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Bakersfield--This has been a busy month for us-uns... as if we knew what idle time was. dean, Lady Fauna, Elizabeth, Don, and Delana all went to the COG So. Council Yule Festival which, as always, was great fun. Before the festival, we spent the better part of the day gawking at the Getty Museum. For those of you who have never been, the museum has the best antiquities collection in the world (that's right, in the world). It's free, but you do have to call ahead for parking reservations. The museum is in Malibu, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. And then, back to Bakersfield. We had a lovely Solstice celebration with dean and Lady Fauna conducting the Yule ritual and a huge feast after our gift exchange. Then, we celebrated Full Moon, with dean and Elizabeth acting as HP and HPs.

Subscription rates are now $8 U.S., $16 foreign surface, $32 foreign air mail. Ad rates will remain the same--$36 for a full page, $20 for 1/2 page, $14 for anything less than 1/2 page. Ads must be camera ready. Contributions in the form of ARTICLES are always appreciated, and our backlog is running low. If you have an article you'd like to send us, please do!!!!

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By A 13 Be Blessed from Tales from A Witch's Hearthfire
by Tarostar

I once knew a cat named Thirteen,
Whose coat was like pitch with a black velvet sheen.
He was found in a junkyard one dark Halloween.

Of all Familiars ever known,
None had so much intelligence shown,
Nor to such enormous size had grown.

He lived with Witches many a year,
Who cared for him well, and loved him dear.
Being pampered and spoiled he made a career.

He was always in the thick of things.
At dinnertime it was if he had wings.
Neither was your plate safe from his examinings.

His worries in Life were very few: What's to eat and Where's to sleep?
Upon your bed at night he'd creep
And stretch full out without a peep.

A Witch Familiar is a sign of grace.
The Goddess gives life to all of such race.
She shows us her love in an animal's face.

Treat with kindness, understanding and respect
The bird, the beast and the lowly insect.
For in harm to such ones, its the Goddess you reject.

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A home must be the habitat of your interests as well as your body. It must afford an outlet for your emotions and your desires as well as a place to hang your hat. In its furnishings, devices or appurtenances, there must be something that will challenge your mind and stimulate your thinking in a pleasant way. A home does not need to be a schoolroom or laboratory where tedious mental occupation is demanded of you. It should, however, provide interests to your mind which are restful, relaxing, and which move your consciousness pleasantly, without the need of accelerating your body 30, 40 or 80 miles an hour along the highway to get the same results. If you cannot conceive of what to bring into your home that will afford these mentally constructive, not dissipating, pleasures, you are poverty stricken, even though you may be wealthy in material possessions. --Samuel Rittenhouse

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Power Behind the Crone: DOS from Blacksun

As many who read the GNL already know, Shadowhawk and I have recently acquired a home computer. Which accounts for the fact that the person who is typing this article into the newsletter has not found the seven errors that I've made in the first and this sentence. Uh... make that eight. Anyway, we have been using this tool of modern alchemy with decided intent. I will use it at least an hour every day, and she uses it as much as eight when the mood hits her. Even after the initial "Oh boy, there's a new fantastic tool in the office," wore off we still are extremely pleased with it. As with any new tool, we have been using our imagination and experimenting with uses that we hadn't thought of when we bought it. Thus the discovery of the DOS, otherwise known as Disk of Shadows.

This was first suggested to me by a joking remark from Shadowhawk after I had spent about two hours in front of the screen working on the outline for my book. Oh, I forgot to tell you. I'm writing a book on how to build a ritual. But the concept of a Disk of Shadows was intriguing and would not get out of my head. So I started to think about it more directly and was happily surprised by the possibilities that popped up.

I should explain that BOS has long been used by us and several other witches we know instead of saying Book of Shadows. And for the folks who don't know about computers, I should also explain that the term DOS refers to Disk Operating System. Which is computereez for the particular way the information put into the computer is made into electronic magic in the computer via the disk used for memory and programs. So the DOS is what makes it possible for me to store this article and also where our printer gets the information to print it out so I can send it to the GNL.

So there's a cut little pun to say DOS instead of BOS. But is it just a pun? Are there any advantages to a record of rituals and spells kept in computer memory rather than a book? I think there are. I also think that there are some unique security factors which should be paid attention to also.

First, there is the factor of "word processing" versus writing or typing. I can edit what is put into the computer so it is word perfect and absolutely clear, even if I think of it a year from now. I can just put it in and not have

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Power Behind the Crone: DOS (cont.) by Blacksun

to write it ALL over again. There is nothing more frustrating than to type or write something that you want error free, only to make an error at the bottom of the page.

Next, there is a very important function that word processing performs but which I can't seem to find mentioned in any advertising or book. Namely, I can get my thoughts down in print in the most haphazard and sloppy way and not have to worry about it. There is not interruption, such as having to make carriage returns, just when you're on a roll. This means that the creative process is not hindered or stopped. When you're trying to create something to say, such as in a ritual or article, and you want it to come out as if you were talking (rather than writing) for a 12-year-old, I think w-p has it all over the typewriter or handwriting. And, again, the whole thing can get cleaned up later when you only want to deal with spelling, grammar, and other things that can get in the way of those of us who are not so well schooled that we naturally speak in Elizabethean prose.

And I think the fact that the information is going onto a disk rather than being put in a book makes it a little bit more secure in some ways. For instance, if anyone were to take my DOS disk, they would also have to have a compatible machine and program to read it. It is easy to read a book. Plus, there are many different ways to code the material so that you need a password to even make it come up on the screen. One of the more popular methods of password locking a file on the disk scrambles the words and letters so much that it looks like garbage unless you use the password. I understand that there are so many ways to do this, even Carl Sagan would give up describing the number.

