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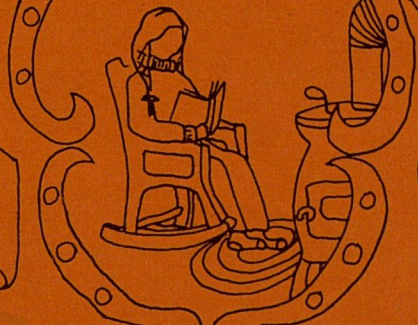
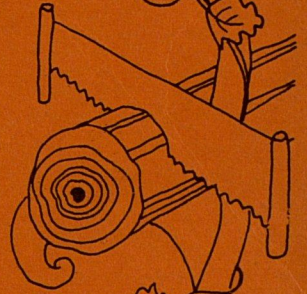
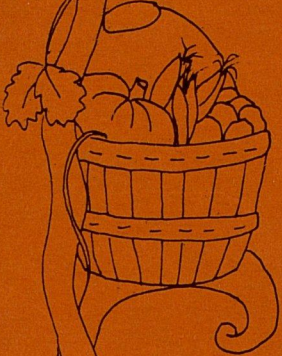
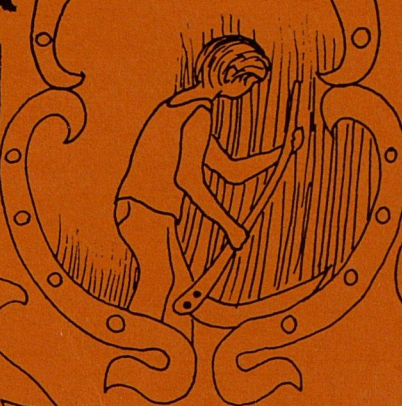
Women & Land

60¢

COUNTRY
WOMEN

VOL. I

No. VII





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**Changing the Oil (Issue Six) was written by Paula Hartzell

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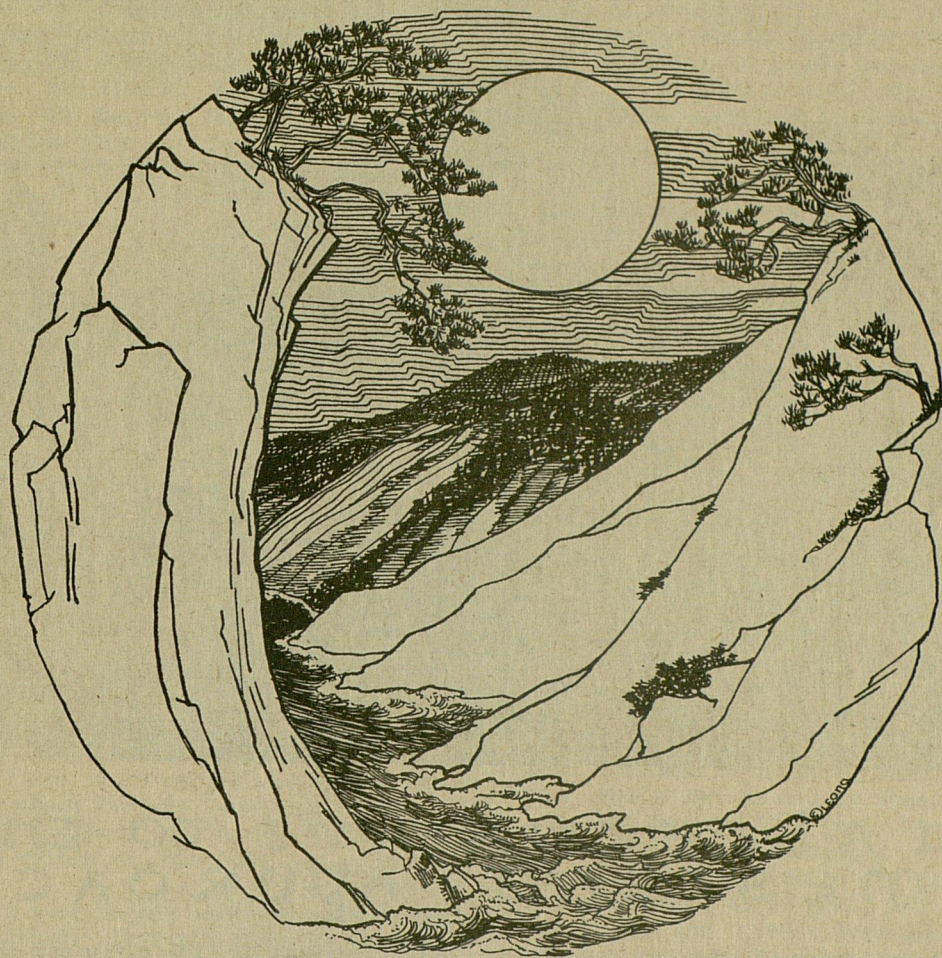
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Thru many moons the mountain was waiting:
For a dancer to float above its fog.
For a spirit to soar high as its hawks.
For a body to roll thru its flowers.
For a laughter to echo its joy.
For a soul to drink of its secrets.
And for a smile to soothe its storms.
Now, in this thirsty year of the big snow
the mountain found
a woman Diane
who calls it home.



AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE HOMESTEAD APPROACH

I live on a large piece of land in a remote area of Trinity County with twenty other people. Three of the twenty put down the original money for the down payment, but we are trying to generate money for our huge mortgage and monthly expenses with projects we do together. Many of us get food stamps which we all share and a great deal of our food comes from our garden. I have no personal, private money (though most other people do) and the ranch pays for my basic needs -- Tampax, stamps, laundry soap. The ranch can't afford to pay for extras, however, and so I can't count on being able to travel, buy books, have a treat in town. Sometimes that feels like a pinch (especially when I get an urge to escape and realize I can't go farther than the cattle guard). But my life is moving toward fewer wants rather than more, and most of the time, if given the option of having money or not, I'd choose not to have it. I have found it a great freedom not to have to deal with it or the desires it brings up, and so far that far outweighs the occasional deprivations.

The flow of my life here in general is toward simplifying, and my life style here reflects that. There are hassles for me living here, of course. Mostly they are in the form of problems with people. They center on the difficulties involved in trying to find alternative ways to live, and for me especially, arise from the con-

flict between my life style and that of others here. That was a conflict I did not anticipate, and working it out has been hard and sometimes painful. But it feels pretty good now, and the story of the conflict itself is one which I don't want to tell here.

I am not into a "homesteading" way of life on the land. If I lived alone, I don't think I would have any domestic animals, machinery, plumbing. I want to live primitively, and see that as a very different approach to life in the country. That means I value the peace and freedom of a simple life more than the products of a homestead. That I'd rather drink fir needle tea with my meals than take care of a milk goat. That I'd rather haul water than have to hassle with plumbing breaking down. That I realize that putting in an orchard means building a new reservoir which means keeping the caterpillar running which means going to town for a new part which means getting the car running which means... It all mushrooms, and I've found that maintaining a "homestead" standard of living takes me away from the reasons I came to the country. I hadn't thought out this whole "life style" issue before I left the city. My coming here just felt right, and I worked out my own life within the framework of the group life after the fact (and it is a "homestead" framework, which I do share in to some extent).

From my experience, I think it's important for people coming to the country to be aware of the choices before they set up lives here. And so I got to thinking about why I feel the way I do, why I turn away from the homestead mode. And I concluded that most of my feelings about how I want to live come pretty directly from how I feel about the land itself. And so what I want to write about here is just that -- who the land is for me, and how that makes me want to live.

Looking back, it seems very strange to me that the twenty of us never thought much about the land before coming here. We spent hours talking about the school we hoped to have, the financial structure we'd set up, the dwellings we wanted to build. But it wasn't until we got here that we began to have some idea of what would be the overwhelming force in our existence here: the land itself.

I remember well that first summer, when things were especially crazy. I remember feeling that the land was watching us, was sifting us through to see how we measured up. From the first it felt awesome and powerful -- a force truly alien to the substance of our conscious lives until then. Yet it was also a part of our deeper past and spoke to us in ways long buried in our subconscious. The land opened its arms to us and folded us in as if to welcome home errant children -- and watched us, to see if we had forgotten too much.

The land was, and is, a healer for me. It seems obvious that the only way we made it through those first crazy months was by our growing love and respect for and knowledge of the land. In a way I cannot say, but understand somewhere deep within me, the land has us in its spell.

At first I went to the land for solace, for serenity, for quiet. It still gives me that peace, but I have come to share other moods with it, too. Mostly there is joy, sheer delight in my existence. I am never happier than when I'm lying flat out in the meadow, my body meeting the earth, my soul merging with it. I know a tree

that makes me warm when I lean against its trunk, and a meadow that is filled with ghosts. The land is very much alive for me; I sense that the trees, rocks, and grasses are of the same order of life that I am. I do not feel that I own this land in any way. Rather, I share this space with the other forms of life here. I gather roots and greens for my dinner with respect, knowing we are all a part of a larger flow of life, feeding off and depending on one another.

The land completes me in a way that people do not. It is somewhat strange to me, but certainly true, that my most intimate relationship here is with the land. I can live wholly and yet equally with it, never feeling I have to be other than myself. I understand less and less of the great mysteries around me as the days pass, but I know more, and it no longer matters much whether I can figure it all out. There is a balance I am beginning to find, a security of timelessness that makes a need for answers seem absurd.

This land has been logged; it makes me very sad to see the stumps that were great firs. The

sadness is for myself, and for all of us who are learning too late what "civilization" is doing to nature. But I have a sense that the land expects no better. Death, birth, change are equally a part of its existence...and if these particular violences are overwhelming, they are mostly overwhelming us. It is our own death we are hastening, not that of Nature. The land will transcend, will endure, will live again.

This, then, is the land for me: intensely alive, but not at all human. My feeling for who the land is leads me quite naturally to my style of life here. That life is very simple: I sleep on a bed of laurel shoots lashed together, carry my water from a nearby stream, eat wild foods as much as I can. I want to blend into the balance of life here and make as few changes as possible; to respect the sanctity of what was here before me out of respect for the greater forces that made it that way and tie us all together.

My days here follow no pattern, and that is a delicious freedom for me. Yet they do feel increasingly part of a wholeness, a unity, a harmony. I realize that the cultivation of that harmony is my main priority here. It is important to me to have time, time that is peaceful and open, free from the pressure of too many "things", too many projects. For that is the climate of growth for me, and growth and change are the substance of my existence now. From the first months here, I can remember being very aware of city habits falling from me in layers. Most of what I "knew" is slipping away from me, as are the crow's feet around my eyes. Getting rid of all that baggage is a real physical process -- I can feel myself changing, getting lighter. The past sometimes drops off furiously, creating pain and chaos as it goes, and sometimes it just melts away and I don't even realize it's gone. It is a rebirth, a violent retching, a bursting, an emerging. The land is the stage of my learning and has been my best teacher. The energy of growth rises up through me directly from the land, and my life has encased that flow, to protect and encourage it. My simple life keeps me clear and receptive; it wards off the drain and distractions of a more complex existence.

But the deeper reason I live this way is simply that I can do nothing else. I love this land and I love my life here. I am happy now in a complete and quiet way that shows in my eyes, my smile. I am glad that my existence is ecologically sound, and it is important to me that I know how to live without city resources, in preparation for a time when they may not be available. But mostly I live simply, with the land, because that is how I am comfortable. My living here seems the living out of something deep inside me, something started long ago, before my conscious mind was born.

My mother, bewildered as she is by this strange tack my life has taken, comforts herself that at least I can go back to the city when I want to, armed with the teaching degree she urged. I haven't had the heart to tell her how wrong she is. I can never go back. The time when I could have passed a long time ago, slipped away with the wind without my even noticing. ♀

Would you like to buy RHODE ISLAND ? ? ? ?

As any Senator will proudly tell you, America's roots lie not in its soil but in a system based on profit and exploitation. Free enterprise has for a long time meant taking as much as you can and giving as little. The earth itself and its essential resources have become just another commodity on the market. This country with 3% of the world's population consumes 50% of the world's natural resources each year, leaving behind a massive garbage heap of junked cars and appliances, homes equipped with electric trash compressors to help us cope with the waste from our gluttonous life.

Land in America does not belong to or exist for the people, either. It is controlled and developed for the benefit of the powerful and privileged corporate elite. 70% of our population, crowded in urban centers, lives on 2% of our land. And most of the 2% is not owned by the people who live on it. The vast majority of America's acres are owned or controlled by giant corporations. In California, 5% of all private land is owned by just one corporation - the Southern Pacific Railroad (land which under an 1864 federal grant was supposed to be returned to the people at \$1.25 an acre if unused for laying railroads.) Time magazine owns timber lands in Texas 1½ times the size of Rhode Island, and they are not even a "large" corporation. An elaborate economic structure of tax loopholes and farm subsidies literally supports as well as encourages corporate land control. For example, Tenneco Corp., (a huge conglomerate which owns agricultural lands, packaging and processing plants, shipping lines, manufacturing plants, and land development companies to sell off in one acre lots what is made unfarmable by their practices) received 1.3 million dollars federal subsidies last year. From the State of California, they received a property tax reduction of \$136,911 under the Williamson Act which exempts timber companies and large agricultural corporations from their equitable share of property taxes. Despite reported profits of \$73.8 million

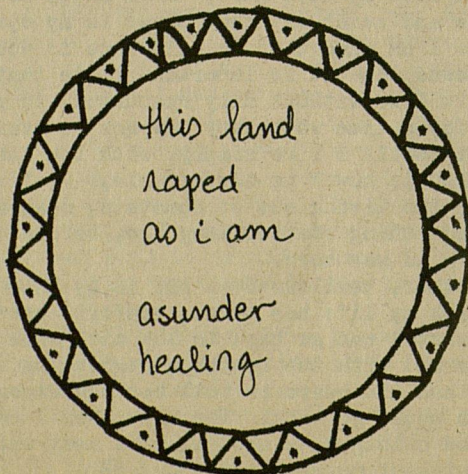
in 1970, Tenneco paid no federal income taxes because of capital gains and farm-loss loopholes. Almost half of all farm subsidies last year went to the richest 7% of America's farmers; all of that 7% are large corporations.

The largest single land owner in America is the federal government itself, but only a minute portion of its holdings are available to the people and then only for temporary recreational use. Millions of acres taken from Indian tribes in the 1860's have become the leaseholds of railroad and oil companies. The 186 million acres of National Forests exist not to preserve timber or wilderness areas, but to supply lumber companies with new cutting ground after they have decimated their own private lands, with seemingly no consciousness of the vulnerability of natural resources. As International Paper told its stockholders, "The company will step up the harvest of timber from its own forest lands and begin to maximize profits by treating the land as current profit centers rather than resource banks for future use."

This institutionalized policy of abusing the earth for profit is not just an aberration of modern corporate industrialism, but stems directly from our basic attitudes toward land. With a few communal exceptions, white settlers have believed in private ownership from their first arrival on this continent. And with the concept of ownership has come not just the power of inequitable land distribution, but an unconscious arrogance. To not conceive of "owning" the earth means knowing your place in the relative scale of things, means respecting the rights and needs of all other living beings as equal to your own. Owning land means thinking your needs come before all other living things and that you can control the earth. People who think they can "own" land leave their marks and scars all over it, never feeling a rhythm that is not human-made. We destroy the land though we never succeed in conquering its spirit.

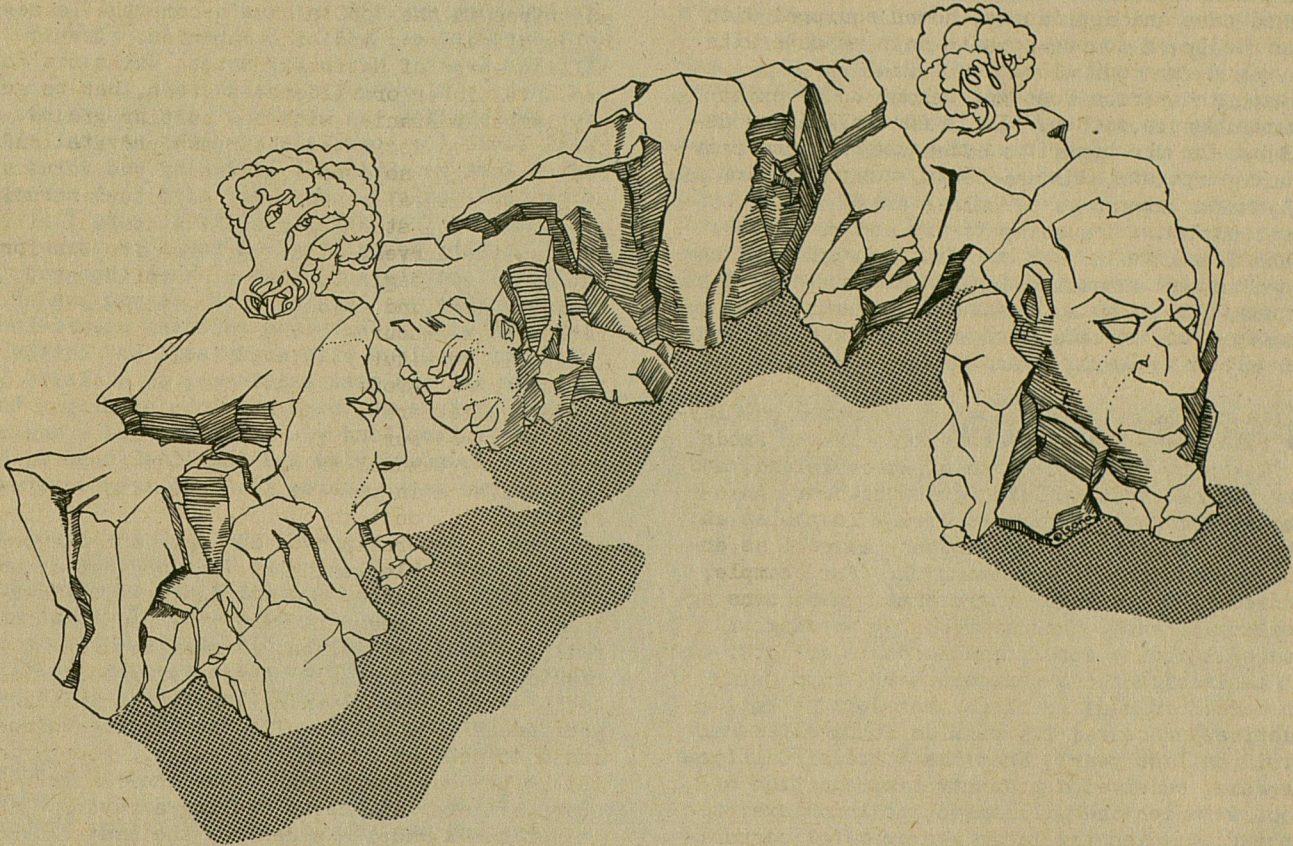
Though ownership seems so much a fact of life as to be natural to us now, whole cultures have existed with no such concept. Indians lived on this very ground for centuries without claiming ownership of it. The land "belonged" to those who used it -- plants, animals, streams, wind, until all were displaced by white men's greed. At Capitol Reef's National Monument this spring, amidst rocky Utah canyons, I thought of the Indians who once lived fruitfully on land we now call desert. As I looked at Government exhibits praising Indian art, I wondered why the government had to own even these wild canyons, driving out the Indians, to build a national monument to our greatest sin: possession.

I did not even question the idea of owning land when I bought it. Three years of renting country homes had left me hungry for a place I could love unreservedly, a place I could sink



roots and visions and energy into for the rest of my life if I chose. I did not stop to question the buying of this land and I still don't question the owning of it in this society. Owning land is a privilege and even the most radical of owners does not alter the power structure of land control. Only massive land reform and redistribution will bring real change. But here in Amerika today I like owning land. I like knowing that only what I believe in will happen to this land. I am saying clearly that this place will not be plundered or abused while I am

its steward. Owning land feels like a major responsibility to me -- a moral obligation to take a stand against this culture's march of progress. In a place where men (for only men could have thought of such consummate egotism) think they can own land, I must own land too, to prevent their leaving scars on "my" land also, Indians felt their place and could be trusted to love and nurture the earth that supported them. White men cannot be trusted to nurture anything. And I, a white woman owning land, must use all the power of my possession to dispossess white men's destruction from this peace of land. ♀



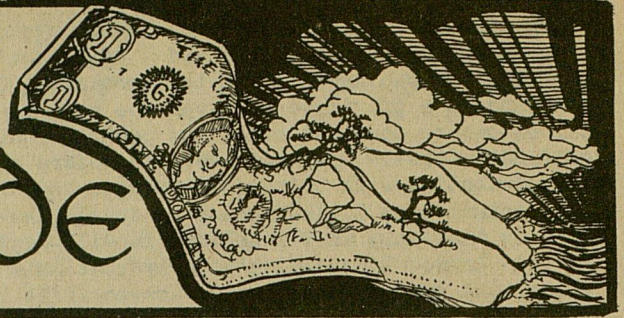
Every week 2000 American farmers go out of business.

In the last 30 years, 100,000 farms a year have succumbed to the "agricultural revolution". Another million farms will disappear by 1980.

