

MAIZE

A LESBIAN COUNTRY MAGAZINE

SUMMER 9992



MAIZE IS BY AND FOR LESBIANS

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

Letters to the editor may be published in full or in part, unless specified "not for publication".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

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

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

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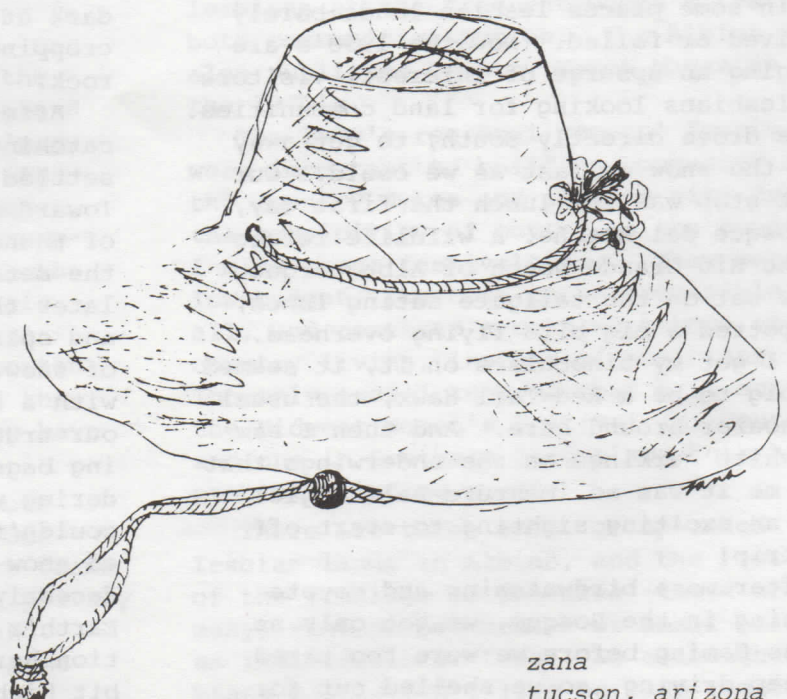
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zana
tucson, arizona

JOURNEY TO LESBIAN LANDS

By Pelican Lee
Tesuque, New Mexico

The deep snows and cold at our New Mexico home sent Rebecca and I travelling last winter to visit friends on lesbian lands in Southern Arizona, the Albion/Mendocino Coast area of California, and Southern Oregon.

It was thrilling to meet kindred spirits on lesbian land, to know we are not alone in our struggling community, to meet lesbians who have been doing it for almost 20 years and to see what they've accomplished. Everywhere we went, lesbians spoke of an increase in interest in lesbian land communities. After the initial high energy of the 1970's, the 1980's seemed to be low-key, and in some places lesbian lands barely survived or failed. Now the 1990's are bringing an upsurge of interest, visitors and lesbians looking for land communities.

We drove directly south, to get away from the snow as fast as we could. Our first stop was for lunch the first day, at Bosque del Apache, a wildlife refuge on the Rio Grande south of Albuquerque. As we sat on the tailgate eating lunch, we spotted a big bird flying overhead. When I got my binoculars on it, it seemed too big to be a Red-Tail Hawk, the usual big soarer around here. And then I saw the white markings on the underwings that told me it was an immature Bald Eagle! What an exciting sighting to start off our trip!

After more birdwatching and coyote watching in the Bosque, we got only as far as Deming before we were too tired to keep driving, so we shelled out for

a motel room. The next morning we woke to find a coating of snow on the ground and the streets were a slushy mess. So much for escaping the snow and cold. But by the time we crossed into Arizona, the snow was gone and life was fine.

As we were following Earth's complicated directions into White Rocks Homeland, a jeep flagged us down and Earth was in it, on her way to Willcox with a neighbor to get parts for her broken-down car. So after going back to town with Earth and giving another neighbor a jump start for her van, we arrived at Earth's winter headquarters. The land here south of Willcox and west of the Chiracahua Mountains is rolling hills with sparse scrub trees, and in the winter, the colors are all dark. In the very middle of all this dark at White Rocks Homeland is an outcropping of startling stark white quartz rock.

After a walk in the misty rain and catching-up-with-our-lives talk, we settled down for the night in our truck. Toward morning we were awakened by crashes of thunder and sheets of rain pounding on the metal roof over our heads. Moments later the sound changed to a softer swish and splat, and I knew that was the sound of snow. It came down hard and fast, with a strong wind that rocked and shook our truck. We huddled inside our sleeping bags, trying to doze some more, wondering what it looked like outside. We couldn't see out because the wind plastered snow onto the windows. Finally it was decently late enough to make a run for Earth's warm (almost) house. The elevation here is around 4000 feet, quite a bit higher and colder than around Tucson.

After breakfast the snow had stopped, but it was a wild drive in snow, mud and slush up and down some awfully steep and scary hills miles out to the paved road.

After stocking up at the Tucson health food co-op, we arrived by evening at Saguaroland, the new land recently purchased by SHE Land Trust. Saguaroland is only 2 acres in a rural/suburban area, but it is special because it is a land community being developed by disabled dykes. Two disabled dykes and one daughter are in the process of getting settled on the land, with a third disabled dyke to come soon. Saguaroland is also special because it is in the beautiful and unique saguaro habitat. During our stay we were delighted by cardinals, cactus wrens, phainopeplas, pyrrhuloxias and curve-bill thrashers.

Refugees like us from hard winters can find more gentle weather at Saguaroland (we hope) when we need it. Luckily, the weather finally did come through for us there. No snow (though it can snow there too) and each day a little warmer. Saguaroland is too new to have their visitor set-up yet, but there are plans. Southern Arizona in mid-winter is cold during the long evening hours after it gets dark, so access to a warm indoor space is convenient. Since we were friends, we were invited into the residents' houses for shared dinners and after-dinner discussions.

Luckily, this land had several buildings, sheds, and a trailer already on it when purchased, which makes settling in for the residents a little easier. One of the Saguaroland lesbians moved the three-room house she built at Adobeland to Saguaroland, one room per truckload. Quite an exciting accomplishment! An anonymous neighbor complained to the county zoning authorities when a three-room house suddenly appeared within the unspoiled view, telling the officials that he wasn't happy to have lesbian neighbors. The official later reported to the Saguarolandians that he told the neighbor "This is America" and they have a right to live there.

As with all new lands, an enormous amount of work needs to be done. Our contribution during our stay was to frame 50 feet of the planned 8-foot high privacy fence that will surround Saguaroland. Saguarolandians were happy to have some experienced carpenters visiting.

I was impressed by Saguaroland's visitor information sheet. Saguaroland lesbians write very frankly about disability needs that are and are not able to be met, and apologize for not having the resources to meet every disability need. Hard work and a resolution to both S/M and anti-S/M dykes living on land together, involving respect for both positions and clear boundaries, is reflected in two short paragraphs. They state clearly that work and financial contributions from visitors are needed, but after stating the financial needs and the resources of the residents, leave it up to the visitor to "Assess your own access to resources and decide how much you can give." And "If we don't do the work it won't get done." And later, "We must continually think about our privileges in relation to others." Saguaroland's information sheet was by far the longest and most detailed we saw, but oh so clear!

We made an unplanned stop at Joshua Tree National Monument on our way into California, and wished we had longer to stay among the amazing rock formations and giant yuccas. After spending a fun week in San Francisco, we travelled north to the Albion/Mendocino Coast.

The Albion/Mendocino Coast country lesbian community is not well known, except to those who have friends there. When I was a young country dyke in Southern Oregon in the 1970's, I met Albion area lesbians at the frequent women's festivals both communities put on. The Albion women also published Country Women Magazine in the 1970's.

The 1970's regional womens' festivals were important to building community among the country dykes and showing city dykes the possibility of moving to the country. I miss those festivals now. They were low-budget, low-cost to be accessible to all, and centered around workshops and country living, instead of musicians. The only ones I know of that have survived, the Midwest Women's Festival (Missouri) and one in Southern Oregon are both having problems finding a site.

There are three small group-owned lesbian lands in Albion, and the rest of the lesbians in the area (there are many) rent or own houses or small acreage as individuals or twos. So although lesbians mostly don't live on land together,

there are many community activities and a sense of being in a large rural lesbian community. Many of the lesbians live within just a few miles of each other in Albion, but there are dykes all along a 30-mile stretch of coast, from Elk to north of Fort Bragg.

We were offered a yurt to stay in at T'ai Farm, and shared meals with the lesbians who live there when we weren't having dinner with others. We visited different area beaches almost every day because the fresh sea breeze gave Rebecca relief from the molds and mildews that were everywhere. Mendocino in January is not full of tourists as it is much of the rest of the year. We could park near the health food store, did not have to fight traffic, and enjoyed almost deserted beaches. I organized a sweat for a Sunday afternoon that turned out to be Candlemas. Part of what makes this a strong community is the shared spirituality of sweats and Solstice and Equinox circles that they have been doing for almost 20 years.

Many Mendocino lesbians are going or have gone back to school to get degrees and professional jobs. School and jobs are so demanding that they have much less time and energy for community activities. Many spoke of how burned out they are, especially now that their professional jobs are being affected by the poor economy. Teaching has become very difficult as the kids are acting out more, reflecting the economic difficulties of their parents. Funding for social work type jobs is disappearing. Lesbians told me they are staying in jobs they are not satisfied with because they are afraid they won't find anything better. The economic downturn seems to be affecting California lesbians much more than the Oregon lesbians, where the economy has been bad for a long time and few lesbians have professional jobs, or lesbians in Santa Fe, where the influx of the wealthy and the tourist economy seems to be insulating us for now.

We spent a week and a half in the Albion area, getting to visit with almost everyone I wanted to see. We had so many stops the day we were leaving--I had to show Rebecca the birds and harbor seals at Lake Cleone and MacKerricher Beach--that we camped that night only a few miles

further north up the coast before heading to Oregon.

The Southern Oregon country lesbian community is more spread out along 100 miles of Interstate 5 from Ashland to Roseburg. There are larger amounts of land, some group-owned and some couple-owned. Here, the lesbian lands are usually 45 minutes to over an hour's drive apart. Driving to the lesbian lands, one passes through beautiful farm valleys, but the lesbian lands are usually in the "backwoods", up on the rugged and steep mountainsides. Some were bought years ago as "bare" land--with no buildings or utilities. Others had just one old house. It was exciting to see some of the Oregon lesbian lands that don't have electricity now have solar lights and solar hot water. I hadn't thought that solar energy would work in rainy Oregon. The steep terrain and wet climate provide easy running water, something I envy, coming from the desert where wells have to be deep and expensive and require electricity.

Our first stop in Oregon was at Cabbage Lane, my first lesbian land home, and the very first lesbian land in Southern Oregon. In the late 1970's the lesbians living there all left. Luckily, by then the land was all paid for, so it wasn't lost. Now Cabbage Lane is being revived as lesbian land and the men whose names are on the deed are being bought out. They need donations and support. Write to get their newsletter to Box 143, Wolf Creek OR 97497.

I hadn't been to visit Cabbage Lane since I left Oregon, 15 years ago, but I remembered where the driveway was off the paved road. The lesbians who live there now hadn't found my old tipi site, so I took them on an expedition. The path was long gone, so we scrambled over brush and fallen trees. Everything looked different because tall trees had grown where I remembered open space from logging damage. But the lay of the land was the same, and I was amazed to find my tipi poles still there! But where my tipi had been in an open sunny spot, it is now nestled among trees, and what was once bare dirt is now covered with ferns and mosses and lichens and liverworts! What a testimony to the power of Mother Earth to heal herself.

Several days after we arrived in Oregon, we went to an Oregon Women's Land Trust committee meeting which was investigating the possibility of OWLT owning Cabbage Lane and maybe other lesbian lands. When we walked in the door, there were many lesbians who I hadn't seen for 15 years. What excitement! The meeting was magical, starting out with a potluck and a song in which everyone knew all the words and all the verses. I could tell that these women have been meeting together for 15 or more years by their meeting skills. The Oregon lesbians were delighted that we were magically delivered to them at just the right time with just the information they needed for their investigations. The meeting ended with another song just as strong, and a group photograph. We spent the rest of our time in Oregon visiting most of the lesbians who were at that meeting at their homes and lands.

Later we found out how this community has become such strong singers. When they have their pagan holiday circles, they start the day with open singing in the afternoon. This way everyone learns songs. Then after a potluck dinner, they circle in the evening. Lesbians come for whatever part of the day they want to.

Of the three lands bought by lesbian couples in the 1970's that we visited, all three of the couples have broken up. Both members of two of the couples still live on the land. Both of these couples are now in the process of separating their lives, living spaces, and/or land ownership so that the one who wants to live in a land community can have that possibility without infringing upon the other.

I have watched lesbian communities go through cycles of strengths and difficulties. The Southern Oregon community was strong when I lived there in the mid-1970's, with lesbians arriving from all over the country and Europe too with lots of energy and excitement of our first coming together to build a country lesbian community. Although we had our differences and our struggles, in those years we created the first women's land trust and raised \$20,000 to purchase Owl Farm to be open land for women. As always, times change. I left, but the word was that there were hard times in the 1980's in Southern Oregon. Lesbians came to Owl

LIFE ON LAND



HOW LAND DYKES BREAK UP-
DIVIDING THE COMPOST

Debby Earthdaughter
Tucson, Arizona

Farm who thought "open land" meant they could do anything regardless of how it affected others on the land. The Oregon dykes struggled to make payments on Owl Farm and mediate severe conflict in the midst of violence, trashing and its depressing aftermath.

Thank Goddess, times change. Agreements were made for Owl Farm and eventually the land was cleaned up and the vision re-birthed. In the past few years many lesbians have been coming to Owl Farm again. The present conflict at Owl Farm has to do with different generations of lesbians having different ways of living and how can everyone's needs be met on the same land and sharing the same community main house. And how do newcomers

become integrated with oldtimers so that power is shared. Everywhere it seems that country lesbians are working on control and power issues. The Southern Oregon community feels to me able to deal with the conflicts that presently exist, given time and process. A good sign to me is that a group of community lesbians who do not live at Owl Farm decided that at least three of them would be present at every Land Trust meeting.

Every lesbian land we visited in Oregon had a place for visitors to stay. Hospitality is a strongly-held value in this community. Most of the lands also had visitor information sheets, many with maps of the land. Some lands limit the number of days visitors can stay, and most ask for varying amounts of money per day, anywhere from \$3-10. I was surprised to find that lesbians do not eat dinners together at many of the lands I visited, but they do at others. One land's only community house is the bathhouse (with laundry!), and that's where one finds their visitor information. Many of the lands are alcohol-free and most discourage pets. The Oregon Women's Land Trust has an information sheet, "Some Lesbian/Wimmin's Lands in Oregon" that lists 10 lands with their visitor policies and addresses, with the admonition "Write, before you plan to visit, and send a SASE."

We were sad that the time we could be away from New Mexico was limited, because we wished we could have stayed longer everywhere. So now with renewed and new friendships everywhere, we are dreaming of when we can visit again. Travel is more expensive and difficult now than it was in the 1970's, when it seemed we saw each other and visited among lesbian lands more often. Of course now there are so many more lesbian land communities to visit and so many more land dykes to get to know! Yet we are still few in number and relatively isolated from each other. I am ever so grateful that we had the opportunity to go so far and visit so many and receive such inspiration to continue on in New Mexico.

Pelican Lee presently lives in New Mexico with her lover, Rebecca Henderson, and is involved in the formation of the New Mexico Women's Land Trust and the effort to save Arf Women's Land.

