



EARTH TIDES

PAGAN NETWORK NEWS

PAGAN PRIDE STATEWIDE! BELTANE 1998 \$1.50

About EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK

The Maine Pagan community is diverse, independent and geographically distant. We worship in existing groups or as solitaires, but feel a need for contact and a shared forum to express opinions and concerns over issues bearing on the Pagan Community in general. The EarthTides Pagan Network was established in 1989 as a support resource for Maine Pagans

The EPN keeps names, addresses and phone numbers confidential except to other network members. Individuals who are under 18 years of age must submit written parental approval to attend gatherings or study with members. The EPN will aid in establishing contacts between individuals if asked to do so, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results.

- This newsletter comes out eight times per year around the Sabbats. Literary, poetic and artistic contributions are welcome as well as letters, and opinion pieces. Please keep submissions to no more than two pages, typed and double spaced. Submissions on disc or by e-mail to mugwort@ime.net are preferred

Articles are edited for grammar, spelling and to fit available space. The EarthTides Pagan Network News is copyrighted 1998 by The EarthTides Pagan Network. All submissions remain the property of the authors and may not be reproduced without their permission.

Memberships are available for a suggested donation of \$11.00 US funds per year. Single copies may be obtained by sending a \$1.50 donation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to EPN, PO Box 161, East Winthrop, ME 04343. The next EPNN will come out just around Litha We hope to hear from more of you before then. Blessed Be!

EPNN STAFF: Mugwort, Elkwing, and Harper Meader

NEWS FLASH

IMMANENT GROVE DENIED SALES/USE TAX EXEMPTION STATE BUREAUCRAT SAYS IMMANENT GROVE IS NOT RELIGIOUS

Although Immanent Grove is incorporated as a Church in the State of Maine, the state has denied the Church's application for a sales/use tax exemption. Most disturbing is the reason for this denial. Peter K. Tucker, Senior Tax Examiner in his letter of denial said: "Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary states a church is 'a building for public, especially Christian worship'. The By-Laws of Immanent Grove state, 'a fellowship of practicing pagans'. Webster's dictionary defines pagans as, 'One who is not Christian, Moslem, or Jew: Heathen... Not religious'. Religion is defined as, 'Belief in and reverence for a supernatural power accepted as the creator and governor of the universe.'" He further wrote: "The exemption is for a 'regularly organized church or house of religious worship'. Based on the definitions in the dictionary, Immanent Grove does not fit the definition of a church nor religious"

Obviously this decision can not stand. It will be appealed. Future Issues of EPNN will keep you updated on our progress in this fight.

Letters of support for Immanent Grove may be sent to Appellate Division, Maine Revenue Services, 24 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0224

See Immanent Grove's response on page 7

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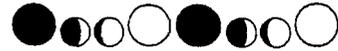
E.P.N. P.O. Box 161, EAST WINTHROP. ME 04343

<http://www.mix-net.net/~annemarie/earthtides/>

e-mail:wachel@wa2000.winarea.biddeford.com



EVENTS CALENDAR



The calendar section is a service to our members. It is intended for events that are either free or have a nominal donation. Several of these places have more extensive workshops; please call them for info. Support our supporters!

May 1 **BELTANE**

May 2 **EarthTides Beltane Celebration** at Popham Beach State Park. Meet 10:30 AM. Maypole, Potluck Lunch, Swimming and Fellowship all day. Call 696-8565 for more information

May 3 **Portland Pagan Coffee House**. Call 828-2032 for more information.

May 6 **USM Pagan Student Association Open Air Fair** at the Portland campus between Luther Bonney Hall and Payson Smith Hall. Workshops, Vendors, Drumming, Barbecue. call 828-2032 for more information

May 9 **Spring Fair** at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. Free. 11-5 PM call 942-5590 for more information

May 10 Augusta area **Pagan Coffee House** 1:00 PM Bring a mug and pot luck snack to share. For more information call 377-3967

May 11 **Full Flower Moon** 10:29 AM

May 18-25 **Rites of Spring** W. Massachusetts. Rituals, workshops music, cabins, camping, drumming, bonfires EarthSpirit, PO Box 723, Williamsburg, MA 01098 (413) 238-4240 www.earthspirit.com

May 25 **New Moon** 3:32 PM

May 31 7:00 PM **Pagan Coffee House** at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. Please bring a small donation to cover costs and/or a donation to the Pagan Pantry. For info call Silo 7 942-5590 or Mugwort 848-2850

June 6 **Portland Pagan Coffee House**. Call 828-2032 for more information.

