

We will run free announcements of particular interest to country Lesbians and free classified ads by Lesbians especially for country Lesbians. Display ads: \$10 (4½h x 3½w)

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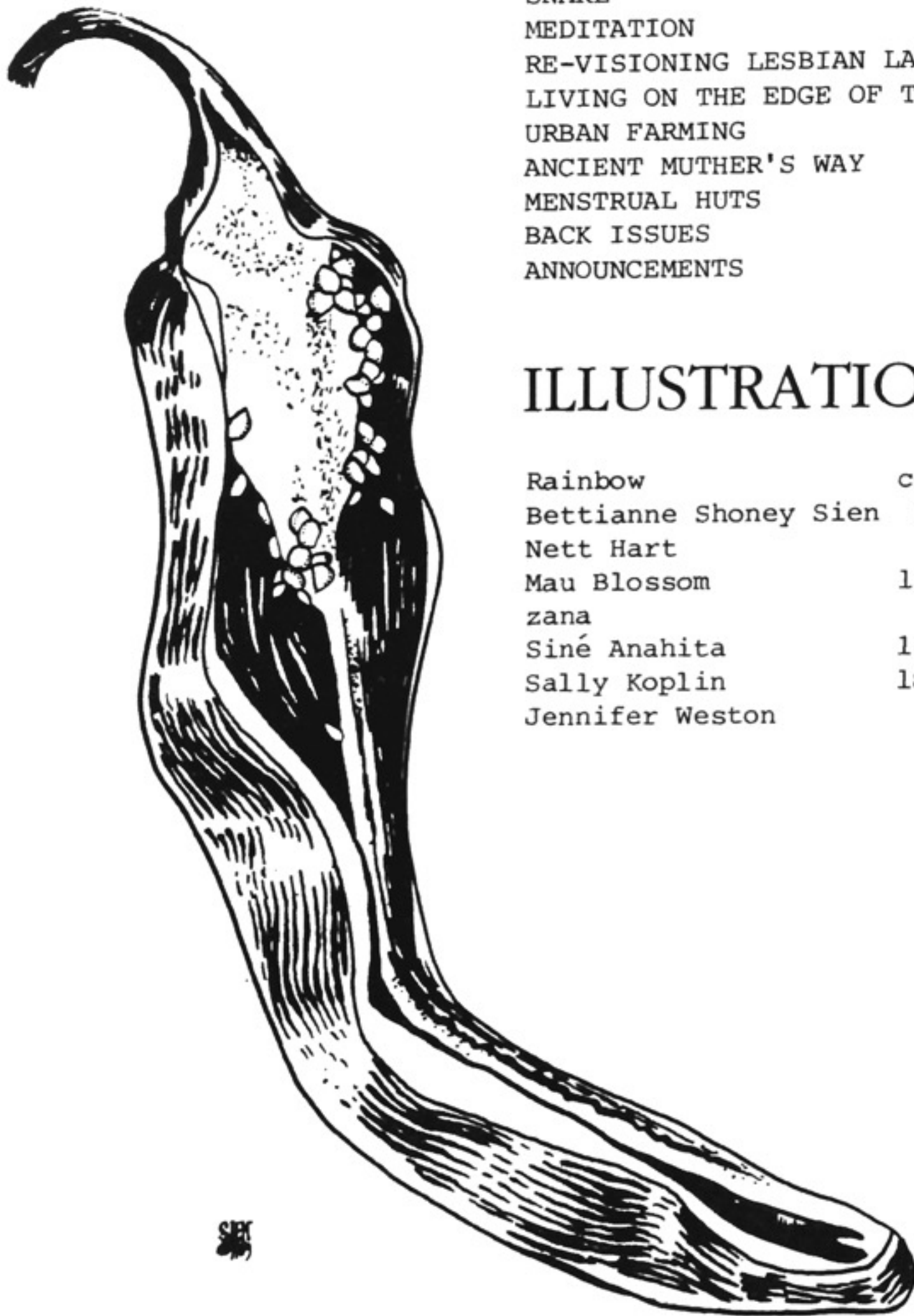
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Bettianne Shoney Sien
 Santa Cruz, California

WALKING THE DREAM

By Gitta Ridder

Lumby, British Columbia

Reprinted from the Waxing Moon Healing Village newsletter. Last winter the WMHV Society held a Healing Fair which raised \$760 toward their dream of womyn's land. Now this land is becoming reality: see the On The Land section in this issue.

The Waxing Moon Womyn's Healing Fair was a thrill for me; witnessing a couple of hundred womyn gathering with the focus of healing their lives. This symbolizes hope for our future as womyn, and it exhilarated me. If we can pull together for one day, that many of us, there will hopefully be several of us who are ready and eager to live and work in healing harmonious ways, in the light and in respect for Mother Earth. I talked to several womyn at the fair, and they shared the vision and longed for a space where we support our healing process and find our road back to nature. A sanctuary within an aura of certainty where we express methods of conflict resolution with a generous heart. A sacred Womyn's space where we grow old in a healthy way, living as relatives with the plants, animals and the Earth as a living organism.