STICKS, STONES 'N BONES

By Linda
Riverland
Beaver, Oregon

The bag ladies on the beach
collecting sticks, stones 'n bones,
the ocean almost out of reach.
They remember as they feel and smell
those sticks, stones 'n bones,
where we've all come from.
And they say they'll retire some day
using those sticks, stones 'n bones
to teach. To teach.
To teach the ones who have forgotten
or who never knew:
Who have forgotten how to play
with sticks, stones 'n bones.
Who never knew how to live
with sticks, stones 'n bones.
Who don't have time to feel
the sticks, stones 'n bones.
Who don't want to smell
the sticks, stones 'n bones.
But the bag ladies on the beach
look for sticks, stones 'n bones,
to play with,
to live with,
to feel and smell,
and to share,
the ocean within reach.



maryanne
miami, florida

OUTLAND

A LESBIAN SPIRIT COMMUNITY

By Sunlight

Comptche, California

The sun is rising clear this morning after a night of wind that blew away the clouds. I love this vast and changing sky, this land, my sisters here. It feels strange that I'm going home tomorrow when Outland feels like home--the kind I'd sought for a long, long time. It surprises me when I think how long.

Eighteen years ago, I began my search for a Lesbian community. The details have changed, but always it was a country place, a place of natural beauty where we would live close to the Mother and close to each other in gentleness and love. That search, which started in my mind, has taken me across thousands of miles where I've visited many Lesbian lands and lived in several in both happiness and pain. Growing as I went, I've come to realize that home is in myself. But still, I want to live with other dykes in a beautiful dream reality we share.

The dream began to take shape several years ago with the idea of Lesbian Spirit Community (LSC). We looked for land--large, remote, accessible--where we could live totally apart for a season of the sun. We would leave behind the male world, its institutions, its devices, its myths, its ways. We would create a community where we could more easily shed the internalized patriarchal aspects of ourselves. We would discover our Lesbian nature and live it together there close to the undamaged earth.

The group grew and each of us grew as we explored and shared our visions. We prepared ourselves for LSC by looking within to find what started there and beginning to let go of the rest. Two years of searching for the right land with some structures in place to accommodate about 40 dykes were unsuccessful. The circle of correspondence disbanded, and the dream of LSC was shelved. But most of us, I believe, were changed by that experience. An some of us at least, still longed to create a Lesbian Spirit Community.

Eventually, Lee and Jae did find 777 acres in the high desert of New Mexico. With the help of many dykes from time to time, they have renovated the house to make community space for a variety of activities. They are building greenhouses and accessible casitas to house other lesbians as Outland grows. They are creating cottage industries to make the community self-sufficient.

Even more basic, I feel, the dykes on the land at any given time are building the essence of a Lesbian Spirit Community by living with respect and caring for ourselves, each other, the earth, and all of her beings here. By living the daily discovery of what is possible in a world apart when we listen to and follow our inner wisdom.

We have been exploring new (or very old) ways of communicating with animals and plants and with each other. We are practicing the womon-way of sharing--food and shelter and other necessities, work and hugs, songs, stories, feelings, presence. Sharing optimism too--helping each other regard the world around us with positive expectation. And always, underneath, the gifting of our love. A different sense of time is another gift of this land. Without clock or calendar, I've felt all time disappear into the present. Other boundaries soften too, bringing me closer to everything, everyone.

Here in this round adobe room with its rose brick floor, my "casita" for awhile, I feel so close to the earth that surrounds me. Outside, on the mound of bricks waiting to finish the greenhouse, a chipmunk leaps from one stack to the next, down into the wheelbarrow, then jumps to the ground and darts to the window, looking in at me. A rabbit nibbles some grass. A phoebe swoops down from her berry bush to catch an insect. The wind blows the cottonwoods, pinons, junipers, tall grasses. Closer to the ground, purple verbena, golden asters, Indian paintbrush and a dozen other flowers sprinkle color over the low hills. Rocks in amazing shapes and colors fill the arroyos with magic. And all of this fills me.

ON THE LAND

OUTLAND

A LESBIAN SPIRIT COMMUNITY
SERAFINA, NEW MEXICO

Outland is a very remote land, some might say "isolated". We're miles from neighbors and surrounded by state and federal lands. It's quiet and peaceful and safe. We leave here as seldom as possible--once a week or so we make the bumpy ride to the post office, and go to town maybe every 3 weeks. We feel we are beginning to truly unhook from that mainstream world out there. The number of wimmin on the land varies--currently there are two permanent residents. We seek other Lesbians who also want to live this way to join us as long-term community members. We're building houses for us all to live in.

Also, when these spaces are available, we want to offer them to Lesbians who need a Lesbian environment and who want short-term community participation. We envision stays of 1 to 3 months, at no cost for space and food (although we welcome contributions from wimmin who can). We offer an opportunity for self-renewal in a community setting, a quiet place to focus on self-healing, on Lesbian creative projects, on our emerging Lesbian spirit.

We value personal time/activities, being present to our true Lesbian selves, and we value community time/activities, participation that reflects our connections to each other. We eat at least one meal a day together, we share daily community tasks like cooking and cleanup and maintenance, we participate as we are able with building, gardening, making menstrual pads (one of our "cottage industries"). We value mutuality, honesty and respectful interactions. We entertain ourselves and are easily amused. We like to talk and sing and laugh together, anything that enhances our connection, raises our energy.

We're working on being accessible to a variety of abilities. The living spaces are wheelchair accessible and "non-toxic", and have hot water and electricity. We try to maintain as scent-free an environment as possible, except we do burn wood in some buildings in the winter. Let us

know what you need, if you're interested in coming here.

Here there is a chance to remove ourselves from patriarchal culture, to develop our own Lesbian ways of being. We on this land embrace many values and live by several agreements. They spring from our desire to live our fullest Lesbian lives. These are ways we find healing, expansive. We ask you to live in harmony with us by adopting these ways while you are here.

We are vegetarian. We keep no pets or domesticated animals.

We are chem-free: no alcohol, drugs, marijuana, hallucinagens, other illegals.

We are separatists: no males, no violence, no s/m, no guns or other weapons, no tv, no newspapers, no mainstream music, etc.

If you are considering coming here you need to be sure you want to live this way. Write us for more info, and begin a conversation with us about who you are, what you need, what you are looking for as we all explore whether we all want to live together in community for several weeks.

We hope all Lesbians who come here find a sense of connection to ourselves, the Earth, and other wimmin as we live Lesbian Spirit and culture on land.

Lee and Jae
PO Box 130, Serafina, NM 87569

WISEHEART FARMS

WILLIAMSPORT, OHIO

This spring marks the completion of two full years on these 160 acres of land in rural south central Ohio. Though there have been a few disappointments and setbacks, already much has been accomplished. The beauty of the woods, the fields, and the rolling hillsides leading to the creek which marks the boundary of the property, is a spiritual and visual delight which lifts the veil of discouragement each time it sets in.

At the moment there are just the two of us, Gail and I, Charoula. Two or three women almost joined the community during these last two years, but it didn't quite work out, primarily because of lack of other housing and/or money which would help create housing or pay for energy bills. The farm only boasts one four-room house where Gail and I live and it does not lend itself to communal existence. So far, no other outbuildings,

except one sort of charming but decrepit shed currently used as garage, and storage area. A metal structure which used to be part of a complex of buildings in the nearby (2.5 miles away) sleepy village of Williamsport has been moved to the land and is being put up at considerable expense, but it will still end up being a lot cheaper than anything we could have afforded otherwise; it will serve as multipurpose barn and we are very excited about it--at last! we will be a proper farm with a barn!

The buildings mentioned above were in Gail's family and about to be torn down because they were dilapidated. We, however, saw a great deal of potential in them, plus loved them for their charm and old age. Last summer we bought out Gail's family's share in them and proceeded to try to clean them out and repair them. This has been very slow. Both of us are over fifty and suffer from bad backs, knees, etc., and from various aches and pains that often are severe. Most of the women we know in the area are involved in their own projects, so we've had to rely on outside help (read: male) to do even the most basic repairs. The buildings, one old wooden grocery storefront, one 100-year old brick two story building and yet another steel storage building, are now at least safe from the weather with repaired roof and exterior walls. We feel that they can be now worked on by women and fixed up, at which time they could house some lesbians who might be interested in being close enough to the land and part of a community. The storefront could actually become a store of some sort, selling organic vegetables and crafts we produced on the land. One of the women who was going to live here wanted to create an artist's workshop in the brick building, complete with kilns, darkrooms, foundry etc., and that is still a dream of ours.

Two and a half miles away, on the land, there is a huge vegetable garden which last year actually produced enough food to sell to a gourmet restaurant in Columbus and to some members of an organic vegetable club. The drought however exhausted us, and we watered the vegetables by going to the creek, filling up plastic water jugs and carrying them to the plants. On some days, other women

came and helped, once even by moonlight! Those are the wonderful times when we know this is worth going through a lot of hardship--just to see all these dykes laughing and carrying on and passing jugs of water down the line to rescue a tomato plant! Women also helped plant the seeds, transplant the seedlings in May and can tomatoes in August. A wonderful experience.

A great deal of this land is now on a government program called Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). It is seeded with native grasses and foodplots for wildlife. Besides the two ponds already existing on the land, there is now an acre or two of restored wetlands. Restoring the land, which had been farmed extensively and chemically, is a primary goal. The other goal is to have a community which will be self-sufficient and economically independent eventually. Weather permitting, this year we will be starting an asparagus field along with a strawberry field which three years from now will become a pick your own business, along with the vegetables. As we are the *only* organic farmers in this county, there is a great deal of interest in our produce, and we believe we will make it somehow, once we get going.

There is a possibility one other woman who might become a resident here this fall, if money manifests itself to build her a little house, and if everything else in our own vision matches up with hers. And there are three younger women who have shown interest in being here part time and helping with the work. This is primarily what we need: HELP! But not any kind of help. It has to come from women who are committed to the idea of Lesbian Land, and alternative life-styles divorced from the patriarchal world out there. Also, a commitment to the land herself, her restoration, healing and survival is a priority.

We want to make this a non-profit land trust, and are seeking advice from a lesbian lawyer next month. Another non-profit entity wants to buy part of the land to start a community here, and has applied for a grant to do so. If that becomes a reality, maybe the two entities could work it out so that they are part of a bigger whole.

Though energy is often low and fatigue a normal state with all that must be done if we are to survive, there is tremendous

spiritual uplift from being on this special piece of the Mother, of awakening every morning to gaze out over the ravine and the fields, of seeing our wild Mustang, New Moon, galloping on the hillside, of hearing the chicken crowing while they lay their eggs, of watching the white geese sail across the pond. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. Each issue of MAIZE is read over and over again, hungrily. Everything other women have to say finds echoes in our own lives. It feels as if we are all learning similar things, or different aspects of the same hard lesson: how to make it on the land, how to get away from patriarchal structures and dependencies, how to heal this sacred land and entrust it to the care of lesbians for the use and delight of lesbians. I think the greatest difficulty of all that we are facing is funding this dream, getting enough money to get and keep the land and provide housing for more of us. Alongside, it is hard to get the logistics worked out of how to own the land and how to pass it on to other women equally committed to the same dream. It is also hard, as far as I'm concerned, to get the logistics worked out of how to get women to become part of a specific community, especially when the land is already owned by a couple of women who have a strong sense of what they want to do with the land!! We have a lot of ideas and hopes and plans. We are looking both for women older and unable to do much work, like us, and for stronger women who could help, and to whom we could pass on a lot of valuable knowledge we've acquired down the years. We need carpenters and plumbers, artists and craftswomen, car mechanics, farmers. Anyone with ideas as to any of the above, please contact us at Wiseheart Farms, Box 237, Williamsport, OH 43164.

Charoula

ADOBELAND

TUCSON, ARIZONA

Such a relief that yes Adobeland still exists. For the 10th time I pitched my tent amidst the saguaros, chollas, chaparral. Clean air and quietness, sleeping on the earth with a wide starry sky above made it easy to feel the sacredness of the land.

At full moon we had a spring fire circle, passing the rattle, singing songs,

sending prayers, telling stories. It was a very playful circle with even the fire sparkling. The circle seemed full of love and good intentions, like in the old days.

Dill was so abundant in the gardens. Picking the excess of them to hang to dry in the common house was such a fragrant form of feeling connected, feeling the continuity. There was plenty of lettuce, parsley, spinach grown by women to enjoy tasty sandwiches. Digging the garden I once started and seeing the seeds sprouting on the morning I was moving on again was so in harmony. Enjoy the gifts of the land and give back to the land.

Adobe is very generous to open her land to women. For me, it is such a blessing to be able to come there, be welcome and loved. Each time I've met interesting women. The women that come through may change but it seems the land and her energies continue. I remember years ago...One day there were about 35 women on the land in trucks, tents, whatever. Early in the morning the cops busted us and it was amazing how fast the majority of women moved on. Adobe as owner had the responsibility to bring the land up to code, find out how the land could continue, so it became a campground. Many women participated in building the sewer system and bathhouse. And many women since have profited from the bathhouse and other structures women left on the land. And it sure is beautiful land, well cared for so it stays in its natural state. Sure, there are neighbors around. I pray to goddess that the adjacent 20 acres will be bought by women. You? Anyone interested can write Adobe. Anyone travelling through Arizona or looking for being on land for a while, Adobeland is there. A few dollars a night isn't much. The road to Tucson is incredibly beautiful. You can write to Adobeland or get the directions from Antigone's Bookstore.

One never knows who you'll find. This time a woman was doing traditional prayer sweats and invited everyone to participate. I don't know if it was a pleasure, but it sure was good to do some hard praying. And spirits know, in this crazy world some good hard praying is beneficial.

I loved hanging out in an easy chair under the shady ramada. I loved working

horse manure into the earth and smelling the earth. The horse is 42 years old now and still somewhat feisty. The little girl, born on the land is almost four now and so free. She decides who to visit when and is great friends with the dogs but hopes lesbian moms with kids come to the land.

Stoking a woodfire under the outside bathtub, then soak uner a starry sky is close to heaven. Cooking supper in my little round fire pit, eating from my round bowl and staring into the flames makes me content and somehow I need much less food, getting nurtured by air and sun and the land.

Often I've taken a bus from downtown Tucson, one block from the Greyhound station, then hitchhiked to the land. This time I only hitchhiked once into and out of town. It took longer than other years so getting out of town before 3 pm might be a good idea. Once a woman from Alaska bought a second hand bike in Tucson and bicycled out to the land. Amazing, because Gate Pass, gorgeous and ancient as it is, also is very steep. And yes, there is more traffic these days. More people (unfortunately) have discovered the beauty of the desert. I consider the best time to be from September til April unless you like a lot of heat and lingering lazily under the ramada during the hot days.

Another blessing of the land is that you wear or don't wear clothing according to convenience. Such a relief not to have to worry about how I look and to Be. For more information you can also read *Lesbian Land*, published by Word Weavers. Going to Adobeland for "easter vacation", I didn't know what to expect. And yes, it has been a very good trip.

The address of Adobeland is 12150 W. Calle Seneca, Tucson AZ 85743. And yes, buying those 20 acres before they are gone isn't a bad idea at all.

Love,

Safuega

Safuega is coordinator of OASIS, a women's center in Mexico. They seek financial support and donations for the library.
OASIS, Espacio cultural para mujeres
Apartado Postal 1-833
C.P. 44100
Guadalajara, Jal Mexico

OREGON WOMON'S LAND TRUST

ROSEBURG, OREGON

"We make our minds large making room for ambiguities. We make our hearts large making room for difference." from *Awakening, An Almanac of Lesbian Lore and Vision*

OWLT is at a crucial point in her herstory. On the one hand, we as an organization are looking towards bringing other lands under the Land Trust umbrella, which is one of the Trust's stated long-term goals. A committee has been studying the many legal and financial aspects that such a move would engender.

On the other hand, the one land OWLT does administer, Owl Farm, is, at this time, the stage for an on-going conflict that has splintered the burgeoning resident community, and has brought much pain to all involved. The cause of the conflict can be viewed from many angles, as the present residents of Owl Farm come from varying class and educational backgrounds, have different degrees of country-living skills and community-living skills, and are varied in terms of age and life experience. Any one of these differences can be seen as a factor in this conflict. On the surface, the issue concerns the use of the Main House by residents and its effect on the needs of the visitors. Because this issue has not been able to be resolved through facilitated meetings and the agreed-upon consensual process, the conflict has escalated and has polarized the resident community into two sides: the older long-term residents who ask of newer residents to go slow with changes considering the fragility of the balance that has been achieved in the past few years, and the newer long-term residents who do not feel they have a voice and say their needs are not being met. As we learned in one of our facilitated meetings with Billie Miracle of Womanshare, this polarization is not unique to Owl Farm, and is one of the obstacles all groups must overcome in order to create lasting community.

