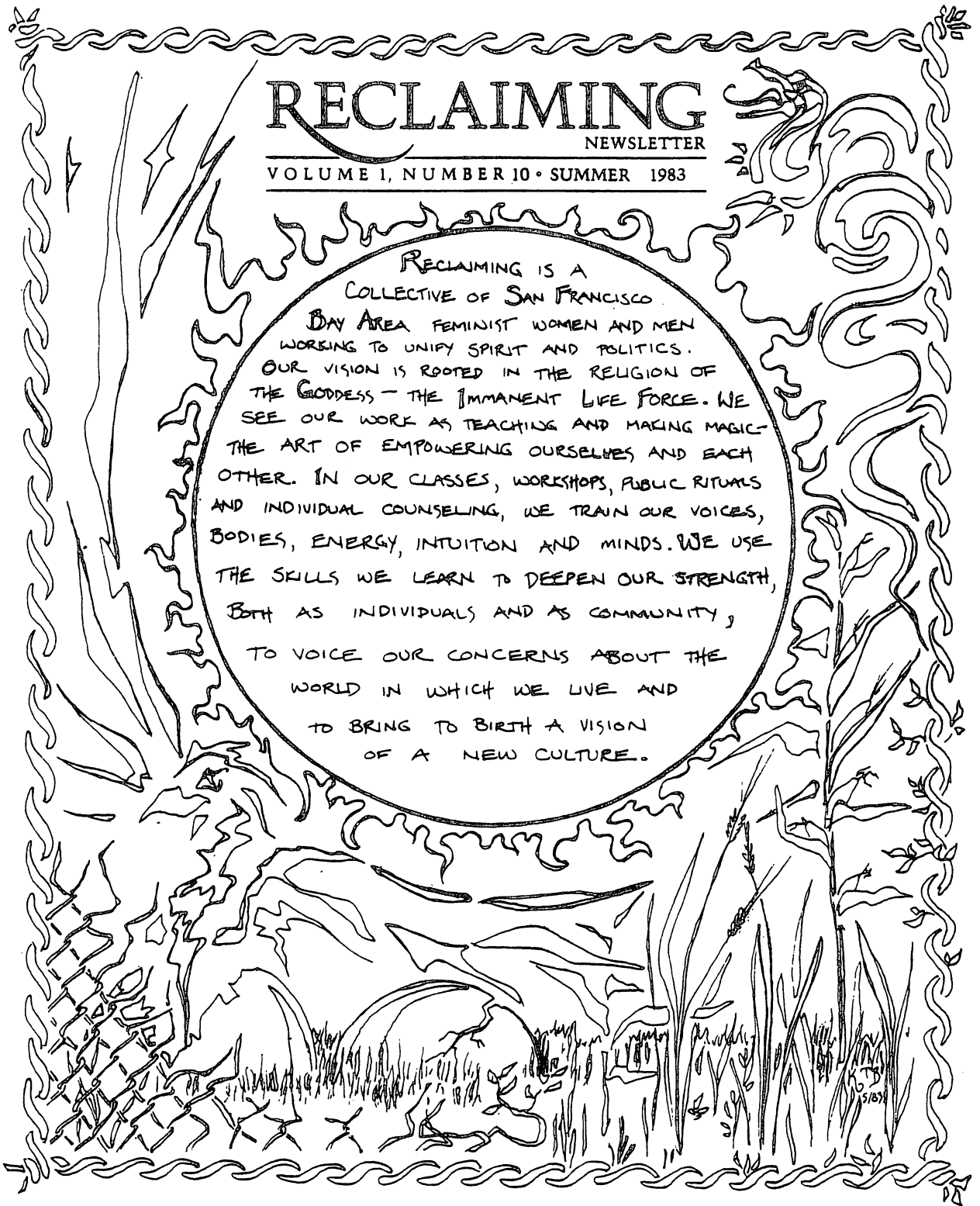


# RECLAIMING

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME I, NUMBER 10 • SUMMER 1983

RECLAIMING IS A  
COLLECTIVE OF SAN FRANCISCO  
BAY AREA FEMINIST WOMEN AND MEN  
WORKING TO UNIFY SPIRIT AND POLITICS.  
OUR VISION IS ROOTED IN THE RELIGION OF  
THE GODDESS - THE IMMANENT LIFE FORCE. WE  
SEE OUR WORK AS TEACHING AND MAKING MAGIC -  
THE ART OF EMPOWERING OURSELVES AND EACH  
OTHER. IN OUR CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, PUBLIC RITUALS  
AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING, WE TRAIN OUR VOICES,  
BODIES, ENERGY, INTUITION AND MINDS. WE USE  
THE SKILLS WE LEARN TO DEEPEN OUR STRENGTH,  
BOTH AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS COMMUNITY,  
TO VOICE OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE  
WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE AND  
TO BRING TO BIRTH A VISION  
OF A NEW CULTURE.



