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NEWS

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AUG 85

What's this all about?

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by Chan Davis

When Bill London asked me to edit this month's Newsletter, which was to be dedicated to women, I was quite flattered and jumped at the opportunity. His idea was to have the newsletter put together entirely by women, so he stepped aside to let me run the show. What better way, I thought, to wrap up my involvement with the Moscow Food Co-op before taking off for adventure in the Middle East.*

To be honest, I had no idea as to what kind of content the newsletter should have. What kind of women's issues would be directly related to the food co-op? Or what kind of Co-op issues would be directly related to women?

Luckily, Bill left me his phone number and checked up on me periodically to see how things were going. Eventually the thing came together and I've compiled some features which I think might be of interest to both the men and women of the co-op.

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Tea: a cup full of superstitions

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by Chan Davis

Tea became known as a ladies' drink in England in the 1700s when women were denied the opportunity to drink coffee or alcohol with the men. The merchants and politicians of the day shaped the life of the British Empire in the "coffee house," and women were strictly prohibited. So they started their own centers for discussions -- "tea rooms."

Tea became a fashionable beverage to serve friends and a safe drink to serve in mixed company. It even became a conversational piece in itself once people began to develop superstitions about the tea. The most popular was "tea leaf reading." Fortune telling was a popular form of entertainment in those days so its combination with the drink of the day was sure to be a hit. And it was.

Tea leaf readers were invited to all the fashionable tea parties and interpreted the designs left by the leaves in each person's cup. Of course not all teas leave designs in the cup. Good tea leaf reading teas leave a residue of logs and leaves on the side of the cup. The dry leaves will feel coarse to the touch.

English breakfast teas are among the best for reading, and so are most Chinese teas such as Souchong and Imperial Gunpowder Orange Pekoe. But be warned that once a package of tea is opened it begins to lose its flavor. To guard against this loss, empty tea into a metal container, and before replacing the lid, place an orange, into which a series of holes have been punched, on top of the tea. The orange not only flavors the tea but keeps it fresh.

Tea leaf reading aside, there are many other superstitions about tea drinking. Among them:

- *if bubbles in a tea cup can be scooped out before they can reach the side of the cup, money is coming.
- *if milk is put in tea before the sugar, the drinker risks losing a sweetheart.
- *if a girl allows a man to pour a second cup of tea for her, she will fall for his advances or designs.
- *a floating tea leaf means the arrival of a visitor, usually a stranger. And if the leaf is placed on the back of the hand, then tapped with the back of the opposite fist, the number of taps it takes for the leaf to stick to the back of the fist signifies the number of days to pass before the visitor arrives.

Indio Viejo, a cooperative for women

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by Pamela Palmer

A cooperative that serves as a rehabilitation center? It sounds like a good idea, and one that I saw in action on a recent visit to Nicaragua in June. The group I was traveling with had lunch one day at the rehabilitation center restaurant "Indio Viejo" in Leon. After lunch we spoke with Benina Rolas, director of the center, as well as some of the workers, about this unusual co-op.

The co-op consists of a sewing center as well as the restaurant. As we walked to the back room to eat at tables large enough for all of us, we passed by some women working on sewing projects in a room full of sewing machines next to the kitchen. The center began in 1980 with about 40 women, through the help of the Nicaraguan government. Most of the women that train and work here are ex-prostitutes. After the triumph of the revolution in 1979, women soon had the opportunity to leave their old life, come to the center, and learn new skills. Besides learning about sewing and running a restaurant, the women participate in adult education, learning to read and write. Their children also have the opportunity to study without having to pay. For the young children, the government has started preschool development centers (known as C.D.I.). After an average of two years, women leave the center to find jobs elsewhere, leaving room for new groups of women to train at the sewing center and restaurant. The salary of women here is 7200 cordobas per month (at the time equivalent to about \$100 per month).

The director told us that before the revolution the women didn't think much of themselves. Now women are aware of the importance that they play in society, and are educated about the opportunities open to them. They are able to share their concerns with each other through the sisterhood evident in the atmosphere of the co-op.

I asked if the attitude of men towards women had changed since the revolution. The response was that men's attitudes had changed only a little. One woman, speaking of their husbands, said "They used to hit us, now they don't." I was aware of one of the new laws enacted by the Sandinista government that says exploitation of women's bodies may not be used to sell products in advertising. The director of the center also told us of another new law which says a man is responsible for his children. Men can no longer have a child here, a child there, and not care for any of them.

Our group asked about the women's participation in the Nicaraguan elections. The women told us they all voted and that

they felt good about it because they knew who they were voting for, and that the Sandanistas have responded to the needs of the poor. They all felt that the election process itself was fair. When asked about their role in the revolution, one response was "without the participation of women, there isn't any revolution."



"FOR 'TIS IN VAIN TO THINK OR GUESS AT A WOMAN BY APPEARANCES." - BUTLER

Vigil planned to remember Hiroshima

by Megan Guido

Latah SANE (Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy) will hold a candlelight vigil to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, at 7:30 p.m., at Friendship Square in downtown Moscow.

