



EARTHTIDES PAGAN NETWORK NEWS

LIVING IN MAINE, CELEBRATING THE EARTH

Summer Solstice 2000

About the EarthTides Pagan Network

The Maine Pagan community is diverse, independent and geographically distant. We worship in groups or alone, but sometimes need contact and a shared forum to express our ideas and concerns for this community.

The EarthTides Pagan Network was established in 1989 as a support resource for Maine Pagans. All solitaries and groups are welcome to join. Some may choose simply to receive this newsletter. Those who wish to be listed among our contacts or vote on organizational matters must sign our Standards.

A subscription to this newsletter is available for a suggested donation of \$11 per year. Single copies may be obtained by sending a \$1.50 donation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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

Immanent Grove Wins State Recognition

By Arwen Evenstar and Harper Meader

About two years ago, this newsletter carried a story about Immanent Grove, one of Maine's Pagan groups. At that point, the story was not a happy one; it explained about how Immanent Grove was denied tax-exempt status by the Maine Revenue Service because it was "pagan, and therefore not religious."

The beginning of that story might have been, well, naive. The middle of it was certainly a challenge. But finally, there's a happy ending: the Appellate Division reversed the earlier ruling, and granted our tax-exempt status.

Immanent Grove was chartered as a local independent church by the Secretary of State's office in September 1997. The following month, we filed for tax-exempt status with the Maine Revenue Service as a regularly organized church (and no, we weren't happy using the term--Maine law allows no alternative).

Then we waited. Our monthly phone calls were met with "these things take time.: Finally, in February of 1998 we received a cryptic letter saying, "I apologize for the late response. There has been an internal controversy in regards to the criteria for a 'regularly organized church or house of worship.' The matter has been settled." There followed several requests for additional information, which we supplied.

The next month, we were denied tax-exempt status. The letter read in part: "Immanent Grove is 'a fellowship of practicing pagans.' Webster's Dictionary defines pagan as 'one who is not a Christian, Moslem, or Jew...heathen...not religious. Based on the definitions in the dictionary, Immanent Grove does not fit the definition of a church nor religious [sic]."

See GROVE, Page 7.

CALENDAR

As a service to the Pagan community, we seek to list as many events as possible that would be of interest to Maine Pagans. You need not be a member of EPN, or even a subscriber to this newsletter, to list an event here. All we ask is that events be non-profit -- that is, that any fees for participating not exceed the reasonable cost of putting on the event -- and submitted to us by e-mail or post by the publication deadline. (Those planning for-profit events are welcome to avail themselves of our very affordable advertising opportunities.)

We make no claim as to the value or safety of any of these events, and caution our readers to rely on their own best judgment when assessing any situation, particularly those involving strangers. That said, we also encourage you to participate in as wide a spectrum of the Pagan community as you can, both for your own enjoyment and because our community needs your positive energy and good fellowship

JUNE

13 Tuesday

Nevola Symposium on Spirituality and Health, Waterville. Presentations, workshops, and networking about the role of the arts in health, wholeness, and healing. For more information, call 626-1894 or visit

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/dms/mdfpr/nevola>

16 Friday

Women's Full Moon Gathering, Auburn, beginning around 5 p.m. Bring snacks and drinks to share, songs and instruments. For more information, call Lorelei Greenwood at 783-5148 or e-mail lolelei@exploremaine.com.

Full Moon in Sagittarius, 5:27 p.m.

17 Saturday

Summer Solstice Ritual, Circle of the Silver Cauldron and Temple of Brigantia, Wells, 5 p.m. Potluck supper to follow. For information or directions call 646-6634 or e-mail temple@janeraeburn.com.

Summer King Solstice Ritual led by Immanent Grove, MOFGA Fairgrounds, (same place as Common Ground Fair) in Unity. We'll be building the Summer King during the afternoon, followed by ritual at 7pm. FMI please contact Susan Pierce at MOFGA 368-4142.

