

- Often a couple enters homesteading with the male having more "physical" skills while the women have more abstract skills which produce things that are less concrete and less noticeable.
- Learning.
- Struggling.
- Feeling inadequate.
- Comparing yourself. You can't do it as well.
- Taking longer to learn the necessary skills due to less previous experience and to being on call 24 hours a day as a mother.
- Raising kids and role models for them.

-- Gina Willette

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The reading group meetings between now and the next newsletter are:

June 5	So Human an Animal	by Rene Dubos	at Montan's
July 3	Malabar Farm	by Louis Bromfield	TBA
Aug. 7	Woman at the Edge of Time	by Marge Piercy	TBA

Questions? Call Bill Sutkus (287-3759). He might have the answer.
New people are always welcome.

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HOME BIRTH CLASSES. Jill Earl will be teaching another series of classes sponsored by the Association for Childbirth at Home International (ACHI). This is a general information course covering breathing and relaxation techniques, coaching, medical complications, emergency procedures, and care of the newborn. The charge is \$40 for an eight-week course and includes the cost of the handbook. The class will be sometime in mid-August. To register or for more information, call Jill at 769-7393. She'll be away in July, so call before or after.

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NUCLEAR FREEZE MEETING. The next general meeting of the North Country Weapons Freeze Campaign will be held on Sunday, June 12 at 2:30 P.M. in the Potsdam Presbyterian Center. The steering committee would like to encourage any interested people to come. Recognizing that many people feel intimidated by the complexity of the issues raised by the Freeze, part of the meeting will consist of an information-sharing/question & answer session. Literature will be available, as well. Committees will be set up to organize participation in numerous events this summer including: the Women's Peace Encampment at Seneca Army Depot starting July through Labor Day, the International Walk to Stop the Cruise and Pershing II (from Kingston, Ont. to Griffiss Air Force Base) July 19-27, the Martin Luther King Memorial Peace Rally in Washington, D.C. Aug. 27. The Steering Committee will hold workshops this summer and fall for anyone wishing to learn more about the Freeze and related issues.

AQUACULTURE WORKSHOP. On Aug. 19 and 20, the Rodale Acquaculture Project will sponsor a two-day workshop on recirculating aquaculture. In addition to explaining the design of a 100-pound production system, this workshop will focus on integrating fish production with aquaculture in farm ponds. The publicity blurb claims that, "Starting with the basics, the workshop will teach you all you need to know to raise hundreds of pounds of fish using your existing farm pond." For more information, write to Nancy R. Volk, P.O. Box 323, Kutztown, PA 19530.

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WENDELL BERRY COMMITTEE. Anyone interested in helping to plan Wendell Berry's visit this fall should contact Doug Ort, 386-3168.

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NOFA CONFERENCE. The 9th Annual Conference & Celebration of Rural Life will be held July 29, 30, & 31 at Johnson State College, Johnson, Vt. As usual, I suspect there'll be a number of people from this area attending. If you're interested, I'd be glad to give you one of our brochures. John and I have gotten five identical ones so far to various combinations of our names. Call me, Valerie, at 265-5732.

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WILLOW ISLAND RESTAURANT is seeking workers interested in a collective workplace. Previous restaurant experience is not essential. A willingness to work long hours, share responsibilities, and participate in weekly meetings are important requirements. For further information, write or call us at 386-8822. One West Main St., Canton, NY 13617.

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NEXT RLA NEWSLETTER. The next newsletter will come out in August. If you've got any ideas at all of something you might like to write or a topic we should look into, call me, Valerie Ingram, at 265-5732 or Kathy Montan at 379-9218. Even if you don't have time to write it, call Kathy or me with your suggestion, and we'll find someone else with time to follow it up.

If you're looking for ideas to research and/or write about, how about credit unions, self-insurance, or additions/responses to anything in this issue? Illustrations are always appreciated, too. I can't draw a stick figure and usually end up stealing illustrations from books.

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ARTICLE ON RURAL WOMEN. Pat Nelson passed this along from "Rural Network": "I am researching an article about women who are going it alone in rural areas. I am particularly interested in women who are already self-sufficient or who are working toward it. I will guarantee absolute confidentiality of any material used and will not divulge anyone's identity or address without her explicit permission. Anyone interested in participating, please write to: Rae Peak, Cedar Hollow, Route One, Westpoint, TN 38486."

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TRAVELLING? Pat would also like people to know that there is a Travel Network of people willing to host travellers. This is also through "Rural Network." If you are interested, Pat has access to a list of hosts. Call her at 265-8271.

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One Last Note: The North Country Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign has asked if they might use our membership list for mailings, etc. I think this is something that the group as a whole needs to decide. So think about it and let me know what you think (265-5732) or talk about it at the meeting in Rossie.

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Organic Farming Bill Gets New Life

The Organic Farming Bill has a new name and another chance. The measure was defeated in the House by a slim margin (198 to 189) last session in Washington. But there are lots of new faces in both the House and Senate this year, so the bill is being revised and reintroduced—this time called the Agricultural Productivity Improvement Act of 1983.

"The new bill will focus on research and extension studies to develop reliable information about farming systems that will reduce production costs, conserve energy and water, and control soil erosion," says U.S. Rep. James Weaver, D-Ore., author of the measure. "It sets up 12 on-farm studies to collect and analyze data about the effects of a transition from industrial farming practices to systems which enhance productivity (as measured by output per unit of input) and conserve soil, energy and water resources."

Additional studies would be done on 12 established (at least five years) organic farms across the nation.

The bill would also start a program to assist farmers who use intercropping farming systems to maintain an erosion-controlling, nitrogen-fixing vegetative cover.

Finally, it directs the USDA to inventory and assess existing research and extension materials and to recommend new research that will help farmers understand and implement low-input farming practices. The bill would set aside \$3.5 million of the USDA's \$430 million annual research budget for this work.

"We're getting a lot of positive response and we're optimistic about the bill's passage," says Kevin Kirchner, Weaver's aide. "Letters from you to your representative or senator can really help push this bill through," he adds. Please write as soon as possible to: Your Representative, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. The Senate address is: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Studies will focus on farms which rely on crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, off-farm organic waste, mineral-bearing rocks, conservation tillage, conservation irrigation (including low pressure systems and irrigation scheduling), and biological pest control. The USDA is to select farms which have the widest possible variations in soil, land, and climatic conditions.

Information gathered as a result of the measure will be made available through state cooperative extension services and other sources.

Besides calling for this type of research, the bill points out some of the problems with the present agricultural system. "The annual irretrievable loss of billions of tons of precious topsoil through wind and water erosion reduces agricultural productivity and raises the spectre of another dust bowl," the bill states. "Modern, energy-intensive agricultural practices are dangerously dependent on limited global reserves of oil and natural gas. Such practices trap American farmers in a cost-price squeeze which threatens the viability of America's agricultural production." □

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