There are many other advantages of disk over book, such as portability and compactness, but I think the best part is that you can get a printed copy any time you want from your printer. With the right program, you can make the print either big or small, the spaces either wide or narrow, and you can even change the type or font. I don't know about you, but I sure do hate to go to the copy store to make copies of a ritual I've written and have to hand over this material to the people on the other side of the counter. More than once, a nosey person wanted to know what it was I was writing. My standard answer is, "They are last night's changes to scene 23 and I have to have them on the set in twenty minutes... could you please HURRY." So far, it's worked swell, but my

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Power Behind the Crone: DOS (cont.) from Blacksun

printer turns out copies for about half the price I would pay at the copy store. And, because I can make a copy any time I want to, I don't feel bad about destroying all the copies right after the ritual. If somebody wants to copy it off into their book, I just plunk them down in front of the screen and show them which button to push to "turn the page." And I know they aren't going to read anything I don't want them to, because they can't get into my other files.

Of course, there are security problems which need attention. Do not ever go on the phone line to transfer security data without some very elaborate and expensive scramble hardware at both ends. Don't leave your DOS disk(s) so that the phone connection can ever access them. And don't forget back up copies in case the disk gets damaged.

But, in the long run, Disk of Shadows is a pretty good concept. I am sure that it may seem somewhat out of place in our religion for those who are not used to computer word processing, but perhaps the ball point pen caused similar feelings. I can assure you that the computers of today are nothing more than a very useful tool. And anybody who wants to take time to learn how to use them will find the rewards available. I mean, after all, I use a Eureka vacuum cleaner instead of a broom... most of the time!

Well, aside from filling up my DOS, I have been working on two books. One is the book on ritual I mentioned before and the other is a book that Shadowhawk and I have been thinking about ever since we started writing for the GNL. I'll tell you more about that and what changes it has caused in us next month.

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Share Your Joy

When a bit of sunshine hits ye,
  After passing of a cloud,
When a fit of laughter gits ye
  An' yer spine is feelin' proud,
Don't forget to up and fling it
  At a soul that's feelin' blue,
For the minute that ye sling it,
  It's a boomerang to you.

--John Wallace Crawford

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Extremist Christians are Aiding Child Molesters Analysis by Allyn Wolfe (December 1985 Red Garters reprint w/permission)

Extremists are using the bogeyman of widespread Satanic sacrifices to stampede the public into action against Pagans. (We must remember not to condemn the majority of Christians, who are decent, honest, sincere people, for the rantings of a fanatic minority.) Undoubtedly a very few such Satanic murders do occur, but they are the acts of sick minds which take their cue from extremist Christians. I have never seen a book in an occult shop which advocated human sacrifice; Christian bookstores have dozens of books which, although well intended, contain detailed how-to-do-it descriptions of murder and Devil worship. The will to torture and kill does not arise in the Pagan community, whose Gods "ask no sacrifice, but do bow."

Senator Jesse Helms sponsored Amendment 705 with the naive notion that revoking the tax exempt status of Satanic organizations would prevent Satanic murders. Those avowedly Satanic organizations with tax exempt legal status do not risk their tax status by committing murder. They are much more interested in money than in blood. Any group willing to commit murder has no need for tax exempt status; they merely have to open the wallets and purses of their victims. Murder is already a capital offense. No further legislation is needed to deal with it.

The Kern County, CA "Satanic murders" have proven to be total fantasy indoctrinated into children by fundamentalist-influenced child abuse counselors. The sequence of events was as follows:

June 26, 1984. A 5-year-old girl claims to have been sexually molested by two men, one of whom is a Christian minister! Both Gerardo Gonzales and Rev. Willard Thomas are arrested and plead innocent.
August 27, 1984. The same 5-year-old and two other girls implicate Mrs. Gonzales, wife of the above-mentioned man.
September 11, 1984. A 6-year-old boy and two of the aforementioned children accuse George Stowe and the Gonzales of molesting them.
November 11, 1984. The 5-year-old girl now implicates Brad and Mary Nokes and Cathy Scott on charges of molestation.
March 15, 1985. The 5-year-old girl first mentions devil worship in connection with the alleged molestations. During the next two months, eleven other children, several of whom attend therapy sessions together (an hence have time to compare stories) begin to make devil worship claims.
April 3, 1985. The 5-year-old who originally set off the whole investigation is taken from the custody of her parents because other children now name them as molesters.

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Extremist Christians (cont.) from Allyn Wolfe

August 6, 1985. The Attorney General's Office of the State of California and the Kern County District Attorney announce that they will jointly review the investigative methods of the Kern County agencies involved.
September 23, 1985. Superior Court Judge Marvin Ferguson returns the girl, now 6 years old, to her parents after finding that her parents (at least) had not molested her. District Attorney Ed Jagels announces that the investigation is "essentially complete."

Net results? As many as 80 adults were accused of child molestation/ devil worship/infant sacrifice. George Stowe, convicted on molestation charges, has been released from jail pending his appeal. Charges have been dropped against most of the persons charged. These people will forever bear the stigma of Satanism, murder, and sexual perversion, without the opportunity to prove their innocence! Imagine, having to prove their innocence! No physical evidence has been found to substantiate any of the charges; none, zip, zero! Several of the alleged "sacrificial victims" are known to be alive, and in good health. At least one of the "victims" was found never to have existed.

Mainstream, ethical Christians are suffering "guilt by association" with these extremist nuts. Satan-phobia has spilled over onto Paganism and Wicca. Newspapers, Christian ministers, and child protective agencies who loudly advertised the prevalence of Devil worship, sexual abuse, and murder are not interested in disabusing the public, or rectifying the injuries and making restitution.

If any molestations have occurred , the molesters will have escaped justice because fundamentalists have tainted the evidence and testimony! If no molestations have occurred, 80 people have had their lives destroyed because of the fundamentalist myth of widespread devil worship!

The rise of Satanism in America owes its origins not to the occult movement, but rather to the fundamentalist movement. The fact that the fundamentalist movement is founded on hate, and fueled by lie and deception guarantees its eventual failure and disgrace. Remember the Law of Three.

Ed note (LF): I certainly hope you and yours are not being harassed as the result of incidents with which you are obviously not even remotely associated. The local paper, The Bakersfield Californian, has been extremely sensitive to the differences between alleged satanic activities and neo-pagan practices.

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Editorial Reply to Extremist Christians (cont.)

In fact, the only association of Satanism and witchcraft in the same breath has been made by the Kern County Sheriff, Larry Klier.