18 Sunday

Celebrating the Summer King at Litha, sponsored by Immanent Grove, 2 p.m., Ironwood Hollow in central Maine. Please bring ribbons or flowers to tie on to the Summer King, and food to share. Persons under 18 are welcome with a custodial parent. Bug repellent of your choice suggested.

20 Tuesday

Summer Solstice, 8:48 p.m.

21 Wednesday

Peace Park 2000 at Deering Oaks Park in Portland. Event begins at 9 a.m., and will include peace prayers of many faiths, a guided meditation by Jennifer Moore, a ceremony led by Phil Whiteawk, and a healing circle led by UU minister Kitsy Winthrop at Noon. In the afternoon there will be children's crafts, and drumming, and in the evening will be performances by Lorelei Greenwood,

Shambhalla and Windstrum.

24 Saturday

Last Quarter Moon in Pisces, 8 p.m.

30 Friday

Workshop on Magick and Song. If you enjoy music and would like to explore its uses in ritual and magick, please join us! FMI, contact mrpukkil@colby.edu, or call the bookstore at 377-3967.

JULY

1 Saturday

New Moon in Cancer, 2:20 p.m.

2 Sunday

Earthtides Pagan Network Quarterly Council Meeting.

4 Tuesday

Independence Day

8 Saturday

First Quarter Moon in Libra, 7:53 a.m.

13 Tuesday

Lake Region CAWfee Talk, informal Pagan social event in Casco. For information and directions, e-mail Lisa at lsileo@maine.rr.com.

15 Saturday

Open Full Moon Ritual, Temple of Brigantia, Wells, 7:30 p.m. Potluck supper to follow. For more information, call 646-6634 or e-mail temple@janeraeburn.com.

16 Sunday

Full Moon in Capricorn, 8:55 a.m.

24 Monday

Last Quarter Moon in Taurus, 6:02 a.m.

30 Sunday

Immanent Grove Lammas, 2p.m., Ironwood Hollow in central Maine. Bring food to share. Persons under 18 are welcome with a custodial parent. Bug repellent of your choice suggested.

31 Monday

New Moon in Leo, 9:25 p.m.

AUGUST

1 Tuesday

Lammas/Lughnasadh. Summer harvest festival.

NETWORKING

The people and groups listed here are mentioned because they have done two things: They have volunteered to serve as points of contact for those seeking Pagan community, and they have signed the EPN Standards, which pledges them to follow a set of basic rules of ethical conduct. Any person or group may be listed here by subscribing to this newsletter and agreeing to those Standards; please contact EPN to arrange such a listing.

EPN has no interest in serving as the "Pagan police," and explicitly supports the autonomy of each person and group in matters of faith, belief and worship. The Maine Pagan community encompasses a wide variety of people and practices, and seekers are cautioned that any person or activity that makes you uncomfortable is probably wrong for you.

Groups and individuals who seek networking opportunities but are reluctant to sign the Standards are encouraged to take advantage of our advertising columns.

AUGUSTA AREA

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

Immanent Grove. 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. *Harper/Arwen, Immanent Grove, P.O. Box 233, Readfield, ME 04355*

Wahtonah Grove. A Pagan Circle honoring a variety of traditions, dedicated to seeking knowledge and understanding, as well as to good friendship. *Aree, tsiganka@prodigy.net*

OXFORD HILLS AREA

Khyrohn Ni Mara. Eclectic Wiccan focusing on healing through herbs and drumming. RR1 Box 2606, N. Waterford, ME 04267. 583-4215.

