

# EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK NEWS

12 PAGES OF COOL STUFF

OSTARA 1997

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## About The EarthTides Pagan Network

The EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK was established in 1989 as a support resource for Maine's Pagan community. This community is diverse, independent and geographically distant. We practice earth-based alternative religions. Most of us worship in existing groups or as solitaries, 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 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, articles, book reviews and editorial pieces. Please keep submissions to no more than two pages, typed and double spaced. You may also send your submission in ASCII, MSWord or WordPerfect format on disc or submit it by e-mail to wachel@wa2000.winarea.biddeford.com or mugwert@ime.net

Submissions will be edited for grammar, spelling and to fit available space. The EarthTides Pagan Network News is copyrighted 1997 by Fred M. Griffith. All submissions remain the property of the authors and may not be reproduced without their permission.

Subscriptions 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 406, Anson, ME 04911. The next EPNN will come out just before Beltane. We hope to hear from more of you before then. Blessed Be!

### EPNN STAFF

Arwen Evenstar	editor
Harper Meader	editor
Kelt	business manager
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Mugwort	production

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## Merry Meet

After asking permission from the tree spirits, I drill a hole in the side of the tree, pound in a spile and hang an empty milk jug from it. Tasting the first sap as it starts to flow, I just imagine the pancakes to follow! The snow crunches underfoot as I then walk to the next tree. We won't see flowers for another month, unless we get them from somewhere else!

Oh well. At least the light is growing and the days are warmer. We have from now until Beltane to get outside work done before the bugs drive us in! Now we look forward to growth, warmth and the beautiful power of the Sun! (Will we appreciate it as much come mid-July?) The restful time of winter over, now is traditionally the busy productive time. Though, I must admit, that if winter was a respite, I hate to think about how busy the summer will be!

For now, though, all is in balance. The light and the dark, the active and reflective, the warmth and the cold. For me, it is a time to dance through my body, mind and spirit, dusting here and there, shaking out the worn rugs of outdated thoughts, and confirming that my life and the energies of the God and Goddess are in balance.

Though balance is important when heading into the dark, I believe it is essential when heading back out into the light. With neither too much baggage on either port or starboard, I can keep an even keel. May we all do the same!

Keep an eye out for shoals, rough water and a shallow bottom!

Blessed Be!

- Fred Griffith -

This sample copy contains only four pages of the Ostara EPNN. To see the rest PLEASE SUBSCRIBE!

PO BOX 406, ANSON MAINE 04911



# EVENTS CALENDAR



- Mar 20 EOSTAR Vernal Equinox 8:55 AM EST
- Mar 23 Full Worm Moon 11:45 PM EST
- Mar 23-24 Partial eclipse of Moon Middle of eclipse at 11:39 PM on Mar 23
- Mar 28-Mar 30 CPR (Cabin Fever Pagan Retreat) For fun, games, camaraderie, and discussing future of EPN. Call 848-2850 or 377-3968 for details.
- Mar 30 Sunday Circle at The Space At Silo, Mt Vernon. see above.
- Mar 31 Last Quarter Moon 2:38 PM EST
- Apr 6 Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 AM
- Apr 6 Sunday Circle at The Space At Silo, Mt Vernon. 10-11:30 AM, \$2.00, Non-denominational, honoring celebrating the seasons in creative contemplative ways. Bring a reading or song to share. Call 293-2239 for more info
- Apr 7 New Moon 7:02 AM DST
- Apr 13 Earthtides Pagan Study Group at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. 6:30 PM. For info call 848-2850 or email mugwert@ime.net
- Apr 14 First Quarter Moon 1:00 PM DST
- Apr 15 Dowsers Gathering in Gardiner. The group meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tue. of each month. For info call Barbara Foust 582-8615
- Apr 19 Dowsers Gathering in Bangor. The group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each Month. For info call Gordon Barton 963-5801
- Apr 18 Goddess Night. 7:00 PM Gather with sculptor Shanna Wheelock and honor your favorite goddess create figurines and wall pieces and sharing stories. Call 621-1901 for more info
- Apr 19 Drum Jam and Boogie Bash at The Space at Silo. Call 293-2239 for more info.
- Apr 21 Lyrid Meteor Shower - best at 4AM
- Apr 22 Full Pink Moon 4:33 PM DST
- Apr 30 Last Quarter Moon 00:37 AM
- Apr 27 Open Earthtides Beltane Celebration at Popham Beach. Maypole around 2 PM; diving into ocean, lunch, and great friendship all day. Call 848-2850 or 696-8565 for info.
- May 1 BELTANE
- May 2-4 Western Mountains Men is holding a men's Gathering at Bryant Pond. For more info write: WMM, PO Box 269, Farmington, ME 04938
- Monthly Dowsers Gathering in Falmouth Contact: Richard Mc Kenzie 797-2513
- Winthrop Area Saturday Night Drum Jam - Held monthly at One Heart Studio. Donation \$2.00 call 377-4168 for more info.

