

FIREWOOD

#1



This is definitely an easy way to build a shelter: you don't need many tools and it is cheap. The invention of this kind of construction made affordable housing available to many people, but it unfortunately involves importing a lot of wood from another source. So, salvage!!

Timber-frame:

This can be a great way to build a structure if you have a lot of timber on your site. It involves making joints in the timbers and fitting them together without the use of nails. It was used to make barns, old farmhouses, and Japanese temples.

By using this method you can create a beautiful strong and natural structure. It uses less wood than a log cabin, and if you log the wood yourself, it could be free. Buying the timbers could be expensive since it requires very thick ones, but logging yourself is not too hard. It does require a few specialized tools like an adze and chisels and possibly a chain-saw and mill attachment and it will mean learning a whole new set of skills. But wood joinery is not hard and it is a lot of fun!

Stone:

Chances are you are not going to have much stone nearby where you are building but if you do, it could be a great building material. Most of the houses in Europe are built with stone. In winter months stone takes a long time to heat up, but once it is warm, it holds the heat very well. The old "black houses" of Scotland and Ireland are beautiful, and fit into the landscape perfectly. They have thatched or sod roofs and they are very cozy and quiet inside with walls around three feet thick.

Tipis and Gers:

You might want to consider a tipi or ger as a shelter. A ger is the Mongolian name for a yurt and is what they prefer them to be called (the word yurt is what the Russians called them when they occupied Mongolia). Both shelters are great for squatting on land. Hey, you are just camping, right?!

You can sow a tipi or a yurt yourself, but I could not find waterproof canvas cheap enough to make it worthwhile, so I ended up buying one. It was not very expensive for a home. Gers are quite a lot more expensive than tipis, but I think they would make a better permanent shelter. To tell the truth, I didn't think that my tipi was very warm in the winter months, even though I had a liner in it. I think they are great for temporary nomadic structures, but they are incredibly inefficient for heating. They are warm if you have a fire going constantly. I put a wood stove in mine. I lived for a while with an open fire and I couldn't get it to work, so I got a tiny sheet-metal wood-stove for only \$30 called the New-wave stove. It's a life (or lung) saver.

Pole frame:

There is a lot to be said for this kind of building. It is free and it doesn't leave a trace on the land. These buildings are the reason why there is

The Anarchist Victory Garden

Boycott war, Capitalism, and boredom. grow your own food! Nothing beats it! Put a seed in the ground, get your hands dirty, pick and cook the most delicious, fresh food. Get to know the seasons and the local snails. Best of all, you'll never run out of things to learn, the garden is full of surprises.

One of the main areas of research at our farm is in what has been dubbed "Paradise Gardening."* We want to turn our little five acres into an edible paradise. Fortunately nature has already done most of this for us, and if we were knowledgeable enough, we should be able to live off of the land just as it is. We would probably have to fish and gather shellfish as well in order to survive, and some of us are already doing that; but the idea of paradise gardening is that it is a kind of step between hunting and gathering and agriculture, although it's aim is to loose the agriculture part completely. It's kind of like extreme permaculture. Many hunting and gathering cultures practiced this kind of "gardening" simply by taking care of and tending the plants they were gathering from, ensuring that nothing was never depleted.

One way to move in this direction is to plant a lot of perennials. Annuals require an amazing amount of work and must be replanted every year. We still have a large garden space dedicated to annuals, and with permaculture methods and seed saving, we hope to reduce the work and the cost of this part of our garden. Another problem with a garden of annuals is the nutrient depletion of the soil, but we are taking care of that problem with our handy automatic humanure factory. Perennials are the backbone of the paradise garden. Fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, bamboos, artichokes and many other plants can provide an incredible amount of food with just about zero work involved.

It is hard to find out information about lesser-known perennial plants. Many cultures all over the world grow their own varieties of perennial plants, which they use as staples. One of our goals is to find as many of these perennials as possible and give them a try. It would also be interesting to do some research into annuals that are good at self-seeding and would grow on their own if left alone, such as the old onion that I left to seed and the next year hundreds of little onions popped up! Forget about planting in rows!

