

THE TEMPLE BELL

Official newsletter of the Temple of Witchcraft

Quarterly

Imbolc 2012

From the Editor...

Our forsythia bloomed early this year, its bright yellow petals flaring like slivers of sunshine on thin bare branches. It usually blossoms around Imbolc, a harbinger of Spring even when its tender flowers are dusted with frost. But this year it burst forth at the turn of the New Year, harkening to its own deva spirit that whispered to it grow, grow, responding to a synchronicity bigger than the calendar on my office wall.

Here in South Georgia, winter swings like a pendulum. I have grown accustomed to this, learning to cherish whatever season I find when I open my door. We're having a cold spell now. The sun sets on clear horizons, and the steely still air settles heavy and low. I wrap up in my thickest wool and venture into it, taking a cup of tea to warm my hands. The fragrant steam rises and hangs briefly before my eyes, like a veil between me and the melting fire of the sunset. It feels newly kindled, this sun, clean and reborn, even as it sinks into indigo night.

I feel the turnings, circles within circles. The Sun goes down, stronger now than it was yesterday, even if the coming night temporarily holds sway. The Moon wanes and waxes, and the stars move across the sky, each constellation a member of an ancient celestial migration.

These illusions of human perspective mark me as a part of the cycle, inseparable from the Wheel. For the Moon does not grow or shrink. The Sun blazes as steady now as it did at the height of Litha. And those wandering stars have been burning in their respective places for millions of years, constant and unwavering.

No, it is Earth that tilts and whirls, the same Earth that feels so steady beneath me. Another illusion, this steadiness, for the Earth and I are plummeting through space at 67,000 miles per hour. And somewhere beyond the stars is the tumbling edge of the expanding universe, light years beyond my comprehension. And so — in my own space and time — I offer thanksgiving, a wordless circle of gratitude that extends in rings around me.

At this time of year, Imbolc is the center of those circles, and as such, it is an auspicious time to debut the first *Temple Bell* of 2012. New and green, tender and full of promise, Imbolc acts as a herald. Likewise, there is much to look forward to in this



issue which celebrates the craft of the Craft, the sacred work of hands and spirit. Raye Snover, who is sharing *Temple Bell* editorial duties with me, has two fascinating articles appropriate to this season of Brighid: an interview with Jessica Arsenaault on being a doula, and a Q&A session with Dave Smith, also known as Damh the Bard, on creative inspiration. Raye also has a book review on *Witchcraft on a Shoestring*, a guide to making the most of magic without blowing one's budget.

In other articles, Stevie Grant shares her artistic work with gourds, including her journeywork with Gourd Spirit (sharing a special message for Temple members). Daedalus describes how he finds connection working with the spirits of woods and metals, transforming what some might see as trash into ritual tools and artwork. Darryl McGlynn provides an introduction into a form of energy healing known as the Immortality Study. Howling Hill provides some excellent ways to honor our Earth by conserving electricity, and Christopher Penczak explains the Temple's recent work crafting ministerial thoughtforms in this quarter's Founders Corner.

For those with an lyrical bent, Andrew Plummer shares some haunting tunes to take you into the Imbolc season, while Annie Hogsett weaves a little poetic magic evoking the spiritual nature of alcoholic spirits. Shea Morgan offers a ritual to Brighid to reawaken the creative wellspring within. And, as always, you'll find an update on everything the Temple has been busy doing over the past three months.

We hope you enjoy these offerings. Here's wishing a bright and bountiful Imbolc to each of you! May whatever seeds you plant grow strong.

Blessings one and all,
Tina Whittle

Tina Whittle is a mystery novelist/freelance writer living and working in Southeast Georgia. She is currently a Witchcraft IV student in the Temple and is co-editor of The Temple Bell. She is a member of the Earth-based Spirituality Group at her local Unitarian-Universalist church, which she attends with her husband and daughter, and also shares her life with one neurotic Maltese and three bossy chickens.

The Spirit of the Temple and Ministerial Servitor Spirits

By Christopher Penczak

With Steve Kenson and Adam Sartwell

Starting in the Spring 2011 Leadership Retreat, the ministerial council began discussing the idea of crafting servitor spirits to help each ministry in its work in the Temple. A teaching we cover in the fourth degree of the Mystery School, a servitor spirit is an artificially constructed entity made through ritual magical techniques for a specific purpose. They are also known as constructs, semi-permanent thoughtforms or artificial elementals. The entity is crafted out of specific energies in alignment with its purpose through ritual, and a physical “home” is crafted corresponding to its nature and the ritual creating it. Its home can include a name and/or recognizable image. The entity is given instructions on its tasks, a method to “feed” it energy to sustain it, and instructions to summon, activate and dismantle it if and when necessary. Many believe that strong servitor spirits can evolve into larger entities, and that many spirits and even gods of traditions began in a manner similar to a servitor spirit. Unconscious, unwanted spirits created in this fashion are considered unwanted thoughtforms or unwanted elementals, and Temple students learn to clear these thoughtforms from the aura in the First Degree training. Affirmations and intentions can create wanted thoughtforms within the aura, with beneficial purposes. Expansion on these concepts is what creates a servitor spirit.