June 10 **Full Strawberry Moon** 12:18 AM

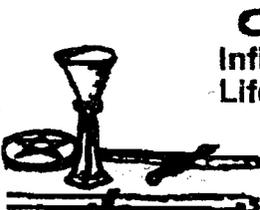
June 14 Augusta area **Pagan Coffee House** 1:00 PM See May 10 Listing above

June 18-21 **Sixth Annual Midsummer Revel**. Workshops, drumming, feasting, dancing, and good old Pagan merriment. Registration information available from The Northern Grove, PO Box 162, Auburn, ME 04212 or lorelei@exploremaine.com or <http://www.exploremaine.com/~lorelei>

June 21 **LITHA** solstice 10:03 AM

June 27 7:00 PM **Pagan Coffee House** at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. See may 31 listing above.

338-Life 338-5433



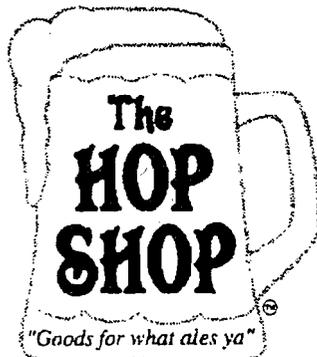
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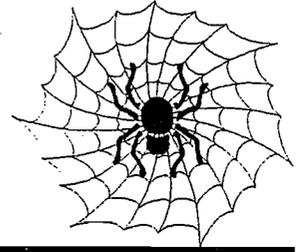
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NETWORKING



-NOTE: While all those listed below are EarthTides members, The EarthTides Pagan Network does not screen the contacts listed below. We are not the "policemen" of Paganism in Maine and would frankly resent such an authority. Everyone should be able to follow their own path. But the downside to this freedom is that You must exercise GOOD JUDGEMENT when using this list. Anyone who makes you uncomfortable or asks you to do anything which makes you uncomfortable is probably wrong for you. Individuals who are under 18 years of age must submit written parental approval to attend gatherings or study with members. EPN will aid in establishing contacts between individuals if asked to do so, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results

Augusta Area:

Bill and Johanna Chellis - 685-3860 Pantheists working with the circle, wheel, and labyrinth.

Immanent Groves a fellowship of practicing Pagans of all persuasions. Members pursue their own personal relationships with the Gods. We're interested in corresponding with experienced Pagans who would like to work with us. Contact Harper or Arwen at Immanent Grove, PO Box 233. Readfield, ME 04355.

Wahtonah Grove - A Pagan circle honoring a variety of traditions, newly founded, April 11, 1997. Dedicated to seeking knowledge and understanding, as well as to good friendship. Contact: Wahtonah Grove, PO Box 257, East Winthrop ME 04343-0257 or e-mail: QGCY88B@prodigy.com

Bangor Area:

Elkwing and Mugwort - Organic Gardening-arians following the garden path to enlightenment. We can help you locate Pagan happenings in the Bangor area. 848-2850 or e-mail mugwort@ime.net

Clinton Area:

Nemeton Community Center Celtic Spirituality - 426-2964 We are rediscovering and practicing the nature-centered spirituality of the Celtic tribes. We observe and celebrate agrarian festivals, and holy days based on a celestial calendar and lunar cycles.

Jay—Farmington:

Circle of the Jade Tiger - *Kerry Phillips* 645-9570 (after 5:00) - Goddess-oriented Shamanism, with a definite splash of Green Man energy. Simplistic and creative rituals that allow for growth and the understanding of death, change, and personal healing. seeking to start a coven and/or teach

Lewiston—Auburn Area

House O' The Greenwood ; *Lorelei* - 782-8704 or lorelei@exploremaine.com Focusing on using our spirituality and Eclectic Wiccan concepts to help us cope with daily life. While there is no formal coven at the moment, Lorelei is available to teach. <http://www.exploremaine.com/~lorelei>

Meditation/Study/fellowship group forming. We're looking for other sober experienced pagans to share, study and hang out with. Send us a letter about your path, topics you wish to study and what you want to commit to. PO Box 272 W. Paris, ME 04289.

Portland—York County Area:

Jane 885-0424 Wiccan Priestess: networking, community, and ritual

LaWRENce and Seshet - We are the Iseum of the Hidden Mysteries and a member of the Fellowship of Isis. We worship the God and Goddess in their many forms. We are an eclectic group focusing on the development of the higher consciousness of the hidden realms. 207-727-5844 or anubis@mix-net.net or <http://maine.home.rr.com/mepagan/iseum>

LunaSea Arts—Khyrohn --772-3381 or PO Box 10786, Portland, ME 04104-6786. Focusing on Pagan Celtic Spirituality in its many forms: Druidism, Shamanism, Wicca, etc. Looking for contacts, especially in the Oxford Hills and Lakes Regions areas. Also looking for informal, day time social/discussion group while children are in school.