My next door neighbor asked me what I thought about the "satanic" cases. I told him that my major concern was for the children. Obviously, regardless of the validity of the accusations, these children have had some serious emotional traumas and I told him I hoped they were receiving adequate and competent care.

Truly, these children are the real victims of this situation--in ways that make any other issue arising from it trivial by comparison. They have been thrust into an adult world of emotionally-fed irrational fears and they haven't developed the mechanisms to cope. Real child abusers are going to jail. But what happens to the 13-year-old who finds her picture and obituary placed in the morning paper by the man she calls "Daddy?"

To my knowledge, no person in the local pagan community has been associated directly with the criminal charges or allegations. The media, for the most part, is wary of doing so because there is no factual basis for the claim.

The defeat of Amendment 705 is, I believe, a reflection of cooler heads who recognize the truth as set forth by the Treasury Department and recorded in the Congressional Record: there are mechanisms established to test and audit the qualifications of any group requesting tax-exempt status sufficient to screen out the criminal element with which Senator Helms is so concerned. Twenty years ago it would have been very, very different. For that, I am thankful to a whole string of goddesses and gods, not to mention my thanks for the dedicated and hard work of some folks still around... and a few who've passed on.

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Old Bud was, by reputation at least, the laziest man in Tennessee, but there was no denying that he was the finest shot in the state. He only worked a few months a year, but even that wore him out.
"If Bud is so lazy, someone asked a native, "how come he is such a deadeye with a rifle that he never misses?"
"Well," came the reply, "By the time Ole Bud goes to all the trouble to get his gun raised and aimed, he's too tired to wiggle."

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For Solitaries Only--The Solitary Tradition by Brandy Williams

Being one of the caretakers of the Aquarian Tabernacle (with Alex Williams), and living as a full-time Pagan immersed in the community, I get smiles when I say I'm a solitary.

I worked in a small town entirely alone for four years, and I know the difference between that and being surrounded by others who share my world view. These days I take myself more seriously and grant more reality to my experiences. Attending open circles gives me a window on how others run rituals, and how our practices have evolved while I've been gone. The most valuable resource other Pagans give me is trading secrets, which a friend describes as pieces of the puzzle.

On the other hand, I have an 'inside outsider' feeling that's hard to pin down. Until now I've said it was because I'm not a member of a working circle. Lately, though, I've been asked so often "What is your tradition?" that I've decided that's the crux of the matter.

My tradition is The Solitary One.

I've circled with Dianics, Georgians, English Traditionalists. I've read Starhawk and the Farrars and Doreen Valiente and others, and I read 30 newsletters a sabbat. I've been a witch for 12 years. I'm also a cabbalist. I do Tai Chi and Silva Mind Control, and study neurolinguistic programming, and these things enrich my understanding of magic.

Granted, this describes eclecticism. The solitaries who attended the Solitary Convention (SolCon '85) at the Tabernacle all identified as eclectic, though this doesn't mean that a solitary who self-defines as Gardnerian, etc. would be closed out of the circle. I do think that when we work alone, without teachers or group support, we tailor study and practice to our particular needs, and listen to experience over theory.

The phrase Althea Whitebirch uses to describe this is 'personal religion.' Mine is a tradition of one--I use what works for me. However, because I say "my own" when asked what tradition I belong to, I occasionally get the comment, "I'm looking for a real tradition that can teach me the secrets." So I've been asking all my fully-other-taught friends, what am I missing? Is there anything in your training that you haven't seen in print, or that wasn't the group's original work? So far, the answer's been "no."

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For Solitaries Only (cont.) by Brandy Williams

My understanding of a secret is something you've learned from magical experience. The words themselves mean nothing unless you've already built their context for yourself. They can even be printed and remain secrets; those who know, nod--those who don't, read on.

Here is a solitary secret: books and peer discussions and personal practice can teach as much as a hierarchical working circle. You can train yourself.

Because I've had exposure to a lot of traditions, I can fit into a lot of groups and know basically what I'm doing. That's an asset eclecticism gives me--and a source of confidence in my own practice. I ask to be judged by my work, not my titles.

As always, I welcome reader feedback: Brandy Williams, POB 95620, Seattle, WA 98145

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Several years ago when Rosemont College, a girl's school in Pennsylvania, came to the end of its current building program, it was sad for the workmen, and for the college people, too. Wanting to recognize the men's fine spirit, the college gave them a graduation party. Each was presented with a diploma which read: "This is to certify that inasmuch as you have been connected with the college over a period of five years and four buildings, and have climbed every rung of the college ladder, demonstrating a high degree of mastery in the arts of carpentry, electricity, painting, plumbing, bricklaying, and tank burying, and have been duly examined by 30 Sisters, 400 students, two gardeners, one night watchman, and one dog, the faculty and trustees of Rosemont College confer on you the degree of Bachelor of Building Arts and declare you from this day forth an honorary alumnus of this college, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto."--Thomas LaMance

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Neptune from The Planets by Tiffany St. Moonstar

I flow, I ebb, I am like the primordal tide since Time was born. I am the great eye within the triangle that looks upon itself, within itself and all that is beyond. I am the keeper of all the Secrets of the Cosmos yet to me, nothing is secret. My being invented prescience and divine omniscience is my heartbeat.

My kingdom is watery deeps and dreams, whispers and shadows, ghosts of what could be. I am the Shaman with his magicke box, the master of the crystal. My words are voices in the wind, shadowboxers in the dark, and silent walkers of the stars. My children are very few for they must drink of dead waters--yet remain living, experience all negativity--yet remain of the purest light, eat foul flesh--but remain clean of tongue. My children are the walkers on the wind, the shadow between the lightning, those that be everywhere at once, yet remain within themselves. They are the Dragonriders.

And none can make them so. They just are, they just be.

Many will try to find out their secrets, to love them, to gain their power, to be one with them, to understand them. But they will find happiness only with each other, never with those of the People.

Our world is the ever-shifting mist of limitless possibilities, probabilities and computations that are reworked each second of every minute of every day during each universal heartbeat.