PORTLAND/YORK COUNTY

Temple of Brigantia. Wiccan group honoring the Goddesses and Gods of Britain and Rome. Offering open Full Moon rituals and accepting selected candidates for apprenticeship. *Jane/Cassius, 646-6634 or temple@janeraeburn.com*

WATERVILLE AREA

MoonGoddess. Eclectic Wicca and Women's Spirituality; area networking online. *Mmmoongoddess@yahoo.com or 873-0528.*

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Deaf Pagans. My youngest daughter is deaf, and I would love to meet deaf adults who are Pagan and other Pagan parents of deaf children. *Ede, 353-6202 (V/TTY) or ede@clinic.net*

PanCraft. Pagan artists, musicians and others beloved of the Muses get together to share their work and honor the Deities who inspire them. *Harper and Arwen, P.O. Box 233, Readfield, ME 04355*

ONLINE RESOURCES

EPN Web site, <http://www.mix-net.net/~annmarie/earthtides>

Maine Pagan Resource Page, <http://www.janeraeburn.com/maine>

Maine Pagan Mailing List, to join send blank e-mail to mepagan-subscribe@egroups.com

EPN Mailing List (open to newsletter subscribers only), to join send blank e-mail to earthtides-subscribe@egroups.com

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STIRRINGS

Maine Pagan groups of any kind –religious, artistic, political, social – are invited to keep the community up to date on their activities in this section. Tell us about coffee-talk topics, rituals, festivals, public-service projects, rites of passage and anything else you'd like us to know about! Send your news to earthtides@celticweb.com or EPN, P.O. Box 161, E. Winthrop, ME 04343.

MAINERS AT RITES

Several Maine Pagans were to be found enjoying the ritual and community at Rites of Spring in Massachusetts. Activities included ecstatic dancing, workshops, feasting, vending and ritual.

ISEVM OF THE HIDDEN MYSTERIES

The Iseum will not be holding New Moon rituals in July or August because of plans to be out of the country. Rituals are currently scheduled to resume in the fall.

TEMPLE OF BRIGANTIA

Jane and Cassius, Priestess and Priest, were married April 22 in a Roman ceremony at Sacred Oaks in Wells. Elements of the ceremony included parting the bride's hair with a spear point to drive away evil spirits, reading of omens, invocation of Jupiter and Juno and offerings at the couple's *lararium* (household altar).

Jupiter apparently blessed the ceremony in person: The power went out! This made for a lovely and authentic ceremony lit by candles alone. Fortunately, photographer Michael Berube coped beautifully under adverse circumstances.

Among the bride's attendants were three Maine Pagans: Regina, Moth and Julie Marie. And yes, the groom wore a toga!

The Brigantes hadn't planned on a May Full Moon ritual, but in fact debuted a Cauldron Rite of Mercury and Rosmerta.

With this ritual we welcomed a new group to York County. Thea and Harry of the Circle of the Silver Cauldron are an experienced Wiccan partnership whose assistance at the Cauldron Rite added a great deal to its energy. For Litha, the two circles will join forces again, and you're welcome to join us.

Send announcements for STIRRINGS to earthtides@celticweb.com or EPN, P.O. Box 161, E. Winthrop, ME 04343.



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Maine Witch faces hate-crimes charge

Maine's attorney general has sought a hate-crimes charge against Scott Buchanan of Livermore, saying Buchanan threatened a Christian co-worker.

Buchanan, 27, is charged with telling the 16-year-old co-worker that he was a Witch with "evil powers" and that he wanted all Christians to burn.

After the charge became public on May 25, EarthTides Pagan Network issued a statement (below) which did not support or condemn Buchanan, but condemned hate crimes in general.

Buchanan, who appeared on television wearing a pentacle, denies the charges, and his attorney, Margot Joly, is preparing a defense against the charge. The case is in Androscoggin County Superior Court.

EarthTides statement on hate-crimes case

[This was sent to all Maine media within 24 hours of our learning of the Buchanan case. It was intended to alert them to the existence of Wiccans and Pagans and possibly to mitigate any damage to our reputation from the case. With the press release went a page of background information on Paganism and Wicca and a paragraph describing the EarthTides Pagan Network. While no media outlet chose to report our words, it's possible that we did some good by giving them a source to go to next time this or any similar case becomes news.]