300 acres of California farmland disappear every day to freeways, parking lots and vacation homes.

Small farmers comprise 56.5% of all farms, but they realize only 7.8% of all farm sales. 45 corporate farms (less than .1% of the state's commercial farms) control 3.7 million acres - 61% of the farmland.

A LAND buying GUIDE



Sitting at the writing desk, looking out over miles of Mendocino hills and woodlands, it feels like a big treehouse here in this shake cabin, not being able to see the ground right below. So perched, I think over the numerous aspects of looking for a home in the country--the things we carefully checked out and those we overlooked. "Babes in the woods" we often called ourselves during the legal transactions. Our position easily taken advantage of unless armed with a lot of information. I'm going to try and cover here what I learned in our own dealings and what has come to our attention during the more than 2 years since. It is by no means all-inclusive, but perhaps can be of help to those now looking for land to buy or dreaming about it for some later day.

The Dream

is, of course, what comes first--and how sweet it is. No matter how much harder the reality hits later, the dream is the strong starting energy--and often what keeps you going. I see no harm in formulating the ideal country scene, to be used for enthusiastic searching, bearing in mind that you probably won't find it, but will find a more possible dream for your area. I was looking for a gentle, lush Vermont farm in the California ranch lands--and found about as close as you can get--which is hardy and summer dry. But the images of rolling hills, big open meadows, quiet woods, mountaintop air and panorama were realized. Undeveloped bountiful water including streams were not--except in the valley 2000 feet below.

If you know the general geographical area you are interested in, you've got a good start. Our choice was determined by weather, terrain, accessibility when desired to city activity and market (about 160 miles), land prices, general direction of the county's changes (i.e. lots of people like us). Second, have an idea of what you can afford compared to general prices of the area. This means cash down payment plus yearly installments. Do you have enough savings to pay the installments or will you have to earn it in order to keep the land? The later means: 1) jobs to acquire a savings before moving to the land, 2) jobs outside the land after moving there (can be a big energy drain), 3) agricultural earnings from your land, which takes much more experience and knowledge than you may at first expect, 4) cottage industry from your land (usually takes a long time to earn a lot of money). It's worthwhile to check many sources about average land prices so as to avoid innocent overpayment. If you're buying with others, get it straight now

how communal land payments relate to individuals.

Usually corresponding to what you can afford is how much acreage you want. We had the pleasant surprise of getting 3 times the acreage for 1/3 the average price per acre. The extra 2/3 is largely sloping unfarmable land that can remain for exploration and beauty of its mountained natural state (or hopefully returned natural state after last generation's lumbering and sheep grazing destruction). Remember also that acreage is recorded from the air as if it were flat--so hill country actually gives you more acres than official computation states. What topographical features are you looking for? Do you prefer valley land with riverbottom soil and upward-looking view, or woodland with acidic soil and little direct sun and enclosed existence, or hillside land with a mixture of these and lots of slopes to live on, or hilltop land with full sun and space and out and downward view and the likelihood of being above your water source (i.e. no easy water system)?

Very importantly--do you want developed or undeveloped land? A place that already has a house and barn and fenced pasture is more expensive and gives you a good start. The land we have had nothing but an old logging/hunting cabin whose insides needed complete re-doing and a shitter. We worked frantically that first summer to shelter and provide for ourselves for an unknown winter.

In this county, virgin redwood acres cost about sixteen times as much as logged acres and are getting impossible to find. Also, at this writing, there is an annual tax per tree if they are of timber market value. I often lament the many enormous redwood stumps, but know, ironically, that we could never have afforded the land otherwise. The larger the piece, the lower the price per acre.

Next--why do you want to live in the country? To farm grain, vegetables, legumes, christmas trees? To raise goats, horses, chickens, cows, bees, llamas? To have a rural base and work in town? To log or mill? To just hole up in the woods and live as simply as possible? To do you-don't-care-what just to get Away From The City? Each of these makes a large difference in what you're looking for: soil, water, sun, vegetation, pasture land, access to a market for your product or to your job, seasonal changes and weather severity, personal survival needs. If you're going to live collectively, get these thoughts started first. Is there a general direction you all share for the land? What are each person's commitments at this point? The

workable commune question is, quite obviously, an entire matter in itself.

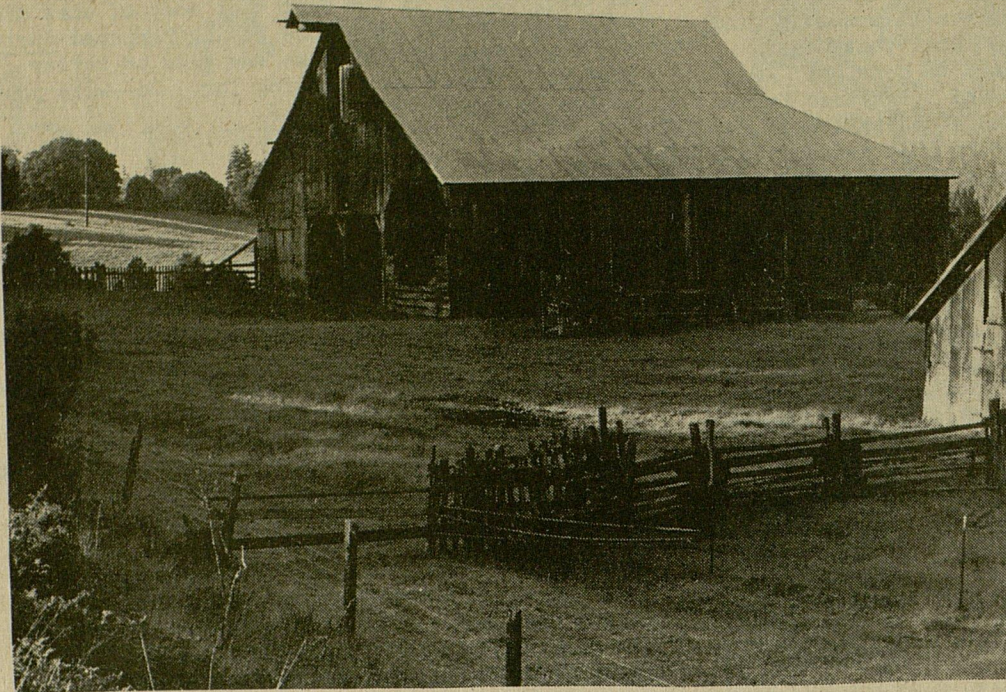
Do you have dreams of self-sufficiency or is this not a concern? If so, you'll probably find it a big shock to learn just what that means. Shelter and heat are not hard to come by. As a woman, I was at first awed and frightened by the prospect of construction and a constant wood supply. You'll be happy to learn it's quite within your range once it's your active direction. Self-sufficient food is harder and will take many years to approach realizing. Even without gas or electricity, you still have to run your lamps on something. And even most candle wax is petroleum based. The only thing I can think of is many years of many hives for beeswax candlelight! Besides the basics, there are needs for tools, animal food and care, taxes, fencing, water systems, medical care, agricultural investments. Realistically, it would take a huge amount of time and work for a majority of your needs to be selfmet. I think the more immediate concern is how to enter this new breed of consumerism the most ecologically. In any case, you'll need capital beyond your down payment, unless you can get, and are satisfied with, medical and food provisions and truly have no desires for land or animal improvements or more than the simplest of personal needs.

If it sounds like much more than you can possibly get together in your head at this point, do take comfort in the fact that most of what did come together for us before buying happened during the search period. What we saw gave us better ideas of what we were looking for. So--with your basics in mind--hit the road.

The hunt

Do hold on to your dreams until you're sure they don't exist. They might. It takes a lot of time to be careful and thorough--and well worth it. There are different ways of finding out what's available. I had the idea that I could wander about and ask local farmers and storekeepers what was for sale and they would turn me on to old Farmer Molly who was selling her bean farm down the road. Not bloody likely in Mendocino or most popular California counties. Perhaps still in parts of Kansas or Maine. Here, almost everything is under the control of the real estate business. And it's quite a business, with Money spurring it on--not to be taken lightly. Now there is the possibility if you carefully check newspapers and bulletin boards that you'll find some real person advertising to sell outright or
continued





continued

to buy shares or to join a group who is buying. I'd check those out first. Unfortunately I must advise Caution even here. That's how we got started--followed a notice that sounded very down to earth and ended up dealing with a hard-nosed, scheming real estate dealer whose only difference was his long hair and funky appearance. We liked one place he told us he had for sale, but it turned out he was hoping to buy it by getting our money. If you deal with individuals, make sure they at least own the land they're trying to sell! It did start the process of lead leading to lead leading lead for us, however.

Spend as much time in the area you're interested in as possible. Make sure it's what you want. Drive and camp around. Look for "For Sale" signs and follow up every interesting one. Go to real estate offices and describe what you want. Occasionally you might hear about land auctions or pieces being sold for the price of back taxes. We started looking on February 12 of 1971 after a year of dreaming and first saw our home on May 3rd. Dealings were not over until July 15th. I'd recommend looking during the most unattractive season if possible. If you love it then, you know you're right, for every place is beautiful in the springtime. Take time to really explore any place you're interested in. Walk all over. Camp there. Don't let the agent rush you. You're bound to get the "so and so has offered me such and such already" line. But stay cool. If you're really interested and get that pressure, work quickly but carefully. We dealt directly with the owner but heard about the place through an agency. He was a fast-talker and bullshitter but we ended up with a good deal. Except we probably should have been stronger in settling on a longer-term payment.

If you fall in love with a place, re-check your limits. Can you really afford it? We almost got ourselves into a situation of having to sell off parts as soon as buying. Keep looking. When you find the place that's meant for you, you'll know.

So--you've found a place you love and can afford. What are its connections with town? Are you nine miles up a dirt road you can't drive in winter? Is that what you want? How do you feel about your closeness to other people, to town itself? Are your neighbors friendly? Do you want a phone? Electricity? Is that easily and cheaply installed or will it cost \$40,000 (literally)? Do you want metered gas?

What is the water situation? Good water is ESSENTIAL. Where is it located and in what form? Is there plenty all year? See for yourself what the source is. Talk to area people about their water and if they know anything about your land. Ask previous owners about your water. Look ahead to expansion of your water needs. The spring by our house was ample water the first summer. Now that we have a big garden, two horses and a mule, ten goats, many chickens, a dozen fruit trees, the spring is not nearly enough. We must find well water or develop the springs down the slopes to survive as we are now, let alone do any irrigating.

What kind of soil does the land have and how deep is the topsoil? If you're thinking of agriculture, this is of utmost importance. The agricultural advisor for this county tells me a major problem is locating soils and adequate water to allow desired crop production. Get a vegetation and soils map of the area. They are available through your agricultural extension service. There is a rating of the different

soils with the map, for timber or grass, all available in this county for 55 cents. Here, you can only get a soil test done after you've bought the land. It's possible you could get one done before in your area. Also available are topographical maps, acreage computer grids, maps from the tax assessors office telling who owns the land, and detailed road maps. The vegetation-soils maps and legends show dominant plant species and miscellaneous elements with tabulation of sprouting nature and browse values. Also a key for recognizing them and illustrated glossary. They also tell type and depth of soils with identifying characteristics. They indicate the capacity of the land for growing timber crops and the size averages of the trees. They give ratings of the relative suitability of the soils for grass production as well.

Finding out about the weather is very helpful. You know generally what to expect for each season and how to prepare for it, how to judge your garden by it, what it means about good road access, etc.

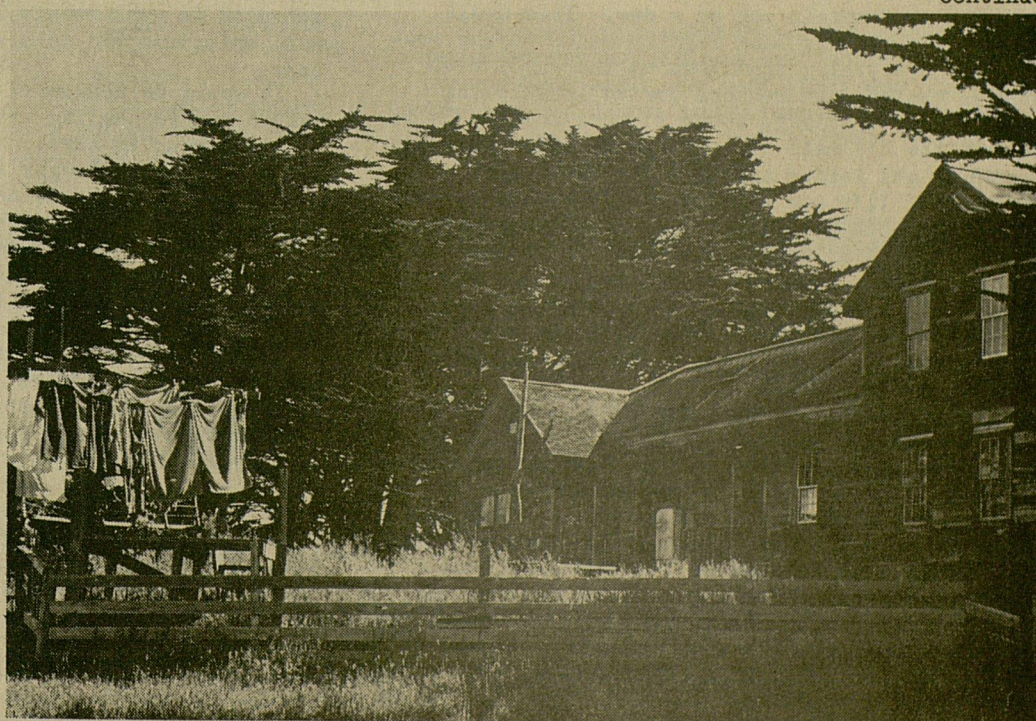
You'll always, under this government, have to pay taxes. Find out how much they'll be. Can you afford it? We have put our land into an agricultural preserves act, called the Williamson Act, which lowered the taxes considerably. To qualify you must have 100 acres or adjoin land already in the act. It is essentially devoting your property to agricultural use and preservation. Go to the tax assessors office and find out about the likelihood of your taxes changing and about possible tax exemption acts. Another possibility is the homeowner's exemption. If you live on the land you own in a code house, you automatically qualify. Most likely if you're building to code you will have gotten a building permit--which presupposes a visit from the building inspector.

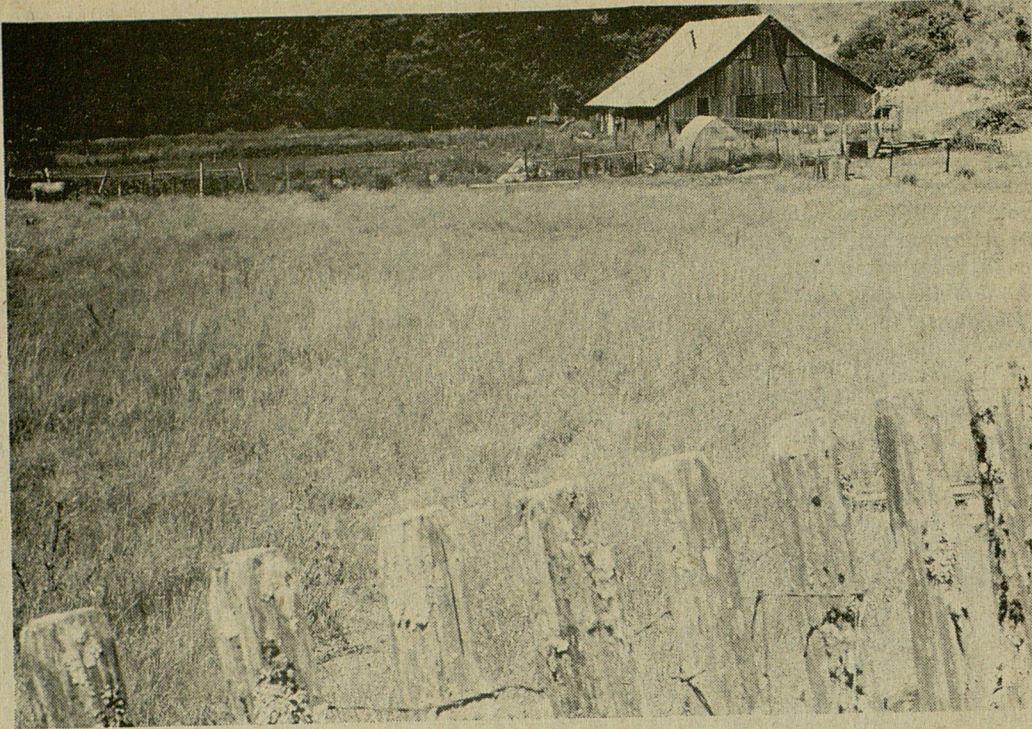
He (most likely he) comes three times to check out your building. If approved, the assessor comes to evaluate your taxes under homeowner's exemption. If, however, your house is not to code and you've invited the inspector, you're actually against the law unless you can convince him it's not your permanent living quarters. Don't invite the assessor or building inspector unless you want this exemption and are sure you qualify. The assessor has the right to come every three years, mostly to look at the land. The building inspector must be invited unless he has got a warrant. There are federal programs also to lower taxes that are presently without funds.

It is wise to check out what's happening in the surrounding areas. Are they going to log your favorite view? Do all your neighbors run generators and chain saws when you want to live quietly? Are developments going in around you so in three years you'll be looking at roads and houses and lights? Who owns your neighboring land and what are their plans? What are your boundaries? Have the agent, or if she/he doesn't know, the previous owner go around and point out the boundary markers. If it's unclear and makes a difference to you now and you're definitely buying, you can get it surveyed at very high expense (seller might pay). Sometimes it doesn't matter about exactness yet--but very well may later. In any case--have an approximate idea of every boundary. Are your borders open or wooded? Recognize what this means in terms of your neighbor's developments affecting you.

One other interesting thing to find out is what, if any, natural dangers exist on your land. We have rattlesnakes and black widow spiders and tarantulas on a very small scale--but it's good to know about. And don't forget that trees fall down!

continued





making the deal

So now you've spent a lot of time checking out your dreamland and are madly in love with magnificent energy to begin your new life! Now its time to make your deals. Above all--use caution along with your exuberance. Something to find out is if you can rent for a year before buying (rent to go toward purchase) and really get to know the land first.

You are entering a relationship of ownership. You've probably done it before with a car or a bicycle or fountain pen or a dog. This feels different. Buying land legally means buying power over everything that goes on there. I feel one of the biggest reasons for we land-loving people and especially women to take this on is to combat the old male trend of heavy developing and misusing and raping and turn it toward care and furthering life and happiness. I have heard many of us say, "We're buying to save and protect this land." It is an incredible power to think, because you own, that you can change in any way you desire all other existing life. Just walking around alters the natural balances. We must remain highly conscious and loving and comprehending to use this human tool.

A woman, especially a young one, is considered more of a push-over than a man. Be firm and convinced. Use all the help you can get. It is hard to go through hasseling and sometimes dirty dealings for something beautiful. This communal land was bought with my name on the deed (the money came through me) for reasons of expediency, stability and an inability to find at that time a suitable group plan. Check out property laws in your area. In California, the property of a married person is half the spouse's. Now that we're more of an established family, we can better know

what we need for legal collective ownership. If you are buying collectively, (as one purchase, not shares), I would strongly advise finding a plan which gives power and stability to the entity, the total group, and allows the individuals to change and move within it.

For this and for everything else, you'll need a real estate lawyer. Very important and absolutely worth the expense if you can't find free counsel. There are many many details to carefully explore that you probably won't know about unless schooled in real estate law. And a lot of sellers will unfortunately take advantage of this ignorance.

It would be wonderful if you could trust the people you're dealing with. You'll probably know. The lawyer helps here. We worked with an agent, the owner, and a lawyer (young and more into drug cases than real estate and not much good for us) who constantly bad-mouthed each other. Get outside references if possible about the people involved. If your agent is a wheeler-dealer, at least you're armed with that information.

So you sit down with the seller and figure price. Make low offers! You already know approximately from before, but this is for final numbers. It is hard--be firm! Find out beforehand what the normal interest rate is on installments, what the average down payment percentage is (probably 5-9% depending on mortgage period). Interest is paid for the periods since the last payment on the remaining amount due only. We had to pay the huge amount of 37% down. The highest amount before the seller has to pay taxes on it is 29%. Talk price, determine length of time to pay off mortgage. The longer is usually the better for you since it lets you use your capital for starting out needs or lets you generate an income with it.

The interest rate gets higher as the term gets longer, but devaluation of the dollar also continues.

Find out what is included in the purchase (equipment, other rights, all land improvements, etc.) Make requests. Especially, learn what liens if any are attached. Liens are holds on the land that are transferred to you in the purchase unless specifically stated otherwise. These include such things as unpaid back taxes (these are not your responsibility), Joe Green's hunting rights on your land, Sally Shoe's right to tear down your buildings and take the lumber, Wilbur Mush's mining and mineral rights, R.T. Hit's water rights, P. G. & E.'s power line rights, and other possible goodies. Just ask "Are there any liens attached?" That's all you need for now, and you can get rid of any you don't want by writing it into the contract. If the seller insists, for instance, on keeping the mining rights, you've got another written deal to make to satisfy both of you by setting up limits.