5/83

You cancel your newspaper, every story is another depressing example of the sway that destructive power continues to hold over our lives. They say you are safer the more "peacekeeper" weapons they pile up. You go mad imagining the "peace" that follows the use of any one of them. You could lose heart.

Or, you could harness the power of despair to trigger that unaccountable response of wild hope, a renewed urge for the balancing influence of creative power, driven by a fierce will to survive.

My kid wants to know if her best friend three blocks away would be hurt if a nuclear bomb hit our house. We start naming the people we love, first ourselves, our housemates, neighbors, family across town, others in the next county...as the radius increases, I hear myself saying, yes, yes, they would all die... While despair burns in my sore heart, that other force deep in my being stirs and blazes: the raging passion to LIVE! I tell my child what I can do about our danger, I ask her to be strong and wait for me while I take action, even if I have to go through jail for doing it. We do it together, with magic we use our energy to push back the bombs...

A few years practicing witchcraft can change your life. You come into your own, free to guide your life more deliberately. Soon, no part of your life goes unexamined by your witch's eye. Then the influence of your magical practice accumulates. Finally, you gather with your growing tribe of paganfolk. Together you emerge out of the dim mainstream of our dominant culture, refusing to lose yourselves in it any longer.

I'm so glad I'm a witch. I intend to live beautifully to a feisty old age. I thrive in our community that sees the Earth beloved. We have momentum now. Our passion to survive in joy and vitality is a force whose tidal swell is forming because we will it so. We are doing it. We who love life see our common need to pool our power, to build up a wave of creative energy that can check that relentless undertow now dragging us out to our deaths...we are doing it.

We know bombs don't make us safe. They sever the web of connection that is our lifeline to each other and to the Earth. A wound in the web is an injury to all. We spin and weave like spiders, using our collected energies in a common vision of balance and connection. Our power grows as we repeat the magic and more witches join forces to charge up the fabric of life. This gathering force is our new body of creative power, just the antidote for our culture's fascination with destruction. My daughter, with the tender charm of her five years, sagged with grief, then took a deep sigh and told me, "OK, mama, if you have to go through jail like Roy and everybody." Afterwards, we won't be dying -- we can go see how far back we pushed the bombs this time.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON BELTANE, SEX, POLITICS, MAGIC AND RECLAIMING

These are random notes distilled from some of the intense discussion going on in the community - some of it sparked by the Beltane Ritual. But let me speak personally here. I loved a lot of the Beltane Ritual but elements of it didn't work and other elements left me uneasy. Part of the problem was logistics. A maypole is a lovely tradition but logistically it's a pain in the ass. It requires a lot of complicated set-up and the dance is not exactly freeform and spontaneous - it only works if people stay in line and do what they're supposed to do - and I'm not sure that's what Reclaiming is about. Yet, I love the tradition and everyone seems to have fun even amidst the entanglements and confusion - so maybe the magic is working anyway and yet I always feel it works in spite of the Maypole instead of because of it. And this year, we complicated the logistics even more by the way the ritual was planned, the overlong explanations, teaching too many songs, etc. Some of that could have been avoided by those of us who've planned Beltane before but none of us with that experience made ourselves available to help with this one.

But the real questions are deeper ones. Beltane is perhaps the most explicitly erotic of all the Craft holidays. Witchcraft is a religion that celebrates sexuality as sacred. Yet all of us grew up in a culture that is, to use Luisah Teish's term, erosphobic - scared to death of sex. What's more, it's heterosexist - it assumes that heterosexuality is the one, right, true and only form of sexuality and all else is deviant. We are trying not to buy that model.