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## EARTHTIDES CONTACTS

*NOTE: 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 Grove*: a fellowship of practicing pagans of all persuasions. All are encouraged to pursue their own world views & personal relationships with the Gods. Contact: Harper or Evenstar, The Immanent Grove, PO Box 233, Readfield, ME 04355.

### Bangor Area:

*Kitty and Jim* - 848-2850 We're garden witches; Organic Gardening-arians. We are following the garden path to enlightenment! [mugwert@ime.net](mailto:mugwert@ime.net)

*Tom Lawrence* - 866-3994 CUUPS: Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, monthly meeting in Bangor.

### 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.

### N. Waterford:

*Circle of Trianon* - Eclectic Wicca Gene and Judy Hemingway - 583-6519

### Madison Area:

*Fär Flung Coven* - Pantheist Wicca Leigh and Fred Griffith - 696-8565 We focus on seeking the deeper truths shared by all religions, to respect all Gods and Goddesses, and to respect all religious paths.

### Portland Area:

*Avalon-9* - 885-0424 A Wiccan group incorporating Celtic and other influences with a healthy dose of humor.

### Sebago Lake Region:

*House O' The Greenwood* - Lorelei - 583-2420 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://www1.usa.com/~valiriantng.html> or [loirelei@ime.net](mailto:loirelei@ime.net)

### Waterville Area:

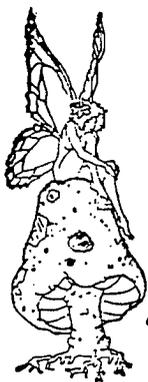
*Dragon of the Mist* - Druid/Pantheist Wicca Contact Dragon of the Mist 9-5, M-Sat., 873-7776, 5 East Concourse, Waterville

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

### Cyberspace

*The Maine Pagan Mailing List* All Maine Pagans with email capability may join in the lively conversation. Send email to [pjane@maine.com](mailto:pjane@maine.com) to sign up.

Bulletin Board: *Circular Logic* - 873-4981 Data line



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## OUR READER'S WRITE - LETTERS TO EARTH TIDES

I would like this opportunity to apologize and explain myself pertaining to comments made of "Broom Closeted" Wiccans.

To start, I do apologize to each and every one of you that may have been offended.

To explain, a lot of the comments made are from a period of my life before Maine and also from a new release titled "Living Between Two Worlds; Challenges of the Modern Witch." If any one else reads this book you may also have felt the same way.

At the time of writing that so called Vitriol, I did not know anyone that I knew or had met previously was in the Broom Closet so on that I do apologize.

As for what I teach, I teach, or should say I was teaching, the Wiccan Religion. Opinions belong to the individual and are drawn by the individual, it's something an individual must get past in order to grow. This is something I also must get past in order for me to grow.

Once again, to anyone offended by my comments, please accept my sincerest apologies. They were not a personal war on any of you.

Thank you  
Blessed Be  
Dragon Mist



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We all are called to a certain role as our religious convictions dictate. Were it not so, our religion would be static, something nature abhors, and as dull as Uncle Fester's 1950's party jokes. Some are called to boldly go where others feel called not to tread. Viva the difference!

I can truly see Dragon Mist's point of view, and am sure it wasn't intended to be a blanket judgement. His view is what has driven his passion to duty to our cause.

On the other side of the hill, I also see Harper's point. However, I didn't see, personally, any hate or personal offense in Dragon Mist's statement. Instead I see real passion in his faith--something I find endearing and invigorating!

You see, I too am a solitary--uh--am "in the broom closet" I believe is the clever analogy--but for specific reasons of my own. I, like the Hermetic, Trappist, monks of the Christian faith, find that my approach to our faith requires the Hermetic approach. To reveal myself publicly would compromise my ability to function in society in ways I feel contribute to its needs. It would also be too invasive to my privacy, which I require for solitude, meditation, and magick.

