

EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK NEWS

12 PAGES OF COOL STUFF

Yule 1996

\$1.50

About The EarthTides Pagan Network

The EARTHTIDES 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.

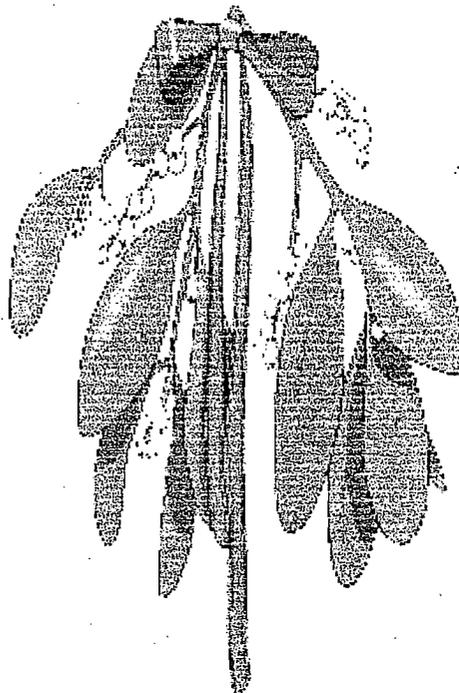
This newsletter comes out eight times per year around the Sabbats. Literary, poetic and artistic contributions are welcome as well as letters, articles, book reviews and editorial pieces. Please keep submissions to no more than two pages, typed and double spaced. You may also send your submission in 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 1996 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. The next EPNN will come out just before Imbolc. We hope to hear from more of you before then. . Blessed Be!

EPNN STAFF

Arwen Evenstar	editor
Harper Meader	editor
Kelt	business manager
Elkwing	production
Mugwort	production



In This Issue:

<i>EVENTS CALENDAR</i>	2
<i>MERRY MEET</i> BY FRED GRIFFITH	2
<i>EARTH TIDES CONTACTS</i>	3
<i>READER'S FORUM</i>	4
<i>MEANDERINGS</i> BY ARWEN EVENSTAR	5
<i>HOOFBAT</i> BY HARPER MEADER	5
<i>MEAGAN & THE YULE SOLSTICE</i> BY KATHRYN DYER	6
<i>POEM: MOWING FIELD</i> BY SILVERTIDE.....	8
<i>POEM: THE CALLING</i> BY AREE	8
<i>ON THE GARDEN PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT</i> BY ELKWING	9
<i>DRAGON FLAMES</i> BY KELT	9
<i>BOOK REVIEW: SEASONS OF THE SUN</i>	10
<i>INTO THE LABYRINTH</i> BY ARIADNE	10
<i>JANE'S TIDINGS</i> BY PJANE	11
<i>POEM: THE STONE WAY</i> BY LAWRENCE.....	12

PO BOX 406, ANSON MAINE 04911



EVENTS CALENDAR



- Dec 21 YULE, Winter Solstice 9:06 am
- Dec 21 Winter Solstice Celebration! At Silo, Mt. Vernon 5:00 PM ceremony, 7:00 PM supper. Ritual, song, sacred circle dance, and children's dance combine to honor the darkness and celebrate the return of the light. Potluck supper to follow: bring plate, utensils, etc., \$3-5 adult, \$1 child. Call 293-2239
- Dec 21 Dowsers Gathering in Bangor. The group meets the 3rd Saturday of each Month. For info call Gordon Barton 963-5801
- Dec 22 Ursid Meteor Shower - Best around 5am
- Dec 24 Full Long Nights Moon 3:41 PM
- Dec 24 Open house & anniversary celebration at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. Call 942-5590 for info or visit their web page <http://www.silo7.com>
- Jan 1 Last Quarter Moon 8:45 PM
- Jan 4 EarthTides Sunday Night Pagan Study Group in Augusta. 6:30 PM. Call 685-3860 for info.
- Jan 5 Quadrantid Meteor Shower - Best around 5 am
- Jan 5 EarthTides Augusta Study Group - see above
- Jan 8 New Moon 11:26 PM
- Jan 12 EarthTides Augusta Study Group - see above
- Jan 15 First Quarter Moon 3:02 PM
- Jan 15 Dowsers Gathering in Gardiner. The group meets on the 3rd wed. of each month. For info call Barbara Foust 582-8615
- Jan 18 Dowsers Gathering in Bangor. See above
- Jan 19 Earthtides Pagan Study Group at Silo 7 Bookstore in Bangor. 6:30 PM. Group will meet monthly. For info call 848-2850 or email mugwert@ime.net.
- Jan 19 EarthTides Augusta Study Group - see above
- Jan 23 Full Wolf Moon 10:11 am
- Jan 26 EarthTides Augusta Study Group - see above
- Jan 31 Last Quarter Moon 2:40 PM
- Feb 2 IMBOLC
- Also Monthly Dowsers Gathering in Falmouth Contact: Richard Mc Kenzie 797-2513

Merry Meet

Nostalgics often talk about the "Good Old Days" when winter holiday celebrations evoked images of riding in a horse-drawn sleigh through fields of snow to a warm, well-lit house full of good smells, good food, good drink and lots of presents. One only needs to drop back a few hundred years more to get a more realistic vision of the winter "holidays" for the majority of our ancestors.