Larger servitor spirits, empowered by a combination of collective group consciousness of living and past initiates and various spiritual patrons is known as an egregore. The term “egregore” relates to the word Grigori, or Watchers, referring to the fallen angels of myth often connected to old Witchcraft myths. Egregore usually refers to the collective energies and intelligence of an occult tradition, which can consist of many smaller “group minds” such as the relationship between a Tradition and its covens or an Order and its lodges. Egregores can naturally develop through the work between people with a common cause or be crafted through ritual work. Along with the energy of collective human consciousness, an egregore can be formed in conjunction with the energy of specific deities or divine manifestations, as well as other spirit allies from a variety of realms deciding to add to or fill out the egregore’s energy as a partner. Often the spirit of the land, or *genus loci*, or the spirit of an ancestral group can add to the collective egregore, rooting the collective in a homeland or culture. It is the egregore that facilitates the current of initiation. Gardnerian Wicca has an egregore. Anderson Feri Witchcraft has an egregore. The Clan of

Tubal Cain has an egregore. And the Temple of Witchcraft has an egregore, albeit a relatively new one.

The Temple Egregore is a combination of the energies of group consciousness — from those who have worked through a developmental system in a specific cycle — with the consciousness of entities and expressions of divinity that desire to work in partnership with the human members of the Temple, co-creating something new and beneficial to all entities involved and the world. The work of the training and system helps mold the vessel of consciousness both to hold more of the Higher Self in the physical, as well as create an interface for more effective communion and initiation with the spirits of the Temple, and with the spirits of the world in general.

The entities contributing to the Temple include the Divine Trinity of Dryghten (Divine Will); Cruthear (Divine Mind); Celiced (Divine Heart); the Goddess & God as the Weaver/Web and the Singer/Song; the animal guardians of Stag, Horse, Crow and Snake; the angels Tzadkiel, Uriel and Lumiel; the Faery Queen Aroxana; and the Mighty Dead. The Temple is not limited to these entities, but is ever evolving. The personal guides of every individual priest/ess are included, as well as guardians and allies from these realms who choose to contribute to the collective whole of the Temple. Various other gods and goddess are also allied with our work in the Temple.

The Spirit of the Temple has thus far manifested with the name Towathan, and appears as a amalgam of the animal guardians – a horned Serpent with iridescent crow wings and flaring nostrils, similar to the Feathered Serpents of Aztec Myth. Towathan is the manifestation of the Temple Egregore in Spirit Form, empowered by various sources, human and non-human.

First suggested by the Capricorn Ministry, each of the twelve ministries in the Temple is encouraged to craft a servitor spirit to aid in the work of that ministry. Each one is crafted with correspondences associated with the twelve zodiac signs.

Gemini Ministry was the first to complete their thoughtform, with the servitor known as TALLAT. That’s “tal-lat,” written so that its name is a palindrome, a genderless being, incorporating the Pentacles of Mercury with the purpose to facilitate communication among members of the Temple. TallaT can enhance verbal, written or any other communication in the Temple.

It may be called upon to enhance any communication simply by saying, "TALLAT, servant of Gemini, carry my meaning true." Temple members may find this useful to do before holding meetings, writing reports, or otherwise engaging in important Temple communication. TALLAT is "fed" with offerings of smoke: frankincense or similar scents are good. Storax (a resin associated with Hod and Mercury) should work well too, but the smoke is more important than the scent. Those calling on it may wish to visualize the servitor manifesting through the smoke, since TALLAT has a smoky, mercurial form that is always shifting and flowing. One can combine giving TALLAT a task with "feeding" it by burning a written copy of the message along with the invocation. TALLAT enhances communication, but it will not communicate on anyone's behalf. Those calling upon it must do the communication. TALLAT only facilitates and clears the way.

The second ministerial thought form was created by the Virgo Ministry, specifically to be a healing servitor to those who are on the Temple healing list. Seen as a "he" by Virgo Minister Adam Sartwell, his name is a play of letters and words upon the healing statement "You are okay" or U-R-OK — Urok. His "marching orders" include sending healing to those on the Temple healing list and to those whose names are in the bowl on the healing altar at the Temple office.

The third ministerial servitor to be created was for the Sagittarius Ministry. Named Valtunmb by the ministry, this servitor serves as a beacon to guide those who best resonate with the teachings of the Temple and to support the teachers of the Temple to embody the highest wisdom, integrity and communication. Crafted with various herbs, stones and papers, mostly under the rulership of Jupiter and fed with Jupiterian herbs and offerings, Valtunmb has the form of a scarab beetle. This thoughtform is not specifically invoked by students seeking to learn, as we instead seek the wisdom and guidance of the Mighty Dead as inner teachers. Valtunmb can be called upon by Temple teachers by saying his name four times when planning or teaching classes.

As the year continues, we expect to have the other nine Ministerial servitor spirits working with the Temple egregore, aiding and supporting all our work in and outside of the community.

Christopher Penczak is co-founder of the Temple of Witchcraft tradition and organization, as well as its Sagittarius minister. A metaphysical author and teacher, Christopher is best known for his Temple of Witchcraft series. His latest book, The Gates of Witchcraft, is now available.



Music Review

Happy Imbolc, all!

It's always exciting to find different media with pagan or witchcraft themes, especially when the work isn't witchcraft specific, but that nonetheless comes from creators who clearly have a connection to nature or the spirit world.

Last year brought new creations by two women that have always had pagan undercurrents in their work: Kate Bush and Tori Amos. Both of these artists, although not witches, have material that connects nature, other worlds, mythology, and various forms of spirituality.

In November 2011, Kate Bush released her tenth studio album: *50 Words for Snow*. This seven-song, sixty-five-minute album is a journey through icy winter lands, falling snowflakes, and ghostly visitations, with a frosty atmosphere perfect for winter nights. In "Snowflake," she sings with her son, Albert, and the result is ethereal, the lyrics sparse and haunting:

We're over a forest
There's millions of snowflakes
We're dancing
The world is so loud
Keep falling and I'll find you
I am ice and dust. I am sky
I can see horses wading through snowdrifts
My broken hearts, my fabulous dances
My fleeting song.