*The idea of paradise gardening is laid out very well in the article written by Joe Hollis that can be found on the internet and also in a slightly different version in the book "Avant Gardening."

On our property we are growing a mixture of sizes. We planted a bunch of semi-dwarfs for food soon, but we are also planting a bunch of full-size trees. This method works out well because just about when your dwarfed trees are dying, the full-size ones are beginning to fruit. We also found a company that sells seedling of trees for very little money. These will take quite a while to grow into full size trees, but we figured why not plant them now and have a forest of fruit and nut trees in a decade or two!

luckily didn't get caught!

Well, now that the hard part is over, time to put together your cabin. Frame-built structures go up real fast, you'll be surprised. The basic frame of my cabin with attached wood-shop went up in less than a week, with just myself working on it. It is a good idea to get the roof up as quickly as possible so that the floor does not get too wet. Don't be worried about having to lift heavy things, through proper leverage you can move things many times your own weight. I am a fairly medium sized gal, and I didn't find anything in building my cabin that I didn't have the strength to do. When raising the walls, that is the only time you will need a friend to help, simply because you need someone else to hold the wall while you nail in temporary supports. I won't go into the details of framing your cabin here, you should be able to find a decent book with diagrams on how to do it. It is really so easy, building a house frame-style can be done quickly and easily.

You won't need many tools to build your cabin, and definitely no power tools are necessary. Cutting plywood is the only thing that takes a bit more sweat without power tools, but it is really not that hard. You should be able to build your entire cabin with: a hammer, a framing square, a tape measure (preferably 20-30 feet), a level, a saw and a pencil.

That's it, now get to it! The hammer and nails are calling you, and that sweet smell of freshly cut wood is waiting.

Materials:

It is hard to decide what materials to use when building a shelter. There are so many things to consider and it is hard to predict what will be the best for a situation. When looking for ideas to build my cabin I researched many different methods and materials and I will attempt to give some of the pluses and minuses here. To me, the ultimate thing to look for in a structure is that it uses the least amount of resources as possible. I also like to ask myself, what will the building site look like in years to come? Will it leave behind lots of material, or will it just disappear into the surroundings without leaving a trace. Ultimately I believe that using as much of what you already have is always the best choice.

Straw-bale:

I think that straw-bale construction has a lot of potential, but if you pick up most books about the subject, all they are concerned with is meeting the expectations of yuppies and building inspectors. Most books on the subject really are a waste of time to the DIY builder, although there is information out there.

Some things to remember: there are two types of straw-bale house, with load-bearing walls, or without. If you have a building with load-bearing walls, the roof is resting directly on top of the straw-bale walls, and if you don't have load-bearing walls, you are basically building a frame house, and

a ground cover of white clover in the orchard area. This attracts bees for pollination, will fix nitrogen in the soil, and keep the grass down.

So far we have planted: Liberty Apple, Chehalis Apple, a five-way (grafted) Japanese pear, a 3 way apricot, a 4 way cherry, a frost peach, a ginkgo, and a walnut.

I hope to do an article in every issue about our research into paradise gardening and give you updates on our garden.

Knoydart

Land ownership in Scotland is one of the most oppressive situations facing human rights in the "first world". It is basically a feudal system and it has changed little since medieval times. Wealthy landowners control most of Scotland, their estates stretching for thousands of acres and including entire villages. Most of the landlords are either nobles (lords, barons etc.) or wealthy people from England or other countries. The system that exists is known as the crofting system, where crofters rent the land on which they live and work from the landlord, or "laird", as he is called. Many of these crofting families have lived and worked on their land for generations, some further back than people can recall. Yet these families are living a life that is determined by the landlord. The laird has complete power over the entire community of crofters, can sell "his" land at any moment, makes his own laws, and sets the tone for the entire community.

From the mid 1700's and even up into the mid 1900's landlords displaced tens of thousands of men, women, and children from their homes, usually forcibly and brutally (many were massacred). They were forced to scrape together money to take rotten, disease-ridden ships away from their homeland. Many died on these ships.

I don't have to walk far from here to come across a cleared village. You can still see rows of ruined houses, farm walls, and even the mounds of dirt where people once grew potatoes.