Travel was limited, especially when snow and ice blanketed the ground. Swirling sleet blew in gusts, forcing its way through cracks in the logs, rock, skin, wattle and daub or other wall materials. In honor of the celebration, the dwelling is heated, not just with the warmth of the livestock, but with a fire heaped with coal, peat, wood and dung - providing an interesting mix of smells. Smoke from the fire makes the eyes water as it floats around enroute to an open window or hole in the roof.

Outside, the dark deepens as the longest night begins. The early moon barely shows through the layers of clouds, fog and smoke from the village's dwellings. Everyone has assembled to keep watch overnight and welcome the sun in the morning; the village elders and children, the wise ones and the idiots, the ones we love and the ones we detest; but all are part of our community and we have learned to get along with them.

The walls are decorated with evergreen - in hopes of everlasting life, and wreaths in recognition of the turning of the wheel. Everyone has been hard at work preparing for winter and carving, weaving, knitting and cooking something special for their loved ones.

As the Yule log burns, tales are told or retold, songs are sung and laughter keeps the darkness at bay. After many dark hours, just as the Yule log is down to coals, the sun peeks it's head above the horizon. In celebration, we pour mead, give each other gifts, tend to the animals, and then go to bed.

I guess things haven't really changed all that much after all...

Have a Blessed Yule! - Fred Griffith

EARTHTIDES CONTACTS

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

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:

Far 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.

House O' The Greenwood - Lorelei - 583-6187 We focus on using our spirituality and Eclectic Wiccan concepts to help us cope with daily life. Lorelei@ime.net & <http://users/loa.com/~toyman/customers/tng>

Showhegan Area:

Dragon of the Mist - Weekly class/study group. Pantheist Wicca with a strong Druidic background. Contact Dragon of the Mist 9-5, M-Sat., 474-9474, 60 Water St., Skowhegan

Waterville Area:

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

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

Silo Seven

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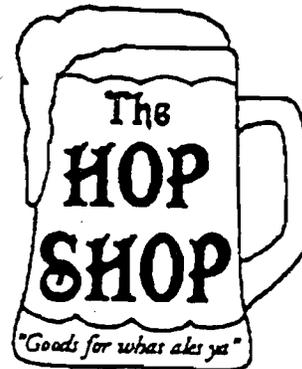
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READER'S FORUM

Editor's note: We received no letters on the issue topic! Therefore, we are proud to publish various reader's works. Next issue topic will be Community Responsibility-and we expect great debate! Be sure to submit your opinion!

I'm a sky freak -- I like to know what shape the sky is in (right now!), cloudy or clear, what kind of clouds, what kind of precip, can we see the moon, can I see some stars or the whole Milky Way...

And last night I was rudely jerked from sleep by the sounds of a cat playing with a (sigh) recently rediscovered bottle-top in the kitchen. I walked down to the kitchen, glanced out the back window (stars, no clouds)...at the clock (2:35 am) and out the side window, recalling that we are in the midst of a meteor swarm.

Max! jumped onto the window to help me look out (we not infrequently see things together out that window -- things like the neighbor's cat messing around on our deck, or a raccoon trying to pry the lid off the birdfeeder) and right about then -- flash! as if on command a meteor painted a bright yellow-white line from east to west, leaving behind a ghostly trail that lasted some few seconds.

Max! walked in front of my face then and we rearranged the window-watching expedition for several moments. Meteors continued to fall, one or two a minute, and I continued to watch. At about 3:05 I decided that I'd seen what there was to see --when flash! another of the east-west whizzing meteors. The north-south variety were much more common, the east-west had the flashy knack for sure...

And so about 3:15 I was in the midst of a "if I don't see a meteor in the next 100 seconds I'll go to --" And, while not the brightest, the fanciest display of the evening. Apparently a meteor of small group of meteors coming directly at the earth rather than obliquely hit and --split -- so that I saw a spot get bright and then become at least three distinct trails -- one on the north-south route, one on a west-to-east route (the only one of those I saw in the evening) and one in a sort of south to north route. About that time Patio rose from her spot, stropped against my legs and made a plaintive noise -- usually a sign that it's her turn to go to bed now.