Tori Amos' twelfth album, *Night of Hunters*, is a concept album, and in Amos' words, it's about "the hunter and the hunted and how both exist within us." As such, it follows a relationship spanning centuries of time. One is struck by its themes of death, rebirth, trance, mythology and nature. Musically, the album revolves around classical music sound cycles, a very different approach for Amos — no drums,

guitars or modern pianos, but rather classical instruments. Lyrically, the album is dense, the meanings a bit obscure, so be prepared to "work" for what she is trying to say. She sings many of the songs with her daughter and niece, adding an element of the otherworldly. One is drawn to the tale of "The Chase," a simple retelling of the Goddess Cerridwen's story. Another fascinating song is "The Battle of Trees," an interpretation of the ancient Celtic Ogham (the alphabet of trees) and the cycles of nature. This is a complex album, but worth a listen.

Andrew Plummer lives north of Boston, works in theater and has a degree in landscape design. He loves finding music, art, theater and books with pagan themes or concepts. He has been studying with Christopher for several years, and loves to walk on this crooked moonlit path.



TEMPLE NEWS & UPDATES

Each issue of The Temple Bell features updates from some of the Temple's twelve Lead Ministers. All of the Temple's ministries are committed to doing important work in the community! For more information on each ministry please see the Ministries page of the Temple of Witchcraft website: templeofwitchcraft.org.

Treasurer's Report: November 2011

Account Balances:

Opening Balance: November 1, 2011:
\$32173.36

Closing Balance: December 1, 2011:
\$32972.59

Petty Cash: \$30.40

Paypal Balance: \$4903.84

Certificate of Deposit: \$2500

Events:

Income from W1-5: net \$1676

Women's Circle: net \$24

Full Moon: net \$5

Mighty Dead workshop: net \$315

Samhain: net \$98.40 (not counting raffle and Temple Store)

Treasurer's Report: December 2011

Account Balances:

Opening Balance: December 1, 2011:
\$32972.59

Closing Balance: December 28, 2011:
\$35995.79

Petty Cash: 0

Paypal Balance: \$2374.85

Certificate of Deposit: \$2500

Events:

Income from W1-5: net \$678.30

Women's Circle: net \$44

Full Moon: net \$55

Ritual Crafting Workshop: net \$125

Yule: net \$153

Cancer

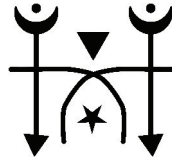
Women's Mystery
Circle — Walking the
Underworld, December



10, 2011: 10 women attended and 2 were first-timers! Food donations were taken to the NH Food Bank, and the drop-offs weighed in at 27 pounds.

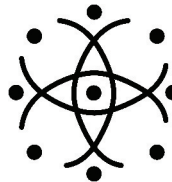
Scorpio

Completed the Ancestor altar at the Temple office. Appointed Wren as Deputy in charge of sacred sexuality. Worked on the Funeral chapter of the Rites of Passage volume and continued to provide support for Temple members who are processing grief and loss.



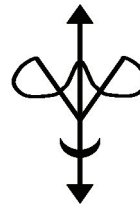
Pisces

Pisces Ministry is working to start public Temple Sabbat rituals in Washington State and started a Temple book club, as well as continuing to run full moon and Sabbat rituals in NH.



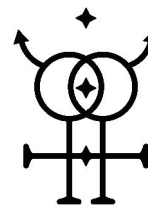
Aries

The Aries Ministry worked a New Year's protection ritual with the assistance of Temple members in-person and online.



Gemini

Gemini Ministry started a monthly e-mail "newsletter" of upcoming Temple events for each month. To subscribe, go to the "Contact" page of the Temple website: templeofwitchcraft.org. Gemini Ministry is also starting monthly Queer Spirit Circles for men in NH.



Virgo

The Virgo Ministry continues to "feed" its healing servitor



with the ashes of each month's healing list and the names on the Temple healing altar. The ministry also maintains a healing case study group to hone members' psychic diagnosis skills. See templeofwitchcraft.org/Healing.html for details.

Sagittarius

While the seminary is currently on hiatus as we await for the current advanced class to graduate the mystery school next year, the mystery school is in full swing. We graduated a Witchcraft III class in October, with an in-person initiation attended by the local class and many students from across the country. We were blessed with a space to perform the ceremony outdoors with a fire and a place for celebration. Samhain this year was quite unseasonably cold, and we had snow during our public Samhain celebration and afternoon workshop happening that same weekend. We graduated a Witchcraft I and Witchcraft II online course, and began sessions of Witchcraft I, II, III and IV between November and February. December marked our final installment of our Monthly Magick Educational series at Myths and Maidens in Manchester, NH. While it was great fun, we've found the consistent monthly night with different topic and teachers doesn't seem to be the best format for us all, so we'll continue with independent classes on variable nights at the Temple's Salem, NH office. Sagittarius will work with the Pisces ministry in 2012 to offer special educational rituals for the Dark Moons, tailored specifically for Ministers in the Temple.



Green Tips from Howling Hill

As light lengthens during Imbloc, let us not forget Our Mother needs us to be more cautious in our consumption of power. We take for granted the amount of resources it takes for the convenience of turning on a light, having hot water at our fingertips, and heat in our homes. Our consumption is leading to climate change which threatens the very deity many Pagans worship. These simple changes will help to reduce the amount of power used and will benefit every life form on the planet.

Unplug electronic devices! Put all plugs onto power strips and unplug the power strip at night and when you're out of the house all day. This includes toasters, TVs, DVD players, computers, phones, PDAs, etc.

Stop using that dryer! Line-dry your clothes year round. In the summer hang lines in your yard and in the winter, place your wet clothes on racks. If your neighborhood prohibits lines, use racks year round.