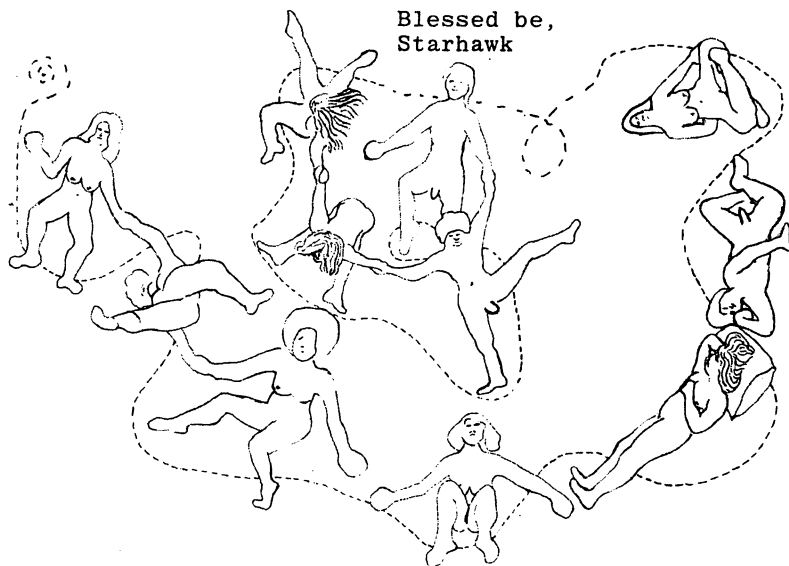
Reclaiming includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, heterosexuals, those who choose celibacy, those who are survivors of rape, incest, sexual abuse. Perhaps all of us have known sexuality to be used against us as a weapon. Yet we try to reclaim it, to value the diversity of its expression. Nevertheless, it is still easier for heterosexuals to be open about our sexuality, to unconsciously assume it is the model we use for our symbols and rituals. Yes, the Maypole is the phallus enfolded by the woven vagina, and yes it is beautiful and powerful to reclaim that act as sacred. But where are the symbols and visions of other sexualities? And would we all be willing to dance around them if we had them?

I feel we need to stretch ourselves more, to imagine more, to envision symbols and rituals that will not shut people out. Yet when we try to create that vision, we hurt. We hurt inside because we encounter the depths in which even the most free and Witchy of us blocked and limited and scared - and we are always inadvertently hurting each other because we don't see out of each other's eyes.

So the problem with Beltane is this: how do we celebrate sexuality in a heterosexist society without being heterosexist? Or even more simply: how do we make the erotic sacred in the midst of a culture that hates it? I don't know - but I think we need to begin to talk about it, and I'm interested in hearing responses to any of this.

On another point, the reason more people weren't around to plan Beltane reflects another concern about Reclaiming. We're over-committed and sometimes burn out. Reclaiming has an inner core of 15 to 20 people who are tightly bonded, almost incestuously so. Some of us live together, some of us sleep together, all of us turn up at the same meetings and rituals and parties. It's like family, which is wonderful. At the same time, there are a lot of new people coming to classes, forming covens, excited by what we're doing and eager to take part - and we haven't figured out yet how to expand the central core or change the forms or metamorphose to bridge some of the gaps. So I'd like to hear back from people who might like to become more central to Reclaiming - what do you need from us to make that possible? easy? inevitable?

Finally, thanks to those who did plan Beltane - Arachne, Robin, Roy, Changing Woman, Bethany and Roddy. Whatever the flaws, it raised power. It worked. It's working now - in the conversations until 2.a.m., in whatever this letter and all the other thinking and questioning sparks. It worked by bringing to the surface conflicts and questions we need to face, and because of our bonding and our love for each other, we can dare to try to face them instead of running. Magic works like a spoon in a cauldron, by stirring up. Where there's fear, there's power. Where there's conflict, there's a chance to change.



SUMMER SOLSTICE CHALLENGE TO THE MAGICAL COMMUNITY  
THE QUEST: International Day of Nuclear Disarmament

"From diverse backgrounds, and with varied world views, we are drawn together on this day, International Day, to create something new. Ours is an effort that is at once joyous and desperate: we seek to prevent the destruction of life on our planet and to re-create our world."

Livermore Action Group Handbook



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This is a call to action, a challenge to the magical community, a request for a very special type of earth magic. We would like you to do magic for anti-militarism on International Day, and we would like you to do the kind of magic where your body is the material of your earth magic.

During the week which begins June 20, a number of witches from the Reclaiming community will be participating in a non-violent blockade and occupation of Livermore Laboratories, where first-strike nuclear weapons are made. This is our way of celebrating Summer Solstice, of honoring the earth, the moon, the sun, the Goddess and God within. We ask of you a three-fold task.

