

THE GENTLE  
GARDENS

PORTRAIT OF A DRUG DEALER AS A YOUNG MAN

# The Reader

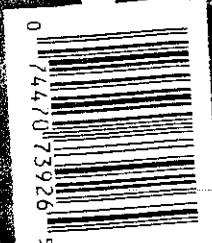
Best of the alternative press



# MEN

## IT'S TIME TO PULL TOGETHER

*The politics of masculinity*





## A new politics of masculinity

**T**his issue's cover section, edited by Jay Walljasper, challenges men to go beyond the therapeutic orientation of the men's movement, and to embrace a new politics of masculinity. The lead article, "A time for men to pull together," written by frequent *Utne Reader* contributor Andrew Kimbrell, offers the kind of thinking that this magazine exists to present—timely, broad-based, visionary. Like the European Greens, we aspire to be "neither left nor right, but in front." Kimbrell's manifesto for men is just that. While fully appreciating the much needed consciousness-raising associated with the U.S. men's movement, Kimbrell puts forth a practical vision that can take the movement and all the rest of us quite a few steps closer to true liberation.

Kimbrell is a generalist in an era of specialists. A former concert pianist and music teacher, in 1968 he helped found Music and Art Students Against the War in Vietnam. He is now an attorney and policy director of the Washington, D.C.-based Foundation on Economic Trends, where he works as a litigator, political organizer, and lobbyist on environmental, ethical, genetic engineering, and technology issues. He was instrumental in organizing the first national planning meeting for an American Green congress, to be held in 1992. Andy lives with his wife, Kaiulani, an actress, and their two children in Arlington, Virginia.



**YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED SOME CHANGES IN OUR** staff box this issue. Stanley Moses has joined us as assistant to the publisher, and Mary Springer is now our circulation manager, succeeding Mark Betchey, who has moved to Chicago to pursue the Cubs, the Bulls, the Bears, and



New *Utne* staffers Mary Springer and Stanley Moses.

other interests. A veteran of several years in the U.S. Army, Stanley most recently worked as an administrative aide to former Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Marlene Johnson. Mary was previously the circulation director of *Final Frontier*. Yes, Mary, there is a place even farther out than the final frontier. And finally, associate editor Helen Cordes is beginning her sixth year at *Utne Reader* under the new title of senior editor. She insists she'll now generate twice the topic ideas and edited copy; we promise to bow to her three times before speaking.



**MY WIFE, NINA, AND I ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE** the birth of number four son. Eli Tenzin Rothschild Utne was born on February 5, 1991, at 6:17 a.m. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 11 ounces. Eli's comin', hide your toys boys.



Eli, Nina, and Eric Utne.

—Eric Utne

Beyond drumming groups and  
wilderness retreats

# THE NEW POLITICS OF MASCULINITY

**F**ive years ago we featured a cover story about men that became our first big best-seller. Curious readers plucked that issue from the newsstands so feverishly that copies are now as rare as male-only taverns.

Since that time, interest in men's issues has mushroomed—wilderness retreats have become a big business and Robert Bly's *Iron John*, a book about the mythic dimensions of masculinity, has climbed to the top of the best-seller list. By now most people are aware of the widespread discussion about a boy's need for initiation into manhood and a man's need to nurture the wildness within him.

But Washington attorney and activist Andrew Kimbrell wants to take the topic of men further—he wonders where political issues fit in. Besides psychological turmoil, he says, men today face very real threats—not from the past or women or each other, but from our socioeconomic system. Drugs, alcohol, heart disease, war, suicide, homelessness, and workaholism all afflict men at higher rates than women. Even men who think they've got it made spend most of their lives taking orders at work. Kimbrell offers a political manifesto around which men can gather to save their lives, save their friends and families, and save the earth.

Delving further into the state of men today, essayist Scott Russell Sanders wonders whether the privilege males are said to enjoy isn't just an illusion for most men. Feminist Barbara Ehrenreich probes the causes of men's violence against women, while psychologist Warren Farrell examines the roots of men's anxiety about themselves. Author Sam Keen works up a list of heart-to-heart questions for men to ask one another. And activist Larry Letich offers some simple but valuable tips to help men pull together to help one another.