Much of the Earth has been mistreated, exploited, abused, and entire species are lost. Many of us have become numbed and unaware of the most basic principles of life and living, such as where our drinking water comes from, or where the garbage we create goes, the effect electricity and power lines have on us, or where the food we eat comes from or what is added to it. Most of us are not in touch with the Earth as a living entity. To feel at home and part of the whole, we will need to rediscover and re-enchant our world. We need to sense and honor the pulse of the Earth's rhythm in our blood

and bones through the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. We want to caretake the Earth, not for profit or only within the boundaries of the land, but the bioregion and beyond, for the good of generations to come. As daughters of this magnificent planet, we have a responsibility to help her in her healing process, to attune ourselves to the planetary life force and needs at this particular point in time. She needs all the help she can get, and so do we.

We deserve to be loved for who we are and be supported in times of transition with loving care and total honesty. Our dysfunctional patterns of the past do not have to keep us in pain and in the darkness of isolation and lack of choices about our quality of life. Life is meant to be about Joy and Abundance. This damaged Earth and every living organism if given a chance will begin a healing process. No doubt, throughout history humankind has managed to lose balance in life. Nonetheless, nature provides for All in Abundance, we only need to open ourselves to the unlimited opportunities of inviting balance back to ourselves and the planet. It will not be easy for us to arrive at the Healing Village with our individual baggage of internalized (patriarchal) patterns of ego, pain, fear, guilt, scarcity and separateness. The future is a seed within our minds, will we choose to vivify the seeds of abundance, confidence, generosity and peace in our hearts and in our community? It may take time. We do have a chance of redeveloping our connectedness and harmony living as sisters closely with our life sustaining Mother Earth. We will make it a (never ending) joyous celebration of

COMING HOME!!!

ON THE LAND

WAXING MOON HEALING VILLAGE British Columbia, Canada

The Waxing Moon Healing Village has found a home in the Okanagan (central B.C. near Vernon). The goddess led us to a most beautiful, magic spot. 320 acres in Bear Valley (half of the Valley) with a lake(!), a hexagon shape Healing Centre (needs some roof work and finishing inside), a 4 bedroom house (interior needs finishing and outside paint job) and there is a cabin by the lake that needs some repair. There is a wonderful big open space in front of the centre with fire places, there is a play house for children, a fenced in hay field, about 4 overgrown gardens and many former home sites around the lake and elsewhere. There is running water in the Healing Centre and the main house from a creek. There is also an artisian well with a hand pump in front of the centre. There is no hydro, i.e. we will have to get solar power eventually. There is no phone, i.e. we will have to look into getting a cellualr phone in time.

This land was formerly used by the HAILOS (wholistic) community, which folded about two years ago. The land seems to have a mind of her own. Many people have had their eyes on it for logging. It is surrounded on 3 sides by crown land, which cannot be logged without this access either. The present owners felt in a bind, because they cannot hold it (as buildings deteriorate and taxes are up) nor could they bear selling it to be logged. We can have an agreement to lease it for two years in exchange for paying the taxes (around 1500 dollars) and the upkeep of the buildings. After two years we have an option to buy. This gives us the time to feel each other out as well as the land. This gives us the chance to experiment with living in community, i.e. living and relating in a healing way.

This also gives us the opportunity and time to raise the necessary moneys to secure this little paradise for longterm.

Much work lies ahead of us now: clean up, repairs, painting, wallpapering and more. The work party is on!

from the newsletter
PO Box GD, Lumby, BC V0E 2G0 Canada

OWL FARM Roseburg, Oregon

Busy, busy, busy! The summer season is in full bloom. We have had two separate weekends of sixteen wimmin on the land, all enjoying ourselves, lots of laughter, conversation, good food, and plenty of work getting done. We are waiting for a new resident who will arrive in July and renovate the bus for a winter space. So OWL is bursting at the seams. As a collective, we've been learning how to respect each other's needs, while keeping focused on work that has to be done. Not always an easy task. With it all, there is a lot of respect and harmony among the residents at OWL, and that feels good. So come visit! The more the merrier!

Lots of work getting done these past months. We've taken down two large dead trees that were threatening two of the structures on the land. The work went smoothly, and these trees will provide the main house with winter wood once seasoned.

A new garden space called "the bog garden" has been cleared and planted. It is our first attempt to make use of the stream water that runs through the land. The Land Trust agreed to purchase fencing for this garden (330 feet at \$67).

Our summer projects include woodsheds for each structure on the land. We'll be gleaning dead trees from the forest around us for supports, thus cutting down on expenditures for lumber.

We are working toward renovating the south side of the coop into a pottery space. A donation of plexiglass odds and ends may have alleviated the need to buy plexiglass for coop roof space.

In March, our well was tested and found to have clean drinking water! YEA! At the June Land Trust meeting, we agreed to purchase a hand pump to have access to this bubbling source of H2O. The estimated cost of this aspect of the water system is \$60.