1) Action is magic. Plan now to take action for International Day. People all over the world will be participating in local actions. All participants are requested to abide by a non-violent commitment for these actions. Here are some suggestions from the Livermore Action Group Handbook: blockades, occupations, and civil disobedience at nuclear weapons facilities and military installations, marches, vigils, rallies, street theater on June 20 (you can participate directly, or you can do childcare, pet-care, transportation, communication, monetary support, job support, etc., for people who are going to be away from their homes and jobs because of the action); conferences, teach-ins, demonstrations, letter writing, calling, etc., during the week before June 20; on June 20, people who cannot leave their workplaces or homes could telephone their friends, public officials, media, to protest the nuclear holocaust which threatens all life; begin work in your community to make it a nuclear free zone; hang banners in the windows and doors in your community; contact the local office of Mobilization for Survival, or headquarters at 853 Broadway #2109, NY NY 10003, (212) 533-0008.

2) Prepare for your action and the action of your sisters and brothers by spellwork at the dark moon. June 10 at 9:38 p.m. (Pacific) and June 11 at 0:38 a.m. (Eastern) is the new moon and the Solar Eclipse. If you do your work before the moon turns new, work with the image of a web which catches up all that we would be rid of concerning the race toward holocaust, and the connected problems and imbalance. See how the web goes all over the world. If you do your work after the moon turns new, make a web that builds peace, that connects the forces for peace, for disarmament, for the restoring of the balance. See how the web goes all over the world. In either case (and we hope you can do both kinds of work), use globes, maps and thread as magical aids. Try using this chant: "We are the power in everyone/ We are the dance of the moon and sun/ We are the hope that will not hide/ We are the turning of the tide. (by Starhawk). Send strength and power to all who will participate in the Solstice Actions. Be the Spider who creates her own pathway, her own world from her belly, her center, her will. Know how connected you are to all those who work for peace and balance. Bind your magic with a good strong web.

3) At sunset on June 20, send strong magic around the world. Everyone participating in International Day is asked to pray: "A prayer in each city and village at sunset on June 20 completely circles the earth as it spins around the sun." Tune in at sunset and do magic for the web of life; send strength to those in jail - those in jail get help and strength from those outside. Make International Day of Nuclear Disarmament part of the focus at your Summer Solstice Ritual.

May the fires of Solstice kindle your desire for peace, give you strength to strive, and light the way to change here where we live. May the blessing of the Goddess be upon you.

Rose May Dance  
for Matrix Affinity Group

## ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN

Iris May, Pandora, Deadly Nightshade

With the art of magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world.

In this class, we begin the practice of magic and Goddess spirituality by working with the elements of magic: earth, air, fire, water and spirit. Techniques will include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, and structuring rituals. Beginning 6-week course, starting Monday, Sept. 12, 7:30 p.m. Call Pandora or Deadly at 641-5836 for registration and location. \$35-90, sliding scale.

## ELEMENTS OF MAGIC (mixed class for women and men)

Rose Dance and Roy King

Beginning 6-week course, starting Thursday, Sept. 11. Call Roy, 566-1680, or Rose, 641-5836. \$35-\$90, sliding scale.

## ELEMENTS OF MAGIC

Feather Singing and Roy King

History, philosophy and theology of Goddess spirituality. Use of ritual magic to help us shed cultural conditioning and learn to trust, cooperate, nurture and heal. Basic techniques of relaxation grounding, visualization, sensing and channeling energy, and releasing blocked feelings. Trance journeys, cycles within us. Planning and creating rituals collectively.

Beginning 6-week course, starting Monday, Aug. 29, 7:30 p.m. \$35-90 sliding scale. Call Feather 548-3342 after Aug. 1 or Roy 566-1680 for registration and location. (Depending on interest, we will offer a men's and/or a mixed class.)

## THE SPIRALLING VORTEX, Magic and Energy

Feather Singing and Ceredwen Fallingstar

A course of hands-on magic to go deeper and farther into energy work than in our other classes. To gain a working knowledge of the relationship of energy and breath, sound, communication, visualization, psychic sight, altered states and group bonding. The power of connecting through energy channeling, tantra. Making our cones of power more concentrated. Building forms of energy: astral temples. Sensing energy fields, ley lines and power spots. Developing skills with healing, communicating with tree spirits, plants and animals, use of quartz crystals, dowsing rods and pendulums.

Intermediate to advanced, for those who have taken an Elements class. Six Thursdays, beginning Sept. 1, 7:30 p.m. Call Feather 548-3342 after Aug. 1 or Ceredwen 383-6687 for registration and location. \$35-90 sliding scale.