The wimmin of OWLT and Owl Farm are in the throes of birthing, creating a new reality, a new way of living on the earth as wimmin. To step away from the mainstream culture, to relinquish old conditioning, to envision new forms of family,

tribe, community, and to live this vision out in a daily way is very hard work. No birthing is without labor and pain. May our minds and hearts be large enough to allow for all the internal and external changes we must each make so that this birthing well be successful. At this time in Owl's herstory, we ask each of you to send to this land and to the wimmin of this organization your prayers, your strength, your healing energy. Woman's Land is Woman's Home.

Blessed be,
NíAódagáin

from the newsletter
OWLT, PO Box 1692, Roseburg OR 97470

D.O.E. FARM

NORWALK, WISCONSIN

In recent years, many communities have lost public places where lesbians and wimmin can gather. The Wisconsin Womyn's Land Cooperative continues to be committed to maintaining D.O.E. (Daughters of the Earth) Farm as womyn only space--a place where wimmin can come together in a peaceful environment: to rest, to play, to work, to share skills and ideas, to meet other wimmin and develop a support network for the preservation and development of feminism and womyn's culture.

Womyn can stay at D.O.E. Farm in the campground

Womyn can stay at D.O.E. Farm in the campground or the four bedroom D.O.E. Lodge. The campground can accomodate tents, vans, and other smaller recreation vehicles or trailers. There is sparkling clear drinking water, a wood heated sauna, and outhouses. The Lodge living room and front porch, the barn with an oak dance floor, the open-sided Star Shelter, several fire circles, and open grassy areas provide areas for organized activities or informal gatherings. Hiking trails go through the woods, meadows, and up a high bluff. From everywhere there are spectacular scenic views of the surrounding hilly countryside. There is a daily fee for individuals to stay at D.O.E. Organizations can arrange group rates depending upon their size and needs. Girl children and nursing/infant boys may accompany adult womyn. Native American womyn are not required to pay camping fees.

WWLC accepts applications for summer caretakers, and seeks womyn with skills to take on short term work projects in exchange for free living space (stipends may be possible). All funds and labor to maintain the farm, except for hay field rental by a nearby farmer, come from wimmin: land use fees; donations of time, equipment, furnishings and money; and memberships. Annual members are primarily from Wisconsin and adjacent states, but some live as far away as southern Ohio and New Mexico. These supporting members pledge \$3 per \$1000 of net/take-home income, self adjusted for medical hardship, dependent care, etc. Womyn may also organize fundraising events for D.O.E. such as dinners, dances and a quilt raffle. Day-to-day operation of D.O.E. is by the Co-ordinating Council which meets at the farm on the second Sunday of most months.

For general information about the Wisconsin Womyn's Land Coop call Sylvia in Madison at (608)244-3154 or Steelie in Minneapolis at (612)729-9419. To inquire about accomodations, reservations or work opportunities phone D.O.E. Farm at (608)269-5301. The mailing address is Route 2, Box 42, Norwalk, WI 54648. Correspondence is answered monthly. Reprinted from *Feminist Voices*, POBox 853, Madison WI 53701

LUNA CIRCLE FARM

GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

Greetings from Luna Circle Farm. We got into our fields April 28, so we've been very busy seeding and transplanting. We bought a new tool this spring that we want to recommend to other wimmin: a Jupiter wheel hoe. This is the small, low wheel hoe type. We paid \$75.00 for the single wheel version (double wheel \$95). This wheel hoe has wood handles, and comes with sturdy, cast attachments: moldboard "plow, 2 slicing hoes, and 3 "ducks feet" cultivators. The attachments go on and off simply and quickly.

If you hoe rows longer than 10', this tool will save lots of hoeing time and strain. We picked ours up directly from a dealer, so shipping costs may increase the cost significantly. If anyone wants more information, just drop us a line.

Love,

Trish and Ayla

Rt.1, Box 1200, Soldier's Grove, WI 54655

WIMMIN ONLY LAND

CAZENOVIA, WISCONSIN

I have recently purchased 35 acres of *unimproved* land about 1 hour 15 minutes outside of Madison. The land is beautiful, in a valley with a brook and I hope to eventually open it up for wimmin to live and farm on. My dream is that it might one day support a self-sufficient community of wimmin. However, it is a long way from being able to shelter permanent residents through the winter. I am open to speaking with wimmin who have similar desires and those who could invest \$ or skills to become a partner or partners in this project.

I am also open to having wimmin camp on the land while I'm not there in the summer and fall. (I can be contacted at 415-647-3444.) Since there are no shelters, well or electricity wimmin should be prepared to bring drinking H2O and anything else you might need on the land.

Lisa



Jenna Weston
Ava, Missouri

MARICASA

RIBERA, NEW MEXICO

At Maricasa we received a grant from Lesbian Natural Resources to put on a woodworking clinic for women. The specific course has not been determined, but the possibilities include general carpentry, lathe work, and furniture making. We will employ a sliding scale to determine fees for the class.

If you are interested in participating in the class let us know where your interests lie. Please contact us at Maricasa, PO Box 426, Ribera, NM 87560.

Thank you Nett Hart and other members of the committee at Lesbian Natural Resources for your time and efforts with the distribution of the fund.

Kathe and Bev

AMAZON ACRES

WITTER, ARKANSAS

Dear Sisters,

We are two wimmin living on 240 acres in N.W. Arkansas. This move has been a big change for us. We moved here last Feb. We thought we'd build a small cordwood cabin and be out of this camper in no time. It's now the middle of May. Last month we were blessed with six great dane pups. Cute as they are we can't go on living like this. With the pups, their parents and a disgusted cat I wonder how we made it this long. The dog house we're building is looking better all the time.

We're living pretty rustic, no phone, no electricity. We use a generator to pump the well. The camper runs off of propane. We would like to hear from wimmin who have solar power. Sometimes the lure of the power lines is strong. It's a different life here. A life we've been dreaming for a long time. Sometimes I still can't believe that we're here.

We would like to have campers, visitors, helpful hints. Possible work exchange? We look forward to meeting new friends. We can finally say we're a couple of country dykes!

Always,

Jeanette & Nanette

HC 66, Box 64A, Witter, AR 72776

SUSAN B. ANTHONY MEMORIAL

UNREST HOME

MILLFIELD, OHIO

I want to talk about pond algae. We have had such good luck with our "method" I want to pass it on but of course we have no proof our "method" had a darn thing to do with the absence of algae. One thing is certain: we have NOT added a single drop of chemicals and we have no algae.

I attended a pond clinic shortly after we had our pond built. The pond expert went into great detail about the depth of the pond being crucial (to keep the water cold) and the side slopes must be as steep as the soil will allow without slipping in (to keep the cattails from growing) and the pond needs

to be as far away from any leach beds or fertilized fields as possible. We did pretty well on all those scores even though we are going to have to fertilize the surrounding hayfield if we hope to keep the nearby farmer interested in haying it.

But the pond expert concluded with the flat assertion that we would have algae unless we added very expensive chemicals. I despaired when I heard what the chemicals were and the price. Then, in the question period, he talked about the fish that did quite a bit for weeds but almost nothing for algae. Almost as an aside he added, "Well, some nut who's into ecology in Athens County seines his algae out." I leaped into the air with joy.

Here are some of our attempts: We put chicken wire over an old bicycle wheel rim--too heavy, wire too large holes, too much pond, rim too small. Next try--yard sale nylon curtain stretched between two small limbs, two people to "seine". Really great! EXCEPT it takes two people who don't mind tromping around the edges in soft clay and muck. And then nearly three women to pull the seine out which got very heavy very quickly. BUT it cleared the pond around the edges. Difficult to swim in the deep center, hold the sticks upright, keep the curtain vertical and get to the edge. Then we learned that algae is wonderful for gardens. So we tried salvaging the algae (after it dries into sheets almost like paper). But still there was algae in the center of the pond. Next came a large onion bag from the co-op with a thin splint of oak (left over from by oak basket making course) woven in and out where the drawstring runs at the top of the onion bag. Then we could take the bag out, swim around, the mouth of the bag was always open because the oak splint made a rigid circle and when we dropped the bag the splint caused it to float until we could get ourselves paddling around again. (Can you tell I'm lousy at "treading" water so I do a lot of thrashing around when I get to pulling a half-full bag of algae through the water.) It took about one month to clear the pond. Then using the onion bag about once a week after that for the entire summer.

And then a miracle happened--the next summer we had almost no algae! We never even got out the curtain-sticks seine. We just kept the onion bag near the dock. And the next summer we didn't even take the onion bag to the pond. That's one women's community's experience with pond algae.

BIRD HOUSE GOURDS

Last summer I grew bird house gourds, at least Jan says I did. I have no recollection of planting them but these huge, green vines began to take over my flower bed and then the strawberry patch and basketball sized melons developed. I drug them into the granary drive-through and tried to open one with a butcher knife, and then a small ax and then a hack saw. Finally drilled a hole through the toughest skin I've ever encountered. The inside was solid flesh but it didn't look like anything I wanted to tackle for dinner so I drilled a small hole in each one so that moisture could escape and mostly forgot about them until some visitor would shriek, "What are those huge, green things in the drive-through?"

Spring comes and Jan loans our shop-made tree planting spades to a pretty decent local fellow. He arrives and says, "I see you've had a good crop of bird house gourds but the hole is too small for the Purple Martin." And without a word from me he, of course, proceeded to tell me about gourds and the Native Americans taming the Purple Martins, and 4 air vents at the top and 4 drain holes in the bottom and hang 10 feet off the ground and in groups of 6, at least, because the Martin is a commundard, etc. etc. And so we have 5 (that's all I saved) large, properly prepared gourds hanging on a "dead" power line, 10 feet from the ground almost, and awaiting the arrival of those wonderful but eaters, the Purple Martins. I don't know how to get the word out that Suh BAM Uh has new housing for them. I hope they see them and are pleased. Already we have human passersby who think we are into gourd worship.

Mary M. Morgan

Mary M. Morgan: Female, white, Appalachian born, 66 years old. Retired from paying work. Blessed with wonderful health. Am trying to find something to laugh at in 1992.

THE PRE LAND PURCHASE

By Bluejay
Redway, California

Frustration. The land hunt. How do I get from there to there? I have come again to live on land...far, far away from the boys. Land-ho. Mama mountain. Here I am.

Beautiful, natural, free land--our birthright--I have come to buy it from the white boys but other white boys keep seeming to beat me to it--the "good" land--so here I am searching, drifting, frustrated, maybe like most all the landless people the patriarchy has stolen from.

There's something wrong with this picture. It is the static in the receiver?

I don't go along with the boys on just about anything, and here in my largest patriarchal pull-away--the land hunt--I'm chained more to the patriarchy than I've been when I've explored the streets and slept under bridges and stuck out my thumb for getting someplace new, away, free...

Is it that the boys own the world and can sell it to us at a profit if they feel like it, if they like us, if we make ourselves appropriately appealing to their powerful sensibilities as seen through their tempered testosterone? Am I learning that it's not just the boys illusion that they own the world, but that it must be reality because now it's my illusion, too?

If I've never believed in land ownership then why in hell am I trying to buy land? Don't all I really need do to free myself is squat down, claim some space, and start holding wimmin's festivals?

Maybe my problem is I've been praying for the perfect land for me. Ain't that a little limited? Don't I know yet that the land, all land, is perfect for herself?

I can make myself feel better reminding myself that frustration passes, but in this case isn't that like saying it'll pass like the patriarchy passes, it just keeps passing and I don't mean away...



Kitt Redwing
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Sometimes I wish I was more than just a hairless female monkey whose only real thought is how to keep herself covered. Sometimes I wish I was truly a transiting angel who spent all her times meditating on moon beamings and universes.

Even then, in my astral self, I'd probably be wondering:

Well, angel, how do I get from there to there?

Spring, 9992

I, Bluejay, wrote this in a fit of privilege. I thought I'd find a good land base and then invite land partners. What I'd most like to see in this northwestern part of California is a California Wimmin's Land Trust. Despite zoning difficulties here I'd like to see a Crosses type situation with 10 to 20 wimmin claiming their own territory (each of a couple to 10 acres) and holding the rest in common. My problem so far is finding lots of good useable land all together. It's mountainous here and I don't want us starting off fussing over the best spots to call our very own. Also, California's armlong regulations about building permits (hence the frustration with patriarchy) has me a bit stumped. But I welcome wimmin brave enough to want to live in a NW California land community (again?) to write me. Cheers!
Bluejay, PO Box 1999, Redway CA 95560

D.O.E. FARM CELEBRATES 15 YEARS

By Caroljean Coventree
Hudson, Wisconsin

This spring marks the fifteenth anniversary of Daughters of the Earth (D.O.E.) Farm, wimmin's land in south-central Wisconsin. I am awed by this accomplishment. Later, I will dance wildly to celebrate, but first, I pause to chat a bit about where we've been and how we got this far.

In the early 1970's, a group of wimmin named the Grapevine, a Lesbian Feminist Action Core, gathered around the Milwaukee area to play and dream together. For a few years, these wimmin rented a state park or a girl scout camp as a meeting place and playground. Naturally, as the wimmin lounged in the sun or swam in the lakes, some of them shed their clothes. This did not please the land-owners. The need for a safe space to be ourselves, as well as some wimmin's yearnings for country living, motivated wimmin to discuss buying land exclusively for wimmin's use.

Approximately forty wimmin gathered to hash out policies by consensus decision making. Meanwhile, a much smaller band roamed southern Wisconsin searching for just the right place. When the 80-acre farm now known as D.O.E. was found in early 1977, the wimmin had only a few days to raise \$15,000 for the down payment. They succeeded, and D.O.E. was born.

As many of you know, D.O.E. is owned by a trust set up for the daughters of the earth. D.O.E. is operated by the Wisconsin Womyn's Land Cooperative (the W.W.L.C.). This cooperative is sort of a hybrid between worker and consumer co-ops. The tension in that hybrid has caused one of the two major conflicts over our fifteen-year herstory. But I get ahead of myself. To give you the flavor of D.O.E.'s life, current members of the W.W.L.C. have composed the following time line of events we thought important in D.O.E.'s herstory. Read them and smile.

1976:

Projects: Meetings and networking occur between wimmin in Milwaukee and Madison areas regarding purchasing land and establishing the group's purposes and policies, including a five-year plan.

1977:

Projects: The land is purchased, the legal papers finalized, and W.W.L.C. and D.O.E. are born, trees are planted, the campground is developed.

Residents: Patti, Paula, who is in second grade, Senecarol, and Steelie move into the house, free running chickens come with, Patti moves back to Madison.

1978:

Projects: Wood furnace purchased and installed; chimney for wood furnace built on to house.

First Major Controversy: First children's celebration weekend held. This creates serious dialogue regarding boy children. Meetings held to try and reach consensus on this issue all summer.

Residents: Deb G. moves in; Claire moves in and out; Senecarol moves back to Iowa City. Goats: Emma, Meredith, and Star move in.

1979:

Projects: Members discuss vegetarianism, the killings of animals on the land, and self-sufficient farming.

Residents: Kate moved in. Betty lives most of the year at D.O.E., Kali the cow, Roxanne the horse, and Rosebud the pig join the crowd. (Note: Rosebud's pighouse is still on the land and in good shape. Anyone interested in it please contact us.)

1980:

Projects: Betty's trailer brought from Colfax, Wisconsin to D.O.E.; the barn wall was repaired and the barn was roofed; thank you Laura, the engineer, and all her beautiful helpers. Betty canned much fruit.

Residents: Malka S. and Smokey move in. Deb G. leaves.

1981:

Projects: First Separatist Survival Gathering; farming with horses; bought

a tractor and made a trailer for it. Star Shelter was built. Burned prairie and planted herb garden. Parenting Paula continues (she's now in seventh grade). The original five year plan was reviewed ... everything planned and hoped for was accomplished except establishing permanent community.