Turn down the heat! Get an electronic thermostat which controls when the heat will go on and off and at what temperature (available at any hardware store). We set ours for 58° when the house is empty and 63° when we're home and moving about.

Howling Hill lives in New Hampshire with her husband, Wolf, and their two cats. She writes about her adventures on her blog, HowlingHill.wordpress.com, on how to green up your life on TheGreenists.com, and a combination of the two on Nature.PaganNewsWireCollective.com. You can friend her on Facebook and like her Authoress page, and get her tweets @howlinghill.

Book Review

by Raye Snover

Witchcraft on a Shoestring

Deborah Blake
Llewellyn Publications
2010. 210 Pages
\$15.95

When one becomes involved in witchcraft, one can easily fall into the magical money pit buying up all the accessories and tools that come with it. There are wands, robes, crystals, herbs and oils, not to mention the symbolic jewelry that easily attracts us and leads us to overspend. Luckily Deborah Blake has given us *Witchcraft on a Shoestring*, to help bring us in under budget with creative, inexpensive ideas to practice the Craft without breaking the bank.

Author of such works as *The Goddess is in the Details* and *Circle, Coven & Grove*, Blake offers a “use this not that” approach to give the reader instructions for hand-crafted alternatives to items we would normally purchase — like using a piece of wood for a wand and decorating it ourselves. Using Blake’s own difficulty rating, there are directions for making such magical tools as spell candles, runes, and tarot cards. Blake reminds us that with a little work, crafting our own items not only saves us money, but also gives an increased magical punch as each item contains energy from our own hands.

An additional benefit to creating our own tools is the bringing together of other witches. Some crafts like the Speaking Stick can be made by a coven with each member putting their own energy into the object. Blake also has a chapter on “Feeding the Masses” with recipes that can be prepared for ten dollars. Organized by sabbats, these recipes could easily be shared by a coven or group of witches to create a potluck of magical cooking.

Tightening the magical money belt even further, *Witchcraft on a Shoestring* is not limited to just crafts; Blake includes ideas on how to save money on books and knowledge in general. She advocates the use of libraries, book swaps, and used bookstores to acquire the reference materials one needs for the Craft. Along with books, the author advises seeking out other witches to gain knowledge and using the Internet as one of the many tools at our fingertips.

The most significant part of this work is that, as Blake points out, “the only tools you need are free.” She reminds us that all we really need to do magic is our “hearts and minds” and that the requirements are “belief, will and focus.” She prompts us to realize that these accrements we so enjoy are merely window dressing. What we must have is “connection,” and she lists fifty ways in which we can gain that connection for free or nearly so, like standing barefoot in the earth, listening to rain and “standing under the full moon.” Most importantly Blake prompts us to remember that “we are the connection. We are the power. We are the magick.”

Raye Snover is a HPS in the Cabot Tradition whose work has appeared in The New York Times, The Daily News and Excalibur. She is co-editor of The Temple Bell and lives in Manhattan.



Damh the Bard

By Raye Snover

One of the many crafts enjoyed universally is music. So in keeping with *The Temple Bell's* "craft" theme, we sent a few questions to Damh the Bard (Dave Smith). Pendragon of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and creator of such works as *Tails From The Crow Man* and *The Spirit of Albion*. The forty-six-year-old musician and storyteller answered our inquiries about his haunting work in an email from his home in Sussex, UK, where he resides with his partner, Pagan artist Cerri Lee.

TB: *You started playing at 8 years old. How did you go from Irish folk music to rock and then back to folk music?*

DB: Rock and folk are still the two styles of music I listen to more than any other. They each offer something to the two sides of my personality, the more reflective thoughtful styles of folk music, along with the wildness of rock. To me it's important that my Pagan music is playable under the stars and moon beside a camp fire as that is the source of my Bardic style. So it makes sense that I don't need amplification, and that it is acoustic.

TB: *In the nineties you studied with The Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids. What called you to study to become a bard? A Druid?*

DB: I've always had an interest in Magic and used to get detentions at school for reading tarot in class. Back then the route into magic was through ceremonial magic, the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley. I moved away from Christianity because it felt like it came from a foreign land and wasn't relevant to me. In the end, working with Egyptian Deities in ceremonial magic felt the same, and I needed to find something from my own land, and blood. It was that search that led me to Druidry.

TB: *What does the training entail?*

DB: BIG question. Three schools in one course: Bard, Ovate and Druid. The Bardic work is the foundation to it all; it's the stories, the lore, the route of Druid Magic and is grounded in this world. The Ovate learns of treelore, plantlore, healing, divination, and this work is done in the Underworld of Annwn and takes the Bard into the world of Myrddin and Taliesin. With the Druid work we come out of the shadows and into the Upperworld to learn how to now be of service to ourselves and our community.

TB: *You've been in rock bands (Targa) then folk bands (Spiral Castle) and had some success. Why did you choose a solo career?*

DB: To be honest it became impossible to get 5 people at the same place, at the same time. I was still writing, and my Path was calling me to work alone. It is, after all, another factor of the Bard — to take up Harp, and the wandering Road . . .

TB: *In your work you reference the Mabinogion, Taliesin, and the myths of King Arthur. What appeals to you about these tales?*

DB: Oh they fill me up! There is a line from a song written by Steve Knightley that says, "Without our stories or our songs, how will we know where we've come from?" And that's how I feel about these old tales. They really need to be kept alive for us and future generations. They are in our very DNA, and can teach us so much.