I would love to function in a coven atmosphere--to celebrate the seasons, raise power or do work for causes under these condition, but that opportunity hasn't yet come. But for now, suffice to say, I'm very secure in who and what I am and where I am going, so where can I find room to be personally offended?

I think, now please don't be offended, if you could both sit down to a big, fat, horn of mead, you would find a lot to love in each other. Last I heard, it was the Monotheists that were at war.

From the heart--Blessed Be!  
Slyph

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## READER'S FORUM: THE FUTURE OF EARTHTIDES

---

*Editor's note: The Beltane topic will be "Sex and Paganism". Is sex an important part of our religion? How does our view of sex differ from that of mainstream society? How do we educate our children about sex and avoid the repressive stereotypes common to the larger culture in which we live? We want and need your opinion!*

As founding members of the EarthTides Pagan Network, we are overjoyed to see so many Maine Pagans taking part in the network and getting together, and to see the educational outreach being done through Common Ground Fair, open circles, local discussion groups, etc. These follow the original intent of EarthTides, namely: to help Maine Pagans connect with each other and build community, and to educate the public about our beliefs.

Originally there was a great resistance to EarthTides becoming 'too organized'. No one wanted to create a 'corporate' entity but wanted to have a networking organization that could either live or die as its members wished, without having to deal with the government. We believe it may be time, however, for the EarthTides Pagan Network to become more of a 'legal' entity.

Concerns have been raised regarding the money which flows through EPNN. Although there has never been a reason to question financial impropriety, that doesn't mean that such questions may not come up at some time in the future. It would not hurt to have financial accounting reviewed occasionally and available to EarthTides members. There is also the question of the IRS. They might decide to question what happens to the money people pay for subscriptions or donate at Common Ground Fair.

Notwithstanding financial considerations, legal status would be important if EarthTides were to get involved in political action, ordination of clergy, or the establishment of legal 'churches' throughout the state.

If we were to become 'legal', would folks prefer to do so from scratch or to do it under an 'Pagan umbrella organization'? If so, which one? To our knowledge, each such organization has its own advantages and disadvantages. Getting legal on our own is time consuming and not cheap. Luckily there are folks in the network who have already had some experience getting legal recognition.

Regarding open events, we would like to see more members sponsoring an open circle, discussion group, or even a pot-luck! You don't have to be "High Priest/ess Mucky-muck of the Silver Dragon Commode" or anything - just a member who might like to connect with others in your area! In case you're nervous about who might attend, please rest assured that no-one who has sponsored an EarthTides Gathering to date, whether it was at their own home or at some other location, has had a problem with persons attending, or with neighbors questions. If you have a question

about it, call some of us on the contact list or write to us care of EarthTides.

Regarding political action, neither of us like politics at all, but that doesn't mean that EarthTides could not become more political. We would hope that anyone representing EarthTides politically, just as with any other representative of the network, would be intelligent, articulate and caring. Our only other concern would be to make sure that anyone doing political action in the name of EarthTides truly represented our membership and did not do political action for the network just to advance their own political agenda.

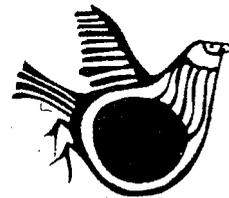
Speaking of 'representing our membership', WHO are members of EarthTides Pagan Network? Anyone who subscribes to the newsletter? Anyone in the Maine Pagan Community who is interested? Is there, or should there be some criteria beyond subscriptions?

What are the rights and responsibilities of EarthTides membership? Right now it would appear that members are subscribers of the network. Rights include the right to receive the newsletter, to contribute to the newsletter (although non-subscribers have contributed in the past as well), to hold and attend open gatherings, and to have some say in how the network as a whole is operated.

Responsibilities seem to include keeping other members names, addresses and phone numbers confidential, and to act in a manner which would not reflect negatively upon EarthTides or upon Pagans in general. If we became 'legal', someone, or a group of folks might also be given the unenviable responsibility of deciding when individuals have "crossed the line" and should be removed from our membership.

These are our thoughts for now. We look forward to the coming dialog and growth which will ensue.