Special Moment: Connie K. dies. Her ashes and personal effects such as her red tennis shoes are buried at the roots of the nine trees planted to form a healing circle. These trees are mature now and make this spot an especially sacred one at D.O.E. Residents: Smokey and Betty left, Suzanne B. moved in.

1982:

Projects: Residents work in local cranberry bogs for Ocean Spray (the company, not the real thing); more rubbing takes place...the real thing. Residents: Steelie and Paula leave for Minneapolis, Mel L. and Sha L. spend the summer and fall in house; late in the year Malka leaves.

1983:

Projects: Road for another permanent house cleared down the hill from original house; sauna and shitters built during carpentry workshops.

1984:

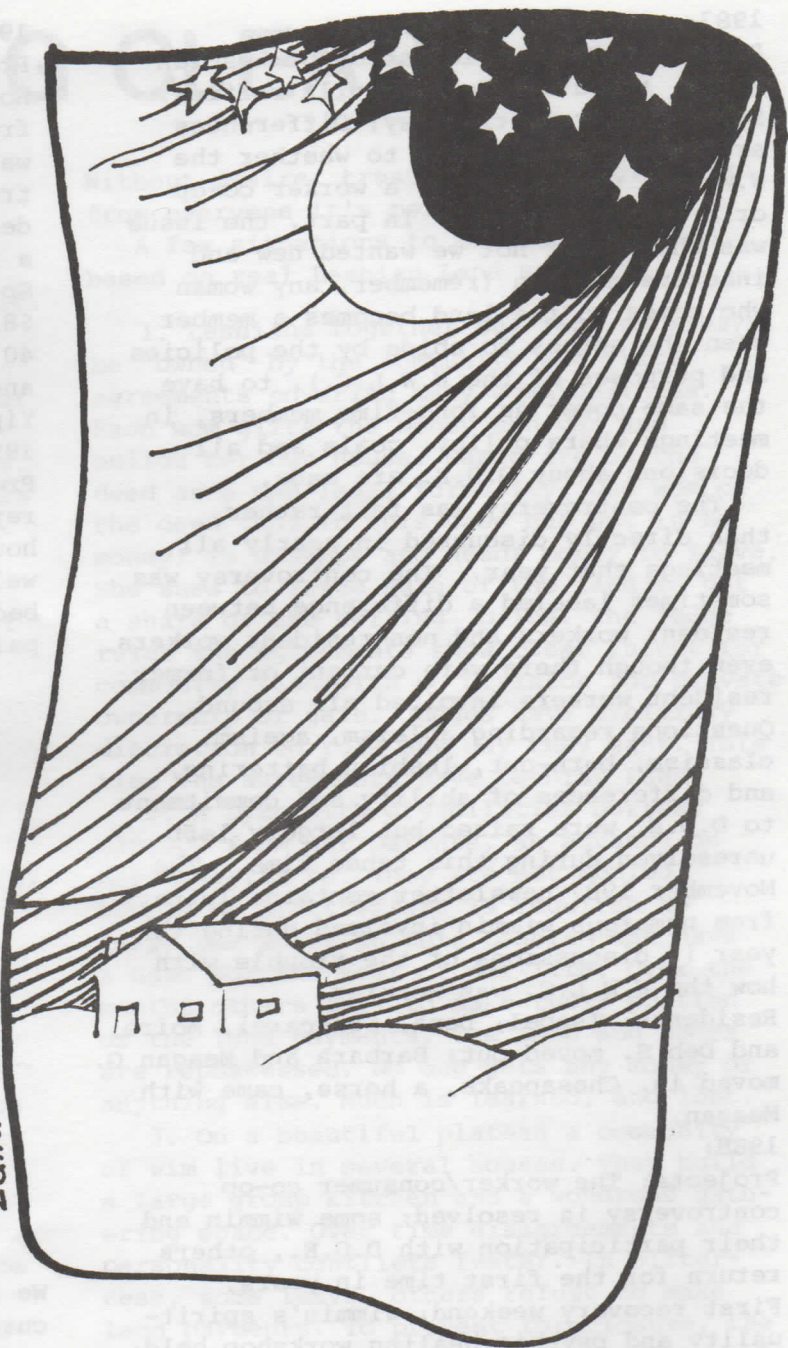
Projects: Robin's nest donated and placed in campground; chicken house built; dance floor for barn donated. Residents: Kate leaves for Oakland; Suzanne leaves for Madison; Deb S, Moire, and Senecarol move in. All the animals except the chickens leave.

1985:

Projects: First Celebration of Lesbian Aging; first quilt making and raffle; article about D.O.E. published in *Lesbian Land*, edited by Joyce Cheney. This highly recommended article gives much wonderful information about the formation of D.O.E. and the "boy child controversy"; research and fund raising for cordwood house project begins. Residents: Jae moves in.

1986:

Projects: Second Celebration of Lesbian Aging; second annual quilt making and raffle; building of cordwood house begins; Deb S. moves trailer on to new road. "Celebration" organized.



zana
tucson, arizona

Residents: Karen S. and Sandy F. move in and out; Jae leaves for Iowa City; Isabel (Black Fly) and Dana K. move in; Spas and Jess live in campground for the summer. Note that lots of summer residents have not been listed just because we cannot remember when they were here or what their names were. Their spirits and contributions, however, remain cherished. Women from all over the U.S., England, Germany, Australia and Wales came to camp at D.O.E.

1987:

Projects: Third Celebration of Lesbian Aging; third and fourth quilt raffles. Second Major Controversy: Differences arose among members as to whether the W.W.L.C. should be/was a worker co-op or a consumer co-op. In part, the issue was whether or not we wanted new and inactive members (remember, any woman who comes to the land becomes a member when she agrees to abide by the policies and purposes of the W.W.L.C.), to have the same power as long-time members, in meetings where policy, goals and all decisions about D.O.E. are made.

The controversy was felt rather than directly discussed in nearly all meetings that year. The controversy was sometimes labeled a difference between resident workers and non-resident workers even though there were current or former resident workers involved all around. Questions regarding ableism, ageism, classism, burn-out, lesbian battering, and differences of ability and commitment to D.O.E. were raised but largely left unresolved during this tense time. The November 1987 newsletter contains letters from numerous wimmin involved during the year in discussions of the trouble with how the W.W.L.C. was working.

Residents: Isabel, Dana, Senecarol, Moire, and Deb S. moved out; Barbara and Meagan G. moved in. Chesapeake, a horse, came with Meagan.

1988:

Projects: The worker/consumer co-op controversy is resolved; some wimmin end their participation with D.O.E., others return for the first time in years. First recovery weekend; wimmin's spirituality and psychic healing workshop held; first year house is used as a lodge; policies regarding resident workers is evaluated and changed. Knitting machine is traded for Deb's trailer.

Residents: Meagan, Barbara and the horse leave.

1989:

Projects: D.O.E. rests and heals; second recovery weekend; much land that had been mowed, pruned, weeded or cultivated is now left to grow wild. The hayfield is rented by the farmer down the road; members begin selling D.O.E. white cotton caps with brims to raise funds.

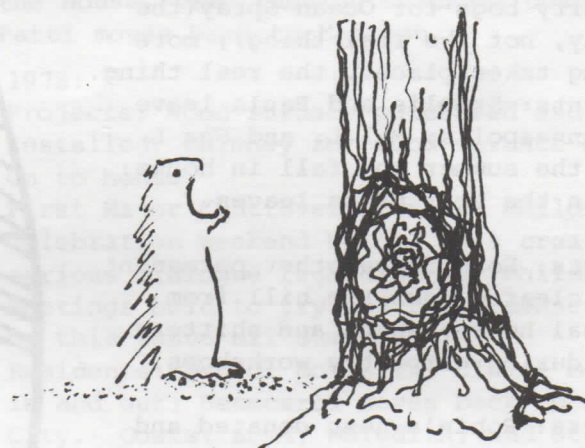
1990:

Projects: Wheel chair ramp built onto house porch; work begins rebuilding the front basement wall of the house after water damages the foundation; review and training regarding W.W.L.C.'s consensus decision making and cooperative principles, a new five year plan is developed.

Special Event: An anonymous donor gives \$8,000 to pay off the mortgage. Nearly 40 wimmin gather to share food, song, and a ritual burning of the mortgage. Yippee!

1991:

Projects: Composting toilet in house repaired and put in working order; house wall finished; new pump put in well; primal skills workshop held; bedrooms and living room in house painted.



maryanne
miami, florida

Whew! The years went by so fast. We are now in the second year of our current five-year plan. This summer we will hold workshops on recycling, renewing, or reusing garbage. We have a bunch in the barn to attend. We will also continue fund raising for next year's building projects: repairing the barn and the Star Shelter. Within the next five years, we plan on hosting a two-week gathering for wimmin involved in lesbian lands worldwide. These are exciting times. We invite you to come and make D.O.E.'s herstory your story too. Happy Birthday to D.O.E. Blessed Be.

Reprinted from *Feminist Voices*,
Madison, Wisconsin

GETTING CLEAR

By Jae Haggard
Outland
Serafina, New Mexico

No, not another one, " I sigh to myself. There seem as many stories of emotional trauma and money disasters as there have been Lesbian Lands. 20 years later another vision doesn't match the reality, differences seem much greater than similarities. the dream shrinks, cracks, shatters. Wimmin leave, wimmin stay. Everyone hurts, animosity grows, there is heartbreak. Isn't this enough? No, some of the wimmin owe others money. There is the possibility of another land going to court. Into the men's system to try to get redress for misconceptions and money owed. Going to males to interpret and decide our dreams, values, intents. Who wins?

How can we keep doing this over and over? Haven't we read the stories in *Lesbian Land* (available from Word Weavers) or heard in circles the tales of both community- and privately-owned lands?

It's inevitable that some of us come together on land, find we're a lousy match wanting real different things, and go through some chaos over who stays and who goes. Sometimes we leave or stay with mutual respect, all taking responsibility for our parts. Many lands have evolved processes to help nourish ongoing mutual respect and equitable resolution. Sometimes we create a grand drama to convince ourselves and others that we could not possibly stay in this dreadful situation or let someone else stay who must be causing this mess by not living up to expectations. I've experienced several "sides." I've parted with good feeling, without blame. Left feeling pushed out, unappreciated. Stayed feeling used, trashed. I'm quite certain in all situations everyone else felt about the same. Stay or go, when some feel pain, disappointment, discouragement, it's likely everyone feels it. Painful partings are all too common on Lesbian Lands. We have a bit to learn yet about consistently parting well. Pushing someone out or leaving mad or hurt can seem easier than valuing and committing ourselves to the process of parting well.

Without desire, trust and clear agreements from everyone it's perhaps impossible.

A few situations to consider, loosely based on real Lesbian Land stories:

1. Lesbians together buy land to always be "owned" by the community and write agreements covering many eventualities. Each woman gifts the money she can and builds her own house. Names are on the deed as a men-legal formality. One woman on the deed (who in this case has put in no money) is unhappy and needs money to leave. She sues to force sale of the land to get a share of the selling price. The judge rules the agreements show clear intent for community land with no division for private ownership or gain. Judges have arbitrary discretion to rule any way they want. This time the agreements save Lesbian Land.

2. A Dyke with disabilities borrows \$10,000 from her parents, an advance on her inheritance. They are not monied people so great effort is required to raise the money so this Lesbian can have a home for the rest of her life. Over the months others fail to make their portion of the land payments. The land and homes are repossessed. No one gets any money or anything else. Much is learned, and lost.

3. On a beautiful plateau a community of wim live in several houses. They build a large group kitchen and a wondrous gathering space. Over time disagreements and personality conflicts fester. In bitterness, some leave, others refuse to make land payments. To prevent foreclosure, the land is sold at a great loss of money, energy, homes, friendship and dreams.

4. Several Lesbians filled with the joy of community, of living and dreaming something new together, buy 100 acres of peaceful rocky old forest with living spaces along the stream. Each puts in a percentage of the purchase price and has her name on the deed. Over time it's apparent there's great difference in the nature of the dream. In fact, visions are quite incompatible, as are personalities. Initial caring and respect degenerate into accusations and disharmony. It is agreed wim who leave will receive their money back, but there is no money to pay

them. In anger and desperation they go to court to force sale of the land.

5. Identical to #4 except there is money available to repay leaving wimmin, but the wim remaining refuse.

6. Lesbians buy land in the mountains so many wimmin can come to live. Lesbians come and go, living separate lives. Some who put in downpayment money and are on the deed have left with hard feelings. The land has greatly increased in value and they want to cash in. The Lesbians living on the land who have for years paid the land payments and taxes want to buy it to preserve it as community land. They do not have the money to pay current market value.

7. Many city wimmin come together to sponsor workshops and find land safe for wim and children. An amazing secluded wooded farm with lush meadows is found commutably close to town. There are fundraisers and each wom contributes what she can, one putting in \$6000 which makes the downpayment possible. This Dyke-style working class mother was raised poor and this small inheritance is likely the only money she will ever have. Everyone agrees that all money given to the land is a gift and the deed is in the name of a non-profit. Over many months as gatherings are held and wim move onto the land, wimmin realize older boy children are a disruption and girl children do not feel safe. After many meetings it is decided the land will be wimmin-only except for designated occasions when all boys will be welcomed. The wom who gifted the \$6000 says, "This was not the intent when we bought the land. If my children cannot be present, I need my money back to buy other land." There is no money and land payments are difficult as it is. The group says, "We're sorry but we need to stick by our original agreement."

These examples illustrate our need individually and as a group to know our intent and have clear agreements. And the importance of thinking/feeling through what we want to do when, no matter what our heartfelt intent, circumstances define our options.

We need clarity--to talk possibilities through in advance, discovering which areas of agreement or difference matter. Writing down our intents clearly in a "contract" that will stand up between us.

That makes our current meaning clear for later when our memories are blurry, when there is distance or anger, when new wim are present. When agreements change, we can consciously change the words. Written agreements are obviously not solutions to everything. Yet clear agreements can help us clarify ourselves at the beginning and as we evolve, and can provide a tangible format if things get bumpy or memories differ. They will not take the place of fairness of heart.

Today, hearing of another land and several wimmin in emotional distress and financial disagreement, I think be aware, be careful, be clear. Let each of us when we're going into a land group be as honest with ourselves and each other as possible.

*Is this land intended to be privately owned, divided up, sold if need be, passed on to heirs? Is it wimmin-only? Heirs are often males or straight women. Or is this community land, stewarded by the wim living here or involved? Is it intended for anyone on the deed to force the sale or to make a profit? Are houses and structures privately or communally owned?

*Is the money each puts into buying the land, maintenance, improvement, housing, or anything else a gift? Loan with or without interest? Ownership share? Investment (should Lesbian Land ever be an investment)?

*Is the labor a wom puts into any part of the land or any community or private structures a gift of energy? Sweat equity? Or is this time subject to present or future payment?

*Is the house I build with my money mine to use, rent out, sell, move off the land, pass on to my heirs? When I leave is my house a gift to the community or will I be paid? Where does buying me out fit into community priorities? Am I paid for materials? Labor? Market value? What about the energy and money others put into "my" house?

Most of us come to land community open and giving, wanting to participate. We are where we want to be, grateful to be doing what we want. For this, payment is extraneous. Besides, on land we usually need to provide our own labor because there are too many priorities for too few dollars. Even if there is some money, doing the work of the land is part and par-



*Mau Blossom
Doniphan, Missouri*

cel of living an Earth-based life for as long as we are on land.

We come to land wanting to contribute all we can. Our needs or goals may change or communication break down. Perhaps we decide to leave. Wim get new lovers and stay, or leave to buy land somewhere else together. What happens when I'm no longer in a position to give of my energy or need my resources to move on? Can I now ask for payment for all my work? Compensation for my contributions? Can I expect reimbursement when it was not a consideration earlier? It's of course ok to discuss, circumstances change after all. And we Land Dykes generally want to do as much as we can to assist each other getting what we need. But, asking doesn't mean there will be any money available or that it will feel ok to take back gifts.

There may be agreements, a clear desire for wimmin who leave to get back part or all of what we've put in, to make the parting and new beginning easier. But is there any money to give? Is our intent to endanger the land to pay someone? To make it difficult for some to stay to pay off one who leaves? On land it's often not realistic to expect there will be any money or other resources available now,

for a long time, or maybe ever to reimburse land payment monies, houses, labor or anything else.