The idea is one of hope, concern and peace. Yet it is also to remember, so as to never repeat the same horror.

Father Sevryn Westbrook, of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pullman, gave the keynote address at Palouse SANE's First Annual Peace Prize last March. He will also open the vigil this year.

Dan Maher, singer, songwriter, and host of KWSU's Inland Folk program, will entertain participants in the vigil with his guitar and songs of peace.

After the vigil, the movie Testament, with Jane Alexander, will be shown free of charge in the Moscow Hotel.

The 1984 Hiroshima vigil in Friendship Square was attended by about 80 people, and this year the group hopes to reach many more Moscow and Pullman residents.

Women find outlet in music

by Jennifer Seidemann

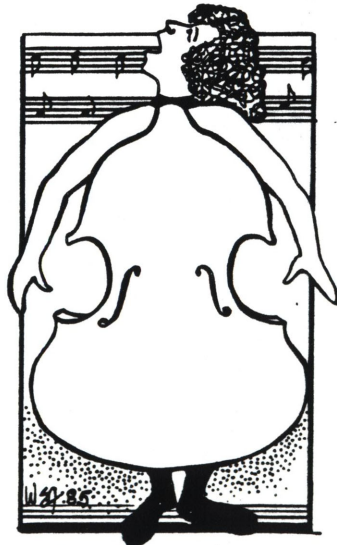
Women's music evolved out of a creative need by women to express their own views. They wanted an outlet that would allow them to share their ideas, concepts and experiences of their own world. To counteract a recording industry dominated by men, women had to develop their own recording labels to express their own music.

Finding a hidden wellspring of talent in other women artists, they gathered together engineers, producers, accountants, instrumentalists, and other essential personnel. What these women created was, in the beginning, political and feminist in nature. This was a reflection of the times (the 1970s). The music today is evolving to reflect not only those views but also the spectrum of everyday living of women. The artists are just now beginning to utilize men's energies as they discover men who are more interested in the music's creation than in money and power.

The following album reviews will give you a clearer idea of what directions the music is going.

Praire Fire by Cris Williamson: This is rock and, for Cris, a return to her Indian roots. She sings of the land in such songs as "Tsunami" (earthquake) and "Colorado Dust-bowl Days." She also wrote a song about Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce and of Crazy Horse. Cris includes love songs and even a song about the badlands. I highly recommend any of Cris' albums -- she is a leader among songwriters and performers. Cris is on Olivia Records.

Open Up by Diane Lindsay: Her debut album, this is a diverse and exciting blend of jazz, blues,



"THE SWEETEST NOISE ON EARTH;
A WOMAN'S TONGUE; A STRING
WHICH HATH NO DISCORD."
- BRYAN W. PROCTOR

classical, and soft rock. Her writing reflects human hopes, weaknesses and struggles with compassion and honesty. Diane, who has been performing with other women artists since the beginning of women's music, is on Cityscape Records.

Big Promise by Sue Fink: This is a punk-rock album debut which has har-hitting lyrics to match a hard beat. Sue is an excellent songwriter and has been writing and performing for many years. Her writing speaks of men's lack of communication with women and also of women's struggle to survive. A well-written album, Sue Fink's Big Promise is on the Ladyslipper label.

A Rainbow Path by Kay Gardener: By the leading composer in healing music, this classical album centers around the body's chakras. It is intended for listening pleasure and relaxation as well as movement and dance, meditation, massage and various disciplines of holistic healing. An absolutely beautiful album on the Ladyslipper label.

For a quick peek into the future of women's albums: Mary Watkins, a leading arranger and composer whose last album was heavy jazz, has a new album out the end of August. News from Olivia, the first women's recording label, tells me that Cris Williamson and friends are creating a Christmas album. Also Olivia is putting together a book-album combination covering the history of women's music. All the latest albums can be heard on my show every Sunday from 6 - 9 p.m. on the alternative radio station KUOI-FM, 89.3 on your dial.

(Jennifer will not be on the air until the last Sunday of August as she is attending the Michigan Women's Music Festival to bring back taped interviews with many of the leading women performers. Be sure to tune in during the time she is gone to hear Peter Basoa's last radio shows before he leaves town to work on his master's degree in Ohio.)



Composting: the organic gardener's best bet

.....

by Corinne Davis

Chemical fertilizers are like heroin, they give the soil a "quick fix." The results are immediate, but the natural nutrients of the soil are burned up in the process. The next time a fertilizer is needed, it will take even more chemicals to get the same results as the original smaller dose. Each dosage will further destroy the natural balance of the soil.

Compost fertilizer works on the opposite principle. Each time the soil is fed organically it adds to the natural components and builds up the nutrients needed for gardening. Since there is no great monetary profit to be made in this system there are no inexpensive commercial organic fertilizers available. However, once the basic fundamentals of quick-composting are understood and with a little extra time and effort, the results will be obvious to all.