Fred Griffith



## READER'S FORUM CONTINUED

I'm amazed at the growth of the Earthtides newsletter. It has greatly expanded with various topics and diverse responses. But the number of people who respond seems to be quite limited. Where is everyone? I'm led to believe that there are subscribers throughout the state of Maine, and some in other states, but why is it that only a few people write responses, and articles? Is Earthtides making it clear that everyone can write in, regardless of their views/responses?

Another concern I have is the cost of the newsletter. I realize I'm ignorant as to the cost of printing, etc. But I notice we use higher-quality paper, compared to the newsletters of 1993. If we as Pagans are all "Earth-friendly", shouldn't we be using recycled materials, and helping our environment? Money can be spent in other necessary areas, such as fees for the Common Ground booth, teaching materials, books, etc.

As for the possibility of political action and teaching groups, great idea! But who will be participating in these activities as the leaders? Shouldn't we all have a say in the form of an "Earthtides council", consisting of various members of more than one group? These members will equally work on a shared curriculum/topics for discussion, so there are no questions as to what exactly is being taught. But then again, there may be some people uncomfortable with the idea of the newsletter becoming involved in various political activities; it should always remain an individual's choice.

I'd like to see more rituals and gatherings held by others, in state as well as throughout New England. Is anyone willing to hold events on Fridays and Saturdays, not just Sundays? It would be wonderful to hear people sharing their ideas of ritual structure, myths/stories, and how they honor the Divine. Diversity is the best teacher.

Dianis.

*Editor's Comment: The cost of this newsletter is in the ballpark for similar publications. \$11.00/yr is the best we can do given the cost of printing, postage and distributing free drop copies. The free drop copies are an important outreach function of EPN. Our current printing costs are not increased by using 11"x 17" paper- in fact total cost is less than with 8 1/2" x 11". Be assured we make every effort to keep costs down. I expect our budget over the next year to break even. I will have a budget projection available for the "Future of EarthTides Meeting" at the Cabin Fever Pagan Retreat*

*Mugwort, Production Editor*

## IMPORTANT NOTICE!

There will be a meeting at the Cabin-Fever Pagan Retreat in Stockton Springs on Saturday morning, March 29, to which all Earthtides subscribers are invited. The focus of the meeting will be the future directions of Earthtides Pagan Network. This will have an impact on the future of the Maine Pagan community as a whole, so please come and add your voice to the discussion, even if you are not spending the weekend!

Some possible issues which may be covered include organizational structure, incorporation, political involvement, membership, and general guidelines and policies. YOUR opinions are important; please share them!

The meeting will start after breakfast, and will go until twelve o'clock (sorry we can't be precise about the start). To get there, turn off Route 1 in Stockton Springs (about 10 miles NE from Belfast) opposite the Rocky Ridge Motel. Across the RR tracks, take the first right to the end of the road, about 1 mile from Route 1. Watch for the small Hersey Retreat signs. For more information ahead of time, call Harper or Arwen at 377-3967.

## UPCOMING FESTIVALS IN NEW ENGLAND

4/27 EarthTides Beltane Celebration at Popham Beach. For info call 696-8565

5/2-5/4 Western Mountain's Men is holding a men's gathering in Bryant Pond. For info write WMM, PO Box 269, Farmington, ME 04938

5/21-26 Rites of Spring, Western MA. Workshops, rituals, music, drumming, dance, cabins \$275 by 3/1. Rites of Spring, P.O. Box 340, Williamsburg, MA 01096 (617)395-1023

6/6-8 Love Without Limits Massachusetts. Polyamory workshop for people with more than 1 lover IntiNet Res.Cn. P.O. Box 4322 San Rafael, CA 94913 (415)507-1739

8/23-30 Witchcamp Vermont/Quebec. Focused workshops, rituals etc. with Reclaiming. Trillium c/o 360 Toad Rd. Charlotte VT 05445

9/5-7 Unity with a Beat Hebron, CT. Learn skills facilitating drum circles in clinical & community setting Bob Bloom (860) 429-9280

An international Pagan Events calendar is published by Larry Cornett, 13347 Caves Road, Chesterland, Ohio 44026. Six issue, one year hardcopy subscription: \$11.00 U.S. \$16 Canada. You can get a frequently updated calendar on the Worldwide Web at: <http://www.io.com/cookec/pagan/calendar.htm>



## STARCAT'S CORNER

### Journeys to Create Reality Part 2: The Road Trip

Last time I wrote about walking as a ritual. Another magickal journey for Quester and I is our annual vacation. We combine a camping trip with a day at a music festival and perhaps a night out in a small city. We usually travel in New England or upstate New York -- the White Mountains of New Hampshire are one of our favorite spots. These road trips, which we jokingly call our shamanic journeys, contain unexpected delights and moments of synchronicity. They also help us put our plans for the future into motion.