Then what? And I think this question really needs to be addressed early on. What do we do when there is no money to give, to repay what is owed? It seems to me that each of us who goes into land, no matter what our financial status or class background, must be prepared to leave behind anything and everything we have put in. If we're not able to do that, then we should real carefully consider not putting it in at all.

On lands where there is no money we can make every effort to part with goodwill without our money. What if there is money and repayment agreements, yet the wimmin remaining refuse to pay? Some wimmin are so convinced of their own priorities or rightness that what is owed to or needed by others is ignored. It sets my every fiber to shuddering but there are wimmin who can and do use money as retribution, power, manipulation. Class differences too can create snags including who feels more entitled to stay, to get money back, to make decisions, to be reimbursed for what skills, to safeguard their own interest. In these cases a clear contract is indispensable. Writing our intents, discussing our options in various situations in advance, can help alleviate heartbreak and disaster. We can also address the questions of who arbitrates the written agreement or what happens if some wimmin refuse to follow through on agreements.

One more dynamic I hear Dykes mention is how we like to enter a relationship with a lover or a community in an open romantic way--to let things evolve as they will, finding the similarities and letting the differences emerge in their own time; to intentionally not disturb the aura of closeness by asking questions or stating desires that may seem to rock the blissful boat. This romance is certainly a choice and may be fitting sometimes. Yet, if we choose this romantic road, I think we also need to acknowledge that there may be some surprising bumps along the way that we in advance agree to accept. It is no more fitting to go into a land community relationship without clear understanding of money, resources and ownership than to buy a house and go into a joint bank

account with a new lover or a new acquaintance without talking through the implications and writing an agreement.

Another question. Are there times when those of us on Lesbian Land or in the larger Lesbian community (any of us who define ourselves as part of it) need to make judgements--to gather information, determine the core issues, take a stand? How, I wonder, do we do this with fairness and caring to all? I'm reminded of an after-concert community meeting with Alix Dobkin and Denslow Brown. Alix tells of a Dyke going from one Lesbian house to another stealing cash, credit cards and other things she wants (she changes her name often). As Alix describes how to recognize this troubled Lesbian, she points out that we really need to share this kind of information with each other, to find ways among ourselves to deal with every possible situation. I wonder, are there times when we need to share information on Dykes going from land to land taking advantage (what does that mean?) or of wimmin on land taking advantage of Lesbians who come there? How do we recognize when opinions or information come out of self-righteousness, revenge or meanness; how do we know when our silence perpetuates a cycle of Lesbians being harmed? We need enough information to make informed decisions and a sense of context to make wise choices. I very much hope we can get a conversation going on these questions of Lesbian ethics.

My purpose in this article is to encourage both early discussion of intent and finding and valuing the questions we need to ask ourselves and each other. I want to encourage both actual written agreements and discussion of the Lesbian ethical questions land situations raise. My spirit says this should not be necessary. Yet the herstory of Lesbian Land (of the patriarchal self-destruct planted in us) as we evolve and grow and find other ways is still chaotic. We aren't each and all doing everything as well as we might like. Some of us make misjudgements, some twist things to make ourselves look good or victimized. Some try to protect others. Some want to cling to romantic notions. Some, unfortunately, are unscrupulous or put their own interests before anyone or anything else. Some are desperate, vengeful, envious or.... No

matter how unlikely it may seem, wimmin find rationalizations for most any kind of unexpected behavior--a passionate sincerity of how right we are, a justification of setting up "good and "bad" sides, a convenient finger to point.

Some pain and disagreement perhaps cannot be avoided as we create a new world on Lesbian Land. Some can be if we think considerations through honestly beforehand. If we sit quietly together and listen to our hearts instead of our fears or egos. If we discuss and write down our assumptions, agreements, with as much clarity as we can muster and sign them so they are a contract among us, to be revised as desired. Not as a sign of distrust or fear. Rather, an indication that we really *do* trust. That we want the clarity, are willing to make decisions, face possibilities, avoid snags or crisis in advance, that we truly want to "work" things through. That we respect ourselves and each other.

I am an idealist. I absolutely believe we can come together and do land, community. That when we come together with mutuality, caring, consciousness and a shared base of values, we change ourselves and the world around us by the way we choose to live. With all my being I know that we can and are doing it. I also know this may not be the time and that I or others may not be as ready as we think.

Many lands have thoughtfully written agreements, carefully crafted processes for finding resolution. I celebrate every one and would dearly love to see the details of these creative ways written up for *Maize*. For each makes an enormous difference as our lives on Lesbian Land evolve. Each helps weave the fabric of a new way of being and relating. Each helps prevent the distress and discouragement that so often come with living on land. For every time a Lesbian Land group splits with emotional trauma or financial disaster, it happens to all of us. We are connected, in a psychic web. The pain, distrust, fear, anger and maybe worst of all the disillusionment reverberate through and among us all. We must continue to "get clear", finding respectful ways to share dreams, exchange information honestly, make and "arbitrate" agreements, as well as to come/live/be together and to part well.

WOMYN, VALUES AND COMMUNITY

By Juana Maria Gonzalez Paz
Louisa, Virginia

What is community? Why do we want it? What would it look like? How much of that do we have now? How much can we have by wanting, creating and focusing on it?

I'm one of the few of us who participated in lesbian land experiments during their heyday in the late 1970's. I wrote a book called *The La Luz Journal*--true story of lesbian of color land, so our attempts and experiences wouldn't be forgotten. There is an anthology on *Lesbian Land* and a magazine for country lesbians, *Maize*, now even a group to fund lesbian land efforts. Presently I live with my teen daughter at a mixed gender commune in Virginia, 2½ hours from Washington D.C. It's raised a lot of questions for me about what do we mean by community? For me community is about womyn and children and lesbians and diversity and feminism and personal transformation and womyn's culture and helping each other because we want health and happiness for ourselves and each other. It's not about duty and power and rules and obligation and control and "having to" and "being accountable to or afraid of". The book *Lesbian Ethics--Toward New Value* by Sarah Lucia Hoagland describes how I want to relate to other womyn and create community.

The group I live at defines itself as a community, which raises the question--is any group or number of people brought together for any reason a community? Is community value-neutral? Are Nazis and the Klan a community? What about white South Africans, the military, the church, universities and corporations, the family, basically every job or social setting we've ever been in? Was all that about community?

In a sense, yes, but if the community we want is different and value-specific maybe we'd better say what we want. All lesbians are not interested in feminism and healing; some know little about race, class and oppression. I think we saw

that at the National Lesbian Conference in Atlanta. We say our movement is for all lesbians but those of us who go to these conferences and try lesbian land have a specific set of values we're trying to enact. One of the choices we've made is that the lesbian community is not a safe place to come and act out prejudices. Racism, classism and oppression will be challenged and dealt with, maybe not well, and often at the expense of our emotional comfort and even the sustainability of the group or event. This is a value we've enacted as a community and I'm very proud of us even when I reach my emotional limits and withdraw.

The group I live at has a different arrangement. It's a full commune with shared work and income but below the surface of the seemingly tranquil social reality, is all the same stuff we confront head-on. What this says to me is there's no getting away from dealing with the harsh realities. The oppression is there whether we acknowledge it or not and I think we deal with it, anyway, by confining ourselves and others, raising consciousness, taking space and taking care of ourselves, saying "no", whatever.

Living at the most "successful" commune in America raises questions for me about what makes a community "work"? Is it a community because it works economically? The same could be said of General Motors or any successful commercial enterprise and I'm sure those running G.M. want to think that it's a community. Is a prison a community, a convent? Is it about giving up our separate identity and turning our lives over to the group? If so, why did we leave men and marriages, the church and other institutions to withdraw from patriarchy? What comes to me is that community is about caring and giving and extending ourselves to create what we really need the world to be, not self-sacrifice and fear and giving up and giving in to everyone else. And I think all layers of community exist everywhere at the same time. Womyn really create

value out of our gifts and caring and also just give in and resent it later. We need to feel that we have community now, the way womyn have always made community in families and neighborhoods and we need to focus on what exactly we want our womyn's community to be. It's Sonia Johnson's influence when I say we need to not be so freaked out by time and money anxiety that we can't posit ways of creating community. It's the ways we're already creating community that are keeping us alive and the ways we're focused on patriarchy that demoralize us.

After reading *Wildfire* by Sonia Johnson I asked myself what I want right now and I'm already doing it, living in a community of sorts about half an hour from a University town with my daughter and no money pressures, in a mild climate and doing discussion groups on womyn, values and community. At first I thought I was here to learn from this successful commune but I think we know everything we need to know about patriarchy already. (Thanks, Sonia.) We need to know and create what we want and this isn't it. We know that. I would like to be in touch with womyn everywhere, especially lesbians of color, to discuss creating and living womyn's community.

March 4, 1992

WOMYN, VALUES AND COMMUNITY: A study group with feminist writer Juana Maria Gonzalez Paz who lives at an intentional community. Community will be defined in the broadest and most inclusive sense, as in the Black community, the university community, the

Asian-American community as well as communes, religious groups, neighborhood and labor organizations. We'll look at reading material on communes and the emerging womyn's land movement. Participants will be asked to explore these questions:

*What is community? What does that mean to you?

*What is your ideal community? What are you looking for/helping to create? How?

*In what areas of your life do you experience a strong sense of community? In what areas is that lacking?

All womyn's voices are needed to build and learn about each other's communities. A special invitation is extended to low-income and welfare moms, teens, aging, physically challenged womyn, lesbians, womyn of color and those of us who didn't like or finish school. Juana is a grass-roots writer, not an academic. Class is free, with no homework, no books and no academic background required. Womyn will be intellectually stimulated and taken seriously as creative thinkers with important ideas to contribute.

To offer *Womyn, Values and Community* in your group or neighborhood, please contact: Juana Maria Gonzalez Paz c/o Twin Oaks Community, Rt.4 Box 169, Louisa, Virginia 23093 (703)894-5126 (bus.) (703)894-5787 (res.)

Any lesbian anywhere is encouraged to use the idea and the questions to develop workshops that suit the needs of the lesbians in her area.

COMMUNAL LIVING

By Juana Maria Gonzalez Paz
Louisa, Virginia

It's almost two years since I arrived at the most successful, certainly the most prosperous secular commune in the United States. I keep asking myself what I wanted, what I expected and what I've contributed. Do I want to leave or do I just want the commune and the whole rest of the world to change? In joining a living group I wanted to be

part of something I could be proud of and help create. I miss being a respected and valued member of a community. I'm grateful for those who feel that way about me but I'm not sure what the group values and respects. I can see what it rewards. I'm not as needy as when we arrived burnt out and in culture shock, not yet re-adjusted to life in the U.S. after a trying year in Puerto Rico exploring our roots. Mary Ann will be a senior in High School this fall.

I want to live more privately but have a larger cultural and educational community nearby, preferably an alternative college. I'm starting to reach out and build bridges for the future. Communal living is a great idea but something's wrong. Tension and pressure can be intense. People here say that in a group this size, about a hundred, conflict is inevitable. Some conflict, yes, but reoccurring episodes of controversy and a low-grade cold war on long standing issues? I know better now what I want and why but not my chances of finding and creating it. I want a quiet harmonious homelife, family size, with no more than a handful of people in the immediate living area, bathroom privacy, less bustling activity in the public space. I wonder if contemporary Americans are prepared for a full commune--having a private room in a dormitory with a dozen other people and sharing work, income, meals, kitchen and living room, no on having a private business or residence. I see signs that people can't handle it, myself included. People who stay can seem rigid, negative and dependent. Confinement is a common approach to problems--imposing rules, limits and controls. Social problems are rarely defined as such. Responsibility for problems and solutions is often attributed solely to individual behavior and personalities. Challenge and complexity in people, ideas and opportunities are resisted. Social context and pressure, group control, assumptions and behavior are rarely addressed.

A new book was just written by a founding member. My initial response was, "That's it. That's Twin Oaks." My delayed response has been, "I don't want to do this." Communal living has all the pain, promise and potential of a great idea. We're not doing it well, maybe because it feels too threatening. To know what womyn can do well now and what we'd like to work toward in the future we need to acknowledge fears, limits, goals and values, not just pressure everyone to "share" as much as possible. My communal living experience may be telling me that what people aren't ready for will backfire. Pushing womyn to be more "open" than we really feel seems analogous to rape and reminds me

of what I heard a white American womyn say on a TV documentary about 1960's sexual liberation. "I think I was too scared to really want to." So much has been forced on us and taken or withheld from us that we may need more time and space to come into our own as individuals and as a community.

Shortly after writing the above, my 16 year old daughter Mary Ann took me to see a musical for Mother's Day, *Les Miserables*, based on Victor Hugo's book. Two themes struck me: 1) the usual depiction of womyn as passive, victims or love objects, 2) unquestioned assumptions about hard work and following rules. Sloppy incomplete work and social disorder are not the answer but critical evaluation is needed of the HARD WORK + FOLLOWING RULES = SUCCESS formula. Do we know who we're working for and whose rules we're following? I don't want lesbians to come together, fuse, explode and disperse. Can we grow into communal living without being so hard on each other and then sustain it longer? What social arrangement would bring out the best in us? Is our community a safe place to take risks and grow, to act out our distress and prejudices? We want to be happy and content, a creative, thriving people but oppressed groups have always sacrificed too much to fit in. To the extent that we don't know who we are yet home base and community serve as incubators for our full personhood and potential, laboratories for our healed and transformed selves to develop new models of living. We need to be centered and grounded at home, not living on the edge.

For the first time, I'm glad womyn's lands are not developed enough to have entrenched systems. We still have time to learn from the past and develop ourselves. I urge womyn to study the communal movement, organizational dynamics, recovery and lesbian land writings. What we did in the 1960's and 1970's was necessarily reactive. We knew what we didn't want but didn't have a strong enough culture yet to build on. We have that now, enough womyn in recovery from patriarchy and a body of skills and knowledge to draw from in developing educational, living and working models. How about *Lesbian Land Summer School*?

5/15/92

THOUGHTS ON LESBIAN WORK

By Lee Lanning
Outland
Serafina, New Mexico

On the land where I live, as on most, there is much work to do. Most of it is work we choose to do, we want to do--this work of building community is our life work--much of it creative and rewarding. Included in this work are building and gardening, wood gathering and cooking, decision-making and need-meeting, crying and loving and singing together, and lots more. We are often overwhelmed by how much there is at the same time we feel blessed by these opportunities. We have sometimes neglected our Selves, put off fulfillment of our more personal needs, to further our community work. We are coming to a wiser balance. Changing the words we use is helping us to make needed changes. We are accustomed to talking about "work" days (hard) and days "off" (easy), but those patriarchal divisions aren't useful here--too many things don't fit into either, like community circle talking or meal preparation. Now we talk of *personal* time/activities and *community* time/activities and have reached more clarity on how we can meet our needs for both.

Whether we're on land or in the city, living in community or individually, I believe we all have these needs--we need to take care of our Selves and we need to participate in our community. Each of us needs to feel that the work we do enhances our world--that our efforts are an expression of our Selves and a real contribution to others.

Community is created by our participation. Our sense of a community of Lesbians on land is born of letters, donations, visits, newsletters, information shared in MAIZE, traveling Dykes carrying news, etc. We make an effort to connect and in doing so we feed our connections. For some, this is as much our land work as gardening. Within communities of Lesbians living together, too, it is our participation that makes us a community--we participate in one

another's lives, physically, emotionally, spiritually. Our efforts are not only for ourselves but for all.

Why do we often find this participation to be hard work, sometimes "too" hard? Our cooperative natures are buried in patriarchal conditioning in individuality and competition. In addition, in patriarchy today we learn to be passive, to expect the world to come to us, without effort. We are part of a society of users--we have learned best how to consume, take in, use the resources of the earth and the efforts of others. In patriarchal society it seems we are always wanting more, expecting instant gratification of our desires. Like wanting to eat without preparing the food, we seek ease without effort. We consume until we run out (of money, resources, whatever) and still we feel empty. We seek to fill ourselves from outside; we go shopping--for a therapist, an ice cream cone, a magazine.