I am. I know. I see. This is our litany. Like a silver wolf on the frozen tundra my passage is within the eye of the hurricane. With my children I travel through the mirrors of Time and Space and Dimension. My purpose is known only to the Dragon. Be happy in your ignorance and do not try to seek me nor mine. I have my chosen and they are of my body. There can only be a certain number of Time Lordes at any given moment in the Universe. For if it were to contain one too many or just one too less Chaos would erupt--and it would be the very abortion of the dragon (Creation).

Speak softly and slowly and listen well. For in the quiet moments of your life you may hear the songs of my children and I--and we may share some of our beautiful world with you. We are the Watchers, and we exist to serve you.

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Thunderings from Thor in Connecticut

My Yule experience this year was so beautiful, I would like to share a bit of it with my brothers and sisters of the Pagan community. Our eclectic Faery Coven and friends gathered at late afternoon on the Solstice at the home on Long Island Sound of a member of the group. Greetings were given, food for the feast which would follow was set out and the Circle was cast. The Magic was electric! The Goddess was there.

Our HPs led us through the trance meditation following which we were, each one, ritually reborn. The group now moved outside where we joined hands and danced the Spiral... inward, and then outward--on down to the beach where, still holding hands, we reformed into a Circle while the cauldron was set ablaze under the now setting Sun and brightly beaming Moon--the Lady and her Consort smiling down on their people. Right beside our group was the gently lapping waters of Mother Ocean.

The ritual now took on a different dimension as we were led by the HP in an invocation to call back the Sun God into the world. Later, one by one, we dipped into the cauldron of ashes and cast a handful onto the Mother, and as we did so, telling the Mother that we were casting upon her bosom our sickness, our insecurities, the bigotry of the world, all unhappiness and a myriad of other things that only our Lady can lift from us.

Now each Covener holding a lighted candle, we made our way back to the house from whence we had come, chanting as we went, "We are an old people, we are a new people, we are the same people--different than before." Back in the yard, we reformed into the Circle, which was now opened but unbroken in love.

Now followed the feasting and the sharing and giving which included, among the many foods, such things as home made beer and traditional Sabbat cakes (baked by yours truly). After such an experience, what can one say except thank Goddess for being a Pagan.

Somewhat dismaying after such a "high," was my visit on the afternoon of 24 December to a well-known Craft shop in New York City. While my needs were simple and I didn't plan on staying for a prolonged visit as I often do, things at the shop were somewhat "hustle-bustle" heading for a 4:00 p.m. closing for "Christmas Eve." I didn't know (and don't believe) that that is one of our Pagan holidays (although the Xtians

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Thunderings from Thor (cont.)

seem to try and make it into what they would call a Pagan event). Nonetheless, I was bothered by good Pagan folk bowing to such a brainwashing by society. The explanation given to me was that we should "tap into the energy"--I, however, do not feel that such energy is healthy for a Pagan (for obvious reasons) and so, for us to partake of a power that would (and did) burn me and mine at the stake and desecrate our sacred places, is, if nothing else, in bad taste and at worst, downright dangerous.

I agree that since we all live in one world, we should make every effort to do so in peace and in a spirit of ecumenism--especially since we, as Pagans, (should) respect the Goddess or God of the other person, even the one born in Bethlehem. However, respect is one thing, closing (or otherwise) celebrating is quite another matter. And what of the Pagan soul(s) who showed up on the shop doorstep later with the intention of purchasing such as incense or candles with which to honor the Goddess? Our Lady was left to play "second fiddle" to the veneration of the Xtian diety.

Now laying aside my hammer, but before closing, I would like to share a final something with those who have been kind enough to wade through my rumblings. This is the name and address of a non-Craft craftsman from Eastern Europe (very respectful of the Craft and Pagans, incidentally). He can create and design jewelry from silver (or gold) that is truly outstanding. He has designed and made for me a ring containing my jewel (stauritides) which has never ceased to get compliments from Craft and non-Craft alike--and for a VERY reasonable price. Incidentally, I am giving this information freely, it benefitting me naught save for the feeling of sharing. His name is George Gots, 36 W. 47th ST #M-2, New York, NY 10036.

Ed note (LF): There are many considerations in operating a business, regardless of its enterprise, which have nothing to do with religion, which is another good reason why they are and should be two separate entities. One that popped into my head was security. How would you like to be minding the only business open on that block on Christmas Eve? As for the energy, well, a pagan might tell you anything when you're keeping 'em from closing shop and heading for a party. As for Pious Pagan, I have a handy reminder list for all religious occasions: 1. Make your own. 2. If you have to plan on someone else's services or goods, plan ahead. 3. If you've gotten this far, you don't need to be reminded of Murphy's Law. 4. Make do (particularly fun to do). 5. Do without. 6. Have a good time.

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Who is Lurline Jennings and Who Cares Anyway? by dean

She could be a pagan. She could be a Witch. She could be a dreaded infiltrator, master of disguise and deception, a weaver of treacherous webs. As for who cares, she does; along with a few pagan publishers. The names Lurline Jennings, Morgana (a pen name), and Wiccan Craft Consultants have shown up on these pages as well as those of a few other newsletters and the like. She has been a subscriber to the GNL for two to three years. During that period she has written in a few times and some of her letters were published (Aug 84, p.3; Sep 84, p. 19; Jul 85, p. 27; Sep 85, p.8).

I first came to have contact with her about a year ago. In a phone call last Winter she confided that her home had been burglarized and that many of her Craft items had been disturbed or taken. There appeared a strong possibility that local fundamentalist Xtians were involved. She said she was very public with her Craft beliefs and well known in the Southern California town she and her non-Craft husband had called home for many years. She was not so much surprised as upset and feeling violated.

She called again a month or two later. Her car had been broken into and a box of her Wiccan Craft Consultants stationery stolen, she said. Sometime thereafter, bizarre communiques began arriving at different pagan addresses, written on Lurline's letterhead. It was enough for at least one newsletter to decide she was a ne'er-do-well, fundamentalist spy.

Is she? My friends, I honestly do not know. My conversations with Lurline have been few and over the phone. I found her personable. I have read secular newspaper articles in which she explains such things as how the pentagram is not an evil symbol and that Witchcraft is a gentle, loving religion for those who remember the Old Gods. One large article with a nice photograph of the lady reports that each Hallows she erects a ghosts, goblins, and Witches scene on the front yard of her suburban home.