So we did that, walking back to the bedroom and making sure that we didn't wake Sharon and that we left a warm spot on the left for Patia, who at circa 18 pounds can forcefully let you know if you forget.

In Maryland you can't see the stars on many nights, even supposedly cloudless ones. Rarely can you see enough of the Milky Way to feel awe of it. All you get is a red, yellow, or gray haze. In Maine I can watch the comets in the daytime, and see the Milky Way from inside the house. Meteors, too. Somehow it makes me feel whole.

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Meanderings

Instead of my usual column, I would like to offer greetings of the Bright Season to all our readers by sharing this.....

Yule Dance

We'll gather in a circle and pass around the horn,
For the hands of the drummers,
And the feet of the dancers,
Go on until the morn.

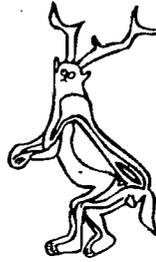
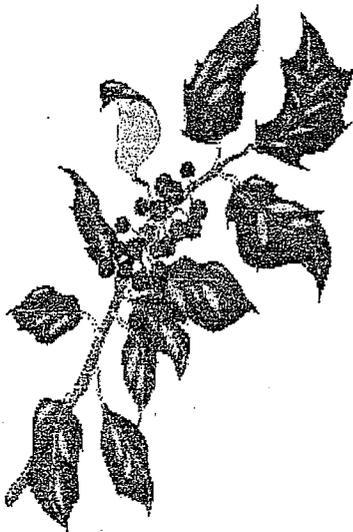
Long autumn's wait is over; we sing the young Lord's birth,
As the hands of the drummers,
And the feet of the dancers
Awake the sleeping earth.

We thank the Lord and Lady, for spring and summer bright,
For the hands of the drummers,
And the feet of the dancers,
And the coming of the light.

With mead we'll seal the circle, to banish dark and fear,
As the hands of the drummers,
And the feet of the dancers,
Help to turn the year.

So share a sip with Ancient Gods; we drink to long lost friends,
And the hands of the drummers,
And the feet of the dancers,
And the song that never ends.

--Arwen Evenstar



HOOFBEAT:

A COLUMN ABOUT MEN'S ISSUES WITHIN PAGANISM

A Book Review

The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece
by Philippe Borgeaud, University of
Chicago Press.

The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece has been around for awhile, but I feel that it deserves a review anyway. I got a copy through interlibrary loan, and then couldn't wait to get my own copy to highlight and otherwise deface! The scope of the author's treatment of the subject is tremendous. Drawing from an impressive list of sources, Borgeaud reconstructs the Arcadian culture from which Pan originated to be adopted into the Greek pantheon, and investigates the position of Pan relative to the other gods and among both Arcadians and Greeks. Panic and panolepsy are discussed in detail, with plenty of speculations on the complication relationship between people and Pan. His sphere of influence, his preferences as to how He should be honored, and his effect on people are all treated in light of many historical and artistic sources.

I have underlined enough to fill three newsletters, but will only quote a little bit to give readers a hint of the book's thoughtfulness: "In the myth, the syrinx comes into existence as the object of desire escapes. Music, so closely associated with Pan's dance, seems thus to originate in a deficit. But we would be wrong to take it as a mere substitutive compensation. It is infused with supernatural power and is that which it replaces; it has all the overpowering force of passion--and its reality: it is the divine word that in the pastoral world fertilizes the flocks, and in a wider symbolic universe leads mankind in a dance where, as Sophocles has it, we take wing under the sign of Eros and Charis." This is part of a discussion about Pan being both grotesque and charming, beneficial and disastrous, which includes valuable insights about the bestial/divine nature of humanity.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone seriously interested in the history behind one of the most popular Greek deities. Seeing that pantheon from the pastures of preselenian Arcadia puts a whole new light on the greater world of Greek gods!

- Harper Meader

MEAGAN AND THE YULE SOLSTICE

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Meagan. She lived in a house that had lost of woods behind it. She lived with her mommy and daddy, her big brother Corwin and her beautiful cat named Starweaver.

Meagan loved to watch Starweaver play with the snow in the winter. He would try to catch the flakes as they came down from the sky. Sometimes he would get mad when the flakes would melt and then his tail would start swishing from side to side. Meagan's parents told her not to mess with Starweaver when his tail was swishing like that. "When Star swishes his tail back and forth it means that he is mad or frustrated," said her father Michael, "and playing with him would be like someone teasing you when you're mad or don't feel good." Meagan could sure understand that! "What does frustrated mean Daddy?" she asked. "Frustrated is how you feel when you are trying very hard to do something and it won't work right. Like when you were learning how to dress yourself and you couldn't get your head through the neck of a shirt." explained Michael. Meagan knew just how that felt and she promised never to bother the cat when his tail swished.