Working in patriarchy we are seldom producing anything meaningful to us. Our efforts there are not expressive of us, of our values. Our relationship to our livelihood--food and shelter--is indirect. Our personal energy goes into patriarchal toys, while our patriarchal money buys us what we need. When we are separated like this from our energy, we feel we will not, cannot, provide for ourselves. We feel powerless. (Of course that's how they want us to feel.) This trained passivity is a far cry from the total focused effort we need to create our Lesbian culture, our Lesbian world.

Many of us, living on land, are feeling our inner energy, fullness, power develop/ emerge as we separate from the external/ patriarchal energy so dominant in the cities. We are learning to use our power, to create, produce, to be active, passionate wimmin. We are finding work of our own. Our needs and our passions guide us. We work to fulfill our needs for food, shelter. And we work to express our passions, our connections to life. Our work is part of us--as much as we choose and define our work, our work

chooses us, shapes us. Work is essential to life and well being. Can our work arise in us as instinctively as in the animals as we procure our food, improvise our shelters? Can it be that direct, that simple? * Can we recognize our share of the world's work as a gift rather than a burden?

As we create our own Lesbian land-based culture, what is our relation to work, to producing and consuming? What are we creating? I'd like our culture to be one of producers/creators as well as consumers. For us to be wimmin who are putting out and taking in. I'd like us to cultivate satisfaction, to learn to recognize "enough", to be wise creators. (Here, progress is not our most important product--more and bigger and better is simply addictive.) We can live simply, seeking our satisfaction from within, in our love for ourselves and each other, in our fullness of spirit, in our relationship to our work.

To me, our work is one of our essential contributions to life, to ourselves and each other. In creating community I'd like to learn to think, "What am I giving?", not worrying about what I am getting. This is my dream for myself, for Lesbians and for the Earth--that the giving will again be as important as the getting, the taking, the using. We give without expectation of return. We receive without obligation to another. Our obligation is larger, to life, to the whole. Our gifts are from the whole, our security is with the whole, whether we mean the whole group, community or universe.

We are giving of ourselves. We prepare the food, we chop wood, we create a song, for ourselves and the wimmin around us. We are moved to give, to be "helpful", as well as being open to receive, to be "helped". We give not because we "need to help others" but because of our connectedness, our understanding of the whole. We don't let the energy stop with us--we let it feed and nourish us and pass it on.

Sometimes this giving seems hard, "too much" effort. To me this is not about service, about being stereotypical women, taking care of everyone else. Nor is it about working, producing for someone else. Energy cycles, recycles, in balance we give and we receive. If

all are participating, there is plenty. If there are no "users", there is no energy drain. We all have needs, we all have gifts. Ah, but this is not about trades and bargaining, either, not about what we owe or are owed, not about what we get if we put out. Rather than a hierarchy of more/less, we can create a more natural, less literal balance, a balance shared among many.** Somehow when we trust our needs will be met, and we are able to receive, this balance becomes more likely. Somehow when we trust our passions can be expressed, and we are able to give, we become more ourselves.

I'd like to include other Dyke musings on work in future MAIZE issues. What is your personal relationship to work? How does this fit into your community? How are we working together? What is our Lesbian culture's relation to work, to producing and consuming? How is work related to our lives, to love, to creativity, to self-esteem?

*Simplicity (like giving, or loving or other inflammatory words) arouses suspicion, derision in patriarchal culture. To me this is a sign it is a true wommon/Lesbian value!

**In creating this balance, can we undo another effect of the patriarchy--our tendencies to dominate or to submit to domination/authority? In our attempts to help we may take responsibility for another; in our need for help we may submit to the authority of another. In balance/mutuality/equality we are only responsible for ourselves and to the whole. Instead of manipulative caretaking, we learn to simply care. Instead of seeking someone to take care of us, to "fix" it, to carry the awesome burden of our Self, we care for ourselves. This doesn't mean going it alone--there is no such thing, we do depend on one another. No wommon's strength, no wommon's need, is more important than another's as each need is met. Each wommon is powerful, able to contribute, each wommon's unique participation valued. One acts, then another, each influence is felt, as we learn ways of sharing our energy, of working together.

THE RAINFOREST NEXT DOOR

By Nett Hart of The Web
Foreston, Minnesota

I remember my grandma and her sisters, stout old women with enormous hands and great folds of skin that hung loosely on their upper arms. I remember imagining as a child what muscles that quantity of skin must have enclosed. Farm women, my stock. But farms in my childhood were only places to visit.

Now I'm a dyke alone on a farm. Lesbian community is the only community identification that has ever made sense to me in a deep and committed way. I spend my time on Lesbian projects, host an amazing number of dyke visitors and plan my weekly forays into the city around dykes events and connections with friends. But where I am in location is on a farm in the midst of farm people.

I struggle at times to reconcile the fact that much of my time, my delights and disasters parallel those of my neighbors with whom I am not in community in the sense of shared values, culture and politics. We share an ecosystem, the weather, and a deep love for the land on which we toil. We roll through the seasons together sometimes with no more contact than the country wave as we pass a house should anyone look to the road to see who passes, which we all reflexively do.

My nearest town is growing, a population of 352 at the last census. Being out is not the problem. I keep wondering if this is the only place the percentages missed, or where the other 34 gays and Lesbians are. Technically there should be enough of us dykes for a softball team although I know that 10% takes in dykes from infancy to 100. Being out as a dyke has its advantages. People I don't know know who I am. Folks I've never met can spell my name and know where to send the truck. You know, as in Dyke--NE corner of Granite Ledge. And women who may giggle their discomfort in my wake, do look me in the eye when we're talking. Can't say they never met one.

I get leads. The junkman thinks I might know the gal who got the windows

for a chicken coop. I don't, but I have a feeling I should. And the married woman who saw a reference to my book in something she was reading leaves me a note, her work number, should I want to call her. Even the DNR ranger knows someone who'd like to talk to me, that is, if my bumper sticker means what he thinks and can she call?

I don't feel more vulnerable about being a dyke in the country, in a small community, than in the city. I don't think there is any larger proportion of homophobia here, more curiosity maybe, but not hostility..

I am increasingly aware of a politics of place that does not conflict with my Lesbian-centric political work. It is as though there is a translation of "Think Globally, Act Locally" into the organizing principle of my work as radical feminist Lesbian separatist and the place where I am a radical feminist Lesbian separatist is in the midst of a farm community whose struggles are the struggles of people bonded to the land in every continent.

My neighbors don't eat Rain Forest Crunch. This winter I was deep in my woods and felt in my heart this sharp rip, then another and more. Days later I passed on the road the logs that had been trees and were on their way to becoming lumber. Hardwood, these logs represent the equivalent of a year's wages. Farming, feeding a nation, does not support my neighbors at even a poverty level.

The trees that fall here fall for the reasons the rainforest trees fall. Their guardians and proprietors do not hate trees, but in the imbalance of resources and wealth, a way of life, even a sustainable way of life, has no economic value. The ties of community, of a human and natural world community, are ripped not by the greed of the farmers or rainforest tribes but by the ubiquitous need for capital in a world in which capital, not community, governs our interactions. Accountability has nothing to do with respects in and for community, but with the "bottom line", with account-ability.



Anahita 9992

Siné Anahita
McLeansville, North Carolina

I worry to see farmers and native peoples, the global land community; subtly blamed by environmentalists, ecologists, liberals, animal rightists for their role in this offensive chain of events that is called consumer goods, as if these were not class players in a market-driven state. The consumer of a teak bookcase or hamburger has more power (and responsibility) to stop the cutting of the rainforest than the logger. There is no mistaking we live in a global community even among xenophobic americans. The problems are not "out there", the fault of people whose short term survival depends on destroying the sustainable life they have known for generations. The problems are large and systemic.

I am aligned with the Lesbian community and the rural community. Feminism is, for me, the analysis that holds my bi-cultural awareness together. Because feminism seeks to dismantle all forms of dominance and submission as practiced in

sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, sadism, and more, it calls to question all exploitation, whether of the earth or women or peoples of color. Ending exploitation requires community, a willingness to participate in the give and take of interactions: interactions among people, interactions between the seasons/ and cycles of change and our preferences/ and needs.

To participate in this politics of place, to understand but not censure my neighbors' "free harvest", requires that I resource myself deeply in my identity as a Lesbian. It is this knowing that I have of being true to myself as a Lesbian that demands justice, the inability to participate in a lie. The mining, the monocropping, the "disposal" of garbage and waste in rural areas worldwide is related to an insupportable lifestyle of consumption. My feminism as a rural Lesbian requires that I not only challenge my neighbor's assumption that wild animals are problematic but also the urban Lesbian culture to which I am attached by the heart. Economic and ecologic justice are not fads or romanticized old-fashioned ways of life. My life is truly not simpler--more direct, maybe--but a deeper immersion into the core of what it means to live in these times and envision a greater wholeness in the world. As I move out of crisis mode in my life I move my human relationship to the earth out of crisis as well.

My life is decidedly Lesbian-centric by which I mean a practice of Lesbian separatism that holds inviolate my being as a dyke-loving-dyke, a center of being a dyke in the world. This Lesbian focus is a strategy of prioritizing Lesbian connection that never permits the erasure of who I am as a dyke whether that context is a Lesbian gathering or a trip to the blacksmith. This Lesbian center means I act in the world from my analysis of patriarchy as a radical feminist Lesbian separatist. I have no allegiance to even progressive or liberal politics simply for their tolerance of queerness. I have a very specific focus, agenda and actions.

The only way I can be faithful to my roots, to my love of women including those farm women with the enormous arms, is to rebuild the natural community of woman and land, of a way of life that respects both.

GOING LIKE SIXTY

By Jean Mountaingrove
Rootworks
Sunny Valley, Oregon

HUNTING AND GATHERING--TODAY

I have often felt nostalgic about ancient people who trusted the bounty of Mother Earth to meet their needs. With pleasure, I imagined walking through fields of flowers and herbs, berries and bulbs, with a group of sisters, aunts, nieces, and other crones, searching together for plants we knew how to convert into food, baskets, twine, dyes and clothing....and the satisfaction of using these gifts wisely...with gratitude.

All the many years I've lived in the peaceful mountains of southern Oregon, I didn't realize I *AM* a twentieth century hunter and gatherer! I do most of my searching in a nearby town and along the intervening byways and roadsides. Leaving my quiet gardens and forest, I drive two miles of dirt road with potholes, then three more to the interstate freeway and steer my old truck into the procession of RV's, tanker trucks, long-loads and wide-loads, towering log trucks, (like elephants climbing the mountain), and arrive in town a half-hour later to jockey my way between darting motorcycles, screaming ambulances, high-rise vans with stereos booming, and huge cement trucks: *This is WILDERNESS!*

If you have lived a rural life for a year or two you have probably discovered ways to enrich your life by hunting and gathering in your local "wilderness". I'll tell you of my discoveries in hopes they will suggest new ways to expand your hunting grounds and increase your gatherings.

In the 1970's, new to country life, I picked apples and elderberries growing at the roadside. Now I know about car exhaust and don't gather food near roads. I pick my apples now from the trees I planted back then. In those days, dumpsters at the market didn't yet have wire covers. I regularly checked several for edible food, and inedible compost material. Even so, last summer I brought home a truckload of kitchen garbage from a weeklong workshop--straight to my compost pile.

Next to dumpsters I have found wooden boxes, discarded boards from store remodeling, broken wooden pallets. All sturdy lumber comes home in the truck to be denailed and stacked by size for future projects. From construction sites I salvaged plastic paint buckets, ends of roll roofing (makes non-slip treads for outdoor steps), heavy wire mesh (now supporting boysenberry vines), and ends of 2 x 4's. For several years I could get free wood chips (for mud-free paths), sawdust (for the outhouse and compost), and scrap wood (for the stove).

About the time I moved to Rootworks I met "hippies" who were hired to dismantle old houses and clear the sites. They let me dig up any plants I wanted, and gave me three sinks, several doors, a set of kitchen cabinets, a lot of different sized windows, used bricks, plus miscellaneous may-someday-be-valuables.

Intrigued by the huge cardboard boxes from mattress and furniture stores, I found they are useful to lay over grass and weeds in the Fall where I intend to make a garden in the Spring. They can be painted and used in place of canvas board, can become bulletin boards, folding screens, posters, and children's playhouses.

I collect cardboard in DRY weather and take a screwdriver to remove heavy staples so it will lie flat in my truck.

Carpet store dumpsters contain large old carpet pieces. (Leave them spread outdoors for a while if they have odors.) Sometimes I find new carpet scraps and even ceramic tiles. They have many uses: as floor coverings, door mats, car floor mats, insulation (cardboard is good for this too), kneeling pads in the garden, bench and swing covers, and weed suppression. (I have more carpets on my garden paths than I have in the house!) I've used the ceramic tiles to make mosaics and for trivets under plants and hot cooking pots.

Behind the appliance store I spied round metal tubs from discarded automatic washers. I realized they would make attractive plant containers. One now holds a thriving bamboo where it can't escape to displace native plants. Another will hold a small tree when I make space in the greenhouse (which is paved with used bricks and has counters covered with linoleum scraps.)

At the County Fairgrounds all the horse bedding I want will be loaded FREE. The unloading at home was easy and I was pleased with its effect on the clay soil--until I found new weeds I may never be able to eliminate. I think I will go back to the Farmer's Co-op for free clean hay. They like my cleaning the hay barn of broken bales, but I have to load and unload it, and it's not as easy for me as it was ten years ago.

My Green Guerrilla forays are my most satisfying gatherings. When I see FOR SALE on a city lot where the house is gone but the yard is green and overgrown, I return later with box, bag and shovel. As I search through weeds and grass, I think of the woman who planted and tended this patch of ground, chose these flowers, these bushes, these bulbs--for her front yard, for her view from the kitchen window. And I rescue her plants: grape hyacinth, iris, violets, roses, forsythia, daffodils, narcissus--from a bulldozer death. The beautiful black earth at their roots is an added treasure since I garden in clay country.

Just last week I noticed the new gravel parking lot on a busy street corner where I had filled many boxes with

plants over the past two summers; I liberated what I could. And in the truck that very same day was a full box of white violets, and reddish-purple ones, a rooted forsythia, a cutting from a wild plum, and more of that dark rich soil. I had dug them from the green jungle next to a market. The manager told me the place is an old homestead and the owner is the granddaughter, living in another town. He hopes to buy the space to enlarge his parking lot....

Sometimes I hunt and gather closer to home. When I first explored the government lands surrounding Rootworks, I found the detritus of mining camps: deep blue glass insulators, parts of charmingly decorated wood stoves, old bottles and antique plates. I also found a marsh with quantities of flourishing horsetail. I gathered it to dry for tea: some for strengthening my teeth, and some for preventing leaf curl on my peach tree. (It worked.) I found gooseberries, blackberries, and an apple tree where I imagine there was a cabin in the gold mining days.

A tumble-down rock wall in a quarry along a sideroad caught my eye. A load of mid-sized rocks gave my pickup great traction in the winter and made two ample rings around fruit trees where I planted flowering bulbs. Flat stones about one inch thick came along to pave the area beside the bench under the grape arbor. Sand from the dry summer creek-bed loosened heavy clay soil in the garden. A plastic bucket of sand in the greenhouse is handy when I'm potting grape cuttings.

All these "finds" are important to the part of me who wants to believe that I am welcome on the earth, and to the part who loves surprises, and the one who delights to find unusual ways to solve problems.

The 1970's were lean years. Every penny saved was necessary to get by while *WomanSpirit* was starting. Everything I could scrounge=recycle=hunt and gather, was a significant saving. It made *WomanSpirit*, Rootworks, and my peaceful way of life possible. Even now, when my Social Security check helps me feel more secure, I still take pleasure in finding usefulness in other people's junk!

ONE THING I'VE LEARNED SINCE MOVING TO THE COUNTRY

By Susan Wiseheart
Hawk Hill
Drury, Missouri

Being aware of and practicing gate etiquette is a key element in country life, especially in an area where ranching is the bulwark of the economy. Most everyone around here raises at least a few cows and keeps a horse or two. The soil is thin, with rock near the surface or poking out everywhere. Crops aren't easy. The landscape is filled with pasture and hayfields. Grazing animals move slowly across most vistas, spreading their calm energy. In these days of property-ownership, they have to be kept in and kept out.