Next to discuss of absolute importance is access. This was our point of contention. Do you have full right of way over the roads to your property? Get it guaranteed in writing. Get copies of the right of way papers. Find out the nature of the access--is it deeded or prescriptive (by virtue of long use)? If deeded, you're fine. Get copies. If prescriptive, get affidavits proclaiming that use and its transference to you. Does anyone have right of way through you, and how do you feel about this? Discuss each of these things with your lawyer and find out their meanings. If you really can't get a lawyer, go to all the claims offices yourself and check everything out. Don't be thrown by the seller's "Don't you trust me?" Just say you want to make sure of everything for yourself.

There is a legal set-up provided to make sure all these things are taken care of. It's called a title search, your title insurance. A third party, a title company, holds the seller's deed and the buyer's money for a period called escrow while checking out any liens and making sure the seller has the right to sell. Usually the buyer

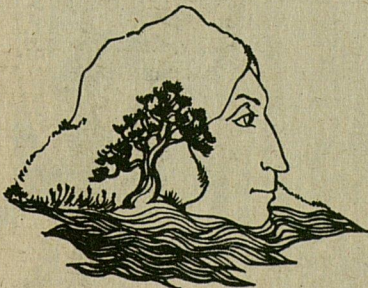
has to pay for this--but the seller might. At close of escrow, if the land is free to change hands and the buyer has met her/his requirements, the title company gives the buyer the deed and the seller the money. Do it! It's a necessary safe-guard.

O.K. You're ready to sign a preliminary contract, which is also a receipt of your deposit (fraction of down payment). It is legally binding, setting up the terms of the agreement (seller might have requirements to meet too), the property description, any liens, the terms of escrow, other conditions. Make it subject to the approval of your lawyer. If not, then you make another preliminary contract with new terms. Money and deed go into escrow, you sign the last real thing, and wait for close of escrow, at which time you'll be presented with the deed. The land is yours except for the deed of trust, which belongs to the previous owners until the mortgage is paid off in full. This is their claim to the land if you don't pay up.

So, you should have copies of preliminary contracts, mortgage contracts, any liens, rights of way, seller's deed of trust, preliminary title report when escrow begins and the policy of title insurance and the deed in your name when escrow closes.

And there you are--a land owner. Full of love and enthusiastic energy and wonderful dreams, you begin the process of country living. You start your garden and find old cabins in the area to tear down for lumber, and look for farm animals and build your shelters and wander in the woods and breathe fresh air and work really hard. One last piece of advice is to post your land against hunters if so desired. They are legally trespassing if the land is properly posted.

You begin that magnificent rediscovery of natural cycles and rhythms and find yourself slowing and calming down. You sit under your favorite tree and watch the scampering lizards, listen to the singing wind, and find your bond to the land already growing strong. ♀



I want to live to be
an outrageous old woman
who is never accused of being
an old lady

I want to live to have ten thousand lovers
in one love
one 70-year-long-loving
love

there are at least
two of me

I want to get leaner and meaner
sharp edged
color of the ground
till I incorporate
from sheer joy.



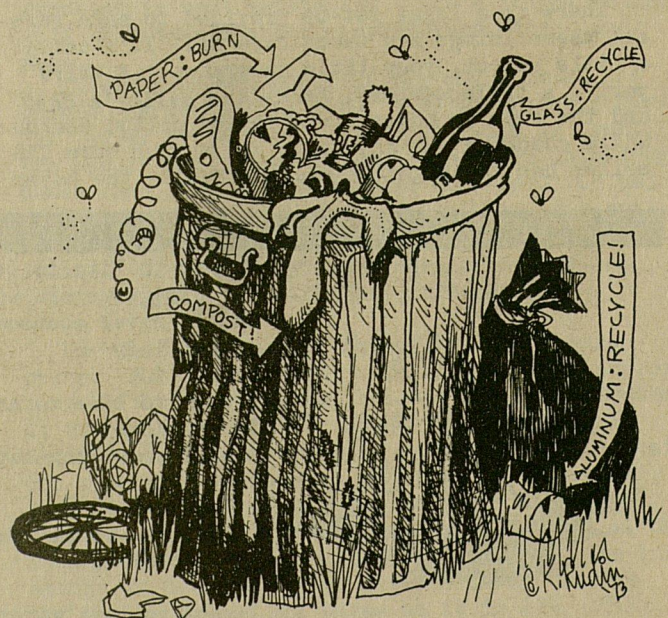
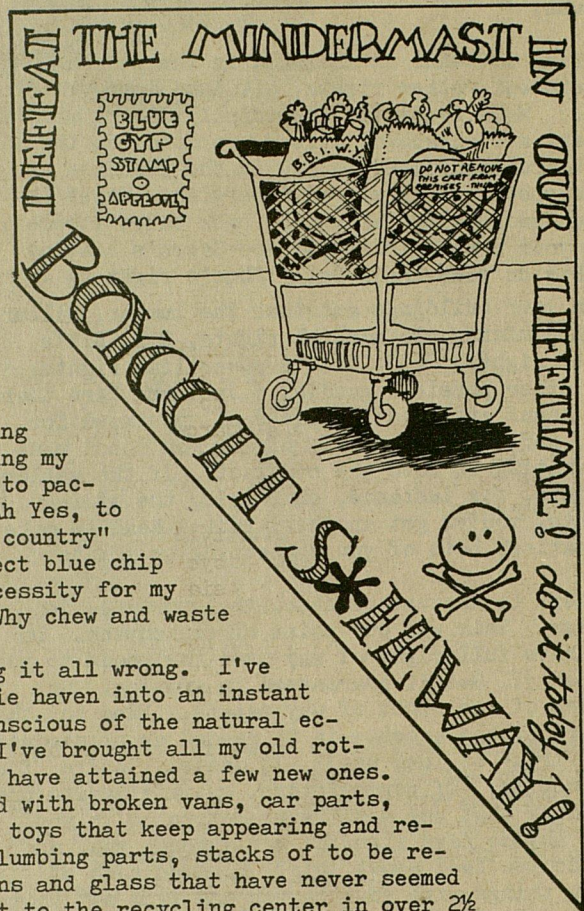
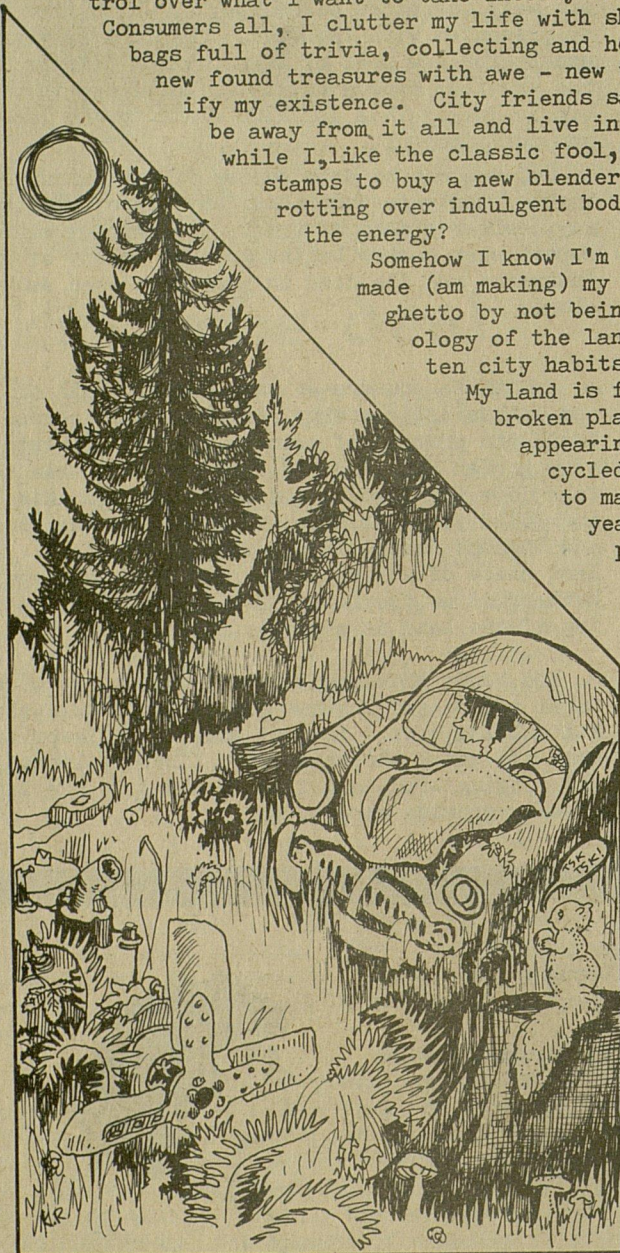
TRASH

Sometimes I feel like I'm being strangled by a huge plastic bag filled with the excrements of our modern age. Drowned in creme rinse-suffocated in smog and chemicals - I've lost control over what I want to take into my body.

Consumers all, I clutter my life with shopping bags full of trivia, collecting and hoarding my new found treasures with awe - new toys to pacify my existence. City friends say "Ah Yes, to be away from it all and live in the country" while I, like the classic fool, collect blue chip stamps to buy a new blender; necessity for my rotting over indulgent body. Why chew and waste the energy?

Somehow I know I'm doing it all wrong. I've made (am making) my hippie haven into an instant ghetto by not being conscious of the natural ecology of the land. I've brought all my old rotten city habits and have attained a few new ones.

My land is filled with broken vans, car parts, broken plastic toys that keep appearing and re-appearing, plumbing parts, stacks of to be recycled cans and glass that have never seemed to make it to the recycling center in over 2½ years! Statistics say every person produces 10 pounds of garbage a day. I was shocked - "not me" I said. Then I remembered the car I junked, its weight and the reality of what that means!



RECYCLE!

Ecology has become such a well-worn word that most of us just assume that we, as well as the media, have developed "ecological consciousness" this year. Yet there are still few people who make a conscious effort in their lives to break their cycle of consumption and restore some of what they've taken. Talking to people about the most elementary of "ecological consciousnesses", the recycling of trash, I have heard a wealth of rationalizations for not doing it. From "It takes more fuel to recycle than it does to produce new goods, and fuel's a scarce resource, therefore..." to "it takes too much of my energy to recycle" - we seem unwilling to take responsibility for the consequences of our consumption.

In a country of scarcity we would use and reuse everything in a spontaneous recycling, even build houses out of coke cans as they do in Asia. Here in the country that begins to happen: baling wire fixes pumps and hinges; your old lumber builds my new cabin. But there are still the truck loads to the dump...

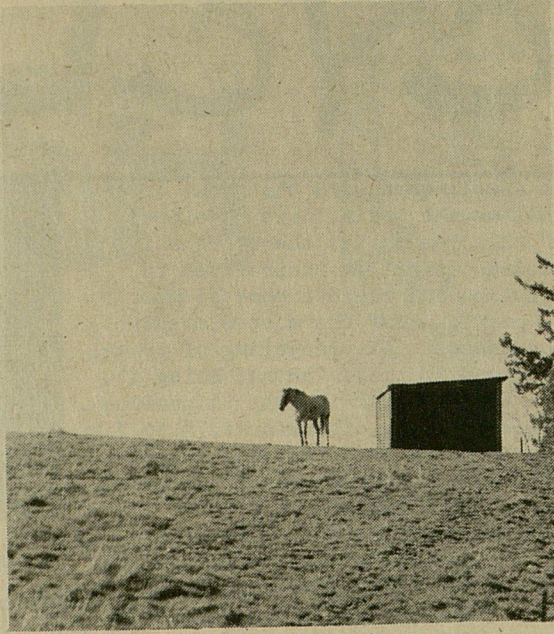
If it was a priority with us to recycle we would find ways to make it efficient, both industrially and personally. It takes far more energy to recycle in your imagination than it does in reality. Even without hot running water, rinsing or flattening your cans becomes as second nature as just chucking them into the garbage can.

There is no excuse for not recycling- America cannot continue to consume half of the ~~entire~~ world's natural resources, they are scarce and irreplaceable. Your cans will not solve the crisis - but each of us taking responsibility.....

You've heard it all before. Why not start now?

Here's what you can do:

- Recycle cans, bottles and paper at your local center:
 - Rinse tin cans, take off both ends and flatten.
 - Rinse and flatten aluminum cans.
 - Rinse bottles and remove metal rings around the neck
 - in most areas bi-metal (tin and aluminum cans - usually soft drinks) can't be recycled.
 - Compost your garbage- a chicken wire frame and lid on bare ground will speed the process and keep dogs from strewing trash.
 - if a recycling center is some distance from your home, get together with your neighbors and cooperate, with each taking everyone's recycling once a month, each family only has to make the trip twice a year
 - start a recycling center if there isn't one: in our area the co-op grocery runs one on volunteer labor 2 Saturdays a month. They sell tin cans to American Can Co., aluminum ones to Coors. Beer and paper to the S.F. Chronicle, glass goes to a scrap dealer
 - encourage your state or county to penalize people who dump re-cyclable trash. In Oregon, for instance, it is illegal to sell drinks in non-returnable bottles.



NONE OF THE ABOVE RANCH

In a way it's hard to talk about buying land at all, impossible to be insensitive to the false ring of the words themselves. The land is here, the given, and we the variables that come and go, dig in but never really root, carpet its surfaces with structures and gardens and fences, but never possess it. The most we can hope to do is borrow it well, use it wisely and return it healthy and free of scars. No safety deposit box could hold the wind in the walnut trees, and nothing could be more alien to the 7-acre meadow than to conceive of its worth as seven times 160 dollars. But that was a game we had to play, and a hard one in the midst of struggling to break free from the valuation of our own lives and work in dollars. One of the biggest difficulties was that not everyone could afford the ante to play, and consequently not everyone shared the responsibility for being involved in the real estate marketplace. Conversely, only a few of us could feel the easy right our money gave us to be here or the comfort of making a tangible commitment.

That may seem too strong a distinction, and certainly in my meadow-struck, river-swept state of mind on coming here I never would have put it so. Hard-headed practicality, in fact, had little to do with our decision to buy 670 beautiful, isolated, rundown acres. The eighteen of us came on a hot day in May, looked at the land and loved it, tripped down to the Eel River and, electrified, knew this was where we wanted to be.

Three of us had money, inherited money, and it just seemed that somehow we could do it. The realtor played his act to the hilt, told us another party was hot on our trail, anxious to buy our land for a hunting camp. He couldn't tell us who, though, or the amount of their bid. Cleverly we put in an immediate bid of \$98,000, \$12,000 below the owners' asking price, which they as quickly accepted. I'm sure our collective heartbeat was higher than the purchase price when we realized, just a few days after seeing the land for the first time, that it was ours. But heartbeats are not accepted currency, and we had a giant bill to pay.

Of the eighteen of us who originally moved here, only three had more than energy and dreams to contribute. The three though, of whom I was one, had in fact more than enough money to buy the land outright. Instead the group agreed that we would pay the down payment of \$25,000, plus the first year's mortgage of \$10,000, with the remaining payments to be raised by the ranch itself. It seemed right and after two years it still does, but at the time we had no real awareness of the implications of our agreement, both good and bad. All we knew then was that we loved the land, each other, and all our wild, half-assed schemes.

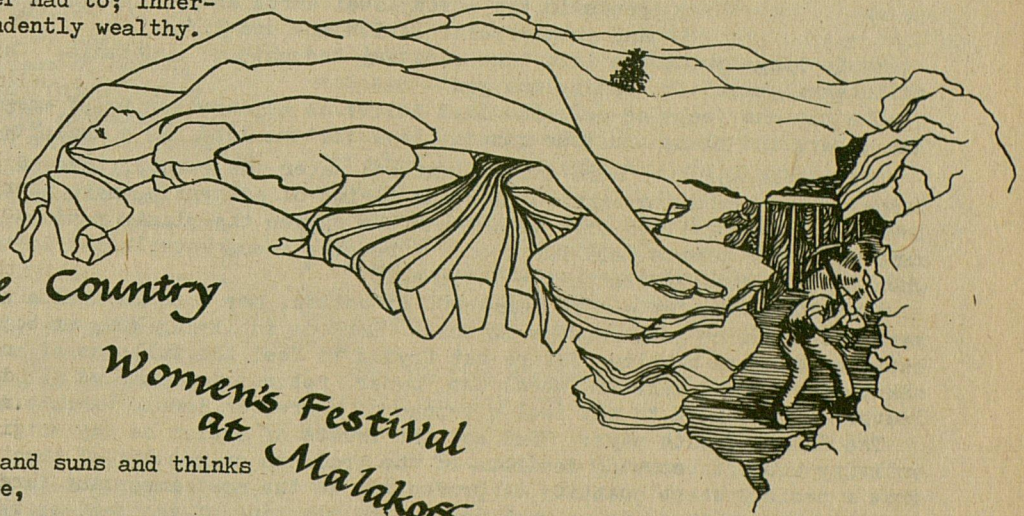
Soon enough, though, our \$10,000 albatross brought us down to earth, we had to have a cash crop, a big one. Meanwhile, of course, we were

working on the long slow process of settling in, building and rebuilding, working the land, and cleaning up after ourselves and those who were here before. The mechanical hassles alone were endless, and the vehicles in particular seemed to have engine-to-engine Morse that brought about a domino effect: when one truck sprung an oil leak the other would blow a valve, and inside the houses even the refrigerators and plumbing would have sympathy pangs. The personal problems, particularly between couples, were chaotic and energy-sapping beyond any anticipation. There were so many hidden costs, both emotional and material, that we had no resources left to apply toward generating any large sum of money. Only now, beginning our third year, are we gaining hold--on ourselves, on our projects, on our plans for a school and self-sufficiency. This summer's projects, including hauling 200 tons of hay for neighbors, holding a 6-weeks summer camp and later a wilderness school, will hopefully raise enough money to pay this year's mortgage. And next fall we'll begin a work/study term for 5 high school students, whose contributions will help meet the monthly expenses of living here. That, in much abbreviated form, is the story of a long hard pull, erratic and blurred by loneliness and doubt, eased by joy and growth, and often enough, thank God, punctuated by laughter at ourselves.

During these two years I have, in effect, largely supported the ranch, which was a strange new situation for me and for everyone. I had never dealt with having money very realistically, partly because as a woman I never had to; inherited money makes a woman independently wealthy.

is a dowry of sorts, nothing very serious. Here I was one of three people out of eighteen who had money, and I had a lot. I have often felt myself the brunt of resentment, the worse for our being unwilling to let money affect our lives and feelings but at the same time tacitly admitting that to an extent it must. And in the past, oversensitive to my unwanted role as Lady Bountiful, I have often restrained myself from asserting an opinion for fear of being accused of putting my mouth where my money was.

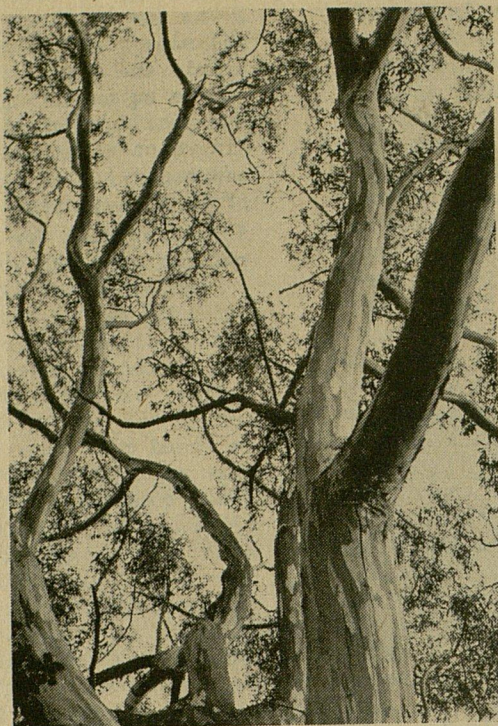
In retrospect it seems to me that the best and only way to handle the ambivalent act of getting involved in buying land is for everyone to share, in some form, in the responsibility of "ownership". We were in too much of a hurry, too country-hungry and anxious to start, to spend much time on reaching an understanding that would give us the feeling of joint and equal commitment, even if that meant waiting until we could raise some money together in the city. We should have, but after all there isn't much point in invoking "should haves" on an experience that fills no categories and defies my attempts to explain it, even to myself. It's taught me a lot, though, and I've become stronger, less sensitive to criticism, and more aware of the importance of evaluating myself and others outside of any externals. And because I so blatantly deserved any slight to my "smart little rich girl" image, I think I've had the sense to realize in the last two years that I'm neither smart nor rich yet in the ways that really matter.♀



After the Country

Women's Festival at Malakoff Diggins

By the river
I am the same
I recognize the self
The person I am who lolls and suns and thinks
Of the graceful iron bridge,
Willows leaning over,
South Fork Yuba River,
Fishin not so good since the diggins,
Suckers and a few trout;
Think of millions left of gold in these red mountains
White men would wash away.
Hydraulic jets of men driven for more out of life/sex than pleasure.
Pressure streams for gold, for goods, for hoarding.
One man, I'm told, from Nevada City, 72, still greedy,
Thinks his gold are children; wouldn't lose a fleck, as if they would plough for him.
White men washing away hills looking for children of gold
To suffocate in boxes, to hoard from sunlight, to stuff in bags;
Dynamiting, sealing yellow men in graves dug looking for yellow children.
And me, white woman tanning, sit beside clear stream now without children or gold,
Make naked promise to fight to preserve this clarity.



i want to know the land. grow with it become one with it. Feel the spirit of its cycles moving through my bones and blood and brain. Open myself to the currents in the earth, feel earth and plants and animals and people pulsate with the one life.