If she is a spy or disrupter--we all know they exist. You have been warned through the years that all sorts of kooks are slobbering to discover what we Witches are saying and some of them are reading these very pages to find out.

If she is not, and you should ever happen to meet her, get her to tell you the story about the evangelist and the cheese sandwiches.

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Religion in the News from a New York Times story

The police at San Francisco's Central Station are still talking about a recent Church of the Sub-Genius Devival meeting, but they call it the M-16 caper.

It was a Saturday night at The Stone Bar in the city's North Beach section. The Zombies-for-Bob choir had sung, the Band That Dares Not Speak Its Name had played and a watch-smashing ceremony already had freed the audience of its "time addiction" when officers spotted a man loading what looked like a machine gun.

"He was putting the magazine in when I got to him," Sgt. Dale Boyd said. He said he dashed across the dimly lit bar and confiscated the weapon.

It turned out to be a plastic prop.

"M-16's are not something you forget very quickly," Boyd said later. "It wasn't very funny."

Be forewarned: the Church of the SubGenius, a pseudo-theology that says it has thousands of members worldwide, is an elaborate spoof of religious cult mentality.

Sometimes, as in San Francisco, SubGenius humor can be frightening. But members insist that their mythical leader, J.R. (Bob) Dobbs, works in mysterious (and often hilarious) ways.

In New York, Dobbs fell into the lap of David N. Meyer II. When Meyer opened a magazine in 1980, he was showered by tiny pictures of Dobbs' smiling face. Today, Meyer is the reigning SubGenius Pope of All New York and Idaho.

In Cleveland last year, Randy Woodling, an archaeology major at Case Western Reserve University, began a radio program, "The Bob Dobbs Radio Revival," after reading that blistering heat had not prevented a merry band of SubGeniuses from demonstrating at the Republican National Convention in Dallas. The issue they rallied around: Nothing in particular.

"It's a cult, it's sort of a joke, but it's a joke you can believe in," said Woodling, 22, a college senior.

And indeed, particularly since McGraw-Hill published The Book of the SubGenius: Lunatic Prophecies for the Coming Weird Times, the group's bible, in 1983, the movement that calls

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Religion in the News (cont.)

itself "an inherently bogus religion" has become a cult in its own right.

About 18,000 copies of the bible, a compilation of satire and graphics, have been sold for $9.95 each.

In addition, since the organization was founded in 1980, 5,000 people have sent $20 to the SubGenius Foundation in Dallas to be ordained as high priests or priestesses, and 20,000 more consider themselves non-paying members, according to spokesmen. Not for nothing does one official SubGenius slogan warn, "You'll pay to know what you really think,"

Dobbs, the High Epopt, is said to preach with one goal in mind: "The SubGenius must have slack," a fragile state of relaxation too often impinged upon by pushy waiters, insensitive employers and withheld taxes, among other things.

But there is more than rhetoric: Members say the SubGenius community is one of comradeship and support. "It is an uncompetitive collaborative network of individuals who are sensitive, creative and sweet to each other," said Meyer, 33, a writer who frequently appears in SubGenius publicity events.

Most SubGenii are in their 30s. "They're in that middle ground--to young to be hippies and too old to be punks," said Douglas Smith, 32, a film editor, who is the co-founder and Sacred Scribe of the church. Many, like the Rev. Ivan Stang (Smith's alias) and Rev. Zyecko Kukulcan (Woodling), have pseudonyms.

"The Church of the Sub Genius hit a nerve in the underground community--people who were interested in everything from R. Crumb to B-movies to aliens to Firesign Theater," said Tim McGinnis, who edited the SubGenius book for McGraw-Hill and is now a senior editor at Fireside Books/Simon & Schuster. "It has all the complexity and appeal of a religion: good, old-fashioned zeal with an avant-garde chip on its shoulder."

That is no accident. "We borrow the best from each major world religion and all the greatest cults," Smith said. Scholars say such a practice is not uncommon. "Even the Kiwanis, the Odd Fellows and the Elks had some elements of caricature in their beginnings," said Harvey Cox Jr., a professor at Harvard Divinity School. "It's an old tradition."

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Religion in the News (cont.)

"No one has ever really met Bob--he's a mystery wrapped in enigma," Woodling said. But SubGenius members manage to keep their leader in the public eye. His face, originally lifted from the generic clip-art created to illustrate telephone books, turns up in subway stations and bathrooms, on sidewalks and on liner notes of records by the rock group Devo.

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From Lady Mariah

Well, it is the Witching Hour 12:00 a.m. and I found a piece of paper and pen. I thought I would write to tell everyone I will not be writing for a while because I am working--yes, I said work! I am a Security Guard, and I work for an international Security Service and I got top clearance. Who said witches can't be trusted to guard people's valuables and business and their bodies. I love the last one (bodies). I promised I would throw myself across a big handsome man and protect him. I have been working seven days a week, 10 to 12 hours a day or night.

I will share with everyone an awesome feeling that I go through. Picture yourself walking through a strange house at night, all alone. You walk in each room checking windows and doors and open dark rooms and walk down dark stairs. Everyone knows that feeling and everyone hopes they don't meet someone. Well, change the house into a large office building with long halls, staircases, hundreds of dark rooms to check and you hear strange sounds of the building and equipment. Boy oh boy do you have to control your thinking and not think of scary things or you will be a space case before your hours are over.

One night eight men were drunk and fighting and tearing each other's clothes off and just little old me to stop it. Boy! Was that a challenge. I have experienced a lot of things on this life's road I am taking now. I love doing this. My boss lets me get time off to give my lecture on Witchcraft at the college. So if you don't see anything that I'm writing it's because I am just too tired to write. But if I have a brainstorm who knows, I might write again.

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There is a way of listening that surpasses all compliments.

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From Moon Web

Moon Web is a group of witches and pagans who join energies in healing and peace efforts. We do rituals together approximately four times during every thirteen month lunar cycle. We direct our energies appropriately to the Moon's phases: new, dark, or full. The upcoming Moon Web is planned for January 30th, 1986. At that time, which is a waning Moon, we plan to do a ritual for the removal of barriers to knowledge, for the healing of AIDS. We choose this time partly because the asteroid, Pallas (Athena) goes direct in Gemini.