# WORKSHOPS



## THE PENTACLE, FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Sophia Moondragon and Cerridwen Fallingstar

An exploration of the five points of our inner pentacle: Sex (primal energy), Self, Passion, Pride and Power (effectiveness in the world). We deepen our skills of channeling and shaping energy, transforming ourselves in trance, storytelling, sound making, and hands-on magic. Also work on group dynamics and group bonding. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic. A six-week course beginning Thurs. July 14th, 7:30pm in San Francisco. Call Sophia 824-0274. \$35 - \$90 sliding scale.

## rites of passage for WOMEN AND MEN

Ariadne and Sophia Moondragon

## rites of passage for WOMEN ONLY

Cerridwen Fallingstar and Sophia Moondragon

Our ancestors had tribe and shaman to support them through life's crises. Today's culture provides little such support for personal transitions. Yet we can learn to let go of outgrown habits and be free to steer the course of our own lives. In this 6-week class, we will use the power of our group bond to support each other's growth in personal power and vitality. We will learn to ritualize our changes using the skills of magic and guided by our dreams and visions. Culminates in a ritual of emergence created by the students. Advanced. Call Sophia 824-0274 for registration and location.

Class for WOMEN AND MEN Mondays beginning July 11.

Class for WOMEN ONLY Wednesdays beginning August 31.

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THE RESOURCE POOL: Reclaiming teachers are available to teach or to advise ongoing or newly formed groups. Your group can make a contract with one or several of our teachers for a class series or for specific sessions that meet your particular needs. Contact Rose at 626-9238. We will travel.

APPRENTICESHIPS: If you live far away and can spend a block of time in the SF Bay Area, Reclaiming can arrange a period of intensive magical study and practice, tailored to your experience and goals. The program might involve classes, workshops, individual sessions, readings and/or student teaching. We are especially interested in training people who will return to their home communities to share their skills. Contact Sophia, *do Reclaiming's* P.O. Box 14404, S.F., 94114 or Phone (415) 824-0274.

CLASS COSTS: We ask anyone who takes Reclaiming classes to put some energy into our collective (i.e., helping cleanup at lectures, helping to do bulk mailing, gardening, blood bank donations, etc.). We have revised our sliding scale: the 6-week series classes, unless otherwise noted, will be from \$35 - \$90.

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## SUMMER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM AUGUST 8 - 13

Reclaiming is offering six days of intensive magical training and spiritual/political exploration to give people from outside the S.F. Bay area tools and skills they can take back to their own communities. Sessions will draw on material from our regular classes and workshops. As part of the learning process, students will participate in designing the program.

The apprenticeship program is open to both women and men, and there will be times when women and men meet in separate groups. We welcome students with little or no magical experience, as well as those who wish to deepen skills they already have. Advanced students will participate in teaching and group facilitation. Priority is given to people who live outside the S.F. Bay area or who cannot take our regular classes. If we have room, we may consider taking local students. Some sessions will be open to the Reclaiming Community.

We will provide places to stay for students in the homes of community people (subject to spaces available). We will assure accessibility for those with physical disabilities. Childcare can be arranged; please contact us early to discuss your needs.

In the past, we have not set a fixed fee on the apprenticeships. However, this program involves much more planning and organization, and we need to be sure that we can pay teachers and support the collective. However, we still do not want money to prevent anyone from becoming an apprentice. The cost of the program is a sliding scale \$175-\$400, with a discount if you arrange your own place to stay. We are willing to negotiate on time payments and will provide limited scholarships, or other creative arrangements.

For more information, contact Sophia Moondragon c/o the Reclaiming P.O. Box.



(This article was prepared from Roy's longer, eloquent account, which is available free on request to newsletter subscribers. Nonsubscribers please include \$1.00 to cover costs. Send SASE to Reclaiming's PO Box.)

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## VANDENBERG II March 19-April 1, 1983

Sunday night the rain stops just as we begin our equinox ritual. The waxing moon breaks through clouds over a field of nylon tents stretching into darkness: the Vandenberg encampment. Encircled in sacred space, we sing the names of our affinity groups and snake dance into a clump of bodies, our arms and voices rising into a powerful cone. As we ground the moon vanishes and rain falls gently.

We gather for a final pre-jail solidarity meeting. Because we'll be arrested by Feds, we can't threaten to jam the courts by demanding jury trials, as we have in previous actions; Federal law gives no right to a jury for a trespassing offense. So a new tactic is in the air--withholding our names until they agree to mass detainment, mass arraignment, equal sentences for all, and no mandatory fines. We don't want anyone singled out, but it's a touchy subject. Many folks feel it's frivolous to quibble with the prison/court system, while others feel proud to be identified by name for their stand against nuclear holocaust. Still others feel that nonviolence entails nonresistance to whatever punishment the authorities choose.