Waterville Area:

Dragon of the Mist - Druid/Pantheist Wicca. Contact Dragon of the Mist 9-5, M-Sat., 873-7776, 5 East Concourse, Waterville

Melissa Moon - 873-0528 Eclectic Wicca and Woman's Spirituality - Networking with all in the area online: comptutr@maine.com

PAGANISM 101: On Sunday, 19th April at 11 am there will be an introductory session to a four week course on the basics of Paganism, which will be held on May 6, 13, 20, and 27 (Wednesday nights) at 7 PM. All of this will be in the Waterville area, and will be geared to folks who want more start-up information about Paganism, its practices, and its beliefs. For more information, please contact Marilyn at 873-0528.

Cyberspace Resources

The Maine Pagan Mailing List All Maine Pagans with e-mail capability may join in the lively conversation. Send e-mail to pjane@maine.rr.com to sign up.

Special Interests

I am interested in being a contact for EPN to the deaf community. My youngest daughter is deaf, and I would love to meet deaf adults who are pagan and other pagan parents of deaf children. Ede 725-6767 relay #1-800-437-1120 or ede@clinic.net

NOTES ABOUT LISTINGS ON THE NETWORKING PAGE

This pages carries notices of EarthTides member groups and individuals seeking to network with each other. If you are an EPN member group or individual that wishes to accept new members, begin a discussion group, accept new students or hold open rituals, or if you are an individual wishing to find a teacher, group, or ritual, please send us a notice for publication. (send by mail to E.P.N. P.O. Box 161, East Winthrop. ME 04343 or by e-mail to mugwort@ime.net). We hope listings will be specific as to what they are offering: classes, formation of a new group, taking students, being a clearing house for local events or simply offering Pagan fellowship. Listings on this page are FREE to all EarthTides members. Non-members wishing to advertise are advised to take out an "Unclassified Ad". Please see Advertising in EPNN on page 4. If you wish your listing to appear in the next issue be sure to send your copy in. DO IT NOW!

EARTHTIDES NEWS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The WERU Full Circle Fair will be held July 18 and 19 in Union. EarthTides needs people to be in the booth on both days to talk to people about Paganism is general and EPN. We are allowed to vend general merchandise at this fair, so if you have any items to donate, please let us know.

This is a small fair, but it reaches a lot of people and supports a Pagan-friendly radio station. The music is great, and the more people who show up for booth duty the more time we'll all have for listening!

The Common Ground Fair has moved to its new home in Unity. The locale has changed, but a lot hasn't including our need for volunteers all three days, September 25, 26 & 27. In addition, EPN's President and a panel of volunteers will present a talk on Paganism in the State. We'd like a very diverse panel and are actively recruiting for it.

To volunteer for either fair call Elkwing at 848-2850.

MIDSUMMER REVEL

The 6th Annual Midsummer Revel will be held on June 18-21. Join us for workshops, drumming, feasting, dancing, and good old Pagan merriment! If you can't make the entire weekend, do consider joining us for Saturday—workshops, pot luck feast, stone exchange, and the Main Ritual. Registration forms and information are available through mail, e-mail, or on the web. The Northern Grove, PO Box 162, Auburn, ME 04212 <http://www.exploremaine.com/~lorelei> or by e-mail: lorelei@exploremaine.com

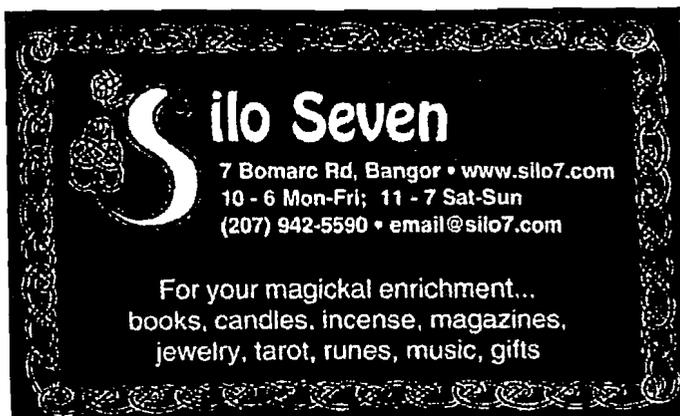
POPHAM BEACH BELTANE

There will be another fun and fantastic Beltane celebration at Popham Beach State Park (south of Bath) on Saturday, May 2nd. We plan to arrive around 10:30 and set up the Maypole straight out from the main parking lot. We will try to do the Maypole itself as close to low tide as possible on the wet sand. Other plans include exploring the island during low tide, a potluck around lunchtime, swimming for the brave of heart and a lot of beach combing.