My feelings about the land transcend any thoughts of ownership. Can you own anything you are an integral part of? Can it own you?

The man who feels he owns the land i live on appears for brief moments every few months. He has papers and plans and some genuine love for the land and a definite feeling that it is HIS.

The people who live here daily plant and water the garden, take care of the animals, repair fences, pick herbs and berries, make no claims of ownership, make no claims of permanence, yet love the land they live on. We breathe the oxygen the plants produce, we exhale the carbon dioxide which the plants need for food. i receive a concrete lesson in the meaning of an ecosystem when i get in touch with that relationship.

i used to long for a more permanent situation, one i could feel a sense of forever in. Living here has given me good lessons in that. Lessons in living NOW, in being on the land NOW, not waiting for some nebulous future but trying to feel the fullness of each moment. People often ask me how i will feel if (when) the "owner" returns and asks us all to tear down our homes and leave. i am hoping to not feel a twinge of regret or loss. Lessons in non-attachment.

The Bhagavad-Gita says: "Let not the fruits of action be thy motive." i want a life of activity without becoming desirous of the products or results of that activity. We have come from a society where quantity of production is the most important factor—"the end justifies the means". For me there is as much joy in the planting of the seed as there is in the picking and eating of the vegetable. Turning the earth, or collecting manure for fertilizer are each in and of themselves acts of love and although all these acts are part of one cycle the end product of which is food for the table, the acts themselves are fulfilling, not the thought of future nourishment.

i am becoming more aware of life's circles here. Found myself watching the apples ripening on the trees and thinking "another season, another circle", a few months ago there were beautiful white blossoms on those trees and now there are leaves and fruit.

So much of life here centers around cyclic events. The goats are bred, the kids born and then suddenly they are grown and waiting themselves to be bred. The eggs in the chicken house become birds and soon they too lay eggs. Plants leaf, flower and then die back. Time is measured in seasons: mushroom season, wild greens, wild berries follow each other with inevitability. i find that i am involved in this process of growth and change and movement. The changes may not be as apparent on the physical plane, but there is inside me a certainty and a knowledge of the growth. If the earth and other animals have changed so much, i realize, then i too have experienced growth and change. ♀

Finding Our Place

I lived in New York City all of my life until I felt there was a need for a change--not able to shape a life there that was satisfying without feeling anxious, unhealthy and depressed. Searching for something new and healthy, we moved out of the city last June and are happy we did. We came here because we had fallen in love with a piece of land here three years ago and had come back every chance we could. It was a secluded hilltop and promised us peace, tranquility, a chance to be unhurried, unbothered, to air out and cool down, slow down and then build up and create. The land (cabin) we stayed at this winter is owned by a friend of a friend, who let us stay there for the price of taxes (\$180 a year). Now we are at the farmhouse down the road and are paying \$160 a month rent.

I have always lived in an apartment house and have dreamed of living "in the country" but never dreamed of "owning" land. After renting this farmhouse and land for this last three summers, we were beginning to feel that we didn't want to invest any more money or energy into this place or piece of land, since our presence here was so transitory. We kept it well, improved it, but could not hope to buy it, since the asking price is too high. We now began to dream of having compost, using it, building cold frames, using them, growing fruit and nut trees, perennial herbs, fixing the house--none of which we wanted, to do if we couldn't stay for at least a few years. So, we thought of buying land. But this was difficult, so many questions. What does owning land mean and how do you do it? When I think of 130 acres compared to a 30 x 20 foot space in New York City, how do I begin?

The process involved in going about buying land is a complicated one. It begins with finding a beautiful place and wanting to stay there, looking for a place to spend the next five, ten, fifteen, twenty years of my life.

First we got lots of catalogues, United Farm and Strout Realty and found out about going prices, information about places and prices and pieces of land. Then we got Mother Earth News which was a fantastic source of knowledge and shared information, contacts with people to share homes, ideas, land etc. These three pieces of literature were our steady fare this winter with additions of leaflets from agricultural extension services from each state we were interested in. They helped us a lot with information of growing seasons, altitude, weather conditions. Also U.S. Department of Agriculture books and pamphlets are very helpful.

We traveled around New England a little but found that to be the least satisfying and efficient way. We went to real estate brokers, which we didn't enjoy doing, tried meeting local people,

and asking questions, looked at local bulletin boards and local newspapers, drove around on back roads and rapped with hundreds of people interested in buying land or who had just bought land.

The most unexpected of all ways was the way in which we bought land. A local Vermonter told Herb about a land auction in northern New Hampshire that he thought sounded great. He would have gone himself, he said, but he was too old and busy. We thought about it (for a minute or two) and then decided to go and check it out. We looked at the land which seemed good, though far from ideal, but available, possible, workable and beautiful. Then we did it and now we own 130 acres in a state in which we never considered buying land, with nothing there that is visible but only a dream of what is possible.

I realize that I didn't believe it was within my realm to buy land and go through all the business and legal hassles (it was "man's business"). I find myself defensive with real estate people who don't take me seriously. The whole process has challenged me to learn more and I have. I have now accepted the challenge with enthusiasm and energy, rather than being discouraged which I was at first. I think my new confidence has come from learning from other women, some men and from having conquered many fears. I now believe that I can learn what I don't know. I still feel weak, not strong enough, but that too can be changed as my body begins to feel strong from the physical work I always shunned or was cautioned away from.

There are still many things I don't know such as water systems, road development, energy sources, building construction, mechanical knowledge of cars and other equipment. At this point, that all seems overwhelming, but I'll take it step by step. We hope to be living with other people from whom we can learn and with whom we can learn together. With mostly men around here at the farm, I miss and seek the satisfying sharing I have with other women. I hope that on our land we can build a community of women, men and children. We are busy here and don't have that much "spare time" but we are doing what we want and it is good work.

Now to find the way to make this all reality. We are on the road... ♀



WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

It seemed fitting for this issue, on land, to write an article on fire fighting. The timing is doubly fitting because where I live (Northern California) late summer, stretching into fall, is a time of no rain, when the golden grass starts shriveling and flattening in the heat. My first hot, dry summer here made me very conscious of the danger of fire, and fairly scared: the fear is real and healthy if it helps you take precautions, but if a fire ever happens, you will need to move quickly and surely. I can tell you my own experiences and all the things I learned from and after them.

I lived in a commune in a rural community of about 150 people. The community stretched along a canyon--redwood and eucalyptus in the bottom, changing to live oak, bay laurel, and madrone trees, then thinning out to dry manzanita brush and scrub pine across the hot ridge tops. One mid-October afternoon we were patching our roof when we heard yelling and car horns up on the ridge. We looked up and across our ravine to a huge column of glowing smoke rising behind the eucalyptus trees. There was no doubt that it was a large fire, uncontrolled. It was the first fire for most of us, and all we knew was the general principle--that we had to stop it. We grabbed the few tools around and started running-jumping on the first car or truck of neighbors that passed us. The whole community turned out as a matter of survival. The fire was in the manzanitas and scrub fir, about 5 to 7 acres was already in flames over my head. Luckily there was already a dirt road up there, a fire-break along one edge, so all we had to do was to keep it from jumping the road, and to stop the leading edge.

I started working heroically and frantically along the edge of the road, trying to keep the fire back, but after the first gust of air sent flames roaring over my head, followed by stinging, blinding smoke, I moved in closer to an experienced old-timer, asking for direction. After about 25 minutes, the nearest fire department arrived, but there was no water source, so they were limited to their tanker truck and by the physical difficulty of access across rural terrain. Then a neighbor arrived with his bulldozer--it's not pleasant to order a swath cut through the land, but the only way to stop the fire was by creating a break where there was nothing to burn. Between us all, the fire was contained by late afternoon, but we had to keep a vigil on the entire area for two more days to put out the flare-ups.

Since then I have been through another fire in similar scrub terrain, a grass fire, and several house fires--more than I hope you ever see. I've learned a lot, trying to prevent fires and to prepare myself.

Preparation is the Most Essential Thing. If you ever have to fight a fire, there will be No Time to figure things out. You need to be prepared to move fast and efficiently to take care of everything, and forethought will really help you deal with panic.

First, look at your situation. Do you live in a fairly populated area, or isolated? What type of terrain, and therefore, what type of fire is likely? Where is the nearest help--fire department, neighbors, Forest Ranger, etc? What communications do you have--phone, electricity for a siren, a gong, or will you have to send for help? I lived in a fairly populated area with phone and electricity. Two households, one at each end of the community, were equipped with electric fire sirens. If there was a fire someone called the fire company and the siren houses, which were also the beginning of an emergency phone tree for the community. If you have phones, organize a calling list that spreads across the whole community as fast as possible, and include special contingencies like calling the school, or people without phones. Give your information concisely and clearly--exactly where the fire is, what type, how big. Our house had one of the sirens because, as a collective of ten people, there was almost always someone at home.

Next, know what you will need to do at your home before going off to fight the fire. The critical factor will be how close the fire is, so have several plans. Do you have small children or invalids who will have to be taken care of? If so, know all alternate escape routes and possible transportation--get them completely out of the way if there is any danger, so you won't be distracted. If the fire is at your house or has any chance of reaching it, turn off the electricity at the master switch box--a fire will sever wires, leaving you working with water and 120 volts. . . If the fire is coming towards you, do you have animals, and if so, should they be moved or turned loose? Horses panic in a fire and are apt to run straight into it, or refuse to leave, unless you blindfold them and carefully move them to a safe location. Goats stay calm, and can be used to lead other animals out of danger.

Next (all of this actually has to happen simultaneously. . .) get yourself ready. For rural terrain you need to wear sturdy boots, comfortable long pants, and a long sleeved shirt--even if it is hot, take a long sleeved shirt, maybe worn over a T-shirt--it will make it easier going through brush and intense heat. Take a cotton scarf or kerchief--damp, if at all possible, to help with smoke inhalation. Unless you are in imminent danger, take the extra 3 minutes to put on good boots and clothes.

Now, as you run out, grab the tools you need.

I mean that literally-you will be running and you will need to have the right tools, in good condition, and always kept in a central, accessible place. The tools vary according to the fire. Shovels are essential, and flashlights if it is night. For a scrub or low woods fire, you also need axes, machetes, adzes, picks, or mattocks. If you want, mark your tools with tape so you can tell them from others' after the fire. For a grass fire, where sod is thick and hard to dig through, the best thing I've found is a wet blanket; otherwise, picks will be needed to break the ground. You should, of course, have several household fire extinguishers around the house; keep them in likely and handy places-like the kitchen? . . . In addition to the usual small CO₂ extinguishers, we got 2 foam extinguishers (like they had in your elementary school. . .) from a surplus store. If you can afford them (check surplus stores) get water back packs-a 5 gallon can which straps on your back and has a hose with a hand pumped nozzle on it. Backpacks are really useful in areas a fire truck can't reach, but they are heavy, so practice carrying and using one. Next, get there as fast as possible with your tools. Think about whether your vehicle will block the road or get trapped by the fire.

Once you are up against the fire, first check its direction so that you never get trapped. A FIRE BURNS UPHILL, almost never down - that is one of the most important factors to remember. The heat creates an updraft which pushes the fire up until it reaches a ridge; then it will usually run sideways (whichever way the wind blows) rather than going down the other side. So if you are ever trapped above a fire, try to get over the ridge and down the other side, angling in the direction the fire came from once you are over the ridge, so that it will pass behind you.

There are three ways to put out a fire that I know of (besides chemicals) - water, suffocation, and a fire break. Your main effort will be to contain the fire, so it burns itself out from lack of fuel. If you have a water source and hose or buckets - splash away. Concentrate your efforts on the edge because that's where the fire moves, and wet each area thoroughly. Most effective though is a fire break - clearing all growth in a wide swath across the fire's path. As you chop and cut out brush, throw it back into the fire - that keeps you from building bridges for the fire, but doesn't significantly speed up the fire. Dig along the swath with shovels, throwing the dirt on the fire to suffocate it; again, watch where you throw and concentrate on the leading edge. For a grass fire, have two people holding opposite edges of a wet blanket walk along the fire edge laying down the blanket, picking it up, moving a few steps, laying it down, etc. Move slowly so that it suffocates the fire and thoroughly puts it out - otherwise you may just fan the flames with your flapping.

Always be aware of your situation - constantly check which way the fire is moving and what your escape routes are. Keep within seeing or shouting distance of each other. Don't underestimate heat and smoke - smoke especially can

suddenly surround you, block your vision, so move out of it, keep your orientation. In addition, watch behind you. In our scrub fire, the fire travelled along the roots underground, and occasionally I'd find a small blaze starting behind me.

Know who to contact for major equipment: is there a bulldozer available; find out who to contact to get a borate bomber (this is a plane that flies in low, spreading borate - a pink, decomposable salt- over the fire to suffocate it. A bomber may be absolutely essential in a forest or large grass fire, but it has to be authorized by a fire or forestry official).

Once a fire is contained or dying, remember that embers or burning roots will continue to flare up - so a long vigil must be kept to put out the spot fires.

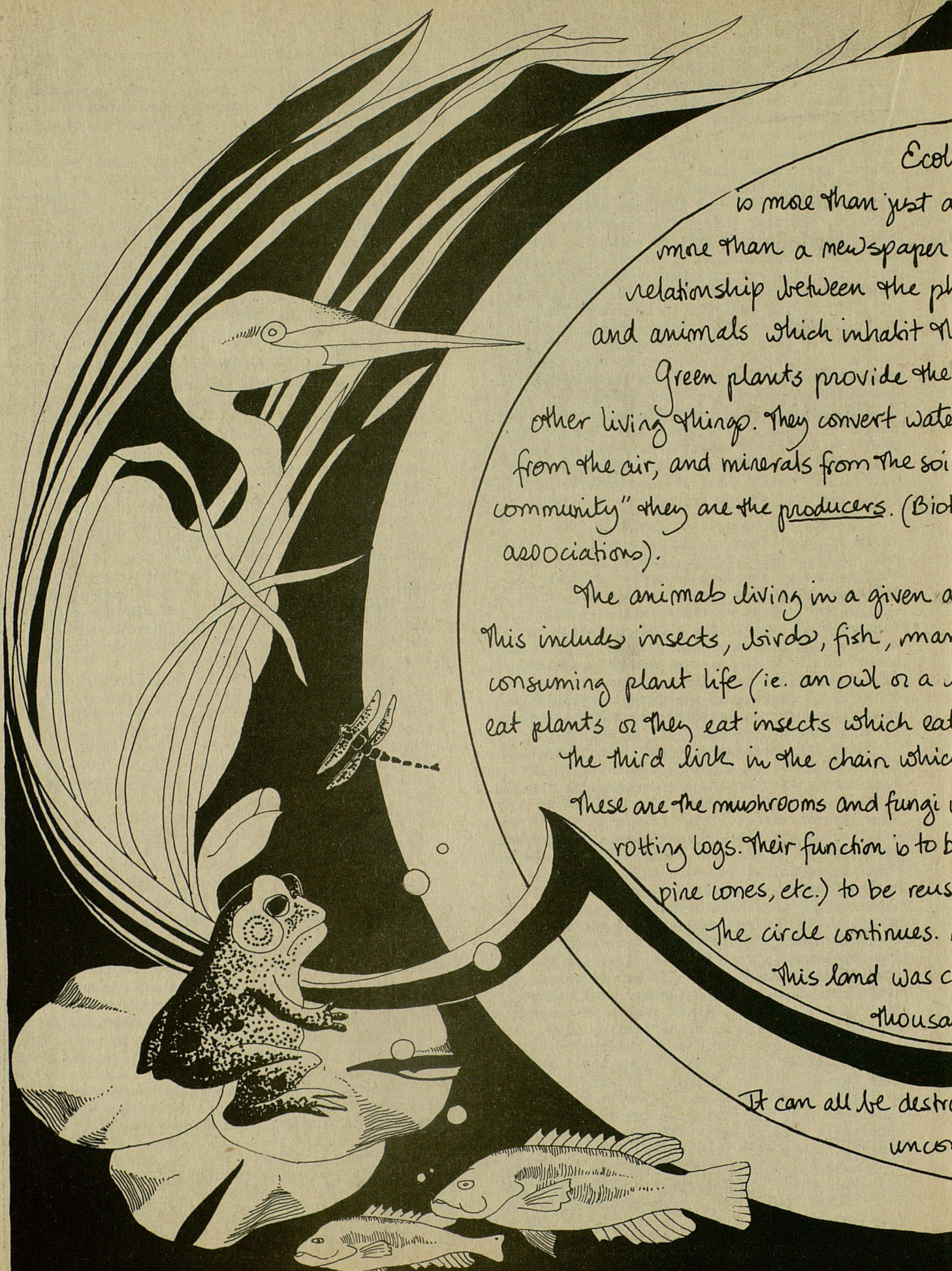
The above information is about land fires. I have watched four houses burn down and know very little about how to stop them. The key is to catch the fire early, and have extinguishers and water available. If water is scarce, collect several 50 gallon drums of rain water during the wet season, and save them for fire only. If you can't stop the fire, the first thing, absolutely, is to make sure everyone gets out. Sound the alarm, and turn off the electricity at the main fuse box. Shut all windows and doors to cut off air and slow the fire down. Beyond that, just try to keep it from spreading by building a fire break around the house. A good preventative measure is to have cut back or cleared the flammable grass and brush from around your structures (forestry laws suggest a 30' perimeter).

It is hard for me to stop this article and pretend I have shared enough information. There are other ways to fight fires, like starting a back fire, which I haven't explained because I don't know them. Check with a local fire official to learn other practices. A fire is full of variables, so start thinking about what to do now. Your biggest opponents will probably be time and fear - so think about what to do and practice until it is automatic and efficient. ♀

Ladies Auxiliary

After the first big fire in our area, we invited the nearest fire marshall to speak to our town meeting. He came and explained a lot to us about use of tools and fire fighting techniques. As he finished, he beamed and said: "You ladies can be useful too! Those men will need coffee and sandwiches, and will really appreciate your help."

There was a short silence and then one of the women stood up slowly. She voiced our feelings: "I don't know where you were, but during that fire I was out there with my shovel and my hatchet stopping it. So don't tell me how useful my coffee is when my community is on fire!" ♀



Ecolo

is more than just a
more than a newspaper
relationship between the phy
and animals which inhabit the
Green plants provide the
other living things. They convert water
from the air, and minerals from the soil
community" they are the producers. (Biotic
associations).

The animals living in a given area
This includes insects, birds, fish, mammals
consuming plant life (ie. an owl or a hawk
eat plants or they eat insects which eat
the third link in the chain which
These are the mushrooms and fungi which
rotting logs. Their function is to break down
pine cones, etc.) to be reused.

The circle continues. A

This land was covered

thousand

It can all be destroyed

uncom

ogy
word on a bumper sticker,
headline. It is a study of the
physical environment and the plants
is environment.

Basic source of energy for all
and carbon dioxide
into food. In a biotic
community is the name for animal/plant

are the consumers, within the biotic community.

Animals, anything which is directly or indirectly
hawk eats other animals, but these animals
smaller insects which eat plants).

forms a living community are the decomposers.

which grow throughout the woods in the soil and on
break down organic matter (wood, leaf mold,
and dry the plants.

and we must find our place within the circle.

formed by sea, slowly over hundreds of
do of years.

aged through collective
sciousness.



Patience & Sarah:

by Isabel Miller

Fawcett paperback--95¢

Patience and Sarah is a novel so pure and wholesome in its simplicity that at first it didn't occur to me that I've never read a book quite like it. Isabel Miller based the story on the lives of two women who went west to homestead in the early 1800's and made a life for themselves. Little of their story remains, but she has fashioned an easy and believable account of what it might have been like for two women to choose such a life in the midst of Puritan New England.

The story is told alternately by Patience and Sarah, as they first become friends and then lovers. Their feelings are their only guides and they know no words to describe their love. There is no one for them to share their secret with, so they dream and scheme of going off together to make their own home in Western New York State, which was then the "frontier". Patience is a schoolmarm, a painter, a lady and a spinster. Sarah, in contrast, is strong and tough and wears pants. The eldest in a family of girls, she was raised to do the hard work on the farm and to help her father. At first this characterization seems like another version of butch /femme stereotypes, but as the story unfolds it's clear that the strengths and weaknesses of each are intertwined, and their relationship is not based on oppression by either of them.