But today Starweaver wasn't swishing his tail. He was following Meagan and Corwin into the woods and chasing shadows. Meagan and Corwin had gone down the path into the woods to gather green fir branches, mistletoe and holly. It was Christmas time and they were helping to decorate the house. Later they would go with their parents to pick out a live tree to decorate and then plant in the Circle behind the house.

Meagan's family were Pagans, but they also celebrated Christmas when Santa Claus came. Meagan's mother Elizabeth told her that many people would celebrate a God's birthday at the middle of the winter or the Yule Solstice. Meagan knew that the Yule Solstice was the longest night of the year. Of course, many Christians celebrated the birthday of Jesus at Christmas. But before there were Christians some people would celebrate the birthday of Mithras, one of the old Gods, or some of the other Solar Gods. Solar means that the God is in charge of the Sun and Light. Meagan could see how the sun would be very important in the cold of Winter.

Meagan's family celebrated two holidays in the winter. They would celebrate Christmas, which her mother said was Santa Claus's birthday and they would celebrate the beginning of winter which they called the Yule Solstice. Meagan thought that Santa Claus must be a very nice person to give other people presents on his birthday so she and Corwin always left him a piece of cake and some eggnog to drink.

Meagan and Corwin picked lots of branches to decorate the house with. They tried to get fallen branches when they could but when they had to take them off a live plant they would ask the plant first and then thank it when they were done. Meagan had some crystals in her pocket to leave for the plants as a thank-you present.

Corwin used the scissors when they had to cut something because he was older and Meagan's safety scissors might hurt the plant more. Corwin was always very careful not to cut more than they needed. They put all their branches into baskets that Elizabeth's mother Nana had made.

"Don't let Starweaver eat anything!" said Corwin, "Many plants can make cats and people sick." Meagan held her basket up higher. She didn't want Star to get sick! Corwin told her that soon she would get to go on walks with their father into the woods to learn about which plants were safe to eat and which were not. "Yes," said Meagan, "and then maybe Cindy's mom will show me how to make medicines!" Cindy was Meagan's best friend and her mother was an herbalist. Cindy's mother Anna made medicine, incense, make-up and lots of other things with all kinds of plants and flowers. Sometimes Meagan would go with her mother when Elizabeth went to trade herbs with Anna. Then she and Cindy would have fun smelling all the herbs in Anna's workshop.

Soon Meagan's house was full of decorations. They made popcorn and cranberry strings to decorate the tree. Each year Meagan and Corwin would make a special ornament to put on the tree. This year Nana helped them make ornaments out of clay. Nana put the ornaments in her kiln, which is a kind of oven, so that they would get hard. Meagan loved her Nana very much. She always brought Meagan a surprise when she came to visit. One time she had brought a little black kitten who grew up to be Starweaver! One time Meagan asked Nana if she was a Pagan too. Nana said, "Oh, I'm half of one and a dozen of the other". Meagan couldn't talk about it to her other grandparents. Her daddy's parents Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott were very Christian and always asked where the children were going to Sunday school. Meagan had been to Sunday school a few times with Cindy because her parents wanted her to know about all religions. But she didn't tell Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott about the time she went to the Jewish temple or talked to her parents' Buddhist friend. She knew that they wouldn't understand and she didn't want to make them feel bad.

It seemed like no time at all before it was the night before Yule Solstice. Meagan's family had found a dead tree in the woods to use for a Yule log. They decorated it with greenery after Michael carved little suns onto it. When it was ready they put it in the fireplace and put the piece of Yule log they had saved from last year on top of it. This year Jeremy, the Coven's High Priest, had to work on the Solstice so the Coven had decided to hold their ritual on the next Saturday. Meagan was excited, they would celebrate three days this year!

That night, Meagan's family had a big dinner and Nana came to stay the night. Elizabeth had talked to Cindy's mother Anna and she let Cindy come to spend the night too! Soon Elizabeth lit the Yule log and many candles around the room. Cindy and Meagan lay on the rug in front of the fire while Michael played his harp.

MEAGAN AND THE YULE SOLSTICE - CONTINUED

They sang some songs that people in their Coven had written about the Yule. Cindy didn't know very many of the songs they sang but she tried to sing them anyway. This made Meagan giggle and so Cindy started to tickle her. They had a great tickle fight until Nana said that they were too close to the fire even if it had a screen.