The landlords had decided that tenants were no longer as profitable as sheep. So sheep moved in, and they are still here... The population in these areas has never recovered, and neither has the Gaelic language. There are hundreds of heartbreaking songs written in Gaelic about this time, the Gaelic world was broken. These times are known as "the Clearances" and mark the devastating and brutal time of ethnic cleansing that was carried out against the Gaels.

Recently I have been staying in Scotland in a place that overlooks a peninsula of land called Knoydart. On one side of the peninsula lies Loch Nevis (Loch Heaven in Gaelic) and on the other side lies Loch Hourn (Loch Hell in Gaelic). It is one of the most desolate places in Scotland and has only a couple villages on it with a total of about 60 people that live there. The only way to reach these homes is by water, or a twenty-mile hike through mountainous wilderness.

but once we started talking to the guy, he quickly realized that we didn't have lot of money to spend and switched from the "yuppie price" to the "kid building a cabin" price. They had neat old doors, old paned windows with peeling paint, some wood, metal for roofs, hinges and handles, we even bought an old ship's stove for wood heat. It was great, we just let our imaginations take over and let what materials were available plan what our cabin would look like.

There are many other ways of finding cheap or free wood. If there is a building being demolished or gutted, dive the dumpster. If there is a building being built, check around the building site for scraps. If you're near a sawmill, ask for some off-cuts. We found a ton of driftwood at the beach that worked well for trim, stairs, railings and shelves, and it looked really cool. Look in the paper for lumberyards that are going out of business: nails and other things are sold for real cheap.

The next thing that I did was to make a plan. When you are using what is called "dimensional lumber" (i.e. 2x4s, 2x8s 4x4s etc.) you can look in a good book to find out what you will need to use where. For instance, for a floor of a certain size, they'll recommend 2x8's spaced every 12 inches (this is called 12 inch centers). Books are great for helping you start out, but here are a few ways to bend the rules to save some wood and money without sacrificing the strength of the structure (books are written with building codes in mind, but we don't care about those!).

It depends on what you are using for the sheathing (outside covering i.e. plywood etc.) but can generally make the centers larger. Move them from 12 to 16 inch, or 16 to 24 inches apart. This is a great way to save wood.

- The width of the wood can also be smaller in some cases. If the span is not too long, you can usually reduce a 2x10 to a 2x8 or a 2x 12 to a 2x 10. In spans greater than 12 feet, don't do this too much.
- Keep your building small. Make your small space as efficient as possible. Think about storage under beds, benches, or up high. When you start to make spans over 16 feet, lumber gets a lot more expensive because you'll need thicker timbers.
- Be creative, but if you're going for cheap, remember that a box is the most efficient shape to build. Think in terms of dimensional lumber. Plan your building to be in feet, in multiples of 2's 4's and 8 feet. This is more important if you're using plywood and avoids having to cut off pieces and waste wood.

of risking arrest. The men decided to follow his advice and what followed were a crooked court session, several appeals that went unanswered, and the continued depopulation of Knoydart. The words of one of the men. involved speak for themselves:

Once in the hands of the lawyers and politicians the land raid was doomed to failure. I was in favor of sticking on the land, you know, sticking on the same as they did in the olden days. But this lawyer got us round to thinking that these modern days such things would not need to take place: do it in the legal way, you know and it would work out pretty good. But I'm afraid that was our downfall. We should have stuck on the land and done as the old boys in the olden days had done-stick on the ground till they put you in jail. We all thought it was a very good idea that it was going to be legal, but afterwards when we saw the whole thing and you look back and realize, it didn't pay to be doing it the modern way. Anything was better than the way it was.

Eventually Lord Brocket sold out and left for the south (England). But not before it was too late. Now Knoydart is still used as a hunting estate by its current owners, and the population has dwindled to 60 people. The glen where the land raids took place is empty now:

Only the homes of Highland Clearance victims remain, together with land on which the 1948 raid took place. Looking back those 40 years I do not regret having been part of the saga. We only stood up for our rights. Had we succeeded, Knoydart would certainly be a different place from what it is today. It failed and the result was the death of a long established native community by an English landlord in a mini Highland Clearance.