When their love for each other becomes known, their families come between them and their own fears nearly immobilize them. Eventually, they are on their way West with Patience's inheritance to get them started. Buying land presents some problems:

"Even letting our intention to be known was not simple because it was not feminine. I did not know how. As Edward had said, men make the world go. How does a woman go up to a strange man and announce that she wants to buy a bit of it? Can a woman approach the Courthouse loiters or the tavern or the docks and ask for news of real estate?Sarah even offered to cut her hair again and be our man if a man was so much needed, and the thought rallied my womanly pride enough to make it possible. After all, to speak to the banker, the drayman... the postmaster ..."

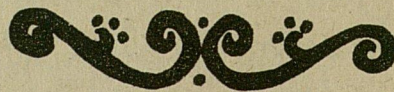
Two Reviews

But perseverance furthers; a small run-down farm is located. This story even has a happy ending!!!

Aside from the fact that this is a pleasant book, there are several other points to recommend it. It's a novel written about women with the tenderness of a woman. The sexual imagery is indirect, soft and sometimes shy, clearly not a man's fantasies of what two women do together.

"I put my cheek against hers. It felt as good as a kiss. Oh, what else is as soft and firm and downy and smooth as a woman's cheek? It made me proud that mine was the same and I could give it to her."

Patience and Sarah is light Spring reading, rather than a deep meaty novel. Nevertheless, I wish there were more books like it, at least to balance all the historical fiction that never led me to suspect that there must have been women like Patience and Sarah who lived and loved a woman's love even while our forefathers hewed the frontier. ♀



I've found I can't write a "book review" about Patience and Sarah. It hit me in my heart; to analyze it objectively is to falsify me. Yet I want to share with others my conviction that here is a TRUE book and with Isabel Miller my gratitude for saying it so beautifully.

When we were handed a library copy of Patience and Sarah, we started reading it aloud to each other that evening. We could not stop, and read till we were each hoarse and it was one in the morning. When we woke up we agreed to finish the story rather than wait for "a convenient time" and we read on, right to the beautiful end. Then I composed this letter, never sent except in spirit, to the author:

Dear Isabel and

YES, it is like that

Thank you,

..... & Jean

.....

Yes, Yes, Yes. It is likethat. I cried when Patience's brother gave them his blessing at last. And I cried when I read it again six months later. Yes, I want a blessing too-- a recognition of how tremendous this love is-- and the hope that it will grow and bless us. We often recommend to our straight sisters that they read it. One of them rushed up to us with

starry eyes, hugged and kissed us as we stood together in the kitchen, whispering "I just finished Patience and Sarah." That was something of a blessing. And my 17 year old daughter told a group that living with her parents had felt rather empty, but living with her mother and had shown her what real love was like. That was something of a blessing.

When I want to help my old friends understand our new love and words fail me, I recommend they read Patience and Sarah. Yes, that is how it is.

The description of their first night in their new bed and the hard knowledge that passion is always a gift -- it made us laugh, but the tears were for the pain of learning it, too. We are

not young as they were, and we have not been struck and beaten to witness for our love. But we have had our children's opposition, and live in fear of the courts, and the feelings are true.

Patience's instructions to Sarah as to how women can avoid trouble with men are priceless. They should be reprinted by themselves so more women could be conscious of how most of us are functioning in just this way.

What a lovely movie this book would make, if women could film it just as you have written it. That it is set 100 years ago only emphasizes the timelessness of such love. Your book is complete and beautiful. Thank you Isabel Miller. It is like that.

....& Jean

♀



Sharing Greenfield Ranch

For most of my adult life I've had the dream of living in the country, building my own house and getting back to a more natural way of life. I had almost resigned myself to living with only the dreams, when all at once in the Fall of 1971, good things started to happen. I got a high paying job for the first time in my life, and I heard about some cheap land in Mendocino County, near Ukiah. It was a 5300 acre cattle ranch being sold in minimum 50 acre pieces at \$125.00 an acre. Too good to be true. It had to be over-logged, burned off, waterless wasteland to be selling at that price. But when



I saw it, my heart did a dance of joy, and I knew I'd found my place. Miles of rolling green hills dotted with oak and bay, maple and buck-eye, creeks filling all the little valleys and pine covered ridges, the Greenfield Ranch. Inherited by a relative of Annie Greenfields when she died, it had been up for sale for a while. An ecological land preservation nut from Berkeley convinced the owner that if he could have an option on the land, with no down payment, that in a year, he would have the down payment and maybe more for him. No land developers or real estate firms involved, just a few people who wanted to see cheap land available to people who had respect for it. I looked at all the available pieces and picked what I still think is the most beautiful piece on the ranch. Just the right combination of pine ridges, oak groves and meadows, with an old hunter's cabin and a good developed spring already on it. I spent the winter working, saving money and looking for someone to share the cost with, since I knew, cheap as it was, that I couldn't afford it all myself. A man

continued

continued

I had lived in a commune with in Berkeley came to see the land and was as impressed as I was, and also liked the piece I had chosen the best. So that Spring, '72 we went together and bought 50 beautiful acres. Each person who bought land was full and private owner of her/his own piece, yet automatically became a member of the "Greenfield Ranch Association," a legally chartered non-profit association, and was regulated by certain deed restrictions common to all owners. Things like no hunting or discharging firearms, no loose unattended dogs, no chemical fertilizers, sprays, toxic materials used, no commercial logging, and more, too many to write here but all of an ecologically sound nature. It felt good to know that the neighbors we would eventually have would be in agreement with those restrictions.

All the land owners began to meet together in the city to get to know each other and make plans for our future life on the land. Like typical city intellectual dreamers, we talked of a free school, collective money making ventures, craft, wood and auto workshops, food co-operatives, a dance and theatre group, all the wonderful beautiful things a consciously created community could have. We got so high on our visions that we were scarcely aware of our own naïveté. The old ranch house was to become our community center. It had a large kitchen and dining room, a walk-in freezer, 5 bedrooms, a giant barn and endless other out buildings all wired for electricity, and a dammed up creek that made a beautiful little lake. Energy was high that summer and like a few others, Peter and I started working on the cabin, enlarging it into a more comfortable, spacious house. Peter is a carpenter and he began to teach me how to build. I learned to put up walls and put on siding, frame in windows and put on roofing. By October Peter left for a trip to the East Coast, and I left the city for good and moved into the cabin. I was looking forward to spending the winter alone, just me and nature. I was tripped out by it, happier than I had ever been, but so poorly prepared to deal with "life in the country" that it makes me laugh now to look back on it. There I was, with no chainsaw, not nearly enough wood to last the winter, a house with plastic for windows, cracks in the walls and sub-floor and an old truck that could barely deal with dry ground, let alone mud and snow, in the middle of the worst winter this area had seen in 30 years. By the end of December, after a week of 0° weather, a foot and a half of snow and wet wood, I packed a duffel and moved to the ranch house where there were already 6 or 8 people taking refuge too. I was depressed and bummed out with myself for not being able to stay on my piece and cope. But it was a good learning experience. I witnessed the birth of a baby and was awed by that miracle of nature. I learned to drive in the mud and snow, and learned how to get my own and other cars un-stuck. I got to know my neighbors better and began to readjust my priorities to fit reality instead of dreams. I stayed down in Ukiah for two months, working, and by April when the roads became passable I was eager to move back home. Some friends came with me to help and we began to put things back together. We made a big garden, cleaned out the spring, built the chicken house and generally

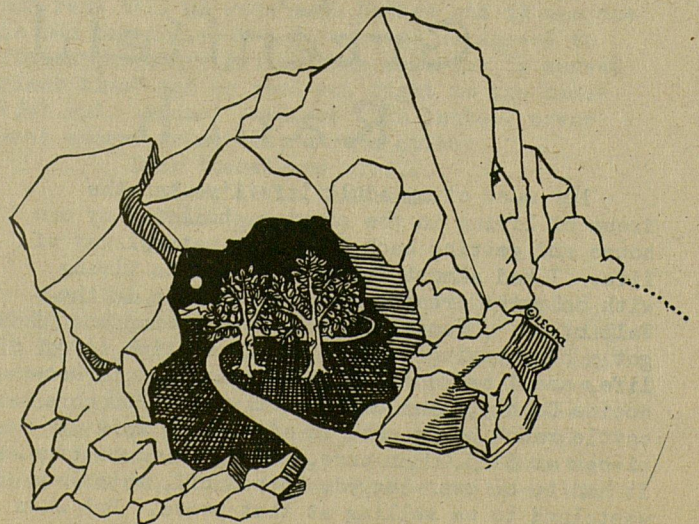
made the house a place to live instead of camp-out in.

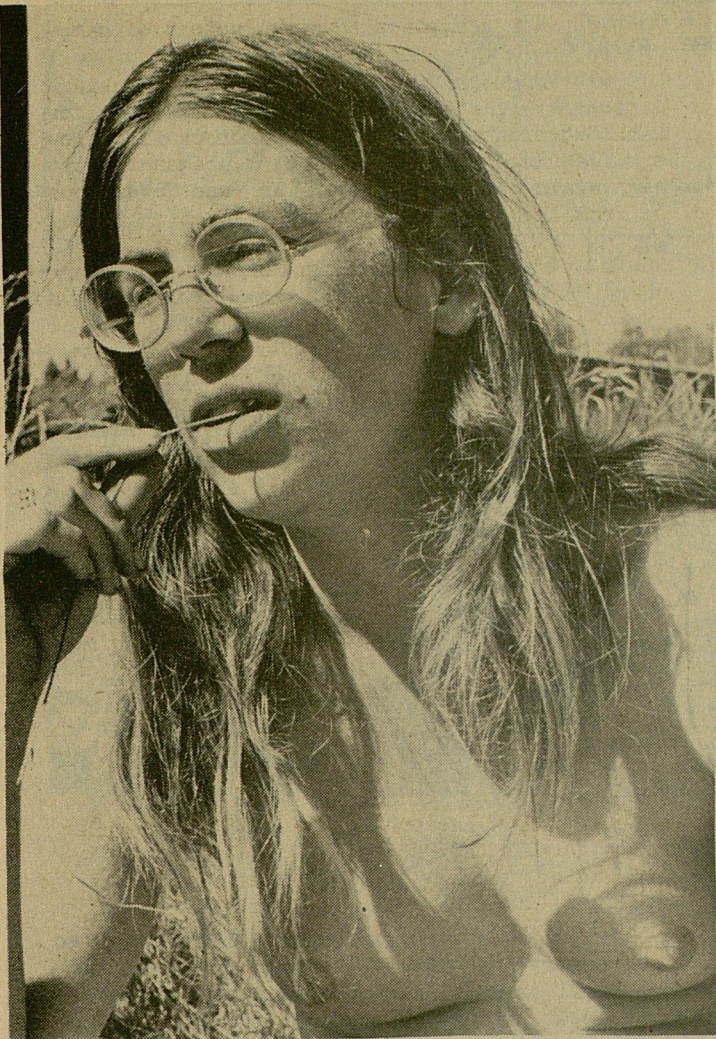
The beauty of the land is so breathtaking especially in the spring. Whole meadows yellow with buttercups and hundreds of other wild flowers flashing color everywhere. I began to get high again just being here. In June Peter moved up from the city, bringing his carpentry tools and his skill and we began to build again. He found an old redwood water tower, tore it down, and we've just finished reassembling it near the house. Within the month we hope to have hot showers and water in the kitchen, the ultimate luxuries.

Adjusting to the change from city to country has been heavy at times but also joyful. Learning to anticipate and solve problems before they happen, learning to live by what I do and how right I do it is beginning to make each day and its reward or dissappointment truly belong to me, instead of time and space passed through unaware. I've come to know Peter as a true friend and brother. And little bit at a time I'm beginning to not only love the land but to know it as a friend.

The dreams of our future community are still there, vivid and exciting but just a little further into the future as we all learn to live in the here and now on our land. We still get together and dream, but mostly we talk of how to deal collectively with practical things like making the roads passable in winter and helping each other get together weather tight homes before winter, dealing with the fire problem in the summer and hunters and poachers in the fall. Many of the women here are conscious of the confining nature of the "country woman" role and want to change it. There has been one women's meeting and I anticipate the forming of a solid women's group that can get together and talk about feelings and relationships to men, to women, to the land and to life in the country, and also to learn to act as a group of women to solve some of our daily problems.

My dream of owning land has come true, but the reality is even better than the dream. Not only am I a land owner, but a member of a community committed to changes and growth and exploration into new forms of living. Greenfield Ranch is a good place to be. ♀





NO TRESPASSING

I was working naked in the garden one afternoon last summer covering the dry earth with layers of matted straw and goat manure. All was hot and silent. Suddenly there was a great clamor of voices and half a dozen teenagers, vacationers from up the road, burst through the trees into the garden clearing. The boys came striding along followed by the girls. They saw me through the fence and stopped. I said "This is private property. Please go back to the main road." They mumbled together, then turned to leave. One boy turned back to me, shook his fist and shouted "This is all free land, God's

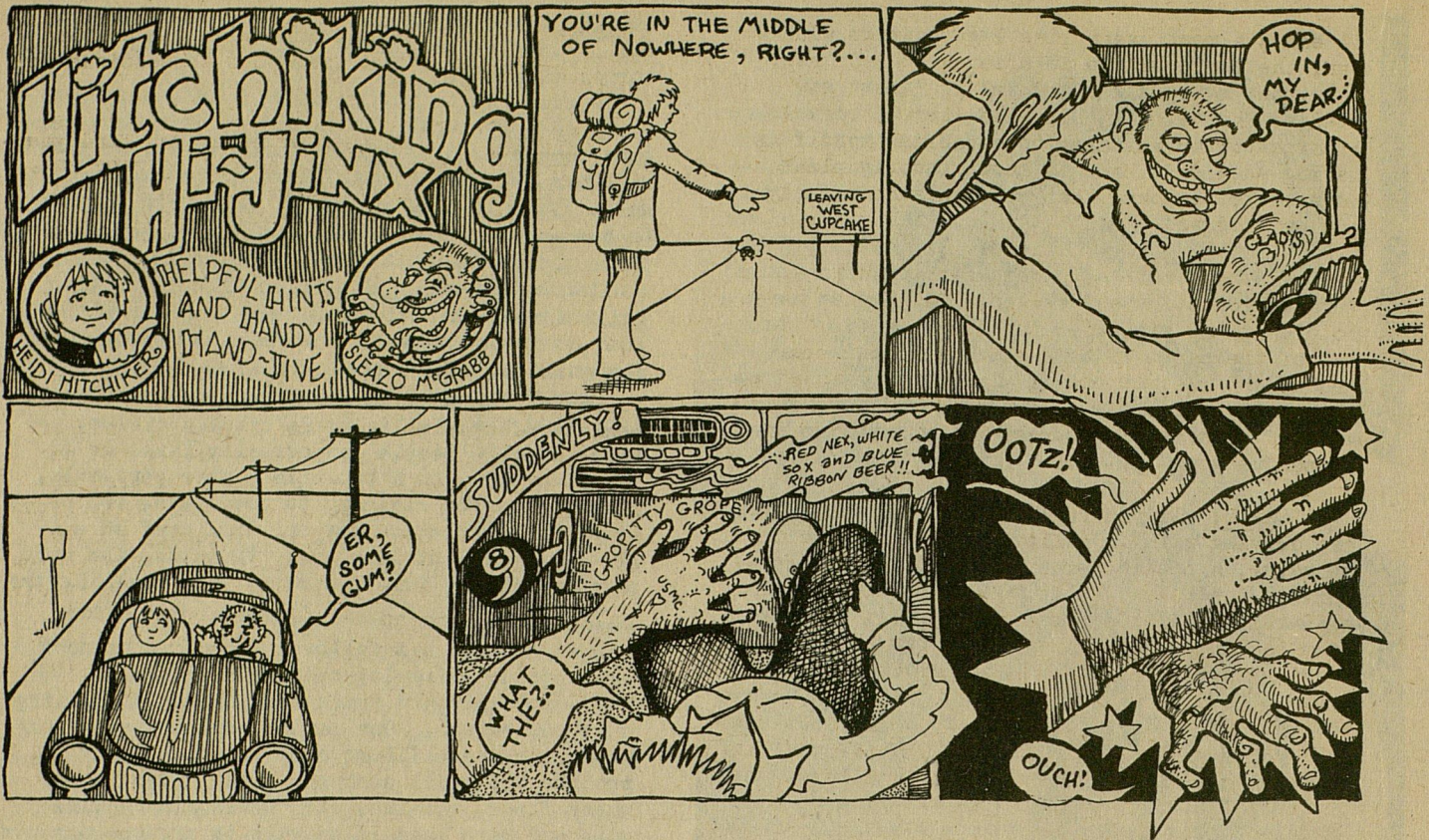
land." Later I followed the path they took. A small pine tree had been uprooted and thrown across the path.

In reaction to the greed of land owners who claim all the earth, trees and air within a certain square area as theirs to do with what they want has come the hippie ethic of no land ownership, "your land is my land", down with borders fences and no trespassing. Both premises seem to me thoughtless extremes. I'm trying to find a balance in myself, one which alleviates the guilt I feel when claiming some right over the land as in the situation above. Understanding the guilt and who imposes it on me is helping.

One of its origins comes from the collective reality of people living in crowded cities. Since 100,000 people can actually live, or at least survive, on a ten-mile square peninsula, then any person claiming to need five, ten or even a hundred acres for survival must be a greedy capitalist land pig. Examining the word survival from a rural point of view explains the need for so much space. Survival means food and anyone who has followed the chain of food production to its logical end realizes the complexity and space requirement of feeding just one person. Our garden expands every year and there are still so many crops we don't produce but still consume. Rice, dried beans, wheat flour, raisins, etc. would all require more and more land if we were to produce our own. We also hay feed our goats and buy grain for the chickens. It would take five more acres under cultivation to feed them. And many times that amount for free grazing. The necessary garden plot begins to expand until the actual acreage needed to feed one person becomes very large. This reality, large farms feeding many people, is what the crowded cities depend on for their survival.

A few weeks ago we posted our land with NO TRESPASSING signs. They are very fierce and read WARNING Hunting or trespassing positively forbidden. Violators will be prosecuted under sections 602 and 627, Penal Code of California. The threat at the end now replaces the old time "will be shot." Neither are ever used because although this land is protected legally, the legal process is so lengthy and expensive it becomes a hollow threat. Why was I putting up those signs? For three reasons. First, to protect a space for myself; some meadows and sections of forest where I can go for times of silence and know that I'm alone. Second, to protect those meadows and trees from carelessness-fires, chain saws, and rubbish, both blatant and insidious such as beer can tops and cigarette filters. The third reason is to protect the animals, wild and domestic that live on this land from people's guns and people's dogs.

Because so many human beings have lost their connections to the earth and to themselves as animals I feel that this land and the animals living here need my protection from these unconscious people. This I gladly give although it may bring me angry words and "bad vibes" from people who want to use the land but not care for it. ♀



Some women think, "Rape - oh it could never happen to me. Not in the country!" I felt that way till a woman was raped and stabbed less than 10 miles from my home. She was just hitching a short distance and got in the wrong car. I know several women who have been raped, almost raped or hassled while on their way to and from town to take care of errands, mostly within a short distance of their homes.

Since many women can't afford to operate a car, and there is no public transportation in the country or it's expensive in the city, hitching is the only alternative. In order to make hitching safer, I've worked out an anti-rape formula that has worked so far.

First the basics: Never accept a ride from two or more men (no matter what they look like -- even long haired freaks) unless of course you know them. Don't accept a ride from anyone in a camper or a closed van -- no need to have a bed around as a reminder. Don't accept a ride from anyone with a gun in a gun rack. You can never quite tell why the gun is there, to shoot animals or people. Refuse rides from anyone (male or female) who has obviously been drinking (slurred words, blood shot eyes, empty beer cans or liquor bottles in the front seat).

Second: Ask where he's going before he asks you. This gives you a little time to look around the car and decide whether or not you want to accept the ride. No matter how close he is going to your destination, **IF IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT DON'T TAKE THE RIDE.**

Third: Keep your belongings next to you so if necessary you can make a quick getaway. Keep some small article (i.e. sleeping bag, groceries) on the seat between you and the driver. It's harder to grab someone over a barrier. Keep a change purse or pouch full of coins in your lap at all times. If you don't have one, get one. Fifty cents worth of pennies is as heavy as a black jack and can be used as a weapon. If he manages to reach over the barrier and put his hand on any part of your body -- hit him across the knuckles with your pouch and demand to get out of the car. If you see you are in for a battle, hit him across the bridge of the nose, lightly will hurt, medium will break it and stop any onslaught, hard can kill if you push the nose straight into the brain.

Fourth: Talk. Establish ties. You are expected at a given place, at a given time. If you don't appear you will be missed. This way, he knows someone will come looking for you and he better not take a chance. Establish yourself as a respectable woman, as a mother, nurse, teacher. **LIE IF YOU HAVE TO.** Give some reason why you are hitching. My usual one is my car just broke down as I was leaving and... This separates you from the mythological women who are out hitching because they want to get laid. Get him talking about himself. Is he married? How many children? How old are they? What are all of their names? I'd think it would be harder to rape someone who knew about your 12 year old son. Avoid talking about sex.