The most important thing to remember is never throw away anything which can decompose. This includes most kitchen leftovers, with the exception of meat, which is slow to decompose and attracts all the cats and dogs of the neighborhood. Some dedicated gardeners have been known to collect the neighbors' garbage; some even collect the refuse from the produce departments of the local supermarkets. All donations of grass clippings and leaves should be enthusiastically accepted.

The principle of fast decomposition is very simple. The combination of nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, moisture and warmth cause the natural enzymes to start "cooking" and eating up the matter in the pile. Some organic materials like bark and wood take too long to decompose and are not practical to use in a compost pile.

The compost can be started almost anywhere. If a place is available on cement or pavement, this will prevent some leeching of the nutrients into the soil. If leaves are available they make a good humus base, but a bale of hay or straw will do as well. The cheapest way is to find a farmer that has some rain-damaged hay, but if this isn't available, hay can be purchased in most feed stores. If a shredding machine is not available, simply spread the hay out in a yard or driveway and run over it a few times with the lawnmower. Rake it all into a pile and soak it with a hose, just to the point of saturation. Now any kitchen compost or fresh grass clippings or even some horse manure can be mixed in.

Some people build bins to keep their compost in attractive piles but they can be left out in the open for easier maneuvering. The pile should start to heat up within 24 hours. Keeping

the pile moist, but not wet, is essential from this point on. Every two or three days the pile should be turned and any clumps broken up (usually a pitchfork works best for this) to keep the pile aerated and supplied with fresh oxygen. If the pile starts to cool down, add some fresh grass clippings and it will heat back up to a working temperature. If it becomes slimey, a little gypsum can be added but this usually isn't necessary and it will add to the acidity of the soil. If it is working well, it will give off just a light smell of ammonia as well as being very warm to touch.

In two to four weeks the fertilizer will be ready for use on the garden. If the garden soil is sandy, put the compost on while it is still small broken-down pieces of hay; this mulch will keep the nutrients from running through the sand. If the soil is a tight clay, two or three doses of this will break it down in one summer. If the soil is the right texture, let the compost finish until it is like a rich black dirt, then use it as a side-dressing for your plants. With extra hard clay or extra sandy soil, shredded hay or straw can be put directly on the soil and worked in. Don't, however, add leaves directly to the soil as they will use up nitrogen in the process of decomposing, even though they will return the nitrogen to the soil as completed compost.

An even faster way to compost is with a fifty gallon barrel. A hole must be cut in the side and a door made. The piece cut out of the barrel makes a good door and inexpensive hinges and a hook-and-eye for a latch can be purchased at any hardware store. Place the compost in the barrel, add some moisture, close the door, and simply roll it a couple of turns every day to aerate. The heat contained in the barrel will speed the process to the finished product in about two weeks.

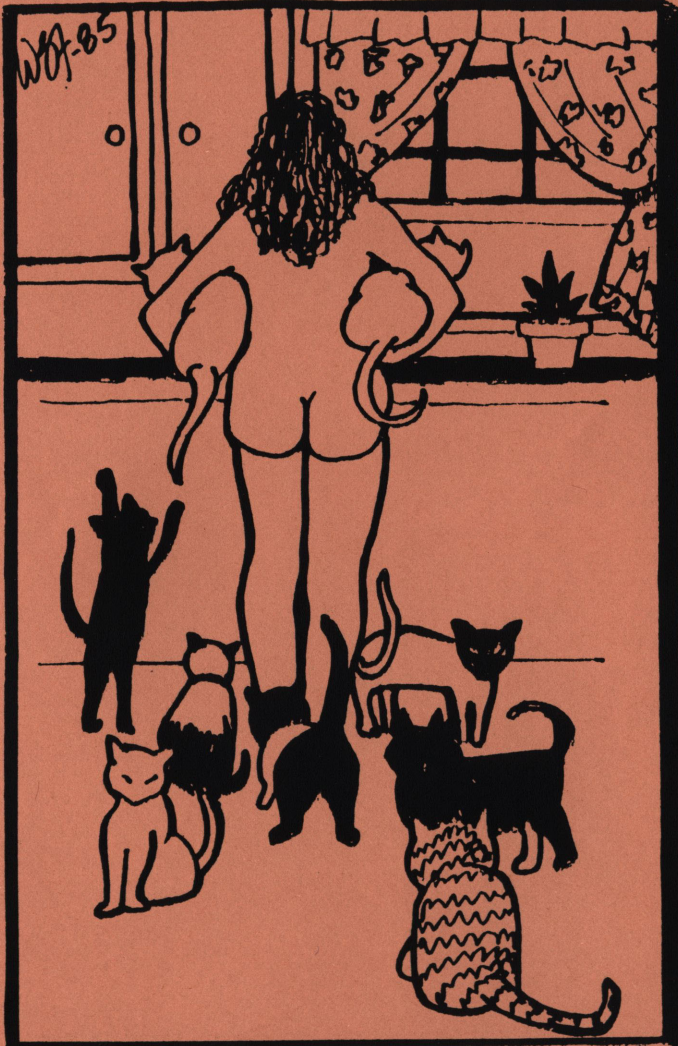


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