On Thursday, May 25, 2000, we learned that the state is seeking a hate-crimes indictment against one Scott Buchanan, accused of telling a teen-age co-worker that he was a "witch with evil powers" and wanted to see all Christians burned.

As Maine Pagans - members of a group of loosely affiliated faiths, some of whom refer to themselves as "witches" - we would like it to be known that our faiths do NOT endorse threats or violence.

Pagan religions (including Wicca, or modern-day witchcraft) are based in the pre-Christian faiths of many cultures, and generally center around the sanctity of the earth and the natural world. Our worship emphasizes personal responsibility, and promises that those who do harm will have harm returned to them. (Christians follow a similar tenet, the Golden Rule.)

As members of a minority religion, we are well aware of the need for tolerance and respect among people of different faiths. We condemn all hate crimes, and specifically the crime of threatening or harming another based on his or her religion. We support the right of all Mainers to worship as they choose, and to bring up their children in their beliefs.

We cannot speak to the truth of the allegations against Mr. Buchanan; that is for the legal system to decide. If they are true, then the state is right to prosecute under the hate-crimes laws. We offer our sympathy to Mr. Buchanan's young co-worker and to his family.

We would like to assure all Mainers that the vast majority of Wiccans and Pagans are peaceful people, who ask only to be allowed to worship as we choose in peace and privacy.



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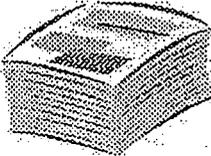
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About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes out eight times a 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, double-spaced. Submissions sent via disk or e-mail to earthtides@celticweb.com are preferred. Articles are edited for spelling, grammar and to fit available space.

Subscribers' names, addresses and other personal information are kept confidential except to other network members. EPN will aid in establishing contact between individuals if asked to do so, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results.

The deadline for the Lammas issue is Friday, July 7, 2000.

Publications of Interest

Maine Well-Being, Portland. Distributed free in many areas.

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

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

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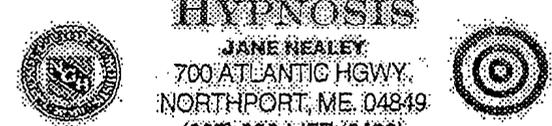
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GROVE,

from Page 1

Once our application was denied we felt we had no choice but to follow the Appeals process. If the state's opinion became the last word, it would have been even easier to deny Pagans their rights in the future. And so, with the help of the Maine Civil Liberties Union, we entered into a two-year struggle, and, in the end, our denial was overturned and we were recognized as a regularly organized church entitled to tax-exempt status.

When we first sought this tax exemption, we had no particular plans. It was just the next logical step, having registered as a local independent church [ugh]. The registration step we took because we believe that, if we expect equal treatment under the law, it is necessary for Pagan groups to follow the same set of legal procedures as non-Pagan groups.

We honestly didn't think our application would be rejected. We understood that it would need some accompanying explanation, and contacted Maine Revenue Services to discuss what material we should send to explain our practices, in an attempt to solve any problems before they occurred. For example, one of their standing definitions of "church" is a building. We explained that we worship in an outdoor grove. We were asked if there were any permanent structures, and explained about seating and an altar. This explanation of why we worship outdoors, and that we have permanent, dedicated space with seating and an altar became part of the documentation that accompanied our application.

With this exemption, we are not expected to pay sales tax for purchases made for religious purposes. Of course, much of what IG purchases for ritual would not be taxable anyway (e.g. bread for cakes and wine, fruit for Mabon mead). However, we have been paying sales tax on things like ribbon for the Maypole, lots of candles, and close to \$100 in supplies for our Paganism 101 course. We will now get a refund of the sales tax we've paid over the past several

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*--Harper & Arwen,
Immanent Grove*

years (yes, we had to save the receipts), and not have to pay sales tax in the future.

To the best of our knowledge, every state in which Pagan organizations have filed for tax exempt status has granted it. We know for sure that pagan groups have tax-exempt status in New York, Ohio, California and Vermont, but the actual list would probably be much, much longer.