TB: *How has being a bard changed your work?*

DB: It's the fulfillment of my dream. I am so lucky, and thank the Gods every day for my life and my Work. Two decisions have shaped my life — to learn the guitar, and to send off a stamp to the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids. From the moment I sent off that letter, everything started to fall into place and make sense.

TB: *How does your spirituality show through in your craft? How do your ideas for songs and music come to you?*

DB: It is at the very heart of my music. Without my spirituality there are no words, no tunes. It is what inspires me to write and perform. I mainly get the tunes first, and the tunes let me know what the song is about. So the hook of the melody comes first. To be honest I find writing lyrics the hardest part — they have to say something important, and speak to my heart. My benchmark is, if I would listen to the song and enjoy it, it stays; if there's any doubt, the lyrics are discarded and I start again.

TB: *In 2010 you were initiated as the Pendragon of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. What are your duties? What do you hope to bring to this position?*

DB: Ross Nichols' Pendragon was Vera Chapman, the writer and founder of the Tolkien Society. Then came Will Worthington, artist of the Druid Animal Oracle, Druid Plant Oracle, DruidCraft Tarot, and the Wildwood Tarot. [And] then it was me. So a writer, an artist, and a musician. Each one communicating through their work their love of myth, magic, the Druid Tradition. And to me that is the role of the Pendragon — communication. To have one foot in the Order and one foot outside, to be ready to answer questions, just like this interview!

TB: *What is next for Damh the Bard?*

DB: Well, I'm recording a new studio album right now and hope to have that ready by mid-March. And of course there is the *Spirit of Albion* movie being launched in May, then touring and more writing. It's busy, but I love it. You can keep up to date with all of that from my website at www.paganmusic.co.uk.

Gourd Art

by Stevie Grant

“What are you going to do with those?” I asked my husband Mark as he harvested his first batch of large exotic gourds.

He said he was going to let them dry and then maybe decorate them. He showed me the books he’d bought, telling him how to dry the gourds and clean them and suggesting a myriad of ways to use them as three-dimensional canvases for art. We had 80 or so bushel gourds that first season that took about a year to dry. He then began to carve and paint copies of Chinese theatre masks on their surface. The results were beautiful, but the process was slow. As I watched him working on the third gourd, I offered to decorate others. I’d had no experience carving anything but slices of beef, and I thought I had no drawing talent, but I love color. I swirled my first few gourds with abstract designs in beautiful hues. We varnished everything we’d finished and let them sit. The second year’s harvest yielded another 100 gourds, this time in a variety of shapes.

That was ten years ago. Since then I’ve progressed from abstract designs to drawings of actual figures and scenes — some traced from pictures, others drawn freehand — and I’ve learned to carve my pictures in bas-relief. Mark has experimented with ways to clean the gourds, opening some to create baskets, bowls, vases, dolls, and trinket boxes, and choosing the best of the long-handled dippers to become musical or shamanic rattles. During 2010, while I was a seminary student in The Temple’s Witchcraft 5, I wove my gourd art into a number of assignments. One of the goals I met was to do the preliminary work for starting our small business that we now call Art in The Craft. My final project for the course included a collection of magickally inspired art worked with gourds. After research, meditation, and shamanic journey, I made the gourds into witchy artifacts, decorated with designs meaningful to witches. The pieces were magickally cleansed and consecrated for beneficial use by the people who were eventually to own them. They were added to the growing inventory of gourd art that we now sell.

So what is this canvas from the Earth? In general, a gourd is a hard-shelled, buoyant, durable fruit from the *cucurbitaceae* family, the same family as pumpkins and squash. *Lagenaria siceraria*, the bottle gourd, has a large number of common names, depending upon its shape, size, and geographical location. Recent genetic and archaeological evidence strongly suggests that it is indigenous to Africa but reached the Americas from Asia. Gourd shards, some dating back 10,000 years, have been found in archaeological digs all over the world. References to gourds can be found in ancient literature and pictographs from many

cultures, predating pottery by thousands of years. Besides a wild population of the bottle gourd discovered in Zimbabwe, the bottle gourds known today, as well as the shards from the past, come from plants. Their uses then and now are legion, and they have been made into such things as bottles, containers, fishing floats, musical instruments, canvases for art, and clothing and adornment. They taste quite bitter and even the young fruit are rarely eaten. Erickson et al. reviewed research that supports the view that the bottle gourd was the first cultivated plant, even before the domestication of plants for food: “This lightweight ‘container crop’ would have been of particular importance to human societies before the advent of pottery and settled village life” (Erickson et al., p. 2). They have medicinal properties and have been used to make such things as purgatives for diseases of the intestines, kidneys, and loins and poultices to ease swelling in muscles. Some people grow them because they’re interesting to watch.

The plant is a tendril-bearing vine. Some with smaller fruits may reach only a few feet in length, but those with larger fruits can extend fifty feet or more. Mark and I have grown apple gourds, shaped like an apple, that measure about 4 inches across by 4 or 5 inches high. Our bushel gourds, mainly round but some with a pointed top, have varied from 8 to 15 inches in diameter. Our long-handled dippers that look like balls with long skinny handles, have ranged from 10 inches long to well over 4 feet. These and the several other varieties we have grown are but a sample of the amazing shapes and sizes of *Lagenaria siceraria*. We grow them on a trellis Mark built from the branches pruned from a friend’s poplar trees and PVC pipe. He coaxes the vines to grow up, over, and through the trellis rather than into the neighbor’s yard.

Photo 1. Gourds on the vine at Mabon.



Photo 2. Gourds hanging from inside the trellis.