For the potluck—there are bar-be-que pits and picnic tables back from the water—we will bring some charcoal and lighter fluid. To avoid duplication I propose the following breakdown of what to bring: Air signs - Salads; Fire signs - main course items; Water signs - beverages and Earth signs - desserts! (Course this means I get stuck bringing beverages again even though I'd love to bring my chocolate cake!) It is okay to swap duties with others who plan to come! :-)

Rain or shine, wind or windyer, we will see you there!

Love and BB,
Leigh and Fred



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PAGAN PANTRY

Maine has it's own "Pagan Pantry"! It is here to help people and animals in need, Pagan or not. Those who are in need should call (207) 296-3482 and ask for "Star". You may also write to her at PO Box 10, Stetson, Maine 04488

Donations of non-perishable food, money, and non-food items such as cleansers, pet food, toilet paper, shampoo, etc. can be dropped off at Silo 7 in Bangor, Dragon of the Mist in Waterville or with Star in Stetson - call for directions.

OTHER PAGAN PUBLICATIONS

EarthTides Pagan Network News has subscription exchanges with the following Pagan publications. They are all worth your interest:

Di Veteres: The Kin of the Old Gods Newsletter, 497 Cumberland Ave. Apt5, Portland, ME 04101

Horns and Crescent P.O. Box 540622 Milieu, MA 02054

Our Pagan Times New Moon New York P.O. Box 1471 Madison Square Station New York NY 10159

PAEAN P.O. Box 635 Farmington NH 03835

The Northern Grove P.O. Box 5363 Portland ME 04101

ADVERTISING IN EPNN

UNCLASSIFIED ADS: Here you can advertise *anything* you want: goods and services, personals, etc. Non-EarthTides members may advertise for Pagan contacts here (Members will get their contact listings free on the new "NETWORKING" page - see the notice on page 3). Cost is \$1.00 per 15 words., in \$1.00 increments. i.e. both a 16 word ad and a 30 word ad will cost \$2.00. Maximum ad size will be 150 words.

BUSINESS DISPLAY ADS: Business card size (2" x 3.5") are \$5.00 per issue, excepting the Mabon Issue where the fee is \$10. Annual subscription (8 issues) for a business card size ad is \$35.00 saving you \$10 and includes a business membership in the EarthTides Pagan Network. Larger size ads can be accommodated, write for details.

Send your ad copy, along with payment to EPN, P.O. Box 161, East Winthrop, ME 04343. While we will allow great freedom of expression, we reserve the right to reject ads too indecorous or illegal or for other reasons.

MINUTES OF THE 2ND ANNUAL MEETING OF EARTHTIDES PAGAN NETWORK

1/31/98, Hersey Retreat Center, Stockton Springs, ME

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by President Geoff, who distributed an agenda. One additional item was raised: the request by a Bangor reporter who wishes to do an article on Paganism in Maine. This was referred to New Business.

Adoption of Bylaws

The Council of Earthtides Pagan Network recommended adoption of the Bylaws written at Samhain. Jane MOVED the adoption of the Bylaws; Kitty SECONDED the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Composition of Council and Installation of Officers

Geoff reminded those present at the meeting that the composition of the Council was determined by the membership, with each coven, circle, grove, or other group electing its own Council member and alternate, and with Solitary representatives elected by ballot by Solitaries. Any new group can add new Council members, but officers are elected by the Council. With one exception, all Council members and alternates have e-mail accounts; Jane offered to set up a listserve for Council members, and her offer was gratefully accepted.

While no formal ritual of installation was on the agenda, it was agreed that this would be a good goal for the future. Instead, the officers were named and introduced to the membership: President Geoff; Vice President Ann Marie; Recording Secretary Marilyn; Corresponding Secretary Jane; Treasurer Rita.

Treasurer's Report

Before reporting on financial matters, Rita described the process of the preceding ten months which led to the day's meeting. A Bylaws Committee of EPN had been formed to produce bylaws and to ensure incorporation of EPN as a domestic non-profit corporation under Title 13-B of the Maine Statutes (the same type of incorporation that the Methodists have). This process took two weeks and cost a total of \$20. The Bylaws took

a little longer; the Bylaws Committee began with another organization's bylaws and adapted them for our use. They sent out copies via e-mail and postal mail requesting feedback from all members, and published the revisions in two succeeding issues of Earthtides Pagan Network News, as well as making copies available at the EPN Common Ground Fair booth. The final product just passed by the membership was thus the result of collaborative efforts reaching as many members as possible.

Rita then moved on to money matters, noting that EPN's fiscal year runs on the calendar year for convenience. Rita outlined the sources of income and outflow, noting that printing the newsletter is the biggest expense, and that we use a Maine family printing business which gives us a very good price. Since outreach is our primary purpose as an organization, it is appropriate that the largest portion of our budget be spent on the newsletter. Still, we are usually running in the red by the end of August, and Kitty and Jim must often advance the funds needed to print the newsletter until the end of September, when our biggest gains of the year occur at the Common Ground Fair, due to donations and new subscriptions.