Pallas is intimately connected with immunology. Her shield protects from invasion and can reflect the light of the Moon to dissolve homophobia and other barriers to healing knowledge. On her shield is the caduseus, whose snakes can discover new connections, for Pallas is a creator of patterns, such as the genetic code. In this ritual we invoke Pallas for medical knowledge.

We will also call on the power of the great goddess Brigit, who heals and purifies with fire. On the following eve we look for a quickening of knowledge for illumination.

We will begin the ritual with purification and circle casting according to personal practice. We will begin at 7:00 p.m., if possible to link up with an international network for the healing of AIDS. After creating sacred space, we will light the cauldron fire and call on the goddess Brigit to burn up the barriers to knowledge, including social prejudice and homophobia; to clear the way for new knowledge.

As the fire dies down we light candles for the illumination that we seek. We call on the power of Pallas Athena in her aspect as Hygieia. We ask that cures for AIDS be found and that their testing may be speedy and safe. We ask for personal transformation and understanding, especially for the sick, for though a cure may be found, many will still die. We ask for education about health and safe sex.

It has been suggested that we may want to make or draw shields to symbolize protection and healing. Each of us may decide how we want to use the symbolic potential of the goddesses Brigit and Athena. Perhaps we could call on the owl of Athena for insight and practical solution.

After opening the circle, think about other rituals that we might do together, and send your ideas to Moon Web c/o Bone

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From Moon Web (cont.)

Blossom, 315 Precita ST, San Francisco, CA 94110. Newcomers may join with a yearly donation of $1.00 or more.

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Open Letter to Tarostar from Blacksun

I wish to thank you for your comments about my article, "The Law of an Anarchist." I believe that you have shown me some interesting ideas that I must admit I had not considered. But I believe that there is a misunderstanding which can be easily cleared up. We are both using a word, "law," but the meaning is different for each of us.

You claim that I have not once mentioned the God/Goddess as the source of Craft Law. And you rightly state that it is through the "true laws of the Mystery Religion that Adepts of the Future will be trained and taught." And you advise that we should not seek to please persons with our laws, but make them to reflect the Diety. All that you say is good and wise, but it demonstrates that what we are doing in creating what we call "The Laws" was not clear to you when I wrote the article. Perhaps I can help clear things up.

The persons that initiated me had come from a circle which had experienced considerable trouble due to lack of understanding between leaders of that circle and other circle leaders within the same general area. These quarrels were mostly because nobody had bothered to explore what would be considered "proper" behaviour by the general Craft community of that area. We are talking about hundreds of people, all of whom knew one another as Craft brothers and sisters. When such a community exists, there are currents of energy which sometimes will contend with one another. And there are people who will strive to make their ideas accepted. These were wise and just people, but they were individuals. And, as individuals, they had differing perceptions of the God/Goddess. They were not evil people, but they were in positions which demanded that they make decisions which other wise people may not agree with.

Thus conflict arose, and it was difficult for those who had love and trust in their teachers to know where the truth was. And so, for the benefit of the Craft, it was decided that some guidelines should be established to prevent misunderstandings and to guide the neophytes so they might not be

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Open Letter to Tarostar (cont.) from Blacksun

drowned in troubled waters. And thus an etiquette was written down and accepted so that others might know by what standard to judge. This came to be known as the Laws and it helped to make love and trust more easily brought to the circles.

These laws were for order and discipline. They were not, nor did they intend to be, theological in nature. They did not strive to inspire; they were for understanding how to act and interact so that tension, mistrust, jealousies and strife of all kinds would never find a breeding ground in the circles of the Craft.

Lady Fauna was correct when she noted after your article that the writing of the laws of the God/Goddess is presumptuous on the part of man. But I shudder to think what would happen if we did not try. I applaud your efforts and those of the others who contributed to your coven's collected works. I would love to hear more of these writings, as I am sure that many would profit by them.

I am content in the knowledge that the God and the Goddess are within us all and their true wisdom can be a guiding force if we but let it. As you have already stated in your article, many groups have insight, but not one contains it all. I would hope that we may share our magic in love and trust. Your work and mine are not that different; we both follow the dictates of our vision. Mine also was about nine or ten years ago. It was the night that my priestess/wife and I met. The Full Moon Goddess took hold of me and gave me a vision which has been as a commandment to me ever since.

But it is not my nature to ponder enigmas overly long. I can be of service in other ways. And if those ways can help you, I would be honored if you would allow me to share with you.

Ed note (LF): That didn't happen to be an eclipsed moon, did it?

Thanks for the clarification (Well, why didn't you say so?) No, really. I thought what Tarostar thought... I guess we've proved your point. Maybe somebody from COG will see this and do an article on tribal organization and ground rules, or something. I think we'd all like to see more....

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From Rhea

Thanks to Tarostar for sharing his thoughts on what is going on in Atlanta. We appreciate his advice, yet we feel a few comments from our perspective may be in order.

Our outdoor temple was located on private property, almost a mile from the highway, at the end of a private road which we tried to keep chained. As the land was posted, we didn't feel we had too much reason for concern. Needless to say, "ritual equipment," per se, was never left at the site, at the mercy of the elements or intruders. However, as the temple was considered a permanent site, many hours and much energy were expended in building the stone altar, temple walls, and entrances. Why shouldn't our temples stand permanently, as do those of other faiths?

Clear away the garbage and start over again without saying anything to anyone? Why? So that the ones guilty of this desecration, or others of their ilk, can feel free to repeat their actions, against us or someone else, knowing they have gone unpunished? No, thanks. There is legal recourse against such actions, according to the laws of this land, and that is the way we choose to take.

We were not the ones to involve the media--the others called them in before we were even aware that any dissension existed. In fact, we have not initiated any media contact--they have gone out of their way to contact us. To date their responses and reports have been very positive and favorable to us. Yes, the "flap" involved the entire community, and well it should--we are a part of this community--one is the whole and the whole is one, and what affects one part affects all.