# A time for men to pull together

*A manifesto for the new politics of masculinity*

*"Our civilization is a dingy ungentlemanly business; it drops so much out of a man."*

*—Robert Louis Stevenson*



Men are hurting—badly. Despite rumors to the contrary, men as a gender are being devastated physically and psychically by our socioeconomic system. As American society continues to empower a small percentage of men—and a smaller but increasing percentage of women—it is causing significant confusion and anguish for the majority of men.

In recent years, there have been many impressive analyses documenting the exploitation of women in our culture. Unfortunately, little attention has been given to the massive disruption and destruction that our economic and political institutions have wrought on men. In fact, far too often, men as a gender have been thought of as synonymous with the power elite.

But thinking on this subject is beginning to change. Over the last decade, men have begun to realize that we cannot properly relate to one another, or understand how some of us in turn exploit others, until we have begun to appreciate the extent and nature of our dispossessed predicament. In a variety of ways, men across the country are beginning to mourn their losses and seek solutions.

This new sense of loss among men comes from the deterioration of men's traditional roles as protectors of family and the earth (although not the sole protectors)—what psychologist Robert Mannis calls the *generative* potential of men. And much of this mourning also focuses on how men's energy is often channeled in the direction of destruction—both of the earth and its inhabitants.

The mission of many men today—both those involved in the men's movement and others outside it—is to find new ways that allow men to celebrate their generative potential and reverse the cycle of destruction that characterizes men's collective behavior today. These calls to action are not abstract or hypothetical. The oppression of men, especially in the last several decades, can be easily seen in a disturbing upward spiral of male self-destruction, addiction, hopelessness, and homelessness.

While suicide rates for women have been stable over the last 20 years, among men—especially white male teenagers—they have increased rapidly. Currently, male teenagers are five times more likely to take their own lives than females. Overall, men are committing suicide at four times the rate of women. America's young men are also being rav-

## **Most men lead powerless, subservient lives in the factory or office.**

aged by alcohol and drug abuse. Men between the ages of 18 and 29 suffer alcohol dependency at three times the rate of women of the same age group. More than two-thirds of all alcoholics are men, and 50 percent more men are regular users of illicit drugs than women. Men account for more than 90 percent of arrests for alcohol and drug abuse violations.

A sense of hopelessness among America's young men is not surprising. Real wages for men under 25 have actually declined over the last 20 years, and 60 percent of all high school dropouts are males. These statistics, added to the fact that more than 400,000 farmers have lost their land in the last decade, account in part for the increasing rate of unemployment among men, and for the fact that more than 80 percent of America's homeless are men.

The stress on men is taking its toll. Men's life expectancy is 10 percent shorter than women's, and the incidence of stress-related illnesses such as heart disease and certain cancers remains inordinately high among men.

And the situation for minority men is even worse. One out of four black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in jail, on probation, or on parole—ten times the proportion for black women in the same age range. More black men are in jail than in college, and there are 40 percent more black women than black men studying in our nation's colleges and universities. Homicide is the leading cause of death among black males ages 15 to 24. Black males have the lowest life expectancy of any segment of the American population. Statistics for Native American and Hispanic men are also grim.

Men are also a large part of the growing crisis in the American family. Studies report that parents today spend 40 percent less time with their children than did parents in 1965, and men are increasingly isolated from their families by the pressures of work and the circumstances of divorce. In a recent poll, 72 percent of employed male respondents agreed that they are "torn by conflict" between their jobs and the desire to be with their families. Yet the average divorced American man spends less than two days a month with his children. Well over half of black male children are raised without fathers.

While the trauma of separation and divorce affects all members of a family, it is especially poignant for sons: Researchers generally agree that boys at all ages are hardest hit by divorce.

### The enclosure of men

The current crisis for men, which goes far beyond statistics, is nothing new. We have faced a legacy of loss, especially since the start of the mechanical age. From the Enclosure Acts, which forced families off the land in Tudor England, to the ongoing destruction of indigenous communities throughout the Third World, the demands of the industrial era have

forced men off the land, out of the family and community, and into the factory and office. The male as steward of family and soil, craftsman, woodsman, native hunter, and fisherman has all but vanished.