It seems almost every time I get a ride with a man, the conversation is steered towards sex. When this happens I start talking about how I studied Karate, T'ai Chi, I'm strong, work as a carpenter or anything to establish myself as having muscles. Make it known (subtly please — no need to provoke) that you can successfully put up a fight.

Fifth: If he says he has to take an alternate route for any reason, "Oh, I just have to pick up my sister -- she only lives..." Get out of the car! If he's sincere he can pick you up when he returns if you have not found an alternative ride. This can be a way for him to get you on some side street where anything can happen to you.

Sixth: If you realize that the person you are driving with is a little weird, either drunk, speeding, a possible rapist, or just strange -- demand, don't ask, to be let out of the car immediately. If he refuses, first, don't panic. Stay in control so that all of your mind is working together. Do not jump out of a moving vehicle. You can be killed by the blow or run over by other cars. Wait until the nearest stop sign or light and jump out. If this is not possible, take the keys out of the ignition and throw them out of the window, or pull the steering wheel

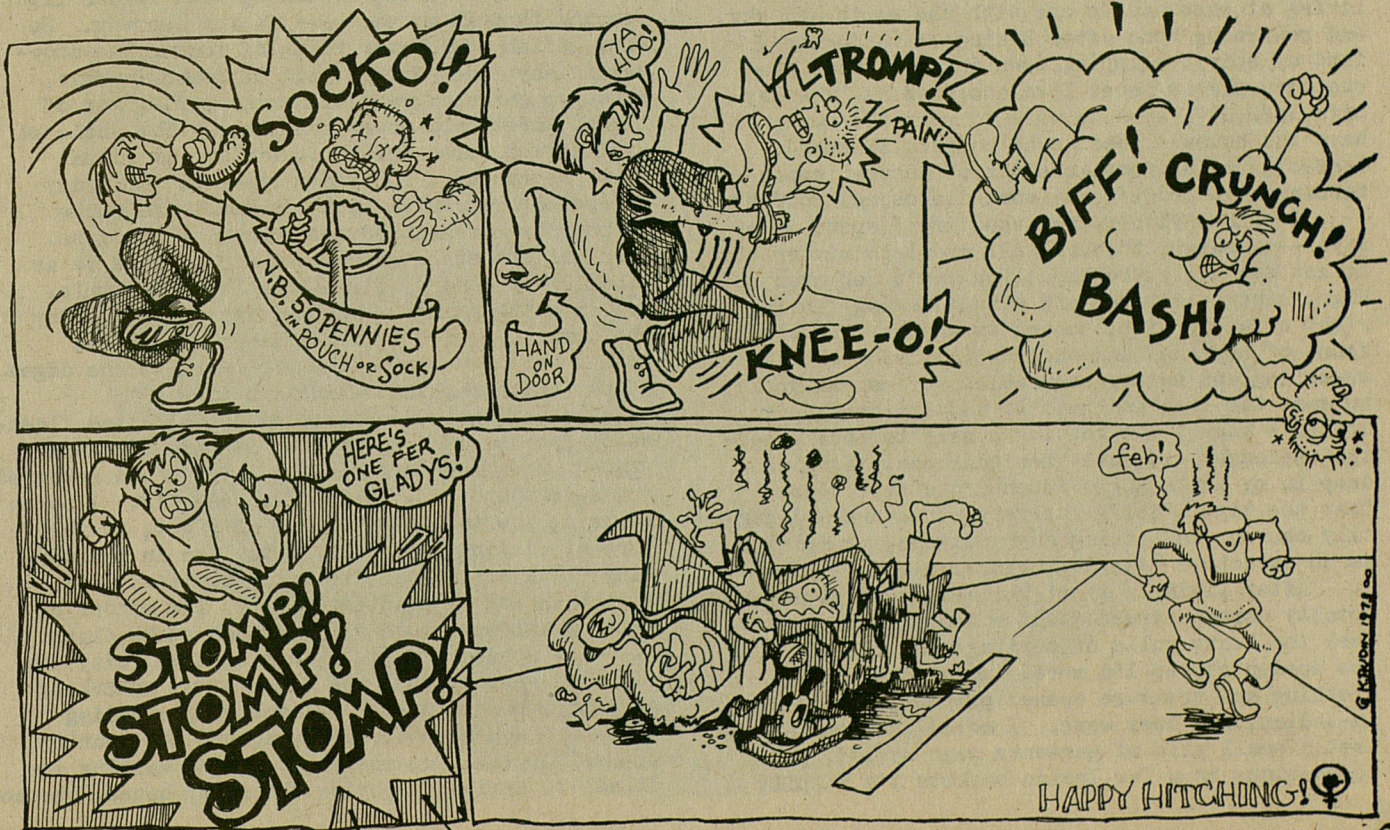
towards you which should make him step on the brake. When he stops, grab your possessions and split.

Seventh: If somehow or other you find yourself parked with a man who is out to rape you, Fight like hell! Don't forget to use all you have. Teeth are a handy weapon; most animals use them; bite vulnerable organs- poke eyes with fingers, pull hair, use elbows and knees in groin, SCREAM. Learn how to break some simple holds.

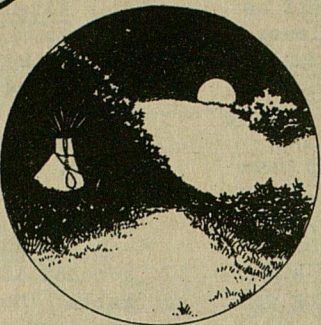
Eighth: If a weapon is drawn and there is a possibility you can get killed, submit to the rape. Then get you and your belongings out of the car, write down the license number and car description (make, color, number of doors) and his description. Get to a phone and contact the nearest Women's Center or any friendly sister. Ask someone to go to the police station with you and help you through their degrading interrogation. If you can't deal with the police sense of justice, post description on local bulletin boards and print it in the local papers to warn other hitchhikers.

Ninth: Arrange to travel with a sister- not only is it safer, but its a lot more fun. ♀

Sisters Pick Up Sisters!



CONSIDER THE CIRCLE



The structure I live in defines, reflects and symbolizes the style of life I choose. Do I want a dwelling that perfectly fits me now? What if I grow? Will it still fit? If I don't grow, how much does my choice of space-style keep me in my present place? Do I like the place I'm in right now enough to want to stay there for a while? A happenstance structure, whatever the style, can teach us -- at least as much as anything else can teach -- if we live consciously. I found that my tipi, purchased in a panic of NO PRIVACY was indeed a heavy teacher.

So often in wilderness or primitive surroundings my soul soars with the rightness of living at ease and at one with the earth and sky. And returning home after hiking or wandering I find my spirit slipping down into the more accustomed places/paces I've accepted as "The Way Life Is"...("I have to work to make the money to have the house I need to be happy...HMMMM") Izatso? Or just one more bit of assumed conditioning I gulped with my corn flakes and coffee?

I recall with wonder the time I spent in my tipi -- a summer through fall and into winter till it got too wet. "So high, you can't get over it!" High, happy, centered and sane. Loving feeling right about my life, though externally the old forms of marriage and nuclear familydom were crumbling and no new securities were sneaking in to ease the fear and pain of unfamiliarity. Still, I knew I was getting myself together, getting stronger, in sometimes solitude. Knowing deep in my White Anglo Saxon Protestant bones that the tipi itself, the very structure I'd hastily chosen, was acting on my psyche, my spirit, as no structure ever had before.

After living a short while in my tipi as a totally unreconstructed white woman, I began to feel the heavy pulls of heritage and history. The two wooden chests I'd moved in for storage of clothing and treasure seemed pompous, ungainly, un-Indian, and they were. I moved them out again. Kept a small pile of garments near my bed, put possessions in a few Indian baskets I'd happily

inherited, and sat on a rug, on a tarp, on the earth. On the earth! A new, bright astonishment at how far I've lived from the earth in my life. Remembering my mother scrubbing floors, waxing floors till they gleamed, cleaning carpets, putting down newspapers by the front door to keep the floor clean. Remembering myself in suburbia, hating to do those same things, but doing them, because not to do so made me feel guilty, a failure, unclean, unkempt, un-American. And I was! I just didn't know anything about alternatives then. And horror of horrors, "I really didn't have that much else to do."

The sky! How the sky lived with me, and I with the sky! Waking at sun-up with golden light pouring through my eastward facing doorway. No tipi Indian would ever think of facing the doorway in any other direction. Of course! Wake, rise, go out and greet the great sun, giver of light, warmth and power and peace. The whole of tipi life becomes the whole of life in ritual form. Structure. Shelter. Symbol. On a day of rest or retreat I watch, through the smoke flaps, the movement of sun across the Heavens. At night the stars shine down directly on me as I build and feed my fire. Simple. So simple. Soul soaring again -- an activity encouraged by the structure itself, as circle of fir poles rush upward, converge, reach outward to the edges of sky and human understanding.

As yet wholly unliberated, still I had flashes of freedom as I spent time in this righteous space. The fire burned bright, for I had gathered dry sticks and split alder, oak and fir. I began learning how to bank the fire at night, in the hope of finding coals to fan to life in the morning. The circle of life, made manifest, and I a part in it! The wonder of it! The wonder of falling asleep, moon shining through smoke flaps.

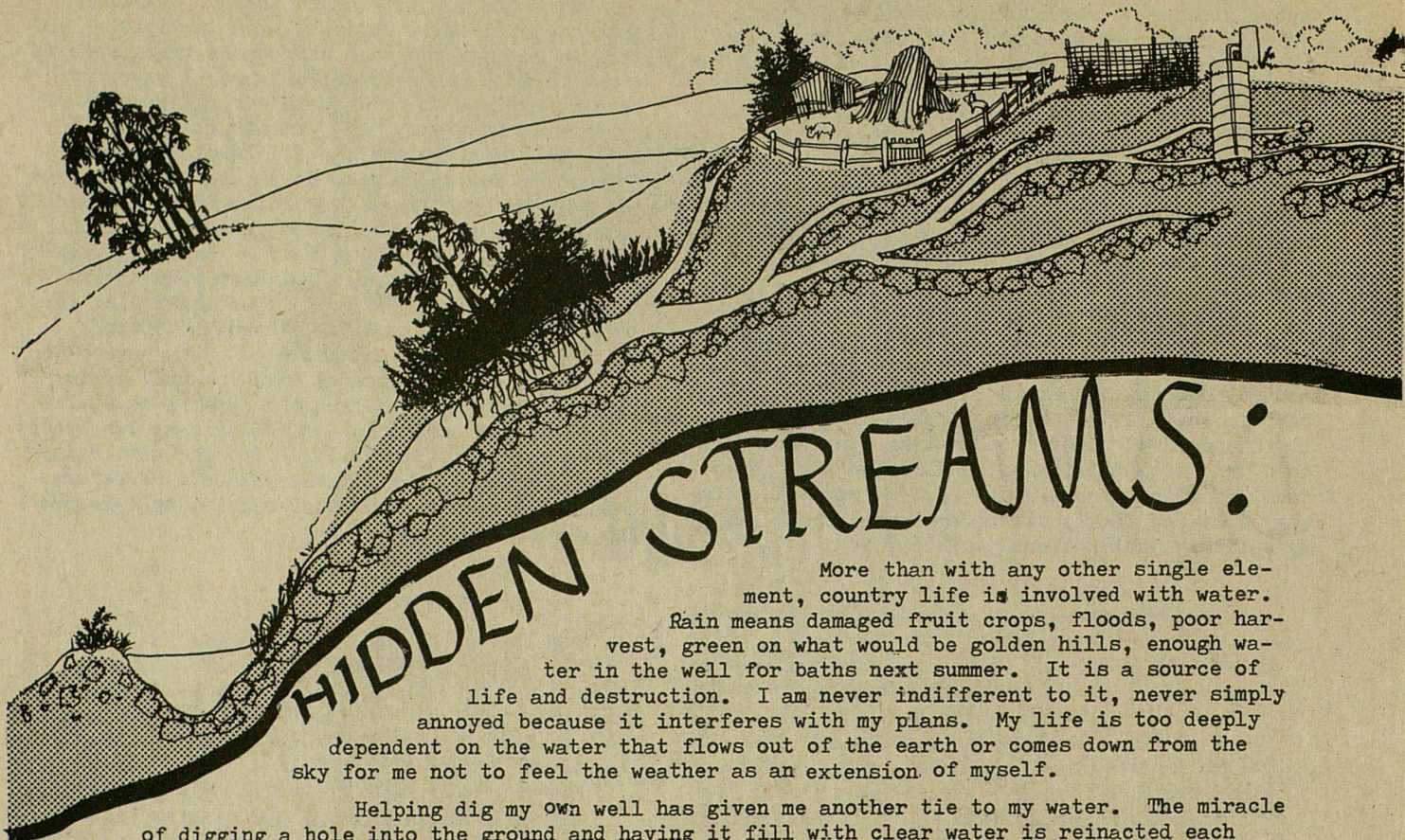
The wonder of this exquisite simplicity lay soft and sure against the sides of my crumbling acculturated comforts. (Remembering spending \$700 to truck our belongings across the country to California. Remembering the week waiting for it all to arrive, enjoying the empty house, the no

vacuum cleaner -- remembering wishing the truck wouldn't come, and we could just camp out in the empty house forever. Realizing that I'd never before questioned the assumption that all those things were necessary. Ah, simplicity! My first clear realization that if I didn't like shit work, I could start by cutting down on the shit. Getting rid of many books, clothes, all silver, crystal, china, appliances, was easy! Simplification has come, when it has, in spurts, but never so easily as in the tipi. But then, I sort of cheated. I did not have within my tipi all necessities for a family of 5. I used it as my own private space, inviting family and friends in, if and when I wished. Loving that feeling of control over my own space! Finding to my slight chagrin that I was failing utterly in tipi keeping standards: no self-respecting squaw would be seen dead with dull, unpolished poles like mine! Hmmm...finding also that to have my special space away from the family eating/convening space suited my solitary inclinations perfectly.

What did not fit was the rain. Realizing that no north coast Indians lived in tipis -- as much because of the rain as because there were no great buffalo herds to follow here, I nevertheless determined to hold forth during the winter. After all, it was my only private space, and I loved it. Tighten the flaps. Smooth the poles. Adjust the dew cloth rope so it won't drip. Hope for days of sun between the rain. But they didn't come, and I, moldering, became miserably disenchanted. Daily drying rituals -- building oversized fires to try to dry out damp bedding and rugs -- weren't sufficient. I was beginning to turn green, and it was time to go. OOOOppps. Back to shared space again.

But I did not lose my love for that magic circle. Many life changes and several moves later, I am now contemplating building my own space. Living in my tipi as I build, for the next rainy season, a waterproof circular space. Maybe something like a yurt -- another simple, self-respecting structure. ♀





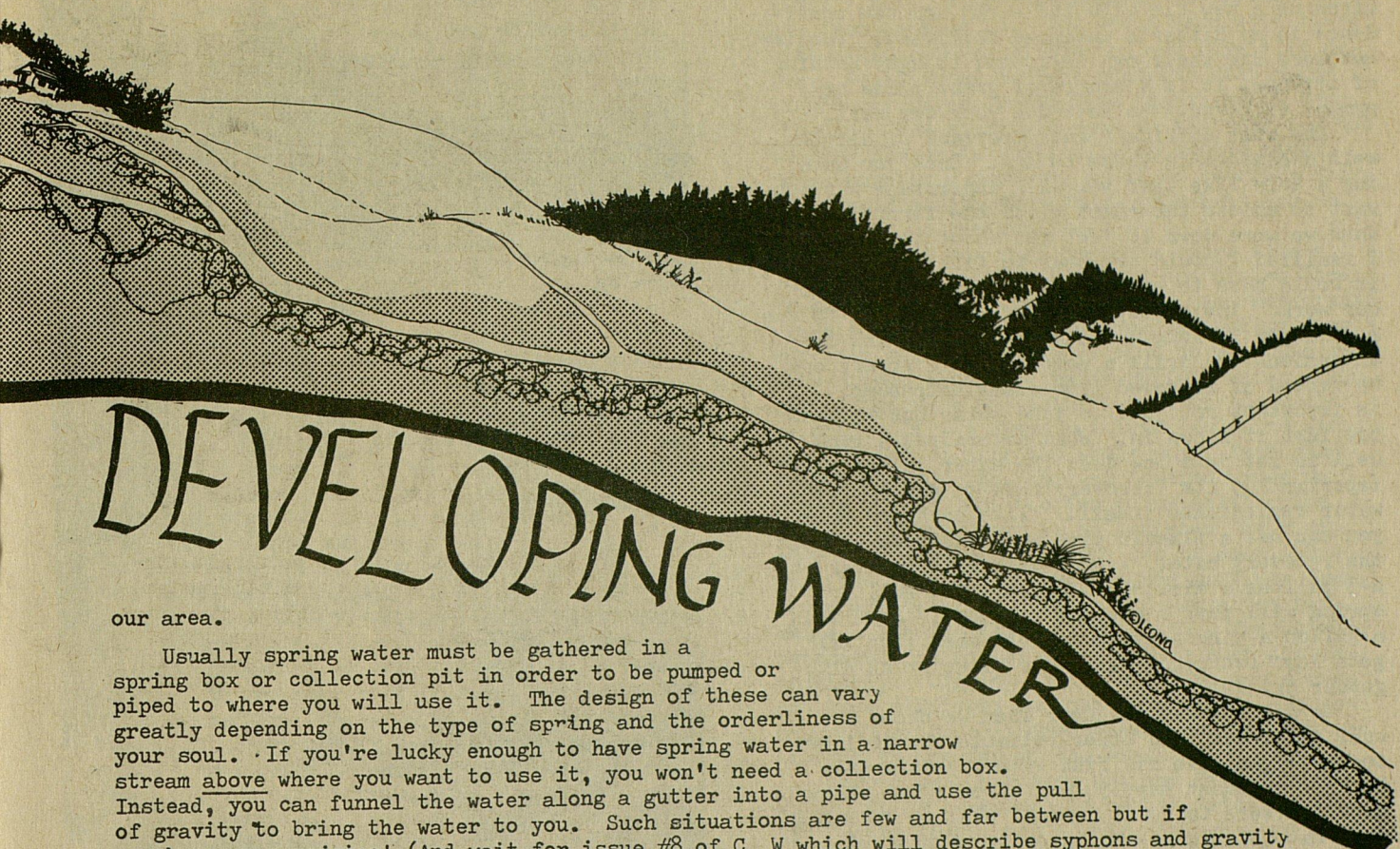
More than with any other single element, country life is involved with water. Rain means damaged fruit crops, floods, poor harvest, green on what would be golden hills, enough water in the well for baths next summer. It is a source of life and destruction. I am never indifferent to it, never simply annoyed because it interferes with my plans. My life is too deeply dependent on the water that flows out of the earth or comes down from the sky for me not to feel the weather as an extension of myself.

Helping dig my own well has given me another tie to my water. The miracle of digging a hole into the ground and having it fill with clear water is reinacted each day. I never turn on a faucet without being aware of where my water comes from. As I drink, I can shut my eyes and still see that last despairing shovel full of clay from under which the water began slowly to bubble and to seep. I am tuned to the levels of the well, to how much and when water can be used, feeling a shock as I watch city visitors run taps on full with no thought for the water flooding down the drain. Water is a finite and precious commodity; it must be developed and conserved even more carefully than the land, for without it there would be no homestead.

Finding and developing an adequate water supply is perhaps your most important action on first moving to a piece of land. Water flows beneath the surface of the ground in small streams. This water can be collected by digging down to the level of the stream (a well) or by finding where the stream comes to the surface (a spring). My favorite source of water is a free-running, bubbling spring because it speaks from the depths of the earth.

SPRINGS Springs are usually the easiest source of water to develop, but they are as varied in shape and kind as the contours of the land itself. On my land alone there are three distinctly different types of springs. There is a deep canyon one where tiny trickles of water flow out of the steep walls and eventually come together, dripping slowly over a log. This spring looks like only a tiny seep but kept us supplied with water for a year until we bought more land and dug a well. Then there are side-hill springs--flowing out of natural amphitheatres near the hill tops and funneling into a narrow gurgling stream as they fall down miniature waterfalls on their way to the canyon-bottom creek. The largest spring of all is a hill top basin of marshy ground covered with horsetail ferns and silvery alder trees. Once while searching for blackberries, I found an old spring box at the edge of this big spring, a box made of old redwood timbers encasing a hole dug into the spring's surface, about 5 feet deep and filled with clear water. It was an exciting discovery, not just because it meant relief for an overstrained well, but also because I felt a deep bond with whoever built it over a century ago: they shared the same basic needs on this land as I do and I am still drawing water from the hole they dug.

Springs on your land may not be like any of these--all that really matters about the type of spring is whether the water is clear and what is the best way to collect the water. "Ground water" from springs, boggy areas or swamps can be brackish, prey to animal and chemical pollution, and full of silt. It can also be an easily accessible source of fine water. Any new water supply (well or spring) probably should be tested for purity. You can send samples in a sterilized jar to your local health department. Don't let them come out and test it unless you want to give them the power to condemn your living situation. Be sure to ask for an explanation of the results, too! On our first farm, we stopped using our well and hauled water because a water test showed 1000 coliforms per million parts water. Three months later, we learned that that was normal surface bacteria for



DEVELOPING WATER

our area.