Ceartas!

Ann an 1948, faisg air a charn seo, ghlac Seanchdnar Chnoideart fearann gus croitean a dheanamh dhaibh fhein. Gad ceud bliadhna 'sann air a' mhodh seo a fhuair an Gaidheal seilbh air criomag tir a shinnsre. Tha a stri na brosnachadh do gach ginealach ur de dh' Albannaich a choir a sheasamh le ceartas. 'Sann le fearg a sheallas eachdraidh air na laghannan ainneartach a dh' fhuadaich cultar araidh as an aite bhoidheach seo cha mhor gu tur.

Justice!

In 1948, near this cairn, Seven Men of Knoydart staked claims to secure a place to live and work. For over a century Highlanders had been forced to use land raids to gain a

almost no sign that hunter-gatherers lived here for a million years.

A pole building can come in many shapes and sizes. Its basic structure is made by the poles (small tress) tied together with rope (or nails) and then covered with small branches, driftwood, or whatever you can find.

We built a very strong pole structure on our land and it only took half a day. We used sheet metal for a rood and left the sides open and used it for a kitchen with a small campfire under the roof as well. It looks beautiful; it fits right into the surroundings. there are so many variations to explore, you could bend the ples or make a long house. Look to Native American designs for inspiration. I have even seen buildings made like this and sheathed in metal from oil drums hammered out. Just use what you can find!

“Creative Action”

If all we are trying to do is to protest in an “acceptable” way, we will not go very far. Who, in the end, are we trying to be acceptable to? If we are trying to meet some idea of acceptable action, we are catering to the ideas of control that we are protesting against in the first place. We do not have to agree with everyone, nor do we have to join in with them, but if we are asking for a freer world, as we do in protest, we must accept that people will have different ways of pointing out injustice.

Protest is a form of expression. It is an art form and just as the boundaries of art must always be pushed, so must our expression in the form of protest be allowed to show itself. Our different forms of expression are what make the world a colorful and interesting place. This creative energy is what can drive and shape protest in the moment of action. Beyond our barriers lies freedom.

Contact info:

To find out the quickest and easiest way to contact me to get a copy, distribute this zinc or just to rant or say hello look up: <http://www.geocities.com/firewoodzine>

Or, if you don't like to go near those computer things, write to me at: Sine Firewood 110 Box 1315 Port Townsend, WA 98368

Issues are \$1 or a trade zine, demo, burrito... I'll review any zine, demo or burrito you send me in the next issue.

Thanks!

When choosing our fruit trees, we looked for several things. I believe the most important factor in choosing a fruit tree for an organic garden is disease resistance. There are particular diseases that are serious problems for certain fruit trees, but some varieties have been bred to resist these. If you don't want to spray chemicals on your trees, it is worth looking into these varieties. Another important factor for us is storage. Some fruits store longer than others, and canning can be hard work, so the longer we can store something "dry" the better. Nuts store very well, and so do some varieties of apples and pears.

You may also want to look into the possibility of buying native or wild fruit trees. There are many kinds of wild fruit trees that grow in North America including apples, pears, cherries, nuts, and the elusive paw-paw, one of the only native fruit trees in North America. Wild and native species are great because they will be naturally disease resistant in their area, and perfectly suited to the climate. You could even get crazy and find some local trees and graft your own rootstocks.

To me this is what paradise gardening is all about, and we hope to do lots of experimenting with this in the seasons to come. There used to be an old apple tree growing in the middle of the woods behind my family's farm. It was planted almost 150 years ago and it still bore fruit! The fruit on wild and native trees is generally smaller and bitterer, but the bitterer a fruit is, the longer it will store. The sweeter a fruit is bred to be, the sooner it will rot. To me that is not much of a price to pay.

Wherever you are the best time of year to plant trees is generally well before the local trees have put out buds. If you plant them too late, they won't have enough time to put energy into their roots and establish themselves in their new soil. When planting, make sure to give them plenty of water and also make sure that you don't put any soil above the rootstock graft. If you do this, the top tree will put out its own roots and the graft will be obsolete.