There's something magickal about hurtling your consciousness over vast distances at high speeds, and coming to rest in a new place (just imagine what our ancient ancestors would have thought of a ride in a car). We have sought and found many places of power, from waterfalls to mountain tops to weathered covered bridges. Teachers have come into our lives and quickly gone again, like the witch in her broken-down purple microbus in Vermont, kind strangers who shared a delicious meal with us at a rest stop, and a determined through-hiker on the last leg of his Appalachian trail trek. One morning we woke up to discover that a dear old friend, whom we hadn't seen or talked with for years, was camped in the site across from us. Is this type of synchronicity more frequent on vacation, or do we just have more time to notice it? I don't know.

During our journey, time does open up. We are removed from our usual daily routines and concerns, so we can focus on each other and our future plans. We dwell closer to the "between-time." Rituals done on vacation take on added significance, too. I'm still filled with wonder when I remember one powerful ritual we did in a nearly deserted campground, with the full moon rising over the lake. We are less concerned with the details of a ritual, which allows for more spontaneity. Living outdoors in the elements puts us more closely in tune with the Earth's energy patterns. I also tend to have more active and significant dreams during our journeys.

On vacation, we take time to play at creating our reality. We are open to new ideas and possibilities, even ones that might seem silly or far-out. We are at a point on our life path where we can pause and examine many off-shoots of the main trail. We consider all of the probable ways we could go, even hiking off into the woods or climbing a tree!

During one of our trips we decided how I would get out of a bad situation at work. Despite several obstacles, our plan that I would transfer to another department was fulfilled within six months. Because we are in

motion, the plans we focus on become imbued with a certain momentum of their own.

Next time you take a vacation, leave yourself some loosely scheduled time to play, to think, to dream, to work magick, and of course to just spend some time outdoors. You might be surprised at what you come up with, and how it manifests in your life!

Starcat

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# meanderings

## Parallel Paths--Different Points of View

Now that "Eclectic Wicca" and "Eclectic Paganism" have become traditions in their own right, with lots of resources available to learn (borrow) from, more and more of us are experiencing the complications of trying to construct a coherent whole from a variety of often unrelated parts.

In putting together our own set of beliefs and ethics, we are forced to think about those beliefs and ethics, where they came from, and whether or not they reflect our current selves. Speaking more personally, I've been sorting through several traditions, including Strega and Wicca, which, at times, seem to have very different points of view.

One of the things about the current Wiccan view that I've had the most trouble with, as readers of "Meanderings" will recall, is its apparent tendency to see the God as less central and important than the Goddess. In ritual, for example, it is not unusual to hear things like, "The Goddess, Queen of Starry Heaven, Maiden, Mother and Crone, She from whose life-giving waters come all living things, and her consort the Horned God." Again, the way many covens dissolve circle, "...may the peace of the Goddess...", seems to acknowledge one gender at the expense, perhaps, of the other.

I've given a lot of thought as to why Wicca has gone in this direction. Perhaps it's the large number of feminists of both genders in our community, or because Wicca has become a haven for those who have found that the Judeo-Christian view of God as the "Punishing/Loving Old White Man in the Sky" is not for them. Or perhaps there is another reason as well, going further back into the roots of contemporary Wiccan thought.

In comparing Strega and Wicca one must confront some obvious differences in the historical and cultural roots from which each has sprung--Strega from Italy and Wicca (mostly) from Celtic tradition. One doesn't have to delve very far into these two cultures to note that the position of the male in both the family, and society as a whole, are very different.

Celts throughout their history have maintained a strong warrior tradition, whether they were serving as mercenaries for the Roman Army or following pipers playing the "Garryowen" at the Little Big Horn. Because of this, the men in the family were often away from their households for extended periods, or, if the Gods decreed, never returned at all. Celtic women maintained both household and farm (or business), and saw to the running of the village when all the able-bodied men

were on campaign. It is easy to see how the cultural descendents of these strong women brought their even stronger Goddesses with them.