As for this being "their" show--sorry to destroy anyone's illusions, but this is one time public sympathy is on our side! We are not the ones being denounced, for a change. We must admit it is a good feeling!

We would also like to clear up one point: we are not on a crusade against Christians. In actuality, some of our strongest defenders have been of the Christian faith, and they abhor the actions of those others as much as we do. In any religion, as in any facet of life, you will find the "lunatic fringe," and we do not denounce all Christians because of the few who claim to be such, yet act in a manner contrary to their own teachings.

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From Rhea (cont.)

We have not sought, nor do we welcome, the situation in which we find ourselves. We are peaceful people, with many other things we would prefer to do with our time and energy than to contend with such dissension. But we will not run and hide, nor will we continue to allow others to persecute us because of our religion without rebuttal. The "Old Laws" served their purpose in their times, and many of them are as valid today as they were in centuries past. However, all things change as time passes. Before the days of the Inquisition the Lord and Lady were worshipped openly and that predates the "old laws." Which way would you think would be most pleasing to the Gods?

As for using our Craft to work against those who seek to do us harm, we do not advocate such actions. We strive to protect ourselves by defense, and leave the offense to higher powers, knowing that each person must answer for all acts of each lifetime. As for delving into someone else's past, each man's secrets are his own possessions, and to steal a man's secrets is worse than stealing his gold.

Are we learning anything from this situation? Yes! We are learning that there are multitudes of people, of many different faiths, who are tolerant and understanding, and who advocate the right of all to live by the rede, "And it harm none...," regardless of how it is phrased. They may not agree with our beliefs, but they believe in our right to follow them as we see fit, and they will stand beside us to fight for those rights. Most importantly, we are learning that when we stop skulking in the shadows, acting as though we have something to be ashamed of, to be hidden as if it were unclean, and bring our basic beliefs into the light where they may be seen in all their beauty, others begin to cease to fear us and our beliefs.

We are not trying to be "Activists for Witches' Rights." But we are, and will continue, working for our own rights. If others benefit from what we accomplish, so much the better. Each person must make their own decision as to the course of action they will take--to step forward or to remain "in the closet," and we would not presume to attempt to tell any individual what they should, or should not, do. As individuals, and as a group, we plan to continue moving forward, in peace and with love for all, yet, determined to exercise our right to worship as we please. We have no illusions, realizing that there will always be negative reactions from the few, and that

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From Rhea (cont.)

we may have to defend our rights and our beliefs time and time again, as have those of all faiths at some time in their history.

We have weighed the benefits and the disadvantages of taking a public stand, and, being natural optimists (as all witches are optimists, for we must believe we will get what we ask for or we would never get it!), we believe the long-term advantages will far outweigh the disadvantages. We may have to work for what we get, but anything worth having is worth working for. In the Charge of our Coven we pledge "to hold the honor of the Craft as we would our own...." Having given our pledge, how could we act otherwise?

To Katherine of COTOR: Your question regarding the choice of names is one we deal with when working with our students. Our students are told to select such a name in the hopes that the name will be an inspiration to them, and they should strive to live up to the qualities associated with that name. They are required to do extensive research into the history, meaning, and qualities of the name before they may adopt it, and to be sure that this is the aspect they most want to emulate. We find that as our students grow, many tend to change names as new levels of attainment are reached, reflecting their own personal growth. I can't speak for everyone, but many Crafters have many names. For example, "Rhea" is my public Craft name, and I am much more comfortable with it than I am with my given name. However, it is not used in Circle except when we are doing an open/public ritual. There is my Circle name, used for inner circle workings, and another one, never spoken to anyone "except the Gods" (and never spoken aloud), used only in "inner circle of inner circle." About the only real reason I can give for the practice is that it is rather like naming your son "Junior" hoping he'll grow up to be just like Daddy!

To Dean and Lady F: Thanks for keeping us informed on current matters of concern and interest to all of us. As the old saying goes, "Knowledge is power," and being informed on an issue is Knowledge.

Many thanks to Judy for her continuing update on the quakes. As one who strongly feels that Earth changes are on their way, and with the complete lack of comprehensive reporting by the media (think they are afraid of panic if the true numbers ever come out), I appreciate the information. A number of us here attempt to keep up with such, but find so little in the news.

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From Albion and Bonnie

We would like to respond to the article by Scarecrow and Moon-dancer in the last issue of the GNL. First off, the Native American people regard all of North America as theirs--they were, as we all know, the original caretakers of this turtle island that we call the United States, and Canada, as well, and they felt that all of the land was "sacred."

While neither of us or any intelligent pagan that we've ever met would go to a Native American Reservation and try to take over a sacred site to perform our rites or rituals, there are other sites that in the distant past were used by the Indians, and for various reasons, are no longer used. I personally can see no reason why the power that was worked with by Native Americans who were wise enough to know that a place had Power and the pulse of the Earth Mother was particularly strong there could not be used by other more modern pagans, that is, if they too are attuned to the place, and any guardian spirits that are left there to carry out their functions also wish the site or place to be used by any person or persons for psychic or magical work.

There are, on the other hand, guardians at such places as burial grounds (remember the movie, Jeremiah Johnson?) that I for one would not wish to "activate" or set in motion. This was true with the Celts as well as the Native Americans. There were places that were guarded and not meant to be tampered with except by those who knew exactly what they were doing.

I personally find it sad that so little of this country is in Native American safekeeping when it was all their country, but I also fear a case of "white guilt," is uncalled for here as well--the Earth is screaming for our help, and I don't really feel that the Earth Mother cares what color our skin is, or what culture we come from.

The Ancient Sites that are in dis-use are among many such places all across our planet. We are in a unique position as Americans in having so much wilderness to work with, much of it pretty short driving time from large cities, surely it would help to revitalize the Earth to "awaken" these Holy Places once again, and to become Guardians and caretakers ourselves, as the Indians were before us.

We would be interested to hear the views of other pagans and witches on this subject.

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A robust belly laugh is not only healthy medicine for the psyche, but is also good for one's physical well-being. In addition to aiding the digestive process and easing tension, it injects six times as much oxygen into the system as a deep breath. And for youth-conscious chucklers, it gives inactive facial and chest muscles a much needed workout.