It is important to note that we won on several points. First, "I find that a belief does not need to be monotheistic to qualify as 'religious.'" Second, the state allows that one does not have to worship in a building to qualify as a church. And third, the requirement that a group's services be open to the public can be satisfied by allowing any non-members to attend (rather than being required to allow non-Pagans).

While our win does not have the force of case law, it is an official finding, and should serve to support pagan rights issues in the future.

StarCat's Corner: Let it Be

I recently heard Midsummer described as a time for "letting go." Now that the crops were all in, our ancestors had to let the Earth and Sun work their magick, and trust that the harvest would be enough to sustain them through the next turn of the wheel. The hard work of planting was done, with the hard work of harvest still in the future, so the letting go was also a pleasant relief of burdens, a chance to be just a little bit lazy.

In our modern era, summer is a time when many of us take vacations, or get outside more than usual to enjoy the warmer weather. The evenings stretch out in front of us, with extra time for rest and recreation. Yet I think many of us would do well to take the lesson of relinquishing control more to heart.

We no longer have to worry about the crops and whether we will have enough food, at least here in the United States. The grocery stores will stay full, one way or another. Most of us are given great control over our physical survival, and have what would be considered in other times or other parts of the world to be great wealth.

Yet we do worry. We fret over money -- whether we will have enough, not only for the cornucopia of food in our supermarkets, but to pay our bills and enjoy luxury items. We worry about whether we will have enough time each week to do the things we "have to" do. And, understandably, we worry about the environment, about the state of affairs in this nation and around the world, about changing our misguided culture of power-over.

I suggest we each take time this Midsummer to let go, to give up the control we expect to have over our lives. I'm not saying we shouldn't work for change, or even work towards taking that vacation we've been saving up for. But do your very best, in mundane and magickal terms, and then trust that your efforts will bear fruit.

Give up a few of the things you feel you "must" do each day or week to stay in control of your world. Chances are no one will notice or complain. Your kids would probably rather spend leisure time with you than have every last scrap of laundry done. Errands can be combined or put off until a later date (think of how much time most Americans spend buying things). Don't work so much -- take time off if at all possible. Don't necessarily use this free time to rush around doing activities that are supposed to be fun, but just relax in the sun and read, take a swim, or chat with a friend.

I may be "preaching to the choir," as the saying goes. We are Pagans, and as such are more in tune with the cycles of the Earth than most modern people. Yet I have noticed recently that even among my Pagan friends, there is a drive to do more, and at the same time a dissatisfaction with having a busy lifestyle. Remember that you choose to work, take an evening class, give Tarot readings, bake bread for your family, and try to fit in a coven meeting. Slow it down a little, and see how you feel.

Take some time this season to consciously "let go" of the results you expect from your work and your play. Let your senses be alive, and delight in the joy of the warm Midsummer breezes. Blessed Be!

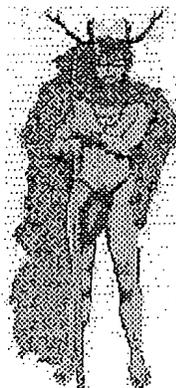


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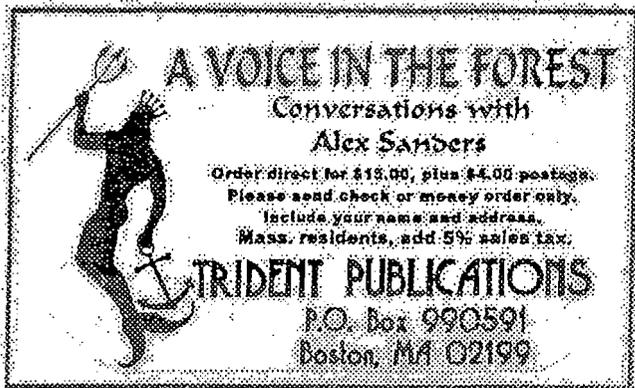
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