Cindy and Meagan got to stay up past their bedtime and even got to have a cookie before they went to bed. They promised each other to meet after Santa came to play with their new toys. Meagan could hardly wait for Santa to get there! On Christmas Eve she and Corwin left out some coconut cake and eggnog for Santa. They left him a note wishing him a happy birthday and thanking him in advance for anything he might leave for them if he thought that they had been good. Meagan had tried to be good all year but it was very hard for her to go to sleep that night. She kept thinking that she heard reindeer on the roof.

The next morning Meagan got up and brushed her teeth. She could hardly wait to go downstairs but she had to wait until her parents and Nana were ready. Because Corwin was old enough he had gone down to the kitchen to heat water for tea and coffee. Meagan's mother and Nana would only drink herb tea but Michael said he had to jump-start his mornings which always made Elizabeth laugh and tease him. Once they got downstairs Corwin and Meagan rushed to see what Santa had left them while their parent's took pictures. After they were done, the whole family exchanged presents. Then it was time to visit Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott. It wasn't until the next day that Meagan had time to play with Cindy.

Since the Coven had chosen to meet on Saturday they decided to have a party all day. People began arriving early in the morning. Some of them had brought gifts for Meagan and her family who also had gifts for them. Meagan had made Jeremy a plate with a pentagram and runes around it spelling out his name with the clay her Nana had brought to make the Christmas decorations with. "Thank you so much Meagan!" said Jeremy, "I will put this on my altar at home and every time I see it I will think of you." Meagan felt very happy that Jeremy liked her present. Everyone had a good time. They all played games and sang songs. Michael played his harp. Corwin had gotten a new recorder for Christmas and played it for everyone. Sometimes people would stop for a little bit and go for a walk in the woods. Not everyone had woods behind their house like Meagan's family did.

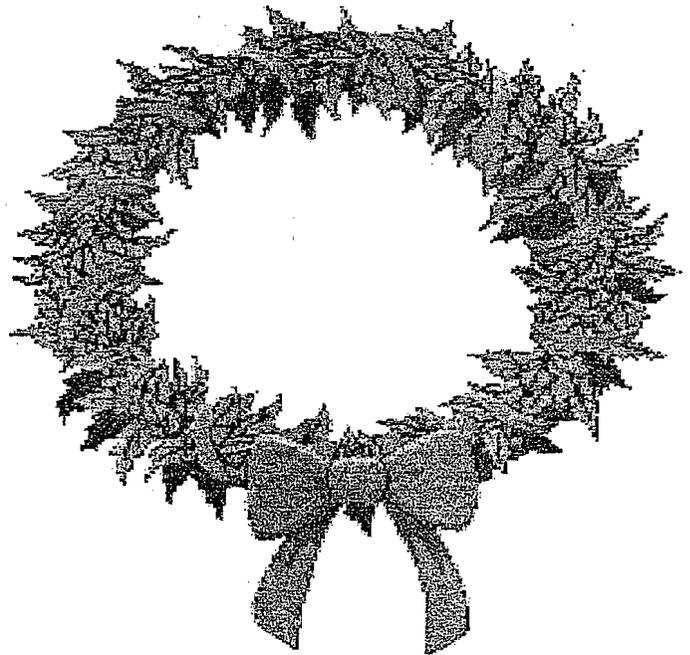
It was getting to be time for the Circle to gather. Everyone took turns taking quick showers and baths to purify themselves. Meagan and Corwin helped decorate the Circle with greens and candles before it was their turn. They took their baths and put on their robes. The Coven was starting to gather in the Circle. There was a bonfire ready to light and two unlit candles waiting on the Altar. They would light the bonfire and the candles

to help light the Horned Lord's way through the dark months of winter. Robert blew a Horn and the ceremony started.

When it came time for Cakes and Ale they passed out some special cookies that Nana had made for them. "I may not come worship with you," Nana said, "but I respect what you do and I would like to share a little part of it with you."

All too soon the ritual was over. Meagan was going to help clean up the Circle but her mother saw her yawning and sent her to bed. "Don't worry Meagan," said Elizabeth, "the grown-ups are going to stay up until the bonfire goes out and we'll clean up then. Go brush your teeth and get ready for bed and one of us will come tuck you in a minute, O.K.?" "O.K. momma," yawned Meagan, "it's all been so much fun this week, I just can't stay awake any longer." When Michael came up to tuck Meagan in she was already sound asleep and dreaming about the wonderful week she had had.