As men became the primary cog in industrial



production, they lost touch with the earth and the parts of themselves that needed the earth to survive. Men by the millions—who long prided themselves on their husbandry of family, community, and land—were forced into a system whose ultimate goal was to turn one man against another in the competitive "jungle" of industrialized society. As the industrial revolution advanced, men lost not only their independence and dignity, but also the sense of personal creativity and responsibility associated with individual crafts and small-scale farming.

The factory wrenched the father from the

home, and he often became a virtual nonentity in the household. By separating a man's work from his family, industrial society caused the permanent alienation of father from son. Even when the modern father returns to the house, he is often too

## Men cannot understand how we exploit others until we look at the nature of our own oppression.

tired and too irritable from the tensions and tedium of work in the factory or corporation to pay close attention to his children. As Robert Bly, in his best-selling book *Iron John* (1990, Addison-Wesley), has pointed out, "When a father, absent during the day, returns home at six, his children receive only his

temperament, and not his teaching." The family, and especially sons, lose the presence of the father, uncle, and other male role models. It is difficult to calculate the full impact that this pattern of paternal absence has had on family and society over the last several generations.

While the loss of fathers is now beginning to be discussed, men have yet to fully come to terms with the terrible loss of sons during the mechanized wars of this century. World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam were what the poet Robert Graves called "holocausts of young men." In the battlefields of this century, hundreds of millions of men were killed or injured. In World Wars I and II—in which more than 100 million soldiers were casualties—most of the victims were teenage boys, the average age being 18.5 years.

Given this obvious evidence of our exploitation,



## Four men, one boy, and a rusty tractor

A love story about men

In his fine poem "Axe Handles," Gary Snyder provides a counterpoint to the view that men exist in complete emotional isolation from one another. Snyder takes teaching his son to make a new axe handle as a metaphor for the connection between generations of men. The handle of the working axe serves as a model for the new handle it fashions, just as a father teaches and molds a son. The axe is an apt symbol, with both a constructive and a destructive aspect. A father's influence may be felt in many ways as well; through affection and involvement at one moment and through absence and disregard at another. Either instance shapes a son. Snyder's description reminds us that connections occur on many levels, some spoken, others not. We are unfair to ourselves if we only think of what is missing and ignore the bonds that are there.

TOOLS, AND WORK WITH MY MALE RELATIVES, WAS ONE STEP FOR ME into the world of men. When we went to visit either grandfather, there was always a job or two on the farm that couldn't be put off for our visit. The more solitary tasks of tending livestock or doing field-work on the tractor had their pleasure, but there was a particular joy in shared work. Perhaps because of the isolation in which they spent much of their lives, the men I knew relished a chance to spend time together, even if it meant work.

ALEX GROSS

is remarkable that so few men have acknowledged the genocide on their gender over the last century—much less turned against those responsible for this past victimization. Women have increasingly identified their oppression in society; men have not. Thankfully, some men are now working to create a movement, or community, that focuses on awareness and understanding of men's loss and pain as well as the potential for healing. Because men's oppression is deeply rooted in the political and economic institutions of modern society, it is critical that awareness of these issues must be followed by action: Men today need a comprehensive political program that points the way toward liberation.

### Lost in the male mystique

Instead of grieving over and acting on our loss of independence and generativity, modern men have

often engaged in denial—a denial that is linked to the existence of a “male mystique.” This defective mythology of the modern age has created a “new man.” The male mystique recasts what anthropologists have identified as the traditional male role throughout history—a man, whether hunter-gatherer or farmer, who is steeped in a creative and sustaining relationship with his extended family and the earth household. In the place of this long-enduring, rooted masculine role, the male mystique has fostered a new image of men: autonomous, efficient, intensely self-interested, and disconnected from community and the earth.

The male mystique was spawned in the early days of the modern age. It combines Francis Bacon's idea that “knowledge is power” and Adam Smith's view that the highest good is “the individual exerting himself to his own advantage.” This power-oriented,

One summer afternoon, my father, uncle, and grandfather were trying to mount the sickle bar on the tractor to cut weeds out in the back pasture. I was there as an observer, too young then for this kind of work. A nut had rusted tight on a threaded stud. My grandfather sweated and struggled, finally rounding the nut through his attempts to get it off. Vise grips slipped and penetrating oil didn't seem to make a difference. I alternated between throwing sticks for the dog and watching.

