

# Contractor's concern is energy

"I was lucky," reflects Martha Rose Maddox.

"I was never taught that there were certain things I couldn't do because I'm a woman."

And so, although her parents rather expected her to go to college, Martha encountered no resistance when she chose instead to seek work as a carpenter. The Deckerville resident is now a subcontractor.

One of 10 children, Martha lived for 13 years in the Chicago area. She moved with her family to Arlington, Virginia, as a young teenager, and it was there that she began her work experience.

"Help was hard to get just then," she says honestly, "and so employers couldn't very well turn me down. But I think I worked harder than many to prove that I was equal to the job."

"Now that I'm on the hiring end, I realize that few men or women really want to work hard enough to succeed in construction. They don't think about how bloody their hands will get. When I started framing, it took two full, painful weeks to develop enough callouses!"

Martha's first experiences included working on a 200-unit townhouse, repeating the same task in each unit. "The first thing I did was to install doorknobs," she remembers. "I progressed to trimming, then to hanging cabinets."

Later work included learning framing, concrete work, foundations and remodeling. She moved to Portland in 1974 and lived there



for three years, during which time she and a friend bought property about seven miles from her current home west of Matlock. In recent

years she has worked as a subcontractor, taking jobs mostly in the eastern Grays Harbor area.

When she first moved here, Martha became involved in the anti-nuclear movement. She participated in marches and demonstrations against the Satsop nuclear plant, and was among the 150 who were arrested during a demonstration at the Elma site.

"We felt that the demonstration was necessary, not to harm property but to make people think," she asserts. "We had expert testimony prepared for the resulting trial, but in the end we were not allowed to present our carefully researched material."

"The trial had been set for a week after the Three Mile Island incident. When that happened, suddenly the charges were dropped!"

Although the issue was never brought to court, Martha has found ways to help educate people about alternative energy sources. She was coordinator of the first Alternative Energy Fair held on the Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds.

At the second energy fair Martha exhibited a solar model home. Her vocation, she feels, is to promote and build alternative-energy and energy-conserving homes, solar greenhouses as heat collectors, and the like.

"Solar homes don't have to be boxy and strange-looking, but a lot of general contractors aren't ready to try them yet," Martha notes. That's why when Martha renews her license next January it will be as a general contractor rather than a subcontractor.

Right now, Martha's business, Rose Construction, is in abeyance awaiting the birth of her first child. She is using the time to good advantage, learning cabinetry from her cabinetmaker husband, Carl, and building such items as folding massage tables, dehydrators and rocking horse swings.

"I do the usual things like baking bread and making garden," she states, "though I don't like housework. I like things that go with country living, like walking, swimming in the river and getting firewood."

It's Martha's dream one day to build her own home, one so energy-conservative that she can heat it for a winter with half a cord of wood.

"It's possible," she says.

**Ed. Note:**

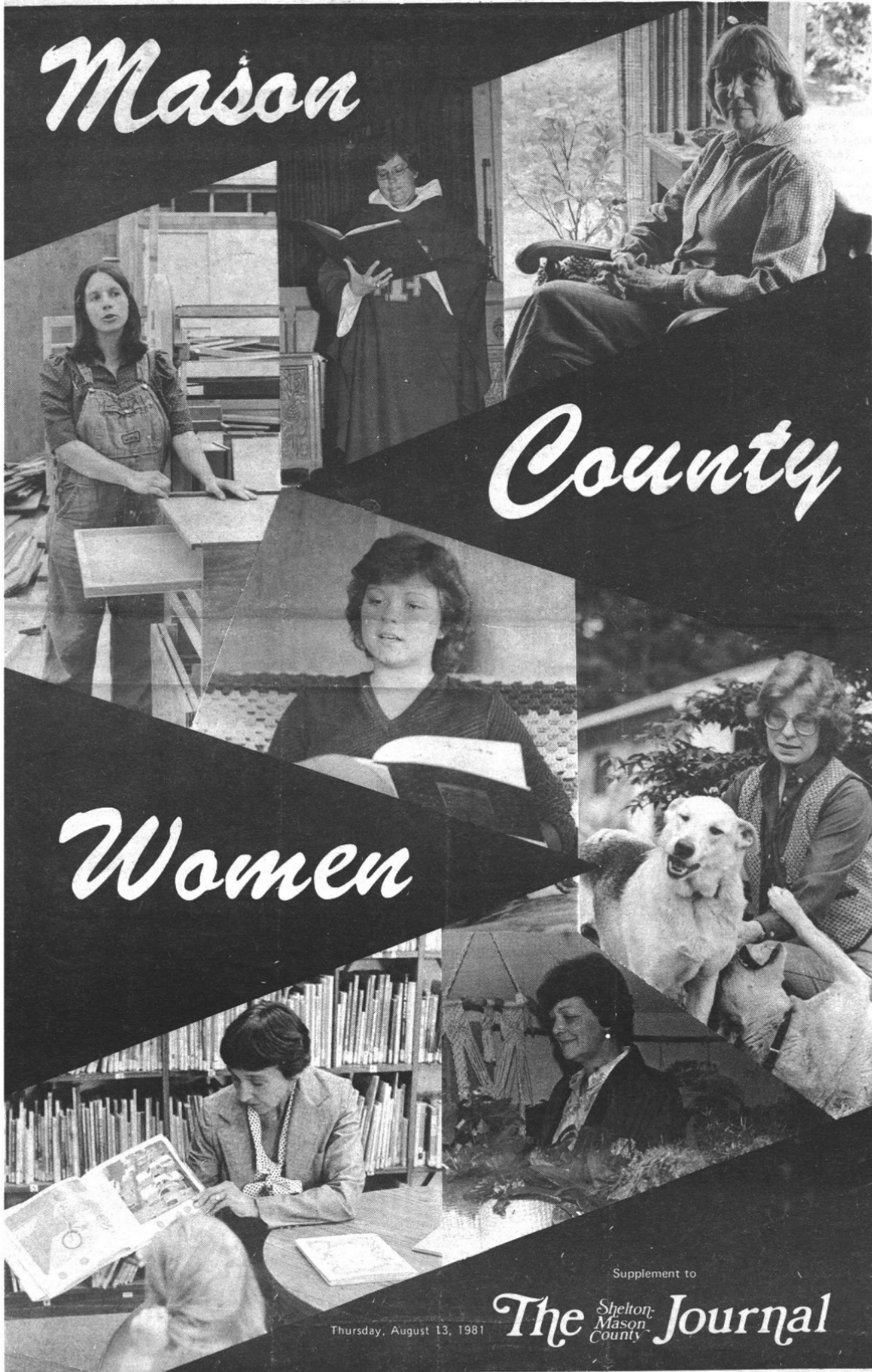
On July 31 Martha gave birth to a son at home. His name is Siles Maddox, and he will have a hand in shaping Martha's career from here on out.



# Mason

# County

# Women



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