WE DID IT! We are tax-exempt. The federal government has accepted our application for exemption from federal income taxes. A final ruling will not be made until March of 1994, but in the meantime, we receive all the benefit of tax-exempt status. All donations made to us are now tax-deductible on your federal income tax returns and we are eligible for grants that are available only to tax-exempt organizations! Hurray! With this ruling, we can now apply for tax-exempt status with the post office which should cut our mailing costs in half and we will also approach the County for a decrease in our County property taxes.

from the newsletter

Oregon Women's Land Trust
PO Box 1692, Roseburg, OR 97470

SILVER CIRCLE SANCTUARY Holly Springs, Mississippi


Silver Circle has enjoyed a wonderful summer of vegetables and flowers. The drought of the last two months is taking its toll on the trees and vegetation. The feelings we are getting here from the Devas is that the Mother Earth is in the mists of making big changes. Our city friends are trying to accommodate the earthquake predictions and we are earthquake "proofing" our buildings' contents as much as we can.

We are planning a major building project for the fall and winter (see announcement if you are interested in coming for a while). We envision a 34' x 16' addition onto our present living space which usually also serves as a communal gathering space. We also plan to finish our composting toilet as soon as it gets cool in Sept. We are hoping for several visitors this fall

and winter after the hot weather breaks the middle of Sept. We will keep you posted on the success of the composter.

New developments in our area have kept us busy in town some this summer. Audrey and Vickie are opening a bookstore in Memphis and we have been helping build bookshelves, etc. Also, we did some traveling during July networking with wimmin in Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. A new cat joined the family in sad condition: injured, starving (worms) and pregnant! Gwen's nursing has done wonders for her in just a short time so we hope to have healthy kittens within the month. Spirit Guide indicates that one may be my next familiar. That is an exciting prospect since I lost mine back in the Spring.

An early planting for the fall garden has been hard hit by the drought but the sugarsnap peas seem to be holding on and chinese cabbage are struggling. Soon, rain, soon. I honor the Mother's need to do what she must even as I ask.

Since I wrote the above, we had 1.1 inches of rain on Labor Day. The night before our neighbor Fran taught us the Cherokee ritual of drawing the turtle in the sand. (If you don't want rain, you draw  in the turtle's back.) Our ritual ended with a loud clap of thunder. The next day we were blessed with this wonderful water. Blessed Be!

Gwen and Gail

Silver Circle Sanctuary
Rt. 5 Box 100, Holly Springs MS 38635

A MANUAL BLENDER?

A friend of mine used to live in Arkansas and has told me of a blender someone had there that used no electricity. It was made to run by a series of gears. A wheel was turned and the blender whizzed.

I live without electricity and I want to keep it that way, but I would like some modern conveniences. I'm sure there is a way to have some of these things without doing a lot of harm to the environment.

If there is anyone who knows how to do this or knows who does, I'd appreciate any information.

Earth
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Nett Hart
Foreston, Minnesota

WOMAN'S WORLD Madisonville, Louisiana

The activity around here has tripled and my muscles ache and my soul soars higher! The old pond was overgrown, broken open at one end and generally a mess. Now it is recut, clean, levee-banked and waiting for packing and seeding! Wow!

The old garage (tin) has its doors off and on the ground awaiting new hands to rebuild one end of the frame. After that we will start making it into a small workshop to house all the woodworking tools. Although I'm still here mostly alone, the women who come on weekends and occasionally for weekday help really keep my projects moving at a hectic but fun pace.

Some questions have arisen that I would love to hear answers from you readers. Some women have suggested that they buy some of the land now instead of living

and working on the place for 5 years first. Other women want to come and work for the "community" but their "help" is short, aperiodic, more play and social than useful and often drains our limited resources instead of adding! How do you communicate to women who want to "be on the land" that there is a price to pay to be privileged to enjoy the benefits? Some town women have an attitude of the place being FREE!!! Somehow they ignore the expenses associated with property taxes, insurance, utilities, repairs, fuel, garbage, cleaning, laundry, replacements, etc. I mention all this mostly for future reference because I have been very fortunate recently to have received primarily *gracious* women who not only come out and work 4 to 6 hours a day to help, but who also take care of their own food and laundry, otherwise I couldn't afford the help! Ha! I hope all this doesn't sound too petty for readers because real living in the country is so invigorating that most of the time women really *forget* the costs to the caretaker in time, energy and money!! What do you think? Anyone experience working all day only to find that without that helper you would have accomplished even more with less stress and expense? Am I alone? Unaware?

Well, the good news is that I am still getting inquiries about Woman's World from the spring issue of MAIZE 9990 and am thrilled with the "readiness" of the women who write! Two have visited!

I am still interested in hearing from women who have a passion to live in the country on clean land, free from addictions with open loving women who are responsible and independent. Being able to support themselves at present is vital to the beginning of Woman's World as we presently have no industry started!

Shewolf

Shewolf is a crone on 100 acres of magic spaces manifesting "a nation of Women with wings" to build and live in Woman's World! 1990 is the year of conception and birth. I am a passionate carpenter-teacher-witch-traveler, who has lived in West Virginia, Ohio, Arizona, Texas, California, Florida and Louisiana!
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