“Damn,” my grandfather said, finally. It was not a word I had ever heard him say. The men stopped to confer.

“I don't know if we're going to get it.”

“We could knock that nut off with a chisel,” my father said.

“Might take the stud with it,” my uncle said.

“Then where would we be?”

A neighbor who lived down the road a mile came by on his way into town. He pulled his pickup into the barn lot and up under the tree where we were working.

“Looks like a convention,” he said. “Can't resist watching other people work.”

“Give us a hand, Dave,” my grandfather said. “We're stuck with this nut here.”

“Yeah, I've got a stuck nut, too,” Dave said, moving his hand toward his groin. There was a different tone to this remark than the talk before. My father and uncle were laughing but my grandfather glanced over at me.

“Watch it,” he said to Dave. “The boy.”

“Sorry,” Dave said.

“Don't worry,” my father said. “It's okay.”

“Probably too many city fellas working on

this,” Dave said. Both my father and my uncle had left the farm for lives in the city. “Let a farmer get on this job, right Ralph?” Dave winked at my grandfather as he picked up a wrench.

They finally got the mower to work that day. Dave knew a trick that broke the nut loose, I think. There was laughter about putting one over on the “city boys.” A few years later I learned to run that mower, first sitting with my grandfather on the high seat, then driving the tractor alone. What I remember most, though, is the feeling of that afternoon: standing in the shade of the burr oak in the barnyard, happy to be out with the men, feeling how physical they were, smelling the sweat and machinery, laughing at the teasing that went back and forth, wishing I was old enough to help.

It is important to draw a distinction between intimacy and bonding. Intimacy involves the open sharing of inner thoughts, feelings, vulnerabilities. Bonding is not so conscious or spoken a thing. I don't know if there was much intimacy between the men I love in my family. I don't think there was. Opening your deepest emotions did not come easily in the rural life of Missouri—especially for men. But the absence of openly shared love didn't mean it wasn't there.

—Eric McCollum  
North American Review

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individualistic ideology was further solidified by the concepts of the survival of the fittest and the ethic of efficiency. The ideal man was no longer the wise farmer, but rather the most successful man-eater in the Darwinian corporate jungle.

The most tragic aspect of all this for us is that as the male mystique created the modern power elite, it destroyed male friendship and bonding. The male mystique teaches that the successful man is competitive, uncaring, unloving. It celebrates the ethic of isolation—it turns men permanently against each other in the tooth and claw world of making a living. As the Ivan Boesky-type character in the movie *Wall Street* tells his young apprentice, "If you need a friend, get a dog."

The male mystique also destroys men's ties to the earth. It embodies the view of 17th century British philosopher John Locke that "[l]and that is left wholly to nature is called, as indeed it is, waste." A sustainable relationship with the earth is sacrificed to material progress and conspicuous consumption.

Ironically, men's own sense of loss has fed the male mystique. As men become more and more powerless in their own lives, they are given more and more media images of excessive, caricatured masculinity with which to identify. Men look to manufactured macho characters from the Wild West, working-class America, and modern war in the hope of gaining some sense of what it means to be a man. The primary symbols of the male mystique are almost never caring fathers, stewards of the land, or community organizers. Instead, over several decades these aggressively masculine figures have evolved from the Western independent man (John Wayne, Gary Cooper) to the blue-collar

### **Men as a gender are being devastated by our socioeconomic system.**

macho man (Sly Stallone and Robert DeNiro) and finally to a variety of military and police figures concluding with the violent revelry of *Robocop*.

Modern men are entranced by this simulated masculinity—they experience danger, independence, success, sexuality, idealism, and adventure as voyeurs. Meanwhile, in real life most men lead powerless, subservient lives in the factory or office—frightened of losing their jobs, mortgaged to the gills, and still feeling responsible for supporting their families. Their lauded independence—as well as most of their basic rights—disappear the minute they report for work. The disparity between their real lives and the macho images of masculinity perpetrated by the media confuses and confounds many men. In his

book *The Men from the Boys*, Ray Raphael asks, "But is it really that manly to wield a jackhammer, or spend one's life in the mines? Physical labor is often mindless, repetitive, and exhausting.... The workers must be subservient while on the job, and subservience is hard to reconcile with the masculine ideal of personal power."