Usually spring water must be gathered in a spring box or collection pit in order to be pumped or piped to where you will use it. The design of these can vary greatly depending on the type of spring and the orderliness of your soul. If you're lucky enough to have spring water in a narrow stream above where you want to use it, you won't need a collection box. Instead, you can funnel the water along a gutter into a pipe and use the pull of gravity to bring the water to you. Such situations are few and far between but if you have one, rejoice! (And wait for issue #3 of C W which will describe syphons and gravity feed systems.)

By far the funkiest of all our water systems was the deep canyon spring which in its final days resembled a caricature of a back country still. The spring was really a series of rivulets dripping out of the hillside. Where they ran together, we built a dam with a fallen log, sticks and mud and behind the dam we dug a pit. From the dam a rain gutter carried the water to an old 55 gallon drum. A plastic pipe with a cheese cloth and wire screen filter on its end (to prevent silt from clogging the pump) carried the water from the barrel to the pump and pressure tank. Periodically, I had to dump the barrel to clean the mud and leaves out of the bottom. The one time I forgot to check, sand got into the pump, tearing up its impellers and I got my first lesson in pump repair.

Essentially, you need some place to collect water. If your soil is fairly hard clay, you can just dig out a hole approximately 5' x 5' by 5' or 6' deep. If your soil is loam, sand or some combination of those, you will need to line your pit in some way. This can be with rot-resistant boards (redwood or cedar) as in old spring boxes, a plastic-lined wooden box, a plastic wading type swimming pool, an old 55 gallon drum or anything else you can think of. Where your water flows together in a narrow channel, you should build a dam of wood and logs and then dig your reservoir behind the dam.

If dirt or leaves can collect in your pit, have a way to divert the flow of water so you can drain and clean it whenever it begins to fill up. Once you have built your collection pit, you should have a steady supply of water to pump out of (or from which to gravity feed your water through a pipe leaving the pit). Submersible pumps can be placed directly in the pit. Centrifugal pumps must be placed above it, covered by a house or box and connected to a pressure tank. Their advantage is their ability to lift water greater distances if your spring is below your house or garden.

If you will be using a pump with your spring, there are two things to careful of: filtering your water so dirt can't clog your pump, and regulating your water use so you never drain the collection pit and run the pump dry. Filter systems can be made from wire screens, cheese cloth, coffee filters, sand traps or anything else which will catch grit and leaves. Water use can be regulated by adjusting the pressure range on the pump so it only draws small amounts of water at a time, and being careful that you use water only at the same rate (or slower) as it flows into the pit. Your pump will come with directions for regulating the pressure range--usually on the inside of the electric box cover.

WELLS Digging your own well is exciting, frightening, empowering, and mystical. Where to dig, how to do it, when to stop are hard problems for a country neophyte and it is possible to do an enormous amount of labor and still have no water. But there is also something deeply satisfying

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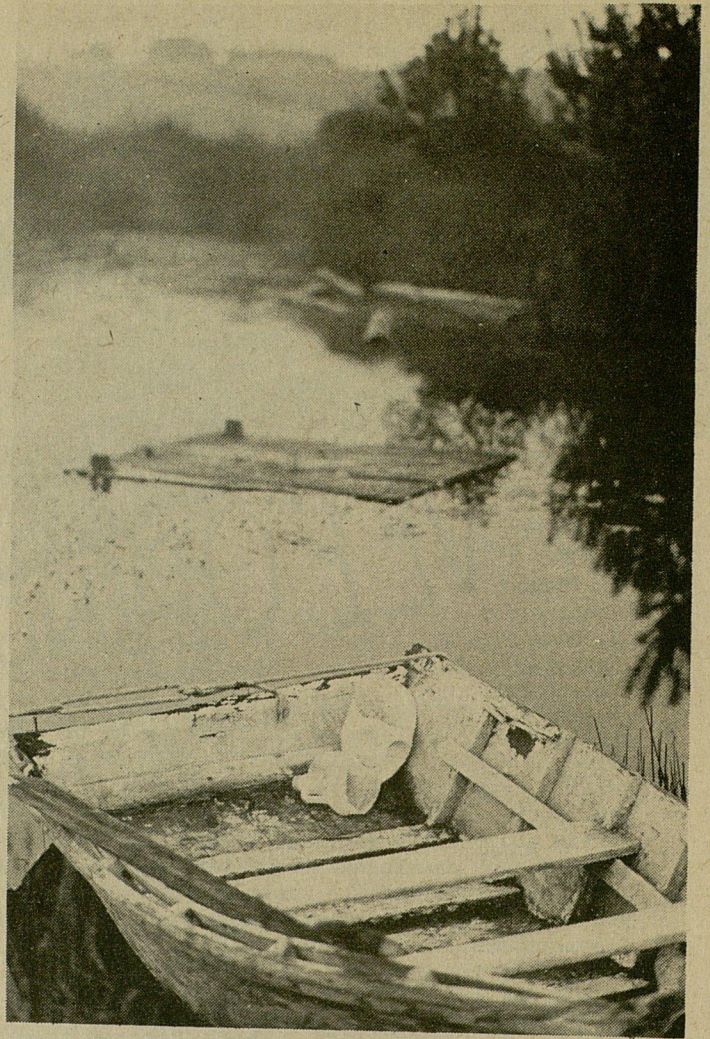
about such a primitive and difficult task--which gives me a new tie with the earth and new confidence in my hitherto untapped abilities. Earlier settlers dug their own wells and thought nothing of it; now, it is a source of great pride or a symbol of poverty to have dug your own well.

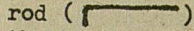
The most difficult and important of all the well decisions is where to dig. Once you have dug a hole like that you will understand why you want to choose the right place the first time. When we were down 16 feet and about to give up, I realized I could not bear to fill in that hole; it would have to stay a hollow monument to all our work. The surest way to find water is to use a 2" auger (a long handled hand drill with 6' extensions) to drill a sample hole. Augers can be rented or borrowed from older neighbors. It is important not just to find water but to know how fast it flows in. What determines a good well is not just how deep the water is but more importantly, its "recovery rate": how fast the water replenishes itself. With an auger hole, you can use a plastic pipe and hand pump to test the recovery rate. A good well will recover at 2-3 gallons a minute; an exceptional well or spring will pump 5 gallons a minute. Less than a gallon a minute means trouble when your well gets low: overnight waits for water or an altogether dry well.

We did not use an auger when we chose our well site, but used other reliable though less secure signs. We did find water, an adequate but not abundant supply, and I would use an auger if I were to do it again. What we followed were natural signs--the types of plants and trees growing in the area, the shape of the land, where there was nearby water. We asked long time residents which grasses, flowers, trees grew in standing water or indicated surface water. Each area has its own; here, they are swamp grass, manzanita, wax myrtle, alder. We chose a site in a natural amphitheater filled with swamp grass and wax myrtle, just uphill from a known spring (not on our land). We were trying to tap into the underground feeders for that spring and we succeeded. Once you get to know your area, you can predict with some accuracy the location of springs and underground water. Now as I walk I always notice likely sources of water and find that certain shapes of land over and over again contain springs.

Another way to find water is to have someone witch it--a mysterious, mystic way entirely in keeping with the magic of water bubbling out of the ground. I have never witched myself but have watched an old neighbor witch several times and even to my sceptic's eyes, the branches quivered and pulled down to the ground over veins of water. Where we dug our well on our old, waterless place, we did indeed find damp veins where the witched lines indicated but not enough water to fill a well.

("When some men came to drain our septic tank, they had to witch for its location. They marked out the 6' x 6' tank exactly and then showed their mysterious art. Take two pieces of baling wire (3 ft. each) and bend them so that you have a handle and a long



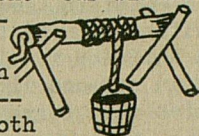
rod (). Hold one in each hand, by the handle, loosely, the long part pointing directly ahead. Hold about chest level. Walk slowly across the land. When you are over an underground water line, the rods swing with a strong pull, in your hands. If the water is very close to the surface, as our 6' deep septic tank was, the rods will swing around in full circles if you hold them above your head. Not so mysterious after all, is it?"

Finding a sure source of water before digging will repay you as long as you live on the land. It is also important to wait until the driest time of year to dig your well. Whenever is the worst possible time for water in your area is the best possible time to dig your well: if it has water in the worst of times, it will have plenty in the best.

Once you have chosen your site and waited for the right season of the year, you are ready to dig. If you have loose soil, a little money, and road access for machines, I would suggest having a back hoe dig the first 12 feet and then going on by hand. The back hoe can do it in an hour or two (at \$15 an hour). My husband and I dug our well in three very hard days--a hole

5' in diameter and 18' deep; the first day we only reached 3½' because of the difficulty of clearing ground and penetrating top layers. A back hoe could have done that first day's work in half an hour.

For digging, we used a short handled, pointed edged shovel, a mattock, and a pick axe. On the advice of our eighty-year-old neighbors, we kept the tools clean and shined with steel wool and the points sharpened. Dirt slides right off shiny tools and you lift only the weight of the shovel, not it plus a load of wet mud. We were lucky enough to be loaned a windlass and rope by a neighbor who had dug several wells--without that luck we would have had to build one. You need a strong (1" hemp) rope and a good cranking mechanism to haul the bucketfuls of dirt up out of the well. Once you hit water, the wet dirt almost literally weighs a ton. Our windlass was a smooth log with a crank attached at one end, resting in a criss-cross frame and padded with leather and a lot of axle grease--very homemade but strong and smooth running. A bucket of dirt falling 15 feet can kill the person standing in the well, so the cranking mechanism is not something to be careless with. The rope must be hemp, not nylon which will slip, and unfrayed so it will not break. We dug our circle 5' in diameter, partly because well rings here are 4' and partly so we would have enough room to swing a pick. I dug 2' of the first four, discovered I was more than twice as slow as my husband and quit digging in favor of running the crank. Later, I learned that the first 4' are by far the hardest and I realized that hauling all that dirt up out of the well and away in wheel barrow loads is just as strenuous as digging. My next well I will dig and crank but on this one I accepted my limitations as finite and kept in "my place".



One of the joys of digging a well is becoming a geologist for your own land, uncovering layer after layer of loam, clay, sand, gravel, rock and coming to know your land as you never will walking on its surface. Somewhere around 16', we hit seashells as well as discouragement, concrete evidence that this rich soil really was once the ocean's floor. At several points we hit cement-like rock which could be broken up with a pick and very hard work. Fortunately, it was never in layers more than 2' thick. Bedrock must be broken with a rented jack hammer or the well must be abandoned. After 16', we hit rock again and were about to quit, thinking it was bedrock, when a thoughtless shovel punctured through it into water--not a geyser, just a slow seep, but three feet of it in the well by morning and we could not bale fast enough to go on digging. Below the water was more rock and old timers told us that it is important to know when to stop. You can dig too deep, puncture the bed beneath your water and have a dry hole.

A hand dug well can go as deep as 45 feet (they say you can see the stars in broad daylight if you look up from that deep); 18 feet felt quite frighteningly deep to us. It is safe to dig as deep as you want through clay or rock and the well only needs to be lined for the

first 5 feet to prevent topsoil and ground water from seeping in. Old wells here were lined with redwood boxes at the top and bare clay below. We intended to rest concrete well rings on old car axles driven into the sides 5' from the top. But about 10' down we hit sand and had to line the whole well, digging inside rings. Sand can mean a cave-in, so it is terribly dangerous to dig with sand above your head and no well rings to protect you.

We bought pre-cast concrete rings from a dealer in the nearest big town and hauled them in our VW bus to save money. We used perforated rings (with holes in them) for the bottom 3 or 4 and then solid rings above that so we would get deep, clear water not muddy surface water. The well rings were the hardest part of the whole process. It was sheer bad luck (and expensive) that we had to ring the whole way. Each ring weighs 200-300 lbs. and was lowered using our rope and windlass--the two of us holding the weight with our arms as we centered the ring over the well and gradually let it down. One fell too fast and jammed crooked part way down. Chris had to climb down in and use a pry bar, while I lowered the ring on down, a frightening experience as one slip could have hurt him irrevocably. Digging inside of rings was slower and more difficult but not impossible. As you dig, the rings slip down around you and you add another to the top of the stack.

Once a well has been dug and filled with water, it is important to use it fairly regularly. Water feeds into a well through tiny capillaries and needs the suction of water being drawn out for the capillaries to send more in. If the water in a well stands stagnant for a long time, the tiny streams will gradually find other passages for their water and your well will lose its recovery power. When your well gets low (if it does!), it is important to watch its level and never drain it completely dry, which will damage its ability to attract more water. If it is at a critical level, only draw water out as fast as it runs in (the recovery rate) and allow several hours between major usings (garden, baths, etc.) for it to regain its normal level.

Developing your own water system is one of the most empowering (as well as essential) acts you can take on first coming to a piece of land. For me, it was a whole new way to know my land--and intuitively now I feel the pull and movement of hidden streams and pools of water. As I walk, I come to know not just its surface, but its deeper life. Water, which I used to use so lavishly and unthinkingly for years, is now a constant part of my consciousness. I have gained the power of learning in one more way how to provide for my most basic needs. I have dug a well and developed springs: I am no longer dependent on municipal pipelines or expensive contractors. ♀

Next Month: Water Systems--How to Get The Water From There to You

herbs

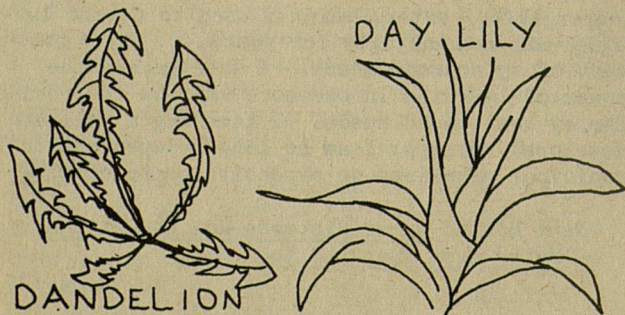
GATHERING

The plants I'm going to describe grow near where most of you live and contain more vitamins and minerals than anything you can buy in the store. You get the plants fresh. In cities the soil has not been worn out usually and no chemical fertilizers and poisonous sprays have been used. Not only free, they taste good, too! I'm going to talk about what I've tried and enjoyed.

Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) have been eaten for centuries for their high mineral and vitamin content -- lots of A and C. They've often sustained populations during famines, from what I've read. Each part of the plant is edible at a certain time of the year. To find out how to use parts of plants I haven't yet tried (like coffee substitute from dandelion roots, wine from blossoms), check out Stalking the Wild Asparagus by Euell Gibbons.

Dandelion greens - the young leaves - can be picked anytime from winter's end before the last frost until the plant sends up flower stalks in the late spring. After that, the leaves taste bitter. Pick leaves at ground level. When young, the whole plant above the root, including the buds, can be cut at one time and eaten. You may have to dig down an inch or so to where the leaves and young buds join above the root. Cut above the root and wash off the dirt. Besides salads, you can steam greens, though much of the vitamins are destroyed. Be sure to drink the cooking water -- lots of minerals get dissolved in it. Dandelions contain "natural nutritive salts" that help purify the blood, according to Jethro Kloss in Back to Eden, a very fine book to keep handy. Kloss lists diseases that dandelions will help remedy, such as anemia.

You can find day lilies (*Hemerocallis fulva*) in yards and parks all over. The stalks, roots and flowers are all edible. In spring, the sprouting stalks before flower stalks appear are good in a salad. Cut above the roots at ground level, remove the larger outer leaves, and use the tender innermost part. Day lilies are a bright green, lighter than dandelions. with orange flowers.



Violets, leaves and flowers, are full of vitamin C, and the leaves contain much vitamin A. A half cup of violet leaves is supposed to contain as much vitamin C as four oranges! You can pick them for salad anytime. You won't hurt the plant by picking the flower. The seed-producing flower, which is different, is small and usually not noticed.

Usually you can find some kind of wild onions or chives growing nearby. Leaves are thin like grass, but round and hollow rather than flat. Most times I've seen them, they grow in bunches with two or more leaves coming up from each bulb. I pick the delicious leaves for salads. Nice munching on while you wander around outside.

For a refreshing drink, find some Staghorn Sumac berries (common sumac). I've found these growing in a city, so look around. Sumac is a small, many-branched tree with compound leaves. The red berries are bunched at the end of the branches. Gather them after summer or as long as they are a nice fresh red color, not scrawny or brownish. Put several bunches in a container of water and let set for a while - half a day. Drink. Contains vitamin C.

Nettles are the only plant in this article that I haven't yet spotted in the city. They grow best near river banks. They are delicious when gathered at the right time and contain vitamins A and C, lots of protein and chlorophyll. Gather the tender tops of young nettles before they bloom when the shoots are less than a foot high. Wear leather or plastic-coated gloves while you pick them so you won't get stung by the tiny stinging hairs that cover the plant. If you do get stung, find a dock plant, which usually grows nearby. Rub and crush the dock leaves on the stung area. The stinging will go away! The hairs get changed by cooking -- don't worry. Wash off nettles and put them in a pot, cover and steam. Enough water will remain on the leaves for cooking. Put whatever you want on them -- tamari, butter, lemon juice...Mmmmm!

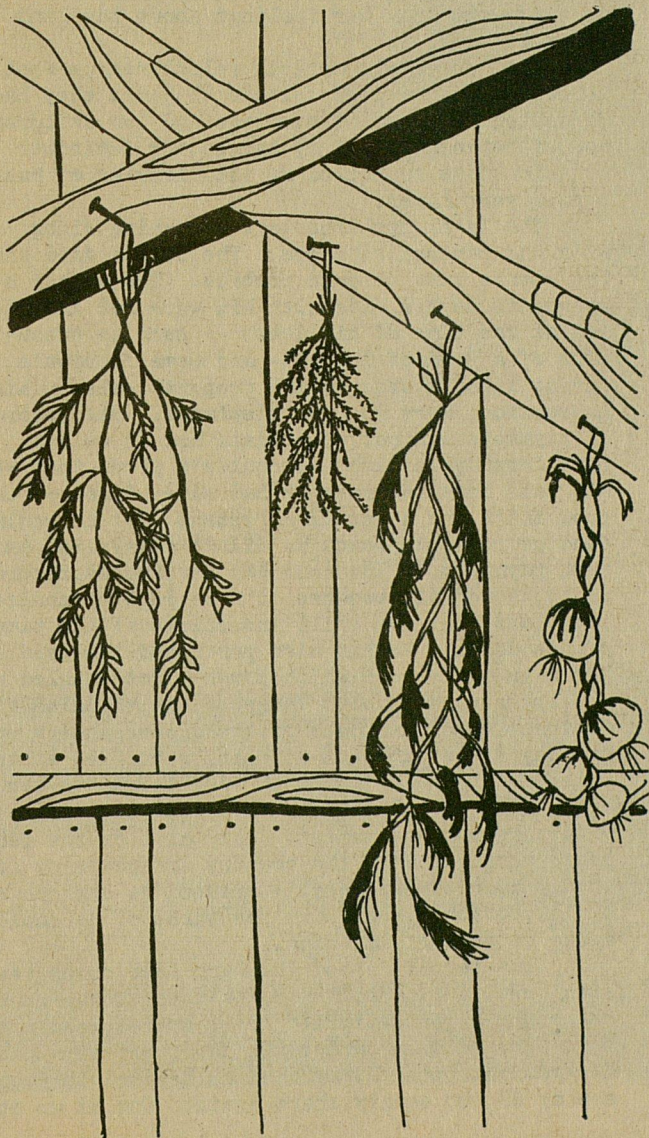
Some suggestions for plant gathering:

-- Tell the plants you are going to pick them for food and that when you die, your body will return to the earth and feed them.

Plants dig being told how much you like them and how beautiful and wonderful they are.

DRYING

- Only pick the part(s) of the plant you are going to use. Unless you are gathering roots, be careful not to cut into them. Don't pick plants that are diseased, have holes, growths.
- Don't cut down or dig up a whole cluster of plants. For every one you take, leave several. You can eat now and have plants next year. Do your gathering here and there, not all in one spot. When you do this when root gathering, you often help the remaining plants by thinning. The area should not look too noticeably upset when you're done. If there are only a couple of plants in the area, it is better to leave them until there are more.
- When you have to take parts you will not use, like the outer leaves of the day lily stalk, peel them off and leave them in the day lily patch to return to the earth.
- Unless the part you want, like violet flowers and some kinds of leaves, come off easily with your fingers, use a knife. You don't want to tear other parts of the plant.
- Do not gather herbs close to a roadside as they absorb toxins from car exhaust. Enjoy yourself and good health.



On a hot summer's day, the smell of a field of mint plants sets me in raptures. I am intoxicated by the aromas of herbs; their names and virtues to be learned later, perhaps during the winter drinking a cup of hot tea.

It is important when gathering herbs to gather them at the right time of year and to dry them properly in order for them to retain their value as medicines.