The large, usually five-lobed, soft leaves alternate on the stem, and the flowers are unisexual but all on the same plant. One doesn't have to look at the center of the five-petaled showy white flowers to see if the flower has a male stamen or female pistils. The male flower is attached directly to the stem, while the female flower has a bulge underneath that, when fertilized, becomes the gourd fruit. Mark and I have watched at dusk as the nightly Sphinx moths that also pollinate our Evening Primrose and Datura begin to flutter from gourd flower to gourd flower to carry the pollen from stamen to pistils. Mark has also used a Q-tip to daub the pollen from the male flower and transfer it to the female. The flowers last a day or two.

We let the gourds begin to cure on the vine, as the fall weather helps them to shed their skin. After harvest around Samhain, we clean and hang them to cure further for at least a year. We select the best, taking them into our studio for final cleaning and prepping, inside and out, to make them ready to transform during the winter into long-lasting pieces of art such as a shamanic rattle. The rattle is 15 inches long with a 5.5 inch diameter head. The seeds inside have come loose from their membrane so that, when the gourd is shaken, it makes a gentle percussive sound.

Photo 3. "Samhain." Shamanic rattle sold at TOW silent auction, Samhain 2011.



Photo 4. "The Five Elements." Trinket box made from an apple gourd.



Photo 5. "Nectar of the Gods." 14-inch diameter bowl in which fit two apple gourds and a pear-shaped gourd.



Whenever I work with the gourds in the studio, I light a candle and ask for Divine guidance. By then I'm in a light trance. Each gourd "speaks" to me in some way, telling me what it wants to be, both in terms of its function and in terms of the designs it wants to be decorated with. Some of these messages come while I'm in the studio holding the gourd, communing or working with it. Others come between times in meditation or shamanic journey. The gourds have taught me many things, including the wisdom of patience. I discovered that in some ways, carving resembles writing or tracing patterns. Even as my hand becomes more steady and sure, the process is slow. I often hear, "Breathe," or "Take a break." Painting is also a long process. The best paints for gourds are acrylics, which are water based. I have to let one color dry overnight before applying another, lest the colors run into one another. While one gourd is drying, I work on a second. Some things, though, just cannot be rushed or crammed into one session but must be attended to on a rhythmic basis, allowing the waves of my energy to dance with those of the gourds.

I made the first journey in connection with the gourds while working on my Final Project for Witchcraft 5. Horse, who is one of my guides, had me get on his back. We rode through a forest, then he stopped and said, "We're here." We were in my studio at home, the gourds all around me, ready to be worked on.

With me still on his back, Horse rode on till we came to a body of water. I saw the Moon's round reflection. As I peered at it, I saw a figure leaning over, kneeling on one knee, arm in the water, reminding me of The Star Tarot card. Images of other major arcana cards then appeared. Afterwards I suspected that The Star image carried a dual message. One was that my star was shining on me, that doing this art work with the gourds is part of my dharma, a message that I have since received in other ways. The other message was to use the Tarot major arcana on the gourds to tell a story.

I did so on two apples gourds that, after they were opened and sanded inside and out to as smooth a finish as the particular gourds allowed, became a pair of treasure boxes. On them I carved and painted the glyphs for the twelve signs of the zodiac and their corresponding Tarot pictures. When I graduated from the seminary, I gifted these two trinket boxes to Christopher, my beloved teacher and mentor throughout my Temple studies. To my amazement and honor, one of them has become the body of the Spirit Servitor for the Sagittarius Ministry.

In subsequent shamanic journeys, I met and have communed with Gourd Spirit, who appears to me as a figure with body, arms, legs, and head made of gourds. She gave me its power song, which I taught to Mark under the gourd trellis. Last Lammas, when the gourds were beginning their second flowering of the growing season, Gourd Spirit directed me to make a flower essence. I have since used the flower essence to better attune to Gourd Spirit's mysteries.

During one of these journeys, Gourd Spirit takes me to my backyard under the gourd trellis. At first there are brown shriveled leaves, then a complete canopy of green growing leaves. I sing Gourd Spirit's song. I ask how people can drink from gourds. She says not with modern paint and varnish inside. Let me show you, she says. I am transported back, back, back in time. I sense that I'm in a desert in northeast Africa in the pre-dynastic times of Egypt. The inhabitants of what would become this modern day country travel deeper into Africa to trade and communicate with the people of the desert. This is during the rainy times, when the Nile overflows and the small basins along the route fill with rain water. To get from basin to distant basin, on donkeys, the other travelers and I carry gourds filled with water that we refill at each basin. The gourds keep the water cool. The piece of gourd that was cut off for the opening is put back to keep out the sand and heat from the sun. The openings are also covered with the leaves from the gourd vines. When we made the gourd bottles, we used rough tree branches to clean out the gourds that we soaked for a long time. We set the seeds aside to dry and to sow for next year's crop. I watch people carving on the outside of the gourds with flint. The carvings are pictographs, what we'd now call early hieroglyphs, commemorating these ceremonial exchanges from ruler to ruler and blessings from the

Gods. The gourds are sacred to the Goddess of the rains. I kneel before a queen seated on a throne of rock and present my gourds, thanking her for letting us fill ours with water and gifting her with other gourds for the year. The queen blesses and thanks me. It is a sacred ceremony, this exchange.