You may have to put some deer fence around your young trees as well, as (I love the young shoots. At our land, we have a deer fence around almost our entire garden, including our orchard. We didn't bother to put nut trees inside the fence since they will soon be huge, and are less appetizing to deer. You probably won't have to go as far as us with tile deer fence, unless you live in a really bad deer area.

Now for the best part: trees require almost zero work! We don't even prune our trees. There is a school of thought that doesn't believe in pruning, we figure the trees know how to do it themselves and just leave them to it. The only things that we do are make sure that they have plenty of water in their first year, and mulch. We put plenty of waste matter, compost, leaves and grasses in a circle from about 4 inches out from the trunk, to about 4 feet out. This insures that they get plenty of nutrients. We also established

using straw-bales for insulation and the actual walls. Also remember that there is a big difference between a straw-bale and a hay-bale. A hay-bale has the seed-heads in it, and it is no good for building with, it will sprout and rot.

Straw-bale construction has many advantages. It provides amazing insulation. A bale house will be warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. It will be very quiet. You can build a house pretty much any shape you want to, which can be very fun. It is also relatively cheap, if you live in an area where you can get cheap straw-bales. It is also quick and easy to put up, especially if you live in a dry climate.

The only thing that turned me away was the climate where I was building: the rainy Pacific-northwest. There are people who say these buildings are fine in a damp climate, but they are at least hard to put up if it is raining everyday. The biggest enemy of the straw-bale house is dampness, although I am sure that this can be overcome in wet climates.

Cob:

I don't know much about this kind of construction, but it could be great if you live in a dry climate. It is free: just mix mud and straw!

Log cabin:

Now, by log cabin I am meaning Lincoln-log style, with one log stacked on top of another. A log cabin is really cool, there is just one downside, and that is you need a lot of trees to make one. It is probably one of the most inefficient uses of wood for building, and would not be worth it unless you have a ton of trees that you will be clearing any way (i.e.: for a garden).

The good sides to a log cabin are that it is pretty much free if you are cutting down the trees and it will cause no displacement of resources. It also requires just an axe to build it.

Traditional wood frame:

I am sure that you have seen a traditional wood frame house, it is the run-of-the-mill way to construct a home in North America. It is usually built by putting up a frame of wood then covering that in plywood and fiberglass insulation. There are many bad sides to this type of construction, but I believe that if it is done in the right way it can be efficient.

The lumber that you buy from a lumberyard is not harvested in your own backyard. You don't know where it comes from, and chances are the forest was not harvested in a "sustainable" manner. This really sucks! The good part is that if you are building from wood, this kind of construction uses the least amount of it. If you try and salvage as much wood as possible, you could end up buying a very small amount of wood from a lumberyard. Another thing to consider is not using plywood. It has nasty glues in it, and you can sometimes find dimensional lumber to use instead.

I have recently come across an important and inspiring story that comes from this place. It applies not only to the land reform struggle in Scotland, but also to the activism world as a whole. It is the story of seven men who were fed-up with the injustices that their landlord had committed and who decided to take the law into their own hands and fight for justice.

The history of Knoydart around the time of the Clearances is much like that of the rest of the Highlands. In 1745, after the Scottish rebellion was crushed by the British Army in a terrible massacre at Culloden, houses in Knoydart were burnt to the ground and entire families were subjected to terrible atrocities. In the 1800's, 500 people in Knoydart were evicted and forcibly shipped to Nova Scotia. They were no longer considered profitable and were replaced by sheep.

In 1934, after a series of landlords, the 60,000-acre estate of Knoydart was bought by a man named Lord Brocket. Besides being a powerful supporter of the Conservative Party, he was closely connected with the Anglo-German Fellowship, supporters of Hitler. He was often seen standing alongside Hitler himself.