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Other Stuff

From G & A Enterprises, 30310 Circle R LA, Valley Center, CA 92082. Your name and address were found in the 1984-85 edition of the Circle Guide to Pagan Resources. The Grove Book Service specializes in esoteric/occult books and tapes, and offers something unique in the entire country: a discount occult book service with very large selection from many different publishers. Anyone who desires one may obtain a free catalogue by writing to request it at the above address. Many thanks.

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MANY THANKS to Sebastiana for the Good Fortune Bean Pot. We've fixed half already and the puppies loved the popcorn.

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The AMHA Research Report is a 24-page quarterly periodical, the primary focus of which is highlights of the most recent medical and health-related trends. These journal abstracts and articles reflect the goal of AMHA which is an objective clearinghouse of information for alternative treatments (traditional and non-traditional) for all health problems. We are non-judgmental in our journalistic approach, and seek only to keep the professional and layperson informed of what alternatives are currently available that appear to have any success rate, in order to ensure freedom of choice. A subscription to our research report is $30 per year. Association for Medical and Health Alternatives, Inc., POB 112, Clearwater, FL 33517.

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From Spirit Speaks. A new journal, Spirit Speaks, unique in concept and approach, has been born. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that every word in every issue is material received from "Spirit sources" beings not currently inhabiting physical bodies but speaking through others who are.

Rather than being a journal of "The" truth of a single individual, Spirit Speaks is a collection of material from diverse Spirit Teachers compiled into a magazine/journal format. Since the teachers are all different (one a Tibetan Monk, another an 18th-century British Doctor, a couple of Oriental philosophers, a few beings from other planets, etc.) their points-of-view are different. Even with the differences though, common threads of understanding run throughout each issue.

(cont. next page)

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Other Stuff (cont.)

Editor Molli Nickell explains, "The purpose of Spirit Speaks is to disseminate recently-channeled and timely information from the Spirit Realm to assist us in better understanding ourselves and our chosen purpose on Earth at this special time in the planet's, and our own evolution. The teachings are presented in a style we term "spiritual psychology"--applicable to all life situations and to all people.

The first issue explored reincarnation with emphasis on comprehending the mystery of oneness through experiencing different lifetimes and different life situations, each one consciously chosen by us beforehand.

The second issue focused on upcoming (and current) Earth changes. Bizarre weather patterns, a possible pole shift, the greenhouse effect, ice ages, being rescued (or not) by extra-terrestrials are among the items covered. The prevailing viewpoint seems to be that man and his consciousness will decide the future and determine how extensive any earth changes will be.

The third issue focused on the nature of reality. While one spirit suggests that "What you create is an expression of what you believe," another tells us, "Don't be afraid of changing your realities. Try a new one as you would a coat to see if it does fit or doesn't fit, then wear it for a while until you find something better." All advise that our reality is what we make it and we can learn to consciously change this to suit our needs. In other words, we are always the creators, never the victims.

For further information, contact Molli Nickell, Spirit Speaks, POB 84304, Los Angeles, CA 90073.

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The largest number that can be written with three digits is

$$9^{99}$$

Which means 9 multiplied by itself 387,420,489 times. This number is so large that written in digits it would reach from Kansas City to New York. That number of grains of sand would cover the entire earth to a depth of 10 miles. The number of snowflakes that have fallen since the earth began does not even approach this number. Interesting?

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A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies.
--Oscar Wilde

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Review of Stormclouds by dean

Title: Stormclouds
Volume: 6 pages, 8 1/2 x 11
Contents: Editorial comments and contributor opinions.
Price: Free, but contributions are appreciated.
Publication Schedule: 8 times yearly--we'll see.

Would you like to have a collector's item? Were short-lived pagan publications not so abundant, Stormclouds would probably turn out to be just that. It will be interesting to see how long a supposed pagan publication which comes a tad too close to advocating violent revolution can keep it up.

Actually, by the time I had finished Mathgan's article which ended at the top of page 5, I had decided that ole dopey me had missed something; perhaps this was some brilliant, New Wave satire. All I needed to do was adjust my perspective and the hilarity would surely have me rolling in the aisles. Gleefully, I flipped back to the beginning, put on a pair of cheap sunglasses, and reread pages one through the top of five. Mathgan's commentary on what's the matter with the pagan world still made me almost smile, but if there was a secondary layer of meaning to the words on the pages it eluded me. The rest of pages 5 and 6 did not light up my life, so I tossed the newsletter along with the cheap sunglasses.

The theme is one that is not new, nor is it a solely East Coast phenomena. It might be stated, "Mama said don't mess with me no more!" If a pagan is locked up by the police and we don't think s/he broke one of Our laws, then we'll just kidnap some of them 'til they turn all of us loose. But not all pagans will be so highly prized and protected. According to the editors, first it will be necessary to pick a few elders who will kick out all the neatsy keen nouveaux pagan pacificists, eclectics, occult shop operators, and anybody else we don't like a whole lot; then its us or them, baby.

If you decide to subscribe, follow the lead of the editors: do not mention your name, use a box address: Stormclouds, c/o Pagansword, St. 432, Dept. D., 263 A W. 19th ST, New York, NY 10011.

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Too many people are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved.

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From the REI Fall/Winter 1985 Catalog

There is a story of a Hopi Indian child who often played with stones; she would hold them close to one another and sit absolutely still, spellbound. When asked what she was doing, she'd answer, "I'm listening to the stones talking."

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A young author asked Stephen Leacock what tricks of the trade he employed when he sat down to write. "No tricks," said the humorist. "I seat myself at my desk, wait until an idea occurs and then jot it down." "You make writing seem so simple." "Writing is simple," replied Leacock, "It's the occuring that's difficult."

And so it seems it's been with our contributors these days. Remember folks, this is YOUR newsletter. If you don't write articles and send them in, you may find yourself without a newsletter, or worse yet, 35 pages of Fauna's meanderings and fillers.... We'll be looking forward to your articles... soon!!!!

That's all for this month. Enjoy life.

Blessed Be,

dean, Lady Fauna &
the Georgians

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