In a traditional Italian family, however, the father is (theoretically, at least) acknowledged as the head of the family, though extended families are often headed by the grandmother of the house. The fathers and brothers nearly always came home every night, and were constants in the life of their families. This is the society which produced Strega, with its many strong Gods worshipped alongside Diana and other equally-strong Goddesses.

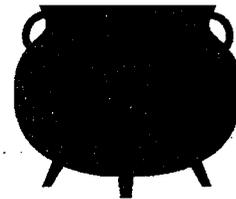
Religion has a cultural context; a people's religious beliefs--and the deities they relate to--depend, in part at least, upon the world in which they live. If it is true that contemporary Wicca's emphasis on the feminine divine stems from its roots in a Celtic society that had learned to get along without its warrior-men, then how relevant is that gender bias for today's Wiccan family, in which men have acknowledged an ever-increasing responsibility toward both household and children?

-Arwen Evenstar

## THE 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 P.O. 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 Skowhegan or with Star in Stetson - call for directions.





*HOOFBEAT: A COLUMN ABOUT  
MEN'S ISSUES WITHIN PAGANISM*

Imagine this: you open the newspaper, read through all the news, the letters to the editor, eat a donut, check out the events calendar, and finally turn to the personals just to see what's interesting. Surprisingly, the word "PAGAN" jumps out at you! You brush the sugar off your shirt and lean closer, interested to see something Pagan in a mainstream paper.

"A playful Pagan--37 yrs, young SWM, sassy, and slightly left of center. Seeks nymph, slim of body, enlightened of spirit. Energy and positive attitude a plus."

My guess is that your first thought is something like, "Who is this jerk? I don't know any Pagan guys who would write this!" That was roughly what went through my mind. The first off-note is the "W" for "White". Who cares what color you are in these enlightened times, particularly in our Pagan culture which embraces variety?

The second thing is the "slim of body" bit. This is a pretty way of saying "fat women do not attract me and need not apply". I'm pretty sure that most Pagans would agree that, while a nice body is a plus, the part you love is the real person inside. Are Pagan men really shallow enough to declare to the world that fat women have no chance with them? I found this really disturbing, and thought that some Pagan women of my acquaintance might want to write to this guy just so they can berate him in person.

Now if you've followed me this far, here's the surprise in the bottom of the box: I changed two words from the ad as it actually appeared in the Maine Times. "SWM" was "SWF", and "nymph" was "satyr". Not being "slim of body" myself, I found the ad from a professed Pagan woman, telling the world that fat men should not bother responding, to be a disturbing example of thoughtless insensitivity.

And why did I change the wording in the original ad? Perhaps because I thought you'd have a stronger negative reaction if the ad were directed at women. The P.C. line is drawn much more closely around men than it is around women in Pagan circles--why is this?

Harper



*ON THE GARDEN PATH  
TO  
ENLIGHTENMENT*

Finally! The seed orders have arrived--except for those that are backordered or unavailable--and shortly, around Ostara, Mugwort and I will bless our seeds in circle and be ready to begin sprouting. I went a little less crazy this year, trying to cut down on plants that either don't do well or that I just don't really like. I find that I get attached to some strange plants, though, and try to keep them going long after their uselessness has been established.

The man who plows our driveway has no perception of trees. Last year, I managed to save most of the blueberries from him. I thought we were set this year--until last week. We have a Mountain Ash (known affectionately as Rowan) that was one of our first plantings. At the East of the house, we consider it our "power" tree. Its first year, it survived mice attacks. Its second year, it survived me with an out-of-control weed whacker. Last year, it survived a nibble by deer, and rewarded us with a display of two bunches of orange berries. Last week, plowman tried to run her over. He plowed snow close enough to bend her over. AAAH! I think she's safe. I'm annoyed.

Soon, I will boil eggs and we will color them. We use vegetable dye, of course. They will be blessed in circle along with the seeds. We save the shells, and then, after the ground has been turned, the shells are crushed and scattered upon the rows. I love to walk through the still barren garden and see the shimmer of color sparkling in the sun!

Soon is my constant refrain. Soon, we will start seeds. Soon, I'll go to my favorite nursery and replace the Patchouli I killed and the Lady's Mantle that killed itself. Soon, the snow will be gone and I can work the ground. Soon, things will dry enough to chip up all the wood. Soon, I'll remove the mulch and the bulbs will start.

I'm unemployed. If only they'd waited two months; I could have put the time to good use.