In preparation for writing this article, I journeyed to Gourd Spirit to ask what I might tell you, the readers. I enter the Underworld to the sound of hammering and see someone in overalls bent over the work. The figure turns and I see that it is Gourd Spirit, her face fashioned from a gourd. I ask why she's wearing overalls. "Because of what I'm doing," she says. I realize that she is mimicking in part the gear I use when working with the gourds, covering myself with a smock and wearing goggles to keep gourd dust out of my eyes and surgical mask to prevent me from breathing the intense fumes of a newly opened gourd. I see other gourd beings working around us. I ask why we're in my studio, since I came way down to the Underworld to meet her. Gourd Spirit says this *is* the Underworld, where her roots dig in and where there are many treasures. She says to tell the Temple Bell readers what I've been doing. Then we're in front of my computer, looking at various images and designs for the gourd art. Gourd Spirit says it's okay to trace designs onto gourds as well as to draw my own pictures. I see drums made of gourds, we're dancing to the drums, and we're in a forest among the animals who provide skins for the drum heads. When I see a horse, Gourd Spirit and I climb on, and we ride and ride. I feel the pain in my neck that I sometimes get from a long session of carving. I see an image of the curvy skinny dragon I'm carving on the big gourd vase. Everything in my field of vision goes gray, then takes on a myriad of color, splashes of paint, then another image for the next piece of gourd art. I thank Gourd Spirit and return to the Middle World to draw this image and begin the next piece of gourd art. (All photos are courtesy of Mark Borgmier.)

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Stevie Grant is a high priestess and ordained minister of the Temple of Witchcraft and serves in several of its ministries. She and her husband Mark grow large exotic gourds at their home in the Pacific Northwest and transform them into magically inspired gourd art. Inquiries about their business may be made at artinthecraft@aol.com.

Human Energy

By Darryl McGlynn

In witchcraft there are many ways to craft with your hands. From moving energy in ritual to creating charm bags, witches find themselves using their hands daily. The use of our hands in healing is a fundamental part of the Craft. The hands-on healing technique that I learned is called “The Immortality Study.” In short, it works with the law of vibration. The practitioner senses the body through his or her hands and feels within their own body for the area in need of healing. You do not take in the disease or ailment; you just pick up on its vibration. The practitioner then sends the appropriate healing energy to that area.

This Immortality Study is a healing system, but not one that is well known. The teachings rely on an understanding of the chakra system and how that system corresponds to the physical body. Learning how the connection of each chakra to one another helps heal the physical ailments is the basis of the immortality study. There are no books or readable material out there that describes this system of healing, at least none that I have found. So like a lot of teachings, it is passed down from teacher to student. While some of the philosophies of the institute do not follow my own, I took what I could use and adapted it to my witchcraft practice. I was one of a select group that worked with a Vietnamese gentleman who taught the Immortality Study through the Human and Universal Energy Institute. I worked with this gentleman’s wife. She and I had long talks about spirituality and the chakras. This led her to tell me that her husband helped people learn about the chakras and the healing properties of them. She invited me over one day and that turned into many weeks of teaching and hands-on healing sessions.

These techniques were originally taught by a wise man named Dasira Narada. The story is told that he meditated for so long that he eventually was able to “transport himself” to the spiritual realms where he learned these techniques from a god form. He then practiced these techniques often, while still conversing with this god form. Eventually he passed along these teachings to others, and they passed it along to others, and so on. Dasira Narada can now be seen as an ascended master of the institute.

Human energy can become very complex when looked at from afar. There are many levels to the auras and several descriptions of the chakras. Some people look to the aura as a product of the energy that swirls around inside us, while others look at it as a first step towards humanity (that is to say that some view our inner energy creating the aura and some say the aura holds the blueprints for our physical creation). The chakras stay in general formation as energy points on our body, moving vertically through our central column. The seven chakra system is the most common. Some systems use more or less. The Immortality Study teaches the chakras as the seven, but strayed away from the root chakra. In its teachings, the root chakra can be very destructive if you are not prepared for it to be opened. For this reason, the root chakra was not addressed at the basic or intermediate levels. The underlying source of energy is what my teacher referred to as universal energy. This energy is all around us all the time, moving in and out of us through our chakra system. This is where we find our power to heal. The immortality study is an exploration of the power of the human being to heal and to use this power for the enrichment of other lives. It is the ability to facilitate disease prevention and cure in others and ourselves. It is believed that when a person has the ability to attract this universal energy into their body, they create a balance within and thus the body creates “antitoxin” to protect itself. From the basic level to the advanced level, one receives universal magnetic field energy and then is taught to attract the universal energy and finally the pinnacle of them all, the quintessence of immortality energy. Each stream of energy you access, the greater the “power” you can build up to use for healing.

This method was a hands-on healing, with the teacher placing the first two fingers on the various chakras and using the quintessence of immortality energy to open them. This really cannot be done through correspondence, but that does not mean someone cannot adapt the healing methods to use in their own practice. Once the chakras are opened, you are to practice “attracting” the energy into your body. By doing this, you create a strong electrical field, which in turn “highlights” vulnerable spots on your body that are in need of healing. By performing a simple, yet powerful, meditation everyday, you can facilitate self-healing and build up your own human energy. This meditation consists of three simple steps.

1. Sitting in a comfortable position, with your eyes open, breathe normally in through your nose and out through your mouth. Repeat this three times.
2. On your fourth breath, close your eyes and your mouth and touch the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth. This forms a Yin Yang symbol within your mouth. Now inhale and exhale normally through your nose while clearing your mind of any thoughts for a minimum of 10 minutes. It is suggested that you perform this step for at least an hour when you first start and do not miss a day.

3. When you are done, open your eyes, breathe normally in through your nose and out through your mouth. Repeat this three times. Ground if needed.

When you first start this practice of “attracting” the universal energy, it should be done daily for at least three months. An additional technique that can be used to bring in even more energy is utilized while sleeping. When you lie down to fall asleep, perform the first step, but when you close your eyes, just relax and go to sleep. Then when you awaken, perform step three (sleeping takes the place of the second step). This builds up the universal energy in your body while you sleep. I will admit that when I do this, I do not get a very good night of rest! So I would err on the side of caution, and if you are fatigued in the morning, do not use this technique.