Flowers and leaves of plants should always be collected on a sunny day after the dew has dried off the leaves. When drying a plant for its leaves, they should be collected when the plant is flowering. When the flower is the part you are most interested in drying, the best time to do it is as soon as possible after the buds have opened. It is important for the herbs to be dried soon after they are gathered to prevent molding.

There are a number of different suggestions for drying herbs; I tied some up in bunches and hung them all over the house, then spent weeks walking around inhaling deeply and watching them dry. The rest, (the loose leaves that couldn't be tied up) I put into paper bags with pin holes punched in them and hung the bags on nails. These had to be checked regularly and stirred or shook around to prevent the herb from getting moldy. Culpepers Complete Herbal says herbs should be dried in the sun. I tried once and all the color faded from the leaves. When a dried herb has turned brown or lost its color or scent it is virtually useless.

When you are collecting a root the best time to do it is when the leaves of the plant have died, because then the energy of the plant is totally in the root. This varies from plant to plant but usually happens in the autumn. The root should be cleaned, cut into slices or pieces and dried. This can be done on a drying rack, in a paper bag or even in a slow(100°) oven. If you are gathering a soft root, the best way to dry it is to hang it on a string and place it somewhere near (but not directly near) the fire.

The barks of trees are best gathered in the spring when they are easily peeled off. These can be dried by any of the above methods.

When you start to learn about the herbs growing in a given area it will become apparent that there are herbs available for all the most common ills right at your fingertips. In the Albion area, there are yarrow and rose hips and manzanita as cold remedies, a variety of mints for stomach complaints, dandelion and yellow dock roots for tonics and blood purifiers, plantain or yarrow to help heal wounds. In addition there are the teas which I drink mostly because they taste so good (all of which have their medicinal value too); yerba buena, yerba sante, scullcap, fir tip.

Nature manifests perfection. We can achieve inner harmony when we put ourselves in harmony with her laws. ♀

HOW NOT TO BUY LAND

It couldn't have been simpler. We (two sets of "stable" married couples) had lived in the country for over a year. We considered ourselves good friends, sharing much of our lives with each other as well as similar views on most things, including use and ownership of property. We had entertained fantasies of buying land together for a number of months, fantasies apparently ordained to remain so, for lack of enough money to make a down payment, although all of us worked and figured we could maintain fairly hefty payments.

One day an acquaintance drove up and breathlessly announced that the piece of land we were looking for was now on the market. It sounded perfect. It was big second growth redwood and fir, not on the road, and best of all, the owner was willing to sell it on a contract of sales basis (which means no down-payment is necessary and is usually accompanied by larger monthly payments and a shorter time to pay off the land.) Contract of Sales purchases are hard to come by and she urged us to check it out immediately, as there would probably be other people interested in it. We went, we saw, we signed. In less than 24 hours we were landowners, our happiness surpassed only by the profundity of our collective ignorance.

The ignorance lasted a very few months, and then beat a steady retreat, faithfully accompanied by happiness and good faith. We had operated largely on good faith in all aspects of the land purchase--good faith that the seller was being honest about boundaries, acreage, lack of liens, etc. as we didn't have money or time (we thought) to have a survey and a title search done. We had also acted in good faith with each other to the extent that we trusted we'd always be friends, that we'd remain in the same stable marital relationships, always pretty much agree on land use, and related priorities, and most of all, always honor agreements, whether written or verbal. The swamp of legal entanglements and personal bitterness we found ourselves in a mere two years later is for me, firm evidence of the error of our beliefs. Good faith, I am permanently convinced, can never substitute for clear, written contractual agreements.

I'll have to summarize all the changes that happened in those two years, for to write them individually in great detail would fill volumes. Every change that could conceivably occur on the personal level, occurred and was complicated by the legal inviability of the land purchase. Our friendship, exposed to the real nitty-gritty test of living "on the land" with no facilities and money (our prior financial stability had changed

and we were all barely surviving) began to erode. The forced, closer contact under heavy stresses exposed unanticipated differences and ultimately, irreconcilable dislikes. Our original conception was cooperative, but not communal, and we had verbally divided the 10 acres into 3½ acres each for personal use, and 3 acres for common use, which was to include gardens, animals, etc. By the end of a year, relationships had so broken down that we had very vague ideas of what was happening with the other (we had polarized into two sets of "couples") and good faith was supplanted by a distrust which broached paranoia as time went on. Our feelings about the land began to vary.

Our respective marital relationships went through many changes. Within 1½ years they had separated (7 years of marriage and two children not withstanding) and my burgeoning feminist consciousness propelled me into leaving my husband a year later.

The legal problems were happening along with the personal changes. The seller died and the estate went through probate. The verbal agreements we had made with him were not fulfilled at the time of his death -- such as execution of a Deed of Trust -- and some documents giving legal status to the property sale in his possession, were lost or misplaced. His record of payments was not up-to-date and as we had paid largely in cash, we couldn't prove that we had made some payments we had made. (Part of our good faith was a verbal agreement that he would send us receipts which he didn't always do, on cash payments.) The land had never been recorded by the county because of some legal technicality, and that was still incomplete at the time of his death. We had also purchased the land as "Tenants in Common" which somehow got bungled up and appeared as "Joint Tenants" on the Sales Contract, which was one of the discrepancies supposedly in the process of being rectified at the time of the seller's death. Joint Tenants own everything jointly, and any changes must be made with unanimous agreement; only three of the four of us were still in the country and power of attorney hadn't been legally granted to any of us by the fourth person; and the three of us couldn't agree on much of anything.

The legalities of the land have never been resolved. I have little faith that they ever will be, but I have mostly let go of my emotional attachments to ever owning the land, and time and changes have greatly reduced my desires to even see my \$2,000 equity share again. One of us still

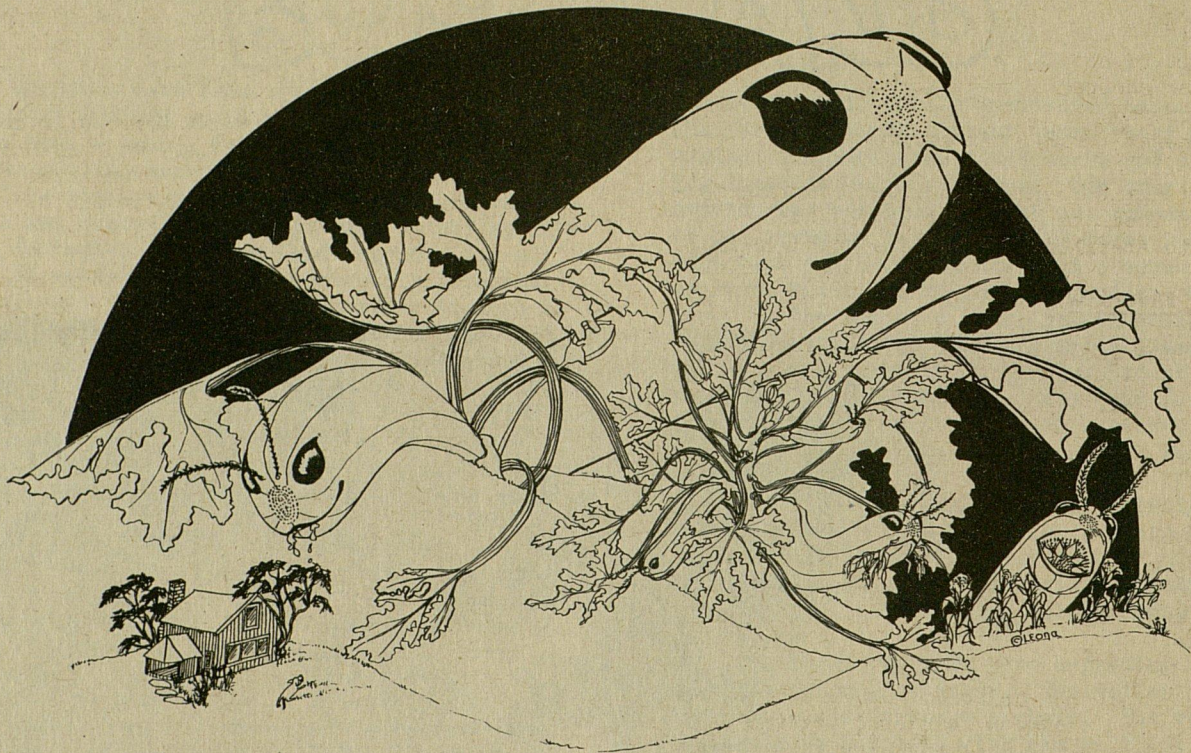
lives on the land and cares about it deeply. He is trying still to get the ownership straightened out and hopes someday it will all be his, free and clear. I wish him my best, though I'm convinced he is tilting at windmills.

It's hard for me to separate the legal from the personal complications at this point. They seem inextricably bound up together. I am more knowledgeable now about the legalities of property ownership than ever before in my life.

Arm yourself with as much property law as you can before you even go look at your first piece of land with the perspective of buying. You will be less likely to find yourself in a legal hold if you are not ignorant. It is easy to be seduced by the romance and beauty of owning land -- knowing the pitfalls ahead of time will enable you to make a better, clearer decision, which you will, ultimately, be less likely to regret. ♀



1001 ZUCCHINI



(Or what to do before they chase you from the garden:)

Zucchini Fritata

Grate: 1 lrg. zucchini and ½ lb. sharp cheese
Chop fine: 2 onions and 2 cloves garlic
Beat 2-3 eggs and add basil, oregano, cayenne
(or whatever else you choose)
Mix all the ingredients together and bake until
firm (about an hour at 350) or fry it like an
omelette in a greased skillet.

This recipe without the **cheese** or spices, and
with 4 T. flour added can be fried as zucchini
pancakes. Both are yummy.

Stuffed Zucchini

Take an overgrown zucchini, one that got hidden
under the leaves until it got a foot long. Slice
it lengthwise and scoop out the insides, chop up
the squash, add cooked rice, chopped onion and
garlic, worchestire sauce, 1 T butter, sunflower
or sesame seeds and mushrooms (if available).
Put this mixture back in the shells and cover
with grated cheese. Place in a pan with a little
bit of water and bake in a hot oven until squash
is soft (about 45 minutes).

Skillet Zucchini (discovered because all the
garden produced last year was zucchini and toma-
toes)

Saute sliced zucchini, onions and tomatoes in
lots of butter (if you get it from commodities).
Meanwhile, fry cooked rice with grated cheese
(preferably homemade goat's milk cheese) and
eggs. Make an open space in the pan and cook
the scrambled eggs, then mix them with the rice
and cheese. Serve the vegetables over the rice
mixture.

Zucchini Parmesan

1 lrg. zucchini	cheese mixture **
tomato sauce *	spinach or bok choy

* tomato sauce: saute 1 clove garlic, 1 lrg.
onion and 1 green pepper (chopped) in oil. Add
2 large cans tomatoes and 4 small cans tomato
sauce, then 1 pinch each of oregano, marjoram,
sage, parsley, thyme and basil. Simmer several
hours.

** cheese mixture: combine 1 lb. cottage cheese,
¼ lb. butter (sliced), ½ c. grated parmesian,
1 c. tofu, 1 lb. any cheese (grated), 2 eggs,
mix together in a bowl.

Zucchini Parmesan cont.

Slice the zucchini and layer in a large pan: zucchini, leafy vegetable, sauce, cheese, zucchini, etc.
Bake at 400 for 30 minutes or until cheese melts and vegetables are soft.

Zucchini Sweet and Sour Pickles

Combine:
2 t. mustard seed 2 t. salt
2 onions, chopped 1/2 c. honey
2 t. turmeric 1 t. celery seed
2 c. vinegar (or 2-1 vinegar to water)

Boil this mixture then add about 6 medium zucchini, sliced thin and boil 25 minutes.
Pour into sterilized jars, wipe tops and seal.

Ellen's Favorite

Take the largest zucchini in your garden, cut it into bite sized pieces and place it on your compost heap.

Vegetable Croquettes or Tired Worker's Tempura

Batter:
3 eggs
1/8 c. each soy sauce and water
enough flour to make a thin batter
Slice thin: zucchini, onions, carrots and potatoes.

Mix these together and drop handfuls into the batter. Drop clumps of battered vegetables (some of each kind in each clump) into a pan with 1/4" of hot oil in it. Fry until crisp and brown on both sides (oil must stay hot). Drain on paper towels and keep warm in the oven until all are cooked. Serve with soy sauce.

Baked Zucchini

(Surprisingly good, even when you never want to see one again)
Slice medium zucchini lengthwise and top with thin slices of cheese (Fontina and Swiss are the best). Bake at 350 until tender, about 30 minutes.

Zucchini Spaghetti

Saute garlic and onions in oil, add a couple of zucchini, diced. When slightly soft, add tomato sauce (2 c.) and maybe a little water if you plan to cook it long. For spices try: basil, oregano, tarragon, rosemary, lots of salt and pepper. Add 1 T of honey to combat the acidity of the tomatoes. Cook as long as you can. Serve over spaghetti noodles.

Zucchini Marmalade

2 lbs young zucchini	1 (1 3/4 oz.) can
juice of 2 lemons	crushed pineapple
1 T. grated lemon peel	1 pkg. pectin
2 T crystallized ginger, chopped fine	5 c. sugar or honey (or to taste)

Slice squash thinly, measure 6 c. zucchini into a big pot. Add lemon juice and peel and pineapple. Bring to boil, lower heat and simmer until squash is barely tender, about 15 minutes. Add pectin, place over high heat and boil. Add sugar or honey and ginger. Boil hard 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat, skim off foam, stir and skim 5 minutes to cool slightly and prevent fruit from floating. Place in sterilized jars, clean rims and seal. Makes 5 half pints.

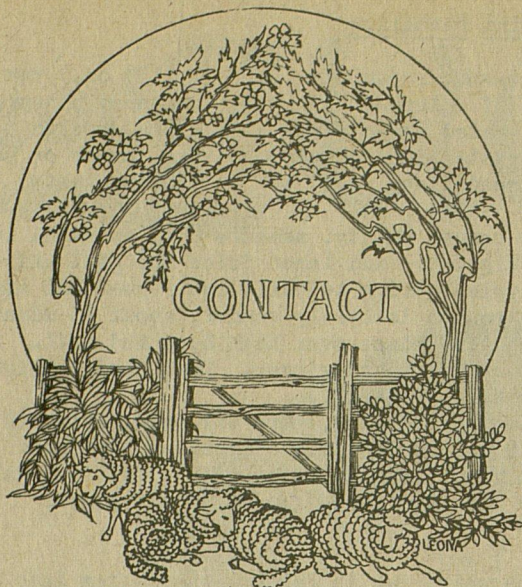
Put zucchini raw in salads, sneak them into soups and curries, feed them to your chickens, and send them home at every opportunity with unsuspecting city visitors! ♀

ISSUE 8***ISSUE 8***ISSUE 8***ISSUE 8***ISSUE 8

The theme for issue #8 of Country Women is going to be "The Women's Movement in the Country." In the preliminary talks we've had about this theme, it became clear that we must find a way of getting written material from women in different parts of the country. We always hope to get contributions but we are particularly dependent on them for this issue. We can only write personally about what is going on in our immediate area and that would not make for a very insightful issue on the women's movement in the country!

Please share your personal experiences. Either experiences of large organized groups, small rap groups, or just your own growing feminist consciousness. Letters, articles, photographs, graphics or poetry will all be needed to make this a comprehensive and beautiful issue.

Deadline October 1st.



We're a communal group of about 25 living on a large, remote piece of land in the mountains of Trinity County, California. We've been here for 2½ years and expect to be here a long, long time. Land is still pretty cheap up here, the natives are friendly and very helpful, and we'd like to have some kindred neighbors.

We would be glad to talk with anyone who would like to learn from our experience with buying land and our familiarity with the area. Please write to Barbara Dean, Star Route 1, Box 38, Covelo, CA. 95428. The following are some pieces of land now for sale in our area:

- 40 acres, forest, on county road, borders our land, asking \$16,000
- 1700 acres, beautiful! Remote, high ridge overlooking our land, steep virgin forest slopes and some river frontage, borders National Forest. Asking \$200,000. Good terms. Someone nice please buy this soon!!
- 880 acres, steep forest slopes to river, asking \$110,000.
- 160 acres on county road 6 miles to town, fertile meadows, \$40,000.
- 40 acres, remote, borders National Forest, \$12,000.

Women -- Feminists -- wanting to share a living experience together in a communal living ranch situation -- with skills or without and wanting to learn skills in livestock management -- irrigation of land and land management -- hay making -- machinery operation and repair -- carpentry -- plumbing -- electricity -- with interests in sports and developing areas for such, volleyball, tennis, etc. -- interests in music, especially classical -- doing or learning massage -- or feminists just wanting to do your own thing and live with a ranch group. Contact Joyce Bowles, Route 1, Box 7026, Vacaville, CA. 95688, phone 707-448-5759.

Gathering information to be made available. If you'd like to share your knowledge of prevention and remedies for menstrual cramps, excessive flow and other hassles, and good readings, write 1185 Edinboro, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Interested in how changes in living (diet, exercise, environment, birth control...) affects periods, too.

FICTION BY WOMEN A new publishing house, Daughters, Inc. is interested in publishing fiction by women. Contact Parke Bowman or June Arnold at Daughters, Plainfield, Vermont, 05667.

Dear Sisters: We are in the process of compiling an anthology of music by and for women. We hope that by making a list of women artists and their work available to others we can begin to press for wider circulation of women's music and increased air time for women artists.

Women who know of music to add to our anthology; women who want a copy of our present list of women's music; and especially women who want to exchange ideas, criticism, support of women's music please contact us at: my Sisters' Song, P.O. Box 90475, Milwaukee, WI 53202

My one year old son and I would like to share our 2½ bedroom house by the Eel River near Leggett with someone (or possibly some two if one is a child) for \$50/month plus ½ of utilities. Very peaceful with organic garden; possible space for chickens or maybe even a milk animal. Since the house is smallish, it would simplify coexistence if you are vegetarian, reasonably clean and sane in living habits, striving for higher consciousness on all levels, fond of children, an early riser, creative. Please contact Barbara, P.O. Box 141, Leggett, CA. 95455

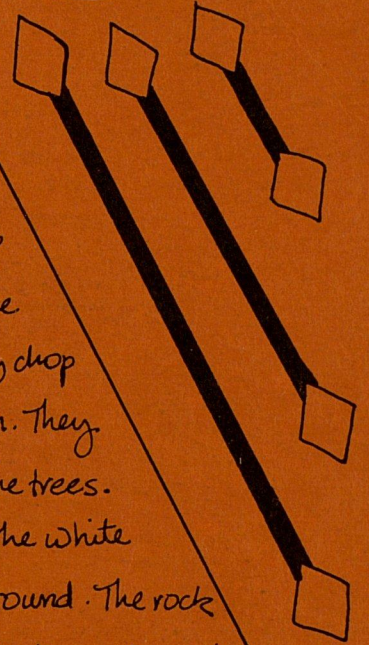
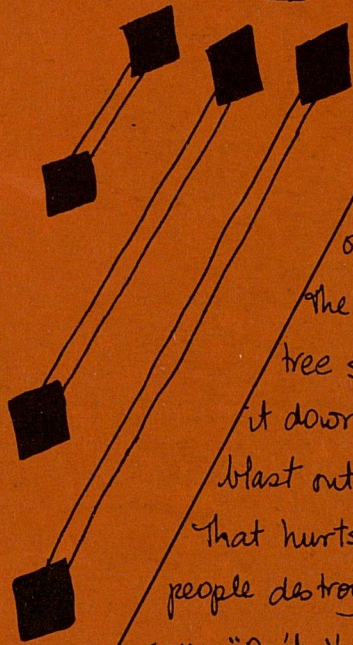
We are a struggling family of three (one four year old girl) with a January baby on the way and an old ramshackle farm house, in the back fields of Virginia. We're looking for a woman with kid or kids or a trying to be non-sexist couple with kids to survive the winter with us and help our children out with "hippie-kid loneliness".

I need you - Love in struggle, Carmen Bonnichild, 3011 Luxembourg, Norfolk Virginia 23509

How do you set up a land trust? There's a useful book covering history, philosophy and practical how-to's of land trusts- available for \$4 from International Independence Institute, West Road, Box 183, Ashby, Mass. 01431.

We are interested in collecting articles, poetry and thoughts for a possible future issue on women and their spiritual experiences. Any practical knowledge you want to share would especially be appreciated, also graphics!! Please contact, Carolyn & Helen c/o Country women, Box 51 Albion

said by an old holy woman of the Wintu Tribe



"The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots we make little holes. When we built houses, we make little holes. When we burn grass for grasshoppers, we don't ruin things. We shake down acorns and pine nuts. We don't chop down the trees. We only use dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. They blast out trees and stir it up to its depths. They saw up the trees. That hurts them. The Indians never hurt anything, but the white people destroy all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. The rock says, "Don't. You are hurting me." But the white people pay no attention. When the Indians use rocks, they take little round ones for their cooking... How can the spirit of the earth like the white man?... Everywhere the white man has touched it, it is sore."

from Touch the Earth: A Self-Portrait of Indian Existence by T.C. McLuhan