Jim noted at this point that we've gone from ten advertisers to five, so we may experience some loss of income there. He also pointed out that we can usually expect to lose money on the newsletter because only 75-80 copies go to subscribers (too small to qualify for bulk rate), while 120 drop copies (smaller versions of the newsletter) go to twelve different sites all over the state. He emphasized that this is, in fact, a good sign, because we want to do outreach; he also emphasized that all members must be on the lookout for new advertisers, and that the size of the newsletter might drop somewhat to compensate for lost revenues (possibly down to eight or ten pages for a while). Rita mentioned that Meridian Arts pulled their \$70 ad because they said they had never had

a customer who mentioned seeing it in the newsletter. For this reason, Rita urged members to tell our advertisers that we see their ads in -EPNN. Lorelei suggested that we print something to that effect in the newsletter, and Marilyn pointed out that some folks might not wish to identify themselves as Pagans in that way. Helen asked if anyone were actively soliciting ads, and was told not at this time. Geoff wondered if the drop copies were worth the expense, and was told that they move very quickly, implying that they are sought after and therefore worth the expense to EPN. Helen asked for clarification on the content of drop copies; do people know what they are missing? Jim said that it is clear that the drop copies are free, and therefore are abbreviated versions of the newsletter with some portions missing.

Jane MOVED that the membership accept the report of the Treasurer; Ann Marie SECONDED the motion, and the report was accepted unanimously.

President's Report:

Geoff began his report by expressing his deep gratitude to Jim and Kitty for their work on the newsletter, and to Rita and Eric for their work on the Bylaws Committee. He said we owe a huge chunk of where we are as an organization to these four folks, and to all who helped them; a round of applause by the membership showed we all agreed.

Geoff then gave the meeting some history of Earthtides Pagan Network. The first meeting was held in 1989 in a freezing barn in Sanford. Those who gathered held a ritual and talked afterwards of a way to provide a safe, reliable Pagan network to connect seekers with practitioners. An early suggestion for a name was the Maine Alternative Religion Society, or MARS, but it was felt that while Mars was certainly an appropriate deity for some concerns, he might not be an auspicious patron for a group which sought to connect

(Continued on page 6)

MINUTES OF 2ND ANNUAL MEETING (CONT.)

with others, and so by the end of the meeting the name Earthtides was chosen. Nine years later, Earthtides has grown from a loose knit group of eight or ten to an incorporated body holding its first annual meeting with 23 members present.

The newsletter has a similar history of growth. It began as a single sheet newsletter, which took 22 minutes per sheet to reproduce. A faster machine allowed a change to two pages; it began to get articles from contributors, and since then it's never looked back.

Through all the ups and downs, Earthtides has arrived at a wonderful place, and is worthy of intense pride. Geoff feels that we can be the envy of many other Pagan communities, since we have such solid growth without power trips or "official Witches" in our ranks. Again, applause by the membership affirmed their agreement with Geoff's assessment.

Finally, Geoff spoke to a concern about the upcoming referendum on February 10th concerning civil rights protections on the basis of sexual orientation. He said that the issue was certainly of relevance to Pagans, since the radical right was sponsoring the attack on civil rights, and they were unlikely to stop with orientation if they won; Pagans could be next on their list of targets. For this reason, Geoff urged the membership to vote no on February 10th.

Jane MOVED that we accept the President's Report with thanks; Melissa SECONDED the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Old Business: None.

New Business

STANDARDS: Geoff distributed copies of the proposed Standards for Membership by groups or individuals, requesting that members read the Standards and give their comments in to members of the Standards Committee, which consists of Geoff, Joanne, Helen, Rita, and Kitty. Geoff requested feedback in writing if possible, and said that the Standards Committee would meet at lunch to consider

their process, with the goal of presenting a final Standards document at the next membership meeting. Bill MOVED that we accept the Standards draft document for membership review and discussion at a future meeting; Richard SECONDED the motion, which was passed unanimously.

MEDIA RELATIONS COMMITTEE: Kitty said that a reporter for the Bangor Daily News had asked to interview her about Earthtides; she had indicated to him that she would be willing to be interviewed anonymously to describe the organization, NOT the individuals. Her offer was accepted by consensus. Jane then suggested that we identify a public liaison for such situations in the future, and pointed out that since the current Vice President is a public, open Pagan, such a responsibility could be given to that office holder. Geoff affirmed that all religions have some form of public relations officer, and Ann Marie expressed willingness to take on such a role if she were given adequate briefing by the organization. It was then suggested that several people, Ann Marie, Kitty, and Jane, could share the responsibility, since it might be that we would need folks in various parts of the state to fulfill the role. Kitty felt that it was important to designate official speakers for the organization, as she didn't want just anyone to be able to say whatever they wished on behalf of Earthtides without some official authority from the organization. Rita suggested that we make this a committee, and it was so MOVED by Kitty and SECONDED by Jim. With the unanimous approval of the membership, the Media Relations Committee was formed, to consist of Jane, Ann Marie, Julie Marie and Kitty.