After you have your chakras opened and balanced, you can then perform healing on others. By praying or reciting a mantra, you create a column of universal energy. This energy comes “out” from the world around you and into your crown chakra, through your arms, out your fingers and into the affected areas where you have placed your hands on the person. We must know the specifics of the chakras and which parts of the body each of them affect, according to the Human and Universal Energy Institute. There are many different views on this. The chakras are assigned numbers for ease of teaching. Starting at the top, the crown is the 7th, the brow is the 6th, the throat is the 5th, the heart is the 4th, the solar plexus is the 3rd, the belly is the 2nd, and the root is the 1st. The 7th and 6th chakras control the entire body — our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well being. They can also heal any unknown diseases, including that beyond the chakras. The 5th chakra controls the respiratory system. It promotes the healing in the areas of the nose, lungs, esophagus and skin, as well as other outside influences like allergies. The 4th chakra controls the circulatory system, which includes the heart, veins and sometimes the lungs. The 3rd chakra controls the digestive system, which includes the liver, stomach, intestines, spleen and kidneys. It also can be used to help the body to fight off viruses by increasing the blood count. The 2nd chakra controls the energy source of the body, from its most primal to its most sophisticated. This energy source has been thought to help heal diseases that are hard to cure and is believed to be able to help fight cancer and/or tumors. The 1st chakra is the latent force of the universal energy. It is the untapped power of the human being that, if one is not ready, can become a dominant force throughout the whole body. This is why this chakra is not addressed until later in the study since this energy can be very difficult to handle. My teacher once told me that he was asked to help heal a child. The child was argumentative and overactive. The child would go berserk for no apparent reason. He then sat the child down and closed the 1st chakra to hold back this latent energy force. The

child became normal. The outbursts stopped and the child became more focused.

The steps taken for the healing are very simple. You sit the person who wanted the healing down in a chair and stand beside them. Placing your hands together, like a prayer position, you would then ask Dasira Narada to open the universal energy source. You take in three deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth, while visualizing the energy source entering your 7th chakra. Then you hold your breath long enough to place your hands on the 7th and 6th chakras of the person. Then return to normal breathing. Keep this up while focusing on the point at which your hands are touching the person. Let the energy “tell” you what is in need of healing. Once you receive this message, you would then place one hand on the corresponding chakra and the other on the “vulnerable spot.” For example, if someone came to you or you received a message about a loss of appetite, you would place one hand on the 3rd chakra because this is what controls the digestive system. The other hand is placed on the esophagus or mouth because this is the entry point for our food. You hold this position for about five minutes and then hold your breath for a moment while you bring your hands back to the prayer position. Take three deep breaths while visualizing the disease in your hands and then with one strong gust, blow the disease away. While you release your hands, push them away from your body. It is simple, but it does take some time and practice to be able to do this healing method well.

There are over 150 different methods for healing this way, plus many others that are still to be realized. With experimenting over time, the mysteries will let themselves be known to you. You just need to start performing the techniques. Remember that these techniques are not a replacement for modern medicine. If you are feeling ill, always first consult your family doctor and use a human energy healing system as an aide to help the modern medical treatment. Here are the top ten most common healing techniques.

1. Nausea: Place one hand on the 3rd chakra and one hand on the lower esophagus.
2. Cold / Fever / Cough: Place one hand on the 5th and the other on the 7th chakras.
3. Allergies: Place one hand on the 5th chakra and two fingers on the bridge of the nose.
4. Regular Pain: Place one hand on the 7th chakra and the other on the spot of the pain.
5. Back pain: Place one hand on the 7th chakra and move the other slowly over the spine.
6. Cold sores: Place one hand on the 7th and the other under the chin.
7. Sweating while sleeping: Place one hand on the 7th and 3rd chakras.

8. Low blood pressure: Place one hand on the 4th and 2nd chakras.
9. High blood pressure: Place one hand on the 4th and 3rd chakra, then place one hand on the 7th chakra.
10. Heart problems: Place one hand on the 7th chakra and the other on the heart.

Carl Jung referred to the chakras as “the gateways of consciousness.” This is true as each one affects our physical and spiritual body in its own unique way. When we heal others, we are taught to speak to them with our mind to heal the subconscious thoughts that may be interfering with their energy body. The Immortality Study teaches that illness is karma on our body. If we realize that it is our own ignorance of our calling that has caused

the suffering on our body and mind, we can change our ways and start to live a magickal life accepting the divine with our every thought, word and deed. But if you ignore the call of your soul, you interfere with the universal law! Blessed Be.

Darryl McGlynn has been a student of the occult since the early 90's. He resides in Schomberg, Ontario, Canada where he owns thoroughbred racehorses. He has received the Munay Ki initiations as well as been trained in the Dasira Narada Immortality Study through the Human and Universal Energy Research Institute. He is also an ordained minister through the ULC Seminary. Since 2010 he has been an honored member of the Temple of Witchcraft.

Gracias

By Annie Hogsett

I've been dead forever
Decades at least.
So dead and dissolved into death
That it's easy here now.
The peace I sought so militantly in life is
Now the silken stream that bears me,
Cradles me
At last.
All is Repose.
Even this utter darkness, total silence
Has become the embrace of The Beloved.

But tonight some thoughtful visitor,
Seeker
Supplicant
Benefactor
Surely, not a mourner.
Surely all my mourners have come down

To join us,
The Erstwhile Mourned

Someone, some kind someone,
Has poured a fifth of José Cuervo Gold upon
my grave.
Resurrection!
I soak it up.

Just for tonight
I am once more a toast to life,
Its wild, unruly brightness,
Its raucous laughter.
Its loud discordant