Note: the latest issue of Herb Companion has an explanation of the origins of Lammass (the word). It's hard to work the earth and not have Pagan leanings!

Elkwing





## DRAGON FLAMES

"The Lady", or "The Broad", as EarthMuffin often says, is an integral part of our spirituality. How did she come to be there?

Lady is derived from hlaefdige (Old English/Anglo-Saxon) meaning kneader of bread. Middle English gives us lafdi - loaf giver. Bread being the "Staff of Life", Lady is Life Giver.

Many of us came to paganism seeking balance. The monotheistic spirituality of the common herd is polarized male. We were seeking the feminine energy to make us whole. In finding that polarity, some became, and still are trapped, in monotheistic feminine polarity. What happened to balance?

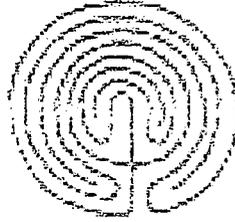
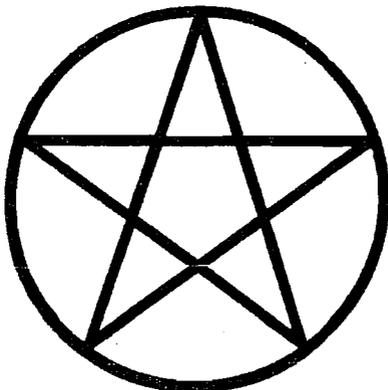
As our spirituality grows, we need to shift back to the other pole and relocate some of the male energy, acknowledge the male aspect, and bring the god back into our celebrations.

At Imbolc, Dragon Mist wrote: "...the ones who live in the so called "Broom-Closet" are the most judgemental, self-righteous, and bigoted of all." I feel sorry, that in 25 years, he only met that kind of person, using the "closet". What kind of circles did he travel in?

I am in the open, but I do take care in my level of exposure. Is it wrong to be careful? We all need to survive in an often negative world. Closing the door may be needed to insure that survival.

Welcome to new writers, their flames will keep us going.

<Kelt>



## INTO THE LABYRINTH

I live on a ridge that overlooks the Kennebec valley and I watch the sun's journey on the sunset skyline all year long. Granting that so darn many of our days are cold and gray, I can see the daily difference in the position of the sun as it endlessly moves north and then south. Mt. Blue is its marker in March, heads for Mt. Abram by May, Sugarloaf by the middle of June and then nearly to Bigelow before it stops, catches its breath and starts the march back again. Thursday the 20th it will be halfway home, just a little south of Mt. Blue, but at least out from the corner of the woodshed where it had vanished last October. The date is usually March 11 when the sunset can be seen once more from the kitchen window.

These are the markers of spring and of the changing of the seasonal guard. Old woman Hecate is melting away and Persephone stirs.

These images of Crete seem to be speaking to me strongly and clearly this spring. The labyrinth gets much attention from there if you remember. The labyrinth is about descent and return, the cycle of death and rebirth whether it is about initiation or the real and personal that we all must face. Last Thursday, my dear and special friend Shirley crossed over to the other side. She had fought the big C for seven and a half years, and won in every sense of the word. Her spirit never gave in and her love of life will continue to inspire all who knew her. Yet it's going to be lonely at times. The stones she brought to the labyrinth are the ones that stand at the crossing mark. They represent to me the place where the Mother stands, holding out her arms to those who walk the paths. Daffodil's are planted there for Shirley. They live, even though it has been bleak and frozen. There is new life and new beginnings all around us. The labyrinth not only takes us into the dark, it leads us out with new information and awareness.

Stay the path. It is only one brief moment of balance, (oh thank the heavens for that. I wouldn't want to have to deal with balance in my life!) and then come the riots of the flower beds and the ecstasy of bird songs and brooks bubbling with the news that it all has started again.

Blessed be Ariadne

## THE WICCAN REDE

(Rede: Old English/Anglo-Saxon, meaning "wisdom.") The Rede says: "An' it harm none, do as ye will." Basically, this is a statement of independence; it affirms our right to be whatever we want to be. However, it does NOT imply justification to act entirely out of our own self-interest.

There is a load of responsibility wrapped up in that simple phrase. It gives us the responsibility to be aware of how our actions affect others, and to take that into consideration before we act on our independent desires. It is a big responsibility, and not to be taken lightly. If we take our spirituality seriously, it is important to make a conscientious effort to evaluate the consequences--and then to be prepared to accept responsibility for whatever responses our actions generate.