OTHER COMMITTEES, EVENTS: We recognized a need for committees or other official designation for people to take responsibility for organizing the Common Ground Fair booth, the Full Circle booth, and Earthtides weekends (currently CPR and Spring Thing). Ann Marie will do CPR in 1999; Eric and Rita will do Spring Thing 1998, and Jane

will consider it for 1999; and Kitty will do the Full Circle booth for 1998. Jane also announced a Spring Equinox ritual to be held in Wells on Saturday, 3/21/98. We realized that the Common Ground Fair would be held in Unity for the first time this year at the new MOFGA fairgrounds, but no one was designated to take responsibility for this event at this time.

Kitty pointed out that we might need to think about holding activities in other parts of the state to reach a wider audience. Jim mentioned that we had received a request for an Earthtides presence at the Earth Day event in Portland, organized by USM. Julie said that the USM Pagan Student Association will be sponsoring a booth at the fair; it will be a family booth with children's activities. There is a \$10 booth fee, but printing costs could be covered by Patrick on the PSA account. Some pointed out that this was the same weekend as Craftwise, and that some Earthtides members are not prepared to be out in their own "neighborhoods". We authorized Julie to set up an Earthtides presence at the USM Earth Day fair.

Bill brought up the question of the public Beltane ritual. The Spring Thing at Hersey will be a Pagan retreat; there will be a public Beltane ritual at Popham Beach, and Fred & Leigh will organize it.

Lorelei inquired about a public ritual at Samhain. Kitty said she has volunteered to do this, and that Julie will help. Tentative plans are for a public Samhain party at the U.U. Church in Auburn.

WEB PAGE: Ann Marie announced that she has created an Earthtides Web Page, and welcomes suggestions for content. Eric suggested that she work closely with the Media Committee on this project.

Adjournment

Jim MOVED and Jane SECONDED adjournment, which was approved unanimously at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn
Recording Secretary, EPN

IMMANENT GROVE'S RESPONSE TO THE MAINE REVENUE SERVICES

Immanent Grove



PO Box 233 Readfield, ME 04355

Peter K. Tucker, Senior Tax Examiner
Sales/Excise Tax Section
Maine Revenue Services
24 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0024

Dear Mr. Tucker,

I am preparing our appeal of your denial of our tax-exempt status, but also felt that some further communication between us would avoid similar problems in the future, as other non-mainstream communities of faith exercise their rights under the law.

I have enclosed a copy of the section on Wicca (also called Paganism or Earth-Based Religion) taken from the Armed Forces Chaplain's Manual. The fact that it is included in the chaplain's manual, as well as the fact that many pagan churches have been recognized by the federal government as 501c(3) tax exempt religious organizations, is about as far as any governmental agency can go to recognize any religious group. Perhaps if you had known that ahead of time, you would not have denied our application, primarily by attempting to judge the validity of our beliefs (which is far outside the purview of any federal or state official) based on a selective use of dictionary definitions, nor would you have applied what we believe to be far more scrutiny to the rest of our application that you would have if we were a mainstream church.

Please note that this does not constitute an appeal, but merely a sharing of information. The steps we intend to take subsequent to your denial are as follows:

1. An appeal to the State Tax Assessor, citing (among other documents) Title 17 Section 1301 of the Maine statutes, and Article 1, Section 3 of the Maine State Constitution, both of which preclude such a religious test as you applied to our application. In addition, we intend to request (under the Freedom of Information Law if necessary) documentation of your department's investigation of other applicants for tax-exempt status, to determine whether they also had to demonstrate (rather than just state in writing as we did in the attachment to our original application) that they fit the five criteria listed in your letter. Among other things, we will be looking to see whether there is a written requirement from your department, applied equally to every tax-exempt church, that all published information about their services include the date and times of services, and a statement that those services are open to the public.
2. If that should be denied, a request for investigation and redress will be made to the Maine Human Rights Commission, under (but not limited to) the above cited statutes.
3. If that should be denied, we intend to file a petition in Federal Court under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, 42 USC @2000 and the first amendment of the US Constitution.

Sincerely,

The Trustees of Immanent Grove



STARCAT'S CORNER: A RADICAL NOTION

The radical notion that I ask you to consider this Beltane season is very simple: stress is a matter of choice. You can choose not to stress out, and if you are feeling stressed, on some level you have chosen to react that way. We tend to view stress as an external factor. "You look upset." "Well, I'm under a lot of stress right now." We blame it on the stressful society we live in. However, it is really freeing to look at stress in a different way - as a deliberate, chosen reaction.