Men can no longer afford to lose themselves in denial. We need to experience grief and anger over our losses and not buy into the pseudo-male stereotypes propagated by the male mystique. We are not, after all, what we are told we are.

At the same time, while recognizing the pervasive victimization of women, we must resist the view of some feminists that maleness itself, and not the current systems of social control and production, is primarily responsible for the exploitation of women. For men who are sensitive to feminist thinking, this view of masculinity creates a confusing and debilitating double bind: We view ourselves as oppressors yet experience victimization on the personal and social level. Instead of blaming male-

## **Husbandry**

### **Reawakening a lost masculine ethic**

**IN THE CONFUSION AND DESPERATION OF MODERN LIFE, MANY men are awakening to a crisis of their gender. They are grieving over the deep sense of alienation caused by the disintegration of their families and the destruction of their true home—the earth. Men are beginning to realize that for their generation and their father's generation the necessities of work and career and the tragedies of divorce have seriously eroded their most critical relationships—to their children, their wives, their households, and themselves.**

This situation has instilled great consternation among men today. There are no longer clear guideposts showing men the correct masculine way to react to these problems. A world of fierce competition and immense pressures to succeed leads to anxiety, even disorientation. As men look about for direction, it is increasingly apparent that neither re-emerging matriarchal values nor a reactionary attempt to revive the macho John Wayne/Rambo image of masculinity quells this deep crisis in men's consciousness.

One answer to the pervasive web of pain and anxiety faced by men in the modern age is embodied in the enduring concept of "husbandry."

to challenge the defective mythology of mystique. Neither the male mystique nor notion of maleness offers hope for the future. We may be on the verge of a renaissance in male consciousness. Recently, there

## male mystique teaches that the successful man is competitive, uncaring.

is a rediscovery of masculinity as a primal and generative force equal to that of the female. A number of recognized creative and nurturing power of men to substitute empathy for efficiency, respect for exploitation, generosity for the competitiveness of the marketplace. At the forefront of this movement have been Robert Bly and others working with him:

The word is derived from a combination of the Old English *husbonda* and the Old Norse word *bu* (to dwell). Accordingly, a husband was a household manager deeply bonded to his home and land rather than a wanderer or nomad. Husbandry also came to mean a wanderer with the craft of farming. Man's primary role was thus seen in terms of a commitment to wife, children, community, and land.

The essence of husbandry is a sense of masculine obligation—generating and maintaining a stable relationship to one's immediate family and to the earth itself. At its heart, husbandry reflects a bonding of both family and nature through a clear appreciation of the responsibility inherent in the role of provider, caretaker, and steward. As men have increasingly been wrenched from their families and the earth upon which they worked, they have lost their appreciation for what it meant to live the role of the steward of the land and caretaker of our resources. Over the generations there has been a considerable erosion in the sustaining identity of the role of husband.

Certainly, for many of us it would be impractical, if not impossible, to literally return to the role of husband of the soil. The spirit of this relationship, however, can be applied to all men today. In this renewed sense of the term, husbandry implies the sober and measured allocation of limited resources in a generative, caring fashion. Husbandry also suggests a sense of pride for men, a pride gained in the purposeful care for their families and communi-

psychologist James Hillman, drummer Michael Meade, Jungian scholar Robert Moore. Bly has called for the recognition and reaffirmation of the "wild" man. As part of Bly's crusade, thousands of men have come together to seek a regeneration of their sexuality and power, as they reject the cerebral, desiccated world of our competitive corporate culture. Another compelling analysis is that of Jungian therapist Robert Mannis, who has called for a renewal of the ethic of "husbandry," a sense of masculine obligation involved with generating and maintaining a stable relationship to one's family and to the earth itself. And a growing number of men are mounting other challenges to the male mystique. But so far, the men's movement has remained primarily therapeutic. Little effort has been made to extend the energy of male self-discovery into a practical social and political agenda.