Spirituality in its day-to-day form is how we live our lives. Remember that kiddie chant: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." I think we can all see that names do, indeed, hurt, and deliberate rudeness hurts especially deeply. Most of us have probably been through it a few times in life. I actually think name-calling and put-downs whether thoughtlessly humorous or deliberately barbed, can often hurt much worse than physical pain.

When a wound or a bruise heals, and for all intents and purposes, the original injury has mended, we do not usually re-experience that same injury pain (except, perhaps, if arthritis settles in later on, or nerve damage triggers phantom pain signals). We don't "remember" physical pain as a reality. But deliberate rudeness hurts again and again, for each time one recalls the incident, it stabs the heart like a freshly honed dagger. The memory of what happened triggers the same emotional response caused by the original act, directly proportional to how important the other person is to us.

Another well-known code of conduct is The Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Now that is a whole different slant on things. It means that if we want courtesy, respect, appreciation, fairness, love, and admiration from other people, we'd better be doing our best to set an example in our dealings with them! There is a natural tendency to respond according to how we are treated. As conscientious persons, we realize this, and make a point to be more aware of how we speak, our expressions, our body language, whether our actions match our words.

The Three-Fold Law is also a valuable guideline. It's more of a warning--that whatever workings we do have the potential to come back to us, magnified 3-fold. It means that if we send out bad vibes, negative power, it may backfire, or even worse. It is sort of an inverse of the Golden Rule; it too means we should be prepared

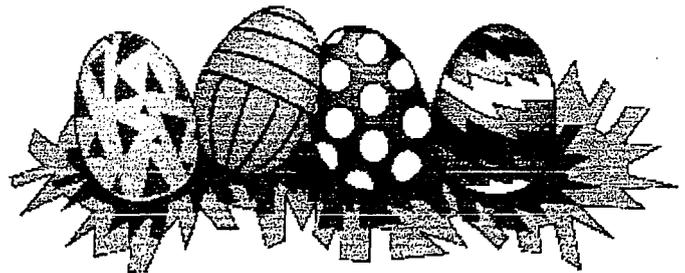
to deal with the consequences, and recognize our own roles in generating the outcome. If we do our best to make our doings positive and constructive in nature, we are more likely to receive positive responses. If our actions are thoughtless or deliberately harmful, the results can be very unpleasant. (There are always a few folks around who have not gotten the message yet, or are having a bad day -- but if we are trying to live by our best principles, we forgive, and hope that others will be equally forgiving when we are having our own bad days.)

People have such varied perceptions of how the unprovable may be visualized, and we have developed elaborate rituals or pared things down to raw basics, all in the effort to understand, explain, and codify our spiritual paths. It is comforting, however, to realize that the basic themes, the codes of values, are quite similar, making it more feasible for us to be brothers and sisters in actuality. It is important to love, honor and respect each other and each other's beliefs, because at heart, our best values are complementary. We balance each other; we complete each other. We need each other, if we value society at all. Otherwise, we would be completely alone. And what is the point of that?

We are only human, and sometimes we are not as skillful in our best practices as we want to be. But we who would live conscientiously, spiritually, soulfully, try to be the best humans we can be, because we really crave the same consideration from others. Just as our best "rules" are simple, our rule of thumb for choosing words or actions should also be simple. All we need to do is ask ourselves: "Would I want someone to do/say this to me?" How much more liveable and enjoyable the world is when people are trying to make the best of their talents, their minds, and their souls.

SO MOTE IT BE!!

Aree Blackcat



*POEM*

All that we are, were, and will be, collect in this moment.  
Collect like rain in the deep caves of our pasts, where we hide secret wounds and desires;  
Collect in the pools and streets and rivers of this day;  
To shine silver threads through all our tomorrows;  
So let it shine;  
Let the rain trace its lines of renewal on our faces.  
We ask for the, shedding of old skin;  
We watch for the, signs  
We know me, subtle fragrance of change;  
As it enters in to the, deep lair of winter;  
The body to mend itself; The spirit to move.  
All that we are, were, and will be collect in this moment;  
Strength rises within, bright and dark as a winter thicket, against the torch of the sky.  
We become ourselves, we come into ourselves, but deeper, freer, wilder.

By Diana

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