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Mowing Field

Today I mowed the upper field.
I guided the 8 horsepower brush cutter down straight rows,
leveling the season's growth,
now yellowed and browned and russetted.
Man ordering this section of Mother Earth.

There is something at once
both sacred and unholy about a mown field.
Grasses shorn level across gentle curves of earth,
jumble-bordered by shrubbed and treed growth.

I walk behind
machine, gobbling, chewing, expelling another
straight ridge of cuttings with each pass.
My mind wanders at random across the ordered
rows imposed on chaos growth.

Me, nature's guest.
Me, this field borrower,
this tenant for one short lifetime imposing
regimentation, passing
judgment on the plants with
each pass of
my machine.

Me, ending trees and shrubs that will not survive the cutting,
strengthening grasses newly free of competition.

For one more season, Mother Earth is held at bay.
She, who would take back this field in a few short seasons
were it not for my yearly walk.
She, who would have this field forest, once again.

She is patient host.

She will let me have my dalliance, sure of Her final victory,
in the while humoring my hubris.

Me, industriously pushing machine across life.

Silvertide

The Calling

Why does the crashing surge of a winter ocean
thrill and also soothe the heart?

What is it about that raw, unbridled power
that exhilarates?

The tireless heartbeat
of that mysterious, breathing ocean
rolls unceasing, releasing
all the bonds
accumulated by a mere mortal.

In the frosty darkness,
the silver moon sails starkly silent --
the glow of ancient wisdom --
drawing the soul upward, outward,
lifting you up into your rightful being --

And you become the goddess
you were meant to be.

Why do you think they call the ocean "She"?

--Aree 11/29/94



ON THE GARDEN PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

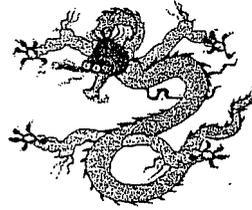
I've just finished my final evergreen wreath. Every year I swear that next year I'm just going to buy them; it wouldn't cost anymore, and probably would cut down on aggravation. I make three to give away and one huge one for me; it goes around my kitchen window and makes me smile whenever I'm walking to the house. It's an odd tradition, though: essentially I'm celebrating the continuation of life by handling formerly living material that I've killed to celebrate renewal. Not that I plan to stop doing it, understand, only that I sense the irony.

The tree is up. It is real (given the choice between artificial and no tree, I'd pick no tree) and farm raised. There's a place in Dover-Foxcroft that grows only beautiful and perfect trees. Acres and acres of perfectly pruned trees, from seedling to cathedral ceiling size. I love to just browse! It's a renewable crop that brings me a lot of joy. Illemanzer, the great spotted cat, has already begun the job of denuding the tree up to three feet high. I spend the first part of the morning rounding up ornaments and garland.

Oh! I love Yule! If I were to make a holiday prayer, it would be that no great tragedy or great age ever robbed me of the pleasure I get at this time. No stress here! I turn into a grinning idiot: grinning at my wreath, at the blinking lights on the tree, at the Salvation Army ringers as I toss coins in the kettle, at my beloved Mugwort as he tries to guess what his gifts will be. The cats all know that new toys await them; they start in with great excitement as soon as they see the tree.

Oddly enough, outside is not festive. There's been no snow cover, yet, only fairly continuous freezing rain. It's brown and dreary. I just finished mulching the leeks; I'm hoping that the ground is frozen enough. The front flower patch is so barren. Where the hollyhocks climbed in wild profusion behind the gentile foxgloves and sweet little violas all is damp straw. Only the faded pink flamingo stands out.

Even without the fulfillment of Yule I see the approach of Spring. The seed catalogues just arrived. Already, the garden barely tucked in for this season, I'm preparing for the next! One thing that we have prepared is the movement of perennials. The tansy managed to kill everything around it this year. Even the wormwood suffered! I didn't think it was possible to kill an Artemesia. It's been cut back very hard and will be moved into the field. There's a patch of mugwort and wormwood over there, already. I'll be interested to see what survives....



DRAGON FLAMES

HELLO! Hello! Is there anyone there? Does anyone care about what we write? The wheel has turned half way around since I started to write Dragon Flames. Looking back, there has been no response to this, or any other column. Are you reading our words and thoughts?

EPNN is for all. We invite response. We would love to get articles, or just letters for publication. This is not a restricted club. Write!!! I'm tired of reading the thoughts of only a few of us. There is a lot of knowledge out there, or there are questions, Pass on your knowledge, or ask your questions. Soon.

"... they cling so strongly to it because it is easy."

"... Easy?"

"... Well, easier, anyway."

"Easier than what?"