Eco-masculinity: Men need to restore bonds with family and earth.

ties as well as in the stewardship of the earth and the husbanding of its resources.

Widespread appreciation of the role of husbandry in the family, the community, and the environment can bring a sense of purpose and meaning that is lost to many men today. A renaissance of husbandry will help heal the deep spiritual wound men now suffer. To actively practice husbandry, without domination or exploitation, can reawaken the male spirit from alienation and isolation.

—Robert Mannis

Robert Frank Mannis, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in Frederick, Maryland. He works with men both individually and in groups and has a special interest in emerging men's issues.



## A manifesto for men

AS MANY OF US COME TO MOURN THE LOST FATHERS AND SONS OF THE last decades and seek to re-establish our ties to each other and to the earth, we need to find ways to change the political, social, and economic structures that have created this crisis. A "wild man" weekend in the woods, or intense man-to-man discussions, can be key experiences in self-discovery and personal empowerment. But these personal experiences are not enough to reverse the victimization of men. As the men's movement gathers strength, it is critical that this increasing sense of personal liberation be channeled into political action. Without significant changes in our society there will only be continued hopelessness and frustration for men. Moreover, a coordinated movement pressing for the liberation of men could be a key factor in ensuring that the struggle for a sustainable future for humanity and the earth succeeds.

What follows is a brief political platform for men, a short manifesto with which we can begin the process of organizing men as a positive political force working for a better future. This is the next step for the men's movement.

### Fathers and children

Political efforts focusing on the family must reassert men's bonds with the family and reverse the "lost father" syndrome. While any long-term plan for men's liberation requires significant changes in the very structure of our work and economic institutions, a number of intermediate steps are possible: We need to take a leadership role in supporting parental leave legislation, which gives working parents the right to take time from work to care for children or other family members. And we need to target the Bush administration for vetoing this vital legislation. Also needed is pro-child tax relief such as greatly expanding the young child tax credit, which would provide income relief and tax breaks to families at a point when children need the most parental care and when income may be the lowest.

We should also be in the forefront of the movement pushing for changes in the workplace including more flexible hours, part-time work, job sharing, and home-based employment. As economic analyst William R. Mattox Jr. notes, a simple step toward making home-based employment more viable would be to loosen restrictions on claiming home office expenses as a tax deduction for parents. Men must also work strenuously in the legal arena

to promote more liberal visitation rights for non-custodial parents and to assert appropriateness of the father as a custodial parent. Non-traditional family structures should also be given more recognition in our society, with acknowledgment of men's important roles as stepfathers, foster fathers, uncles, brothers, and mentors. We must seek legislative ways to recognize many men's commitments that do not fit traditional definitions of family.

### Ecology as male politics

A sustainable environment is not merely one issue among others. It is the crux of all issues in our age, including men's politics. The ecological struggles of our time offer a unique forum in which men can express their renewed sense of the wild and their traditional roles as creators, defenders of the family, and careful stewards of the earth.

The alienation of men from their rootedness to the land has deprived us all of what John Muir called the "heart of wilderness." As part of our efforts to re-experience the wild in ourselves, we should actively become involved in experiencing the wilderness first hand and organize support for the protection of nature and endangered species. Men should also become what Robert Bly has called "inner warriors" for the earth, involving themselves in non-violent civil disobedience to protect wilderness areas

from further destruction.

An important aspect of the masculine ethic is defense of family. Pesticides and other toxic pollutants that poison our food, homes, water, and air

## **Men should be in the forefront of the movement pushing for changes in the workplace— flexible hours, job-sharing, part-time work.**

represent a real danger, especially to children. Men need to be adamant in their call for limitations on the use of chemicals.

Wendell Berry has pointed out that the ecological crisis is also a crisis of agriculture. If men are to recapture a true sense of stewardship and husbandry and affirm the "seedbearing," creative capacity of the male, they must, to the extent possible, become involved in sustainable agriculture and organic farming and gardening. We should also initiate and support legislation that sustains our farming communities.