When Lord Brocket took control of the estate, things changed rapidly for the worse. He proceeded to fire almost all of the employees of the estate. People from the town were not allowed near the manse, or within site of it and he did not allow public access to Knoydart at all. No campers or boats were allowed near the place. In the words of one tenant, "It was becoming a closed dictatorial regime probably in Lord Brocket's private thoughts; a jack booted private wilderness materializing as his Nazi friends engulfed Europe." After the war the estate was used as a hunting ground for rich visitors and the Knoydart crofters returning from the war to their homes came back to find that things had deteriorated greatly. Brocket was more hostile to the tenants than ever, and spent his days massacring the large deer herd on the estate. Houses were lying empty, sheep and cattle were being shipped away, and more and more farmland was being banned from use. Brocket's intentions were clear: to make it impossible for people to live there. A century before, there had been 1,500 people; now there were just 80 and 15 families were planning on leaving that year. The people of Knoydart submitted a letter to the government asking for permission to farm the land, and increase production to make it possible for people to live there, but Brocket blocked the plan. After writing several more letters to the government and getting no reply, they decided to take action themselves.

On a November day in 1948 seven men who were determined to stay in their homeland marched past Lord Brocket's house and each one laid claim to 65 arable acres of land and began working it. Brocket immediately went to the courts and the land-raiders were told that if they didn't leave, they would go to prison. Each of the men agreed that they were prepared to do just that. There was huge public support for them, a fund was set up to help them and some crofters in other areas began to carry out land-raids as well. But things didn't go as planned. A lawyer became involved on behalf of the crofters, and advised them to fight the land claims legally in court instead

When you are planning, also consult books for information on nails. There are different kinds of nails for each area, and different sizes, too. Sheet rock screws are fast, but they are not nearly as strong as nails and should not be used in structural areas. The books will also tell you how to frame windows and doors. This takes a little practice, but it is not hard.

Now that you have a list of materials and a plan, head to the lumberyard. Lumberyards are like junkyards; it takes a little time to be taken seriously, especially if you're a young lady like myself. Don't be afraid to ask questions, underneath the gruff lumberyard guy attitude can often be a surprisingly helpful person.

One way to sound like you know what you're talking about is to know how the dimensions of lumber are measured. Take 2x4x8 for instance. First of all, the numbers stand for inches, but long ago they stopped making lumber as big as it claims to be, a 2x4 is actually only a 1 3/4 x 3 1/2. The first number is the height, the second the width, or depth, and the third is the length. The first two numbers are in inches and the third is in feet.

There is also a special kind of 2x4 called a "stud". These are 2x4x92 1/2 inches. They are made for building walls that are 8' high and subtract the floor sill and the roof sill. Sometimes they are cheaper, and they do save some time. It's good to know about different grades of lumber as well. You might want to check out some cheaper grades, but be careful; sometimes these can be rotten and worthless. Don't let all of this scare you. Just ask questions, but use your best judgment when buying lumber.

Lumberyard prices can vary greatly, so it's a good idea to check out a few. One important thing to know about lumberyards is that there are two prices for lumber! This is never advertised, so you just have to be in the know. There's the regular price, then there's the "contractor's" price. Head straight for the contractor's desk. Now, technically you are supposed to have a contractor card to get the contractor price, but there is a lot of room to haggle. Ask for a quote, give them the list of materials you want and tell them you'll come back another day, or they can call you with the quote. This is totally normal. Even tell them you're going to other lumberyards for quotes so they know they are competing for a "bid". If you get a nice person they should give you the contractor price. Make sure they know you will be building a house, and coming back often. It's worth trying hard to get the contractor's price; it's often a third to a half less!

Every lumberyard also gives free delivery. They'll usually only do this a few times so try to order everything in big loads. The yard will give you a sign to put at the driveway to your site to help the delivery person find you. Beware! You are probably building your cabin without proper building permits, so give the yard good delivery directions to your place, but do not put the sign out. This is the number one thing that building inspectors look for to find illegal buildings. I learned this the hard way, had a scare, but

foothold where their forebears lived.

Their struggle should inspire each new generation of Scots to gain such rights by just laws.

History will judge harshly the oppressive laws that have led to the virtual extinction of a unique culture from this beautiful place.