Easier than doing it yourself. Easier to know you can sin and be forgiven than to keep yourself from sinning in the first place. (PLAYING WITH FIRE by Dana Stabenow)

As pagans, we have not chosen "easy". We have chosen to carry our own responsibility, we can not throw our sins to the devil, we own them. We don't have "The Good Book" to tell us what is right and wrong. If you have been on MEP lately, you can see that we come from so many different spaces we can't agree where, and who our direction comes from. Did we learn from Buckland, Sanders, Farrar, or divine inspiration? We define ourselves. It is not an easy path!

Tis the Yule - The god is reborn - Good luck for the coming year. May the flame keep you warm. <Kelt>

Which Witch



*herbs and lore
from days of yore*

P.O. Box 323, Readfield, Maine 04355

BOOK REVIEW: SEASONS OF THE SUN

Patricia Telesco has given us several Craft books which are both well-researched and good reading. Now with Maine-based Samuel Weiser, Inc., she continues to delight.

Seasons of the Sun, her newest title (Samuel Weiser, Inc., \$15.95), is chock full of practical ideas for celebrating all kinds of things. Taking themes from nearly every culture, she offers over a hundred suggestions for ritual or seasonal observances.

First, she discusses the part seasonal observances have played in people's lives, and suggests ways to fit them into our own, however hectic they may be. There are general formats for scheduling events, including making up a personal Book of Days. Finally, she notes the effects of using different colors, or holding celebrations on various days of the week or times of day.

The rest of the book is divided into a section for each season. General seasonal events begin each section: land and seed blessings, Passover, Earth Day, and Minoan Bull Leaping (no step-by-step instructions for this one!) are among those for spring. Then there are day-by-day listings--Eisteddfod (Druidic from Wales), Birthday of the Moon (China), Saturnalia (Rome), Beltane (Celtic), just to give you an idea of her wide-ranging eclecticism. There seem to be celebrations for nearly every day of the year in this book!

For each listing, Telesco explains the historic/cultural background of the occasion, gives specifics on foods to serve (including many recipes), ways to decorate the home or ritual space, magical themes, ritual suggestions, even special robes to make!

I would recommend this book for those who want to put some variety into their ritual or the way they see and observe the seasons. It's also a great resource for teaching children about the great and joyful diversity of human celebrations.

- Arwen Evenstar



INTO THE LABYRINTH

The mornings are more gray, the days are shorter yet. Joyfully, our five "labyrinth deer" have survived the killing season, but there's not much activity out there in the field these days. I only want to withdraw into the cave and pull the covers up around me, but the demands of being "civilized" and joining into this season and semester end won't allow that quietness on a regular basis. We do need to bring that need for solitude and contemplation to consciousness and respect it. No wonder so many find this time of year depressing.

At a cellular level we are being told to lay low and conserve energy, yet our predominant culture says "Party! Be happy!" Warning: She approaches with soapbox. OK, here goes one more time. DRUM ROLL. The message and purpose of the labyrinth is needed. Stay the path. Don't get distracted. The walking meditation is the only journey of which to be mindful. In the labyrinth, we do not meet the Minotaur, we meet ourselves. Balance is the gift we can give to ourselves, and the labyrinth is our balancing tool.

This Yule/Solstice we will pull our little family close around the fire, and envision and call in a circle of love that will extend to all of you. The members of our expanded family, our family of choice grow more precious to us each day and we wish you all renewed strength and energy. 'Let the sun shine, let the sun shine in...', but not until we've had our winter's sleep.

Well, that's it folks. Now it is back into the bed with the covers pulled up snug along with Hecate, the bottom-of-the-bed cat, as faithful footwarmer.

Blessed Be
Ariadne

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Jane's mopping up! The Northeastern flood left her temple space 8 inches deep in stinky water. But she's learned something: There are lots of great and helpful people out there in Pagan-land! Be counted among them by sending your Wiccan- and Pagan-related News to Jane's Tidings, PO Box 64, Portland, ME 04112, or e-mail pjane@maine.com.

Witches mobilize for Kerri Patavino

Connecticut Witches are raising money to help pay legal costs for one of their own. Kerri Patavino was sentenced to six years in jail after being convicted (amid lurid publicity that emphasized and cheapened her religion) of having sex with a 14-year-old boy. Patavino's side of the story - the alleged victim had molested her 9-year-old daughter - was not brought out in court, and even newspaper reporters called her lawyer's statements "rambling" and "disjointed." Her supporters in the Pagan community raised \$2,750 to keep her free on bond during her appeal (presumably with a different attorney). Those wishing to help her win a fair trial may send contributions to the Kerri Patavino Defense Fund, c/o Avalon, 9 North Main St., So. Norwalk, CT 06854. (Connecticut Post 10/12/96; Associated Press 10/12/96; communication from Avalon)