Miraculously, we agree we need not reach consensus on tactics, but only on our demands. Spoke after spoke reports most of their affinity group members will withhold names. We'll demand equal sentences for all.

Our cluster, with ages ranging from 17 to 70, spends Monday trekking overland to the Minuteman missile silos. We hide from police, from soldiers on foot and in helicopters. On a high ridge we cast a circle and call on the power of the Elementals to counteract the warped power of the U.S. war machine. We occupy the land with our spirit/bodies together with the spirits of the land and animals and human ancestors.

On a paved road at nightfall, we're joined by soldiers. At first they are nervous, but after we circle and sing they walk down the road with us, chatting and laughing about our day's adventures.

At the silo we're searched, cuffed, and bussed to a gym. Searched again, taken to an equipment cage, then to a classroom. We're given baloney on white bread, mothballed army blankets, and a floor.

Tuesday we demand the uncuffing of another group that was cuffed all night. When they come to take some of us for booking we form a tight spiral and chant. They drag some people out, but we've washed the arrest numbers off our arms so they can't tell who was arrested where. We refuse to give names. Those who need to leave plead guilty to a magistrate and are released. Those refusing to plead are bussed to Lompoc Federal Pen. Men are finally parted from women. The men sleep on mats on a gym floor. But with sheets!

Wednesday--it's exciting and disorienting to be in this big, all-male group, in jail. I see friends from other actions, and lots of new faces. We're a movement!

Days in Lompoc are long--40 minutes outside, 23 hours and 20 minutes inside. We play games, have a talent show where some of us sing "Burning Times." On the final chorus the Goddess chant soars, goes on and on. As it finally peaks and subsides I realize most of the men don't know how to ground the energy, and I miss the opportunity to teach them. A man stands crying in anguish. He is a committed Christian yet feels strongly drawn to the Earth energy we tap. He is ripped in the conflict. The entire room forms a circle and tries to ohm ourselves into oneness to heal the wound. Men talk on, quoting abstract platitudes that hide more than they heal. We grow frustrated and resentful, and I feel I've learned an important lesson about ungrounded power.

Thursday--More songs and resistance when they come to pull out people on a list. They order us up against the wall and cuff and drag those who won't walk. After they take those they want, we form a circle. Some blame the resisters for the violence; some consider nonresisters wimps and blame the authorities.

We have many long meetings over the days. News trickles in from our lawyers. The Federal prosecutor wants 30 days for 2nd offenders. Our separated friends are in Arizona. The food is worse, and many men are fasting.

By Sunday energy is low and muddled. I gather a few men and plan a ritual. About forty of us circle as the full moon looks in the high windows. Our energy becomes very focussed, very clear. We plant our hopes and dreams and visions as spring seeds, to grow into a future where Earth's life is again recognized and honored and loved. We bind our spell. We chant and dance and bond together in a mass of sound and flesh, channeling Earth energy in a spiral up beyond this prison into the sky, filling our hearts with new power. [Simultaneously in San Francisco the Matrix affinity group is working powerful support magic, strengthening our web of connection. -Sophia]

Monday the space feels renewed, even to those who weren't in the circle. Arraignments draw near. We hear the women and people in L.A. jails want to plead. Many of us still want to hold out.

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Tuesday morning I go before the magistrate with the first group of 10 men. 14 days for second offenders (later reduced to 10), 3 days for firsts. Some still resist, until the whole gym population reaches consensus to accept the sentences.

By Friday all 700+ folks arrested are free. The action is over. General feeling is that solidarity was incredible, especially since this was many people's first action and nobody expected to be jailed so long.

We return home, invigorated and drained, somewhat stunned at reentry into ordinary life, between actions, isolated from our greater tribe.

--Roy (respectfully excerpted by Rick)



Calling on the spirits of the future  
Calling on the lifetimes yet to come  
Send courage to the present generation  
Help us find the strength to carry on.

Calling on the spirits of the ancients  
Calling on the wise ones of the past  
Illuminate the vision of a people  
Help us keep our feet upon the path.

Calling on the guardians of the planet  
Calling on all people now alive  
With vision of the past and memory of the future  
Claiming our power to survive!  
Claiming our power to survive!  
Claiming our power to survive!

c 1983 Charlie Murphy