- *Cairn in Knoydart*

Lamenting the Civil War

So many times since antiquity the human world has barely escaped destruction yet ten thousand fortunes and a thousand misfortunes and in one void after all Puppets squabbling back and forth across the stage People brawling over a snail's horn winning or losing The ferocity of a snipe and a clam glaring at each other only to arrive at death before the tribunal of Yama the Judge of Hell When will the horses of war be turned loose on Flower Mountain It would be best to throw their bits away to the east of the Palace

- *Muso Soseki b. 1275*

Welcome to Firewood # 1

There's something about building your own house, growing your own food, making your own music, art, culture, life. To me there is really no better feeling. After all that is what culture is, isn't it? It's something that we've made our own. Culture cannot be spoon-fed to us; we must create it ourselves. Things do not perpetuate by themselves. Languages die, people lose skills if they are not passed on. This is our struggle.

While it is important to create our own traditions, there are valuable skills and ideas also to be found in the past I am not saying that everything that the, past needs to be put up on a pedestal, plenty of close-minded ideas can be thrown in the bin. But it is easy for the consumer-culture blob to sweep all of those old ways under the carpet as some kind of barrier to progress. This is happening all over the world.

Languages are dying at an alarming rate-- the latest statistics are around one day! As imperialist languages take over indigenous languages are being lost forever. It's a kind of extinction-- a way of life and a folk knowledge is lost forever. One less way of thinking about and describing our world, a disappearing diversity. One language in China spoken only by women is down to a handful of speakers. Hundreds of languages in the Amazon River Basin are dying, and a monoculture is taking over. Even in first world countries with plenty of resources, Scotland for example, the outlook does not look good for minority languages such as Gaelic.

Beyond languages, skills are also being lost. When the days of Capitalism are over, who will know how to light a fire, let alone live without plastic? How many people know how to forge metal, make ceramics, build a shelter, grow food?

The only good thing about the wasteland that consumer-culture has

created is that anything is possible. "Anything" is always possible. Out of the dust we are creating our own culture that is vibrant and alive*. Tribes of nomads moving quietly through the night, undetected. Coming together in secret enclaves making music and sharing ideas with one another. Always expanding the possibilities, creating the ideal conditions for moments of freedom. We must begin to learn how to use our own hands to grow our own food and build our own shelter. The less we need to rely on the things we hate, the freer we will be.

-*Sine December 2002*

Cabin Girl

A good way to break free of chains is not to need them at all. If you know how to build a house, you'll never go homeless; you'll be less likely to have to worry about shelter. You'll know how to fix things you didn't before. You can rely less on other people and more on yourself. Where to start, what tools to use, what materials are right for the environment, how to get them it seems like a lot to know, but it's really not that hard, you can't go very wrong. It is a lot of fun to create a shelter and a space that fits you.

When it comes to building, I was really inspired by my dad. He built himself a cabin in the woods when he was my age, then built a boat, then ended up building two houses for his family when he was older. As a child, whenever these houses were being built I was always hanging around, banging nails into scraps of wood. My father designed and built these houses without any education past eighth grade. I suppose this put the idea in my head, building a house is easy, anyone can do it." It's true.

When I was planning to build my cabin, I did a lot of research on what kind of building it would be. Many kinds of materials were considered, and I got lots of books out of the library on building methods. Straw bale, turf, timber-frame, log cabin, welsh-round house, underground house, were all considered. In the end, due to time (we were building in the winter and needed warm shelter fast), cost, and tools, I opted for a 2 by 4 frame construction with as much salvaged material as possible. While we were building I had my little tipi to stay in and it kept me relatively warm and dry.

The first thing to do was to find a salvage yard to see what we had to work with. There are a couple of different kinds of salvage yards, ones selling just good old junk from torn down buildings: windows, doors, glass, metal, wood etc. But there are also salvage yards for yuppies that are full of "distressed" furnishings. These places have lots of old windows, doors and stuff with a lot of character, but they are usually sold at extortionate prices. You can usually find a good salvage yard under "salvage" or "junk dealers" in the phone book. It's also worth checking the local dump. It depends on the laws, but some dumps will let you weed through piles of building materials. Or if you don't care about laws, you might be able to manage something.

The salvage yard that we found was great. It was a little pricey at first,