If you need to go through a closed gate, you always close it after you. If you go through an open gate, never close it. Those who break that etiquette are looked upon with contempt. One day someone drove through the gate between our place and Helen's and left it open, then went out her barnyard gate and left it open, too. Helen knew intruders had been on her land because of the open gates. No one in the neighborhood would have done that.

Jackie tells a story of how her phone broke while she was living high on a mountain top up a steep rocky road. There was a gate across the road two miles from the house. The phone company repairman, when he got to the gate, refused to go through it because it was closed. He just turned around and went back. Jackie's phone stayed broken and she learned how important it is to open gates you want people to go through.

Another time, Jenna, Terri, Shauna (a young neighbor) and I were riding on Brush Creek Road. We had forded the creek, stopping in the middle for the horses to splash water on their bellies, and were off on an adventure. We approached a driveway for land we knew belonged to a friend. I'd never seen it, so we thought we'd ride on up there. Soon, we arrived at a closed gate. We thought it must be



GRAY CLOUD AND ME

Jenna Weston

unintentionally shut, because we knew no one was living there and besides, Terri had gone up not that long before. After a short discussion, we all agreed, and Jenna got off Gray Cloud to open it.

It was an Ozarks Gap Gate, which means it was a section of a barbed wire fence with a removable pole that fits into two loops of wire at the bottom and top of the post. It takes a few more minutes to manage than an ordinary metal or wooden gate, because you have to push the pole to free the tension keeping it vertical, slip off the upper loop, lift it out of the lower loop (not all gap gates have the lower loop, just the more deluxe ones), then move it back from the road or path, taking care not to get caught in the wire.

Once the rest of us rode through, Jenna had to pull it back across the driveway, set the bottom of the pole into the lower loop, then push hard on the top to get it back under the upper loop. This is not a simple task under the best of conditions. This time, Gray was, Jenna tells me, not waiting patiently. He watched Nori, Dakota and Brownie carry the rest of us up the hill toward the farmhouse and disappear around the bend without him and tried his best to join us. Jenna struggled to hold him, wrestle with the pole and keep herself and the horse out of the barbed wire.

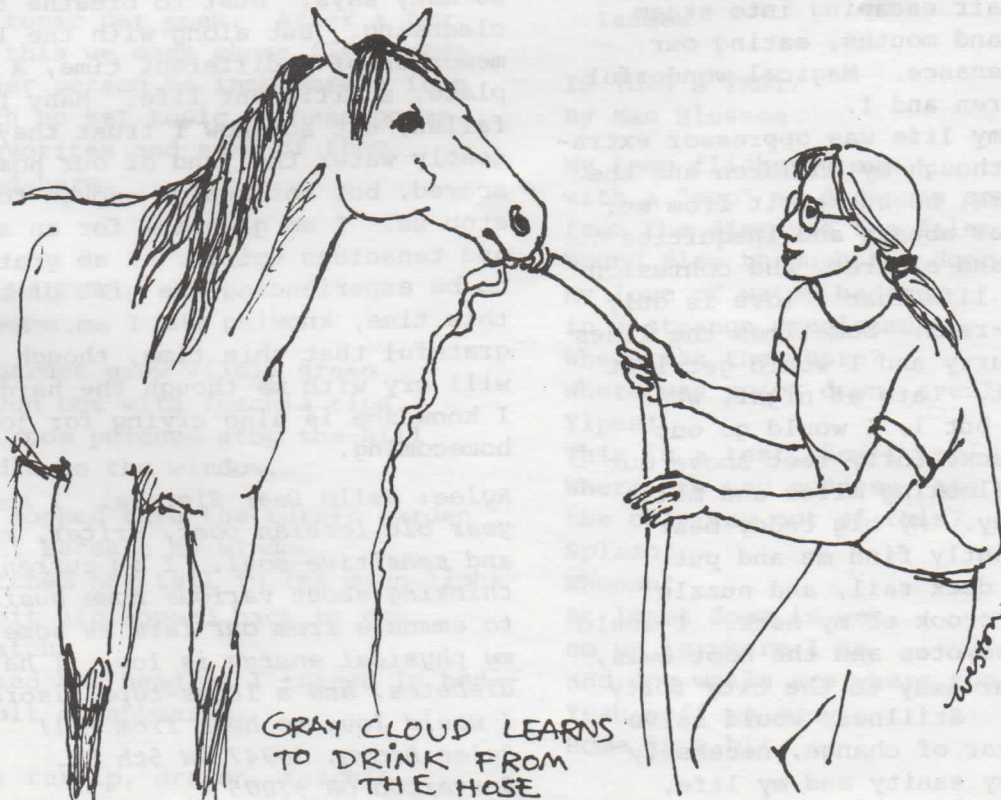
Meanwhile, Terri, Shauna and I rode on, callously oblivious to her predicament. Surprise! As we rounded the curve, there were several horses and cows, ears pricked in interest. Two of the horses charged toward us. Our horses began to dance and we hastily turned them and started back.

Terri was trying out a new bit on Nori that day and had less control than usual. Besides, Nori was the only mare among our horses. Not knowing what she would do or what condition the ones charging us were in (Mares, mad we were in their territory? Curious geldings? A randy stallion?), Terri quickly slid off and held Nori steady. By now poor Jenna was meandering toward us, having finally gotten

the gate closed. "Quick!" we shouted, "Go open the gate again! Hurry!"

Happily, we made it safely out without any physical connection between the strange horses and ours, but we chastized ourselves for ignoring another piece of gate etiquette. Don't go through a closed gate on horses if you don't know what's on the other side. There was no reason in the world for our friend to tell us a neighbor was using the pasture at the farm. We should have assumed the gate was closed for a reason.

Susan: After 48 years of city life in Michigan and more than a decade of scheming and dreaming, belonging to land groups, and supporting rural land trusts, I finally moved to the country in 1989. I live on Hawk Hill Community Land Trust, in the Missouri Ozarks, along with my girlfriend, Terri, my pals Denslow, Linda, Pat and Lorraine, and animals galore. From Hawk Hill it's a short ride by truck or horse to Gathering Root Farm, another Dyke Land. I work away from Hawk Hill for many hours a week, at nearby Elixer Farm, home to supportive non-Lesbians. The wonderful Ozarks Lesbian community inspires me. I only occasionally regret leaving the city, when I feel pangs of missing both my dear friends who still live there and the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity.



GRAY CLOUD LEARNS
TO DRINK FROM
THE HOSE

Jenna Weston
Ava, Missouri

AND THE FOREST CRIES AT NIGHT

By Rylee Brown
Beaverton, Oregon

Many years ago, many heartaches, many realizations ago, I lived in the country, on a hill with acres of strawberry fields behind me, forests on both sides, and a lush valley with forest beyond, in front. I was fairly young, as most folks reckon time, and my dreams were as big as the night sky. Four little ducklings, human ones, that is, followed me everywhere I went...down the hill to the garden, up the road to view the other houses along the way, and off on our many imaginative adventures. I'd bundle them up, pack up some fruit, crackers, milk and juice, tote the littlest two in a red wagon and tell them great and preposterous stories as we ventured down paths and more than once, we were lost in Alaska and must hurriedly find shelter, sometimes we were on a simple, daytime camping trip, traveling for a while, then resting on thick blankets, warm air escaping into steam from our noses and mouths, eating our snacks for sustenance. Magical wonderful times, my children and I.

The male in my life was oppressor extraordinaire, and though my children and the land gave me life, he sucked it from me. Memories of other abuses and inequities became clearer and clearer, and confusion followed. This life that I love is only half-true, half-real. Sometimes the lines would become blurry and I would get lost in what was what. Late at night, when all were asleep but I, I would go out onto the back deck, forty feet above our ground, and overlooking miles and miles of fertile valley. My big teddy-bear puppy would silently find me and put his paws on the deck rail, and nuzzle his head in the crook of my neck. I would listen for the coyotes and the hoot owls, and look far, far away to the city forty miles from home. Stillness would salve my heart, but fear of change, necessary change to keep my sanity and my life,

would prick at my soul. I knew that sometime, someday soon, I would need to leave for a while. Find the me who had been buried alive. Reclaim my wholeness.

Energize my being to mother in the way I knew was good and loving and right. Face the lies and oppression head on. And acknowledge the terrors my inside little girl was still bleeding from.

Now, it is over ten years later. I am no longer living on that hill. I have long since lived with that male. I claim my strength, my truth, my sanity, my lovingness, my children, and myself. And as the Earth comes full circle once more, I am given the opportunity to do the same. My beloved Partner, Katherine, my two youngest daughters, and myself are taking our first step back to the land. Working the land, raising animals, building, learning again the kind of patience the land is entitled to, we are setting out on the first phase of an important life journey. I am delighted, joyful in so many ways. Just to breathe there is cleansing. But along with the land comes memories of a different time, a different place, a different life. Many tears have fallen, but somehow I trust they will gently water the land of our home. I am scared, but not scared enough to let it stop us. I am grateful for an adventurous and tenacious spirit. I am grateful to be experiencing the gift of the land, this time, knowing who I am. And I am grateful that this time, though the forest will cry with me though the hard times, I know she is also crying for joy at my homecoming.

Rylee: Hello Dear Sisters. I am a 40 year old lesbian poet, writer, musician and sensitive-soul. I am currently thinking about various home businesses to emanate from our farm as sometimes my physical energy is low. I have diabetes, and a lupus-type disorder. I would love to hear from all!
Rylee Brown, 10947 SW 5th St.
Beaverton OR 97005

OFF THE CUFF PICTURES AND POEMS

By Sasha Daucus
Goldenlight Farm
Doniphan, Missouri

One spring day, Mau and I came up with this game to play. First one of us suggested a topic for a picture, then we both drew for a set period of time, setting a timer for 10-15 minutes per picture. Having the timer set helped us avoid spending a lot of time thinking or revising, but just got us into drawing freely.

After three or four pictures like this, we set the timer for a shorter period of time with no topic and drew whatever came to us, then we exchanged the pictures and finished up on the other person's picture, in whatever way we wanted. By the time we got to the last picture we were really loosened up and enjoying ourselves.

Then we did some poems, this time setting the timer for a shorter period of time, about five minutes, and choosing a specific topic per poem. After a few poems like this we each *chose five words* for the *other person* to incorporate into a poem, with no set topic. These poems were our favorites and some of them are included here.

MOON LIGHT WALKERS

By Mau Blossom

My turnip garden grew wildly green
like a crayon box with fuschia tips.
My moonlit room perched atop the hill
With a candle in the window.

The rabbit hopped thru the turnip garden
till she sat beneath my window.
My cat twitched her tail in the moon light
As the rabbit hip hopped back to the
turnip patch.

My dog lifted her head as I turned in bed--
As the rabbit disappeared.

Words used: turnip, crayon, fuschia,
candle, moon

WINTER DAY

By Sasha Daucus

A red spider mite
Pulls itself
Across the
Tall and rugged carpet
Of moist moss,
Small, the veriest dab of
Red in the winter swept woods.

The sky silent,
Birds migrated.

I lean my ladder against
The chicken house,
Knocking against the latch,
A bell-like sound,
And the chickens cackle in reply.

And I,
Replete with winter squash
And rice,
Give a loud and resonant burp.

Words used: red, burp, spider, bell,
ladder

IS THIS A TEST?

By Mau Blossom

My lamp flickered out
with a "pop" as darkness enclosed the boat--
from the distance the faint barking of a
hound flew through the door.

My love of water had me
in a strange predicament.

Where was the shore?
Where was up or down, even?

Yipes!

This is a test, isn't it?
Where are you goddess--are my eyes
the only way out of this?

Splash!

Whoosh!

At least down is wet,
so up is where I am
and dog wails are where shore is.

Yeah--off we go--
Home in a bit.

Words used: lamp, love, door, bark, boat



Lesbian Natural Resources

PO Box 8742 · Minneapolis MN 55408 -0742

The Funding Committee of Lesbian Natural Resources announces the grant recipients for 1992 as follows:

Lesbian Land Development Grants for incorporated non-profit Lesbian Lands

Maat Dompin	downpayment	\$13,950
SisterSpirit	downpayment	13,950
Spinsterhaven	downpayment	13,950
Waxing Moon	downpayment	4,650
Cabbage Lane	contract payment	4,650
New Mexico Women's Land Trust for ARF	contract payment	4,650
Wisconsin Womyn's Land Coop	road repair, ramps, outreach mailing	1,860
HOWL: Vermont Women's Land Trust	water development	4,650
Womland Trust, Inc.	living space construction	4,650

Lesbian Community Development Grants

Cedar Hill/Paula Mariedaughter, Jeanne Neath	accessible living space	1,040
Dragon	road repair for accessibility	780
Hawk Hill/Denslow Brown	making living space and community space accessible	1,040
Hawk Hill/Lorraine Keller	accessible living space, skill- building weekends	1,040
Pagoda, Temple of Love	accessible community space	1,040
Saguaro Sisterland	accessible bathhouse, skill- building weekend	1,560
Silver Circle Sanctuary	four ramps, two land apprenticeships	2,007
Luna Circle Farm/Tricia Bross, Ayla Heartsong	apprenticeship program	1,560
Dragon/Hromov	materials and assistance in glass business	1,040
Gathering Root/Jenna Weston	basketry studio for self-sufficiency	1,040
Greentree/Mimi Baczewska	studio for self-sufficiency	1,040
Hawk Hill/Linda Smith	shitake mushroom production business	1,040
Labrys/Rebecca Clark	retail and mailorder business for crafts made by Lesbians on land	1,040
Northern Minnesota Women's Land Trust	cottage industry development	780
Riverland	greenhouse and studio for pottery business	936
Wiseheart Farm/Charoula Dontopoulos	U-pick asparagus business	1,040
Fly Away Home/Madrone	co-counselling training workshop for community	260
Maricasa/Kathe Kirkbride, Bev Butler	woodworking skill workshops for community	1,040
Spiral Wimmin's Land Trust	campground and festival site	1,040
Womanshare	coordinator for apprenticeships, visitors and outreach	1,040
Arco Iris	dormitory and conference center completion	1,040
OWL Farm/ Oregon Women's Land Trust	visitor handbook and professional services to enable other lands to be deeded to it	624

LESBIAN NATURAL RESOURCES

By Nett Hart
Foreston, Minnesota

The Funding Committee of Lesbian Natural Resources met for several days in the middle of April to allocate the money for this year's grants. Three Lesbians who have been involved in varied ways with Lesbian land and brought much experience, made the decisions. They are Jean Mountaingrove, Chris of Coventree and Susan Wiseheart. Thanks to their careful attention we were able to fund in part all eligible projects. These dykes have undertaken a large task and deserve the appreciation of the entire Lesbian land community.

The grants were made in two categories: Lesbian Land Development Grants for incorporated non-profit community land and Lesbian Community Development Grants for non-profit and privately owned Lesbian Land. The criteria for each were:

Lesbian Land Development Grants:
Grants for downpayment or mortgage and taxes, housing and development:

- *The land is owned by an incorporated non-profit for Lesbians/wimmin

- *The land is the home or intended home of a community of Lesbians/wimmin whose intent is to create autonomous (non-patriarchal) Lesbian culture

- *The land encompasses a minimum of ten acres (or adjoins other Lesbian land) and is sufficiently private to invite Lesbian creativity and culture

- *The resident community has secured, or developed a plan to secure, finances for the remaining land costs

Lesbian Community Development Grants:
Grants to make housing spaces accessible, train Lesbians in rural skills, develop economic self-sufficiency on the land, hold community events, work projects and workshops:

- *The land is privately held Lesbian land or non-profit Lesbian/wimmin community land

- *The land is home to Lesbians/wimmin

- *The intent of the residents is to build Lesbian community

Funding Priorities:

While the above guidelines are necessary to be considered for the grants, the following are funding priorities which will be considered by the committee in making decisions:

- *Communities in which a large number of Lesbians reside

- *Communities in which a large number of Lesbians are involved as visitors, work weekend, and event participants

- *Lesbians who would not otherwise be able to live on land for financial reasons

- *Lesbians adversely affected by racism, classism, ableism and ageism

- *Communities accessible to Lesbians/wimmin of different abilities

- *Communities which are ecologically responsible in the use of the land and other natural resources

- *Communities working toward economic self-sufficiency

- *Communities which have not been funded before

Lesbian Natural Resources was able to fund these projects through the generosity of a donor who initiated this fund. With this vision of community and building viable Lesbian Lands that engender Lesbian culture, creativity and autonomy, we hope to grow as a resource for Lesbians, both as a source of support for projects and as a means for Lesbians to share their resources. Information packets will soon be available for donors and potential donors as will the guidelines and application forms for 1993. If you wish to receive these when they are available, please contact Lesbian Natural Resources, PO Box 8742, Mpls. MN 55408-0742.