We can examine stress on a purely rational, mental level, but if we want to become aware of stress as only one option of many, we need to look at the physical body's instinctive reactions as well. That's where we hold and store tension. When something happens that we must react to, it helps to stop and see how it feels in your body. People arguing or yelling angrily, even if it is not directed at me, makes my stomach tense up. Then I begin to breathe less deeply, which is the opposite of what I need to do to remain centered in a tough situation. By bringing these subconscious reactions into conscious awareness, I can remember that I do have a choice in how I feel, react and behave.

It also helps to develop and practice healthy coping mechanisms, things that make you feel good on the physical, mental and spiritual levels. Things like exercise, sex, a soak in a hot bath, ritual, relaxing with a good book, meditation, hanging out with friends, whatever brings you joy.

Another important part of letting go of stress is to bring the spiritual realm into your everyday routine. Most of us honor the Sabbats and Esbats, but I've discovered recently that incorporating devotions and blessings into my daily life makes an amazing difference. Silver Ravenwolf emphasizes the importance and value of devotions in a pagan spiritual practice in the first chapter of her book *To Stir a Magick Cauldron*. I've also been doing a daily three-card Tarot reading for almost a year now, and seeing the patterns the cards form day after day helps me look at the bigger picture, and see how what I might consider a stressful situation on a given day actually fits in with the larger cycles of my life.

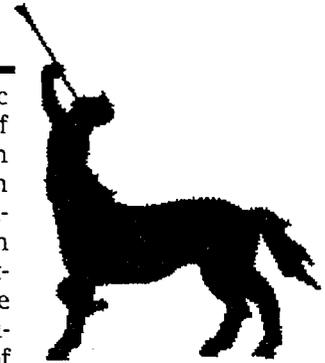
We all get caught up in the mundane aspects of daily physical existence at times, which can make us as stressed-out as many of the other members of our fast-paced society. But by stopping to examine our push-button automatic reactions, and realizing that we do have control over how we view reality, we can have more fun and be happier, healthier people. This tends to have a ripple effect, with other people observing your actions and attitudes, and beginning to examine their own choices regarding stress.

And there's so much to do when you don't bother to be stressed! Noticing changes in the seasons, playing, dancing for no apparent reason. I know, I know - it's a radical notion! Relax, and blessed be.

-Starcat

SOLITARY VOICE

The following is a poetic dialogue consisting of some ideas brought up in various conversations with other Pagans in the community. The thought/question shared is whether or not a Network and Coven-concept share similar ideals, dreams and failings. These are only some of the points focused on that do seem to say that a Network and Coven are similar. What does everyone think?



It begins with the best of intentions,
There is joy, hard work...often frustration.
There are surges of energy and insight,
Moments of stagnation...the loss of light.
There are those wishing to lead...
Those who should not,
Always those never satisfied.
Dreams of a Future...accomplished.
Spiraling, thoughtless destruction.
A struggle to persevere...
Maintain ideals to hold everyone
save and dear.
Festivals for a rainbow community,
Bonded with love and respect.
One moment of misguided hatred...
the destruction of homes and families.
Many paths that may lead to One.
Differing minds focuses on collapse.
Loving arms and trusting hearts,
Honest wisdom shared with all.
Misguided egos shattering souls...
Fools ruling all but themselves.
There is a Circle within and without,
A sanctified space...safe harbor to all.
There is a transformative quality...
an elusive butterfly...
with wings of gossamer and steel.
One voice, one heart...
A future of destruction or empowerment..
One mind...one vision.
What will the future hold?
Always this...the solitary choice.

--K. Phillips

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NOTES FROM THE UNDERWORLD

I don't remember what inspired me to "become" Pagan. I think it was more a process than an event. I do remember looking at the bookshelves in Earthmuffin's and Kelt's home and finding a copy of *What Witches Do*. I was instantly fascinated by the subject matter and knew I had found something important. I borrowed the book and read it several times over.

I think one of the things that attracted me to an alternative path was the need to find a spiritual pursuit that did not care one way or another who I slept with, that did not consider me filth from the very beginning, and that saw my person as inherently sacred - not something to be denied and overcome. In Wicca I found a religion that focused on healing and the whole person, spirit and all. When I picked up my first copy of *The Spiral Dance* I found even more reason to delight in my new discovery. Here was a system of belief that a) put the power of my religion in my own hands, and b) regarded women on a par with men. These were radical concepts at the time (although many mainstream churches are coming around). Most important was the positive outlook on virtually everything. I began to believe that, as long as my intentions were good and well reasoned, I could not go wrong.