### **Men in the classrooms and community**

In many communities, especially inner cities, men are absent not only from homes but also from the schools. Men must support the current efforts by black men's groups around the country to implement male-only early-grade classes taught by men. These programs provide role models and a surrogate paternal presence for young black males. We should also commit ourselves to having a far greater male presence in all elementary school education. Recent studies have shown that male grade school students have a higher level of achievement when they are taught by male teachers. Part-time or full-time home schooling options can also be helpful in providing men a great opportunity to be teachers—not just temperaments—to their children.

We need to revive our concern for community. Community-based boys' clubs, scout troops, sports leagues, and big brother programs have achieved significant success in helping fatherless male children find self-esteem. Men's groups must work to strengthen these organizations.

### **Men's minds, men's bodies, and work**

Men need to join together to fight threats to male health including suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, AIDS, and stress diseases. We should support active prevention and education efforts aimed at these deadly threats. Most importantly, men need to be leaders in initiating and supporting holistic and

psychotherapeutic approaches that directly link many of these health threats to the coercive nature of the male mystique and the current economic system. Changes in diet, reduction of drug and alcohol use, less stressful work environments, greater nurturing of and caring for men by other men, and fighting racism, hopelessness, and homelessness are all important, interconnected aspects of any male health initiative.

### **Men without hope or homes**

Men need to support measures that promote small business and entrepreneurship, which will allow more people to engage in crafts and human-scale, community-oriented enterprises. Also important is a commitment to appropriate, human-scale technologies such as renewable energy sources. Industrial and other inappropriate technologies have led to men's dispossession, degradation—and increasingly to unemployment.

A related struggle is eliminating racism. No group of men is more dispossessed than minority men. White men should support and network with African-American and other minority men's groups. Violence and discrimination against men because of their sexual preference should also be challenged.

Men, who represent more than four-fifths of the homeless, can no longer ignore this increasing social tragedy. Men's councils should develop support groups for the homeless in their communities.

### **The holocaust of men**

As the primary victims of mechanized war, men must oppose this continued slaughter. Men need to realize that the traditional male concepts of the noble warrior are undermined and caricatured in the technological nightmare of modern warfare. Men must together become prime movers in dismantling the military-industrial establishment and redistrib-



Way of the warrior: True masculinity is deformed by militarism.



Bless the beasts and the buddies: Male friendship is an often overlooked need for modern men.

uting defense spending toward a sustainable environment and protection of family, school, and community.

### Men's Action Network

No area of the men's political agenda will be realized until men can establish a network of activists to create collective action. A first step might be to create a high-profile national coalition of the men's councils that are growing around the country. This coalition, which could be called the Men's Action Network (MAN), could call for a national conference to define a comprehensive platform of men's concerns and to provide the political muscle to implement those ideas.

### A man could stand up

The current generation of men face a unique moment in history. Though often still trapped by economic coercion and psychological co-option, we are beginning to see that there is a profound choice ahead. Will we choose to remain subservient tools of social and environmental destruction or to fight for rediscovery of the male as a full partner and participant in family, community, and the earth? Will we remain mesmerized by the male mystique,

or will we reclaim the true meaning of our masculinity?

There is a world to gain. The male mystique, in which many of today's men—especially the most politically powerful—are trapped, is threatening the family and the planet with irreversible destruction. A men's movement based on the recovery of masculinity could renew much of the world we have lost. By changing types of work and work hours, we could break our subordination to corporate managers and return much of our work and lives to the household. We could once again be teaching, nurturing presences to our children. By devoting ourselves to meaningful work with appropriate technology, we could recover independence in our work and our spirit. By caring for each other, we could recover the dignity of our gender and heal the wounds of addiction and self-destruction. By becoming husbands to the earth, we could protect the wild and recover our creative connec-

tions with the forces and rhythms of nature.

Ultimately we must help fashion a world without the daily frustration and sorrow of having to view each other as a collection of competitors instead of a community of friends. We must celebrate the essence and rituals of our masculinity. We can no longer passively submit to the destruction of the household, the demise of self-employment, the disintegration of family and community, and the desecration of our earth.

Shortly after the First World War, Ford Madox Ford, one of this century's greatest writers, depicted 20th century men as continually pinned down in their trenches, unable to stand up for fear of annihilation. As the century closes, men remain pinned down by an economic and political system that daily forces millions of us into meaningless work, powerless lives, and self-destruction. The time has come for men to stand up.

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