Lesbian Natural Resources funded land downpayments for these communities which are incorporated as non-profits for the purpose of being home and work community land for Lesbians/wimmin:

MAAT DOMPIN

Named for Maat, the African goddess of balance, truth and justice and Dompin, a place in the bush where the voice of the goddess is heard, this rural settlement is to be a safe, harmonious, contemplative environment for research, study, meditation, ritual and conferences whose primary focus is Lesbians of Color, a place of spiritual healing for women whose

cultures have historically been shattered or distorted by racism and genocide in the Americas. Projects will include residences, conference center, Institute of Ancient African Herstory, ecological center. It will be a chem-free, anti-isms settlement. Blanche Jackson and Amoja Three Rivers, Maat Dompin, Box 28, Indian Valley, VA 24105

SISTERSPIRIT

SisterSpirit, Inc. has been the producer of Lesbian community events in Mississippi for the last five years and is now in search of a rural setting in which to have a resident community and a women's educational and retreat center. Projects to date have included fund raising for the land, the first women's music concerts in the area, maintaining food bank primarily for old women, and running a flea market with donated items.

Brenda Henson, SisterSpirit, 1806 Curcor Dr. Gulfport MS 39507

SPINSTERHAVEN

Spinsterhaven is a grass-roots organization formed by Lesbians to provide a supportive residential community for older and/or differently abled wimmin and a safe haven for a multi-generational gathering of wimmin. Spinsterhaven is created to be a supportive, like-minded community free of racism, classism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and the threat of violence against wimmin or by wimmin.

It will be open to Lesbians of all backgrounds and ages for retreats, rituals, conferences and craftworks. Projects have included fundraising and workshops at wimmin's conferences and gatherings. LouAnn Norman, Spinsterhaven, PO Box 718, Fayetteville AR 72702

WAXING MOON HEALING VILLAGE

Waxing Moon will be an economically self-sufficient community on land with members using their skills to produce products as well as training programs. In addition to womyn living and working on the land, they will provide retreat and camping space for womyn and be a possible site for festivals and gatherings. It will be an alternative home base for aging and differently abled womyn and a supportive environment for dying womyn. A healing center is planned to provide workshops and a supportive

environment for self-help and self-healing methods and nutrition. Regular on-going self-healing circles will facilitate a community of womyn helping each other heal. Gitta Ridder, Waxing Moon c/o S-8A C-5, RR 1, Crescent Valley BC Canada V0G 1H0

Lesbian Natural Resources also supported two long-time Lesbian lands in the process of buying out previous owners:

CABBAGE LANE

The first womyn's land in SW Oregon, where now many Lesbian lands are found, Cabbage Lane is wild rugged canyon land where spotted owls and pacific yews, endangered species, are found as well as a place of healing and solace for Lesbians. The land was bought in the 70's by wimmin and men who then all came out. The land was divided, the wimmin taking the lower 60 acres by oral agreement since the land could not be legally divided. The 20 acres with buildings is now to be sold. If the full price of \$20,000 can not be met, the whole parcel will be put on the market. Kaseja, Robin and Green, Cabbage Lane, PO Box 143, Wof Creek OR 97497

NEW MEXICO WOMEN'S LAND TRUST

Arf has been a home and healing refuge for low-income and disadvantaged Lesbians and children and a community center for a wider community of Lesbians and children. It is one of the few open women's lands existing in the U.S. Presently there are 11 houses and cabins, a community building, and a number of beautiful campsites. Last August NMWLT signed a purchase agreement with the current owners for \$100,000, of which \$30,000 has already been paid. The balance of \$70,000 is due this August.

Pelican Lee and Rebecca Henderson, NMWLT, PO Box 707, Tesuque NM 87574

All of these communities are in need of support in order to secure these lands for Lesbians. Because community land serves as a haven and resource for the whole Lesbian community and as gathering places of Lesbian cultural and educational events, it is important for the whole Lesbian community to support these lands. Contributions sent to the addresses above are tax deductible for us taxees, except for Canadian incorporated Waxing Moon.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

By Jae Haggard
Outland
Serafina, New Mexico

UPDATE:

It's Wimifest--Albuquerque's annual gathering to express and expand Lesbian culture. For the first time, Kathe Kirkbride and I go as craftswimmin.

"LanDyke Crafts. These wares are created by Lesbians making our life and living on land. We thank you for your support", says our sign. Four lands from New Mexico and Minnesota are represented. Since Labrys in Michigan and Riverland in Oregon were interested too we expect to expand next year.

Our booth is made from 2x4 foot peg board panels clamped together, then clamped to and winging out from a table. Using sections makes it really versatile and we're thrilled with how well it works to display so many Dyke-beautiful wares grouped by lands. Each has a sign identifying wommon, land, town, state. Dozens of Dykes say how appealing the display looks with so many different wares together and how special is the feeling of our diversity and cooperation.

We sell the incredible Word Weaver books (anyone not yet have the 3 Lesbian Almanacs or *Spirited Lesbians?*) and the "End Patriarchy" poster from Nett Hart at The Web, Foreston, Minnesota. Moon from ARF, Tesuque, New Mexico sent neat jewelry, silk-lined and wonderfully beaded bags and smudge sticks. Kathe and Bev from Maricasa, Ribera, New Mexico, display beautiful maple bread boards, trivets, belt racks, kids puzzles and more. I take the colorful fun LesBean Bags I crocheted all winter, along with woven scarves and sashes. Lee sends *Maize* which dozens of wim look at and buy. We meet and exchange stories with many land Lesbians and lots in the process of moving to land. Weaving our Lesbian Land web goes on and my appreciation for *Maize* grows again.

In two intense exhilarating days we sell \$658 of LanDyke wares and trade for another \$300 worth. The choose-a-price-you-find-fitting-and-affordable sliding scale on the LesBean Bags and weavings couldn't work better. Trading with other craftswimmin is as important as the needed

dollars--our support for ourselves and each other, passing on energy, feeding Lesbian spirit and culture, expanding our Lesbian Economic System. Kathe suggests, "Next time let's put up a sign saying we prefer to trade." Why not? Trades among craftswimmin are Dyke traditional. I also traded sashes to an Arizona festy-goer (not a Wimifest craftswommon) who will send me a small stained glass desert scene. Locally or my mail we can trade skills or labor. All possible if I'm there with my wares. The question: in a LanDyke booth, how can we trade the wares sent by wimmin who are not present yet who prefer to participate in/create something other than a money system?

What other more creative possibilities are there? I'd especially like to explore any ways to get away from a money system, to move beyond barter to pass along free items--our wares, tools, skills, knowledge, anything practical or treasured we're ready to move along to another Dyke. Take what you want/need at no cost, contribute if you want, or leave something you're ready to pass on (like the Isis Barter table at Michigan--do I have the name right?).

Every facet of the weekend is a delight--the fun, Lesbian Land visibility and connections, sales. My thanks to all of us for the ideas and support. We're certainly not the first to try a cooperative booth. Diane Chamisa did it for years until the powers at Michigan decided shared booths was not in their interest. Blanche and Amoja have long sold wimmin of color crafts through Market Wimmin. I hope more Dykes who've done cooperative marketing will write up the stories and how-to details and that we'll continue to join together to sell each others' wares at every festy and crafts fair (and insist other festies review their policies excluding joint/cooperative booths like ours). In joining our energies we expand physical/political/psychic possibilities for all of us.

Let's keep ideas coming, energy moving. And again my thanks to all of us on land, being who we are, doing what we're doing, for it is the stuff that changes our world.

COUNTRY CONNECTIONS

ADOBELAND, 12150 W. Calle Seneca,
Tucson, AZ 85743
camping

AMAZON ACRES, HC 66, Box 64A,
Witter, AR 72776
visitors, primitive camping, 240 acres

ARCO IRIS, HC 70, Box 17, Ponca AR
72670-9620

ARF/New Mexico Women's Land Trust
POBox 707, Tesuque NM 87574
camping

CABBAGE LANE, POBox 143, Wolf Creek,
OR 97497

DOE FARM/ Wisconsin Women's Land
Cooperative, Rt. 2, Box 42,
Norwalk, WI 54648
camping, lodging, memberships
summer work

FULL CIRCLE FARM, Rt. 1 Box 427 Silk Hope,
Siler City, NC 27344
919-742-5959
community members, apprentices

FULL MOON ENTERPRISES/MOONSHADOW
POBox 416, Hopland CA 95449
707-744-1648
camping
Moonshadow Ranch 707-744-1093

HOWL, POBox 242, Winooski VT 05404

LUNA CIRCLE FARM, Rt. 1, Box 1200,
Soldier's Grove, WI 54655
visitors, apprentices

OUTLAND, POBox 130, Serafina, NM 87569
Remote Lesbian Spirit Community seeking
residents committed to self-sufficient
living based in Lesbian culture.

OWL FARM/ Oregon Women's Land Trust
Box 1692, Roseburg, OR 97470

RIVERLAND, POBox 156, Beaver OR 97108

SISTER HOMELANDS ON EARTH (SHE)
Box 5285, Tucson AZ 85703
Saguaro Sisterland, 12101 W. Calle
Madero, Tucson AZ 85743
White Rocks Homeland, POBox 231,
Willcox, AZ 85644

SPIRALAND/ Spiral Wimmin's Land Trust
H.C. 72, Box 94-A, Monticello KY 42633
visitors, work exchange

SUSAN B. ANTHONY MEMORIAL UNREST HOME
13423 Howard Rd, Millfield OH 45761
community members, camping

THE WEB, c/o Word Weavers, POBox 8742,
Minneapolis MN 55408 (1½ hrs from Mpls.)
camping

WIMMIN ONLY LAND, Cazenovia, Wisconsin
contact Lisa: 415-647-3444
camping on unimproved land
partners wanted

WISEHEART FARMS, Box 237, Williamsport,
OH 43164
seeking community members

WOMEN'S ART COLONY FARM, c/o Kate Millet,
295 Bowery, NYC, NY 10003
writers & artists work exchange, summer
landswomen & builders work exchange,
spring and fall

WOMLAND, POBox 55, Troy ME 04987

Tips for visitors to Lesbian Land:

The visitor calls or writes in advance and arrives somewhere near when she said she would. (include sase if writing)

She comes prepared to care for herself totally, or makes specific arrangements with the land.

She doesn't presume anything; she asks what is appropriate in the way of food, money, pets, phone use, scents, smoking, chemical use and anything else that affects the wimmin on the land.

She respects the land, leaving everything the way she found it.

She comes willing and ready to enter into the life of the land, to pitch in on work projects as well as cooking and dishes, unless other arrangements have been made.

She communicates what she is seeking from the wimmin on the land and what she has to offer.

She knows that Lesbians on the land are not likely to have more resources than she--no more time, energy, love, strength, money.

She respects the life the land dykes are creating, living as they do during the visit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DYKE SEPARATIST seeks befriending with other rural sisters. Have lived in isolation for over a decade and need interaction with others of our tribe and culture. Hoping for written connections as well as psychic dialogue. Kiwani, Whaletown, B.C. Canada VOP 1Z0 (discreet envelopes appreciated as 1 of 3 lesbians in an island population of 800.)

BUY A T-SHIRT TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S LAND: SUH-BAM-UH (Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home) is in Athens County, Ohio. We are raising funds to make improvements on the land. This T-shirt sale will be an on-going fundraiser. The first project goal is to purchase an electric golf cart to make the hilly land more accessible for physically challenged women. With your support and purchase, "Failure is impossible." Send for info: SBAMUH, 13423 Howard Rd. Millfield OH 45761 (SASE)

BOLD MOON WOMYN'S GATHERING, Sept. 19 and 20. Small, homegrown gathering on womyn's land near Greensboro. Workshops, ritual, camping, veggie food, music by Kid Sister. SASE for info: Bold Moon Farm, PO Box 412, McLeansville NC 27301 or (919) 375-3764.

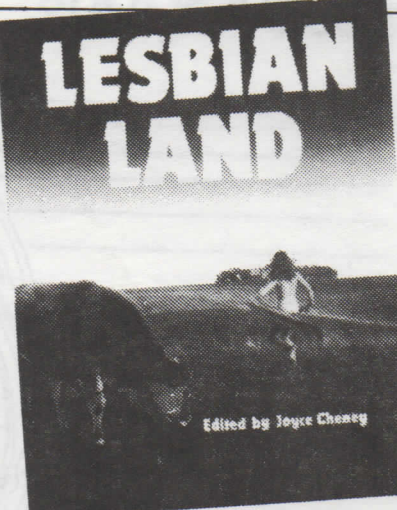
WRITING AND DRAWINGS WANTED for upcoming issue of *HIKANE: THE CAPABLE WOMAN*, disabled wimmin's magazine for Lesbians and our wimmin friends. The topic is Disabled Wimmin, Nature, and the Outdoors. Stories, experiences, poetry, fantasies and aspirations, reflections on our relationships with, access to, experiences in, and desires for...are all encouraged. Send your drawings, articles and ideas with SASE by September 1, 1992, to Hikane, PO Box 841, Great Barrington MA 01230. (We are seeking work from disabled wimmin only.) Thanks!

WOMONSEED, Sunlight's novel about a Lesbian spirit community, is available at your wimmin's bookstore or from Earth Books, PO Box 740, Redwood Valley CA 95470. \$10 includes postage.

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BYE SEPARATIST seeks befriending with other rural sisters. Have lived in isolation for over a decade and need interaction with others of the same kind. Write to: Hoping for a rural community of women as psychic dialogue. KIWANI, Whitehorse, B.C. Canada. Tel: (604) 635-0000. KIMMIE appreciated as life-3-friendship in isolation island population of 1000. No phone. Letters wanted.

BUY A FRIENDSHIP SUPPORT WOMEN'S LESBIANISM. EUN-BAM (Susan B. Anthony Memorial) is (first name) in Victoria, British Columbia. We are looking for a woman to make a commitment on the land. This is a serious project. On-going leadership. We are a project. Goal is to purchase an island in the Pacific to make the hills land more accessible for physically challenged women. With your support and purchase, "Taste is impossible." Send for info: SBAMU, 13433 Howard St. Milfield OH 45761 (682)

BOLD MOON WOMEN'S CATERING, Sept. 19 and 20. Small, home-cooked catering for women's land-meet. Contact: (604) 635-0000. KIMMIE, Hoping for a rural community of women as psychic dialogue. KIWANI, Whitehorse, B.C. Canada. Tel: (604) 635-0000. KIMMIE appreciated as life-3-friendship in isolation island population of 1000. No phone. Letters wanted.

WRITING AND DRAWINGS WANTED for upcoming issue of **VISIBLE**. THE topic is disabled women's experiences for lesbians and gay men. Our women's journal, **VISIBLE**, is a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal. We are seeking work from disabled women only. We are interested in your experiences and with access to, experiences, and your best work for us. All enquiries to: **VISIBLE**, your drawings, articles and ideas with our **VISIBLE** September, 1992. We are now at PO Box 241, Green Bay, WI 53002. We are seeking work from disabled women only. We are interested in your experiences and with access to, experiences, and your best work for us. All enquiries to: **VISIBLE**, your drawings, articles and ideas with our **VISIBLE** September, 1992. We are now at PO Box 241, Green Bay, WI 53002.

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