Okay, that was fourteen years ago. I've learned a few things since then. For one thing, I know next to nothing about how the universe actually works...and I'm not likely to figure it out before I leave this veil of tears. Number two, nobody else is ahead of me on this problem, either. Some just think they are. The old adage promoted by G.I. Gurdjieff remains true. We know nothing and will get nowhere until we realize that.

At best, reality is an educated guess or, as Lily Tomlin said, "A collective hunch." Nobody has a stranglehold on the true meaning of anything. That means that anything we do must pass through the filter of our limited understanding. We can not know if what we do is good or not, or what effect it will have in the long run. We can only guess and go with our hearts.

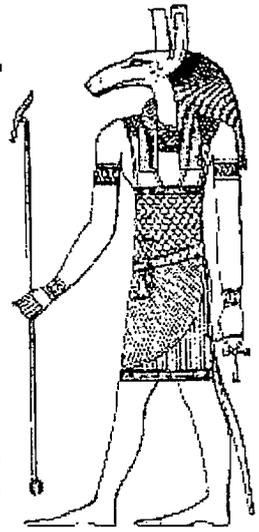
But we're far from pure. Our feelings and emotions hold more sway over us than we often like to admit. Our perspective on the world and its happenings is extremely narrow. We are prone to accident in actions, thoughts and feelings. Evil (the concept I wrote about in the last issue), although not an "anti-deity" is a very real issue.

I once read a book by Dr. Frank Church Jr entitled *The Devil and Dr. Church* in which he postulated that the devil was, in fact, the shadow side of God. He believed that the two were inseparable and that to worship one, you had to understand the other. While this sort of thinking may seem heretical coming from a Unitarian minister, I have no problem with it. In fact, I can extend the image even further. Just as God has a shadow side, so do I. That doesn't mean that I should spend a lot of time exercising that shadow, only that I should spend time understanding it. That, I think, is the only real failing of the modern Pagan movement. No time is

spent on this issue. How often have you read about learning to understand the dark side of yourself? What exercises were you taught that centered on wrapping your arms around that ugly part of you and embracing it? I challenge you by saying that, until you do that, you are not complete.

Remember that when you find a little darkness in your white light. It belongs there. It is the shadow you cast when you bask in the light of the gods. You would do well to find out where it is falling.

Jackal



HINTS FROM HEKATE

If you like to use floating wicks as an alternative to candles, either in ritual or for household light, but don't like the smell of lamp oil or kerosene, try vegetable oil; a gallon of it costs less than five dollars, and it has practically no scent! I find that a wick wears out before I run out of oil in the container. You can make a floating wick with about a half-inch of candle-wick stuck through a hole punched in a triangle of aluminum (cut from a beer can), with a small bit of cork stuck on each corner of the triangle to keep it afloat.

Speaking of flames, for ritual use I find that lighters just don't give the right mood to the act of lighting a candle or fire. A match just seems more appropriate, but robes (especially "Skyclad" brand robes) often don't have pockets, and finding a match in a pouch can interrupt the flow. What to do? Well, the simplest solution is to leave a match next to each candle! If finding a striker is a problem, try using a pottery candle-holder, which usually can double as a striker, or taping a piece of the striker from the matchbox on the edge of the table!

One last thing, little known. beeswax candles often need an extra-thick wick in order to burn properly. If you make your own candles, and plan to try beeswax, take the trouble to find about the largest wicking you can, particularly for pillar or jar candles. It's rather embarrassing to have your candles sputter out in circle, leaving too little wick to re-light!

(My friend Loki insists that I pass His newest hint along. He suggests that the next time the Radical Religious Right are collecting signatures for a hateful referendum, you simply sign it, as often as possible, and put in a PO box for an address! Very trickster)

- Hekate

"Absent Lover"

I had not wanted to go down this familiar path
caressing ripening red buds of desire
affirming beloved flesh with cupped hands
slipping back into my sensual, sexual body
I had not wanted to go down this path.

Here be dragons:

dragons of thwarted desire
dragons of empty spaces, missing touches
dragons of flesh hungering to bond with
other beloved flesh
and smile with smile
and breath with breath.

Still

I go down this path
this solitary path
this ruby moist spiral path

I go down
and down
and down

releasing the fire in the flesh
the hoards of glittering tears
the deep dragon-roars.

We dance in spirals on the winds
a solitary dragon dance
etching our absences on a blood-rose sky.

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"Magick Night"

This is a Magick night

Hearing her my mind opens
Seeing her my heart opens
Smelling her my mind reels
Touching her
— all my flesh yearns for her

To be one
Merge
Share our light

For this magick night
And for many more to come

And, I'll drink from a Pierian Spring
And sing songs of love

Mugwort

EPN
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