Adler and UU

Margot Adler has an article in a recent issue of *World*, a magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Church, explaining "Why I am a UU Pagan." Adler, the NPR commentator and author of "Drawing Down the Moon," explains how she came to Paganism, what Paganism is, and some of the similarities between Paganism and other religions. "I guess I chose UUism because I need to live in balance. I can do all those wonderful, earth-centered spiritual things: sing under the stars, drum for hours, create moving ceremonies for the changes of seasons or the passage of time in the lives of men and women. But I also need to be a worldly, down-to-earth person in a complicated world--someone who believes oppression is real, that tragedies happen, that chaos happens, that not everything is for a purpose. Unitarian Universalism gives me a place to be at home with some of my closest friends: my doubts." (*World*, 11/96)

Going parking

Pagans in Haverhill, Mass., put on a public ritual for Samhain with the reluctant blessing of the City Council. Ed and Lynn Dube, owners of a business called *Magick and Mail*, received a permit to hold the event in a public park but were ordered to provide security. The hearing on the permit gave them a chance to explain the non-Satanic nature of their religion, though some residents remained dubious. (Associated Press, 10/15/96)

Put your clothes on

The Senate Judiciary Committee is preparing to take action on House Bill 881. If passed and signed into law, this measure would allow counties to establish their own standards of "decency." A correspondent points out, "They would be able to declare nudity as a crime, and decide whether it should be a misdemeanor or felony. If this becomes law, it would certainly have an impact on those pagans who worship skyclad, and even more of an impact on those of us with children." Write your Senators... (communication from correspondent)

TV teen

Delighted with the success of the movie "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch," producers have turned it into a TV series starring Melissa Joan Hart as a high schooler who lives with three Witches - two zany aunts (Hilda and Zelda) and a black cat named Salem, supposedly a former "warlock" doing "penance." (Little do they know that becoming a cat is a promotion!) Some elements are amusing - the Halloween episode was treated like Christmas, with carols and presents. But the fundamental premise - that Witches are either freaks or gorgeous teenage girls - is pretty unpleasant when you think about it. (ABC press releases; *New York Post*, 10/15/96)

More from the tube

The Arts and Entertainment cable channel offered a one-hour program called "Ancient Mysteries: Witches." Leonard Nimoy, the host, led viewers on a largely positive and sympathetic view of Witchcraft through history, including modern Wiccans. On NBC, "Unsolved Mysteries" featured Laurie Cabot using her psychic abilities to help solve crimes, an appearance which netted Cabot a color photo in *TV Guide*. (reports from correspondents)

Keep your children sane

I'm not even going to paraphrase this - it's great on its own: "Kids who celebrate Halloween have a new menace besides ghosts and goblins -- religious groups that want to ban Halloween claiming that Oct. 31 is Satan's holiday and trick-or-treating is a sinful ritual that leads young people to paganism. 'It's really tough being a kid today. They have to be on guard about being kidnapped or sexually molested, bombarded by peer pressure to use drugs, and fears over sexual harassment. Now adults are saying that if you dress up as a witch or goblin on Halloween you're risking hell,' said Los Angeles child psychologist Robert R. Butterworth, Ph.D. Butterworth believes that parents who forbid a child to dress in costume and celebrate Halloween actually do more to increase a child's fear and preoccupation of the unknown than by participating in the festivities." (*Business Wire*, 10/15/96)

The Stone Way

I stand on an ancient path which I laid many centuries ago
A path leading back to my source.
It is a well-laid path of cold hard stone
Each stone chosen with the care a father has when caring for his child
A path so old that time its self knows not its age
Each step I take stand upon a new stone bring with it new experiences
The experiences are all to familiar in my mind but it seems I see and feel them for the first time
Onward I step, stone after stone
Gathering the smells, tastes and pleasures of each movement on stone way
Some smells are foul some are pleasant
Some tastes are bitter some are sweet
Some pleasures are painful some are not.
All are harvested in an attempt to move on to the next stone in my pathway
Upon each stone my form changes one form after the other
One life after the other
I clean and polish each stone correcting each blemish
Honing each of the rough spots
placing the stone back in its ancestral home.
There are some who have chosen to join me on my walkway for a time
Each sharing their time and showing me how to work my stones into better, smoother shapes
I thank all of them for expending their energy with me
Though there is one who never seems to leave
Vision of her inspire to make my stones shine like the stars an a winter's night
It is for her I live
It is for the love of her that I work
It is to her I go
Walking on my stones which I laid so long ago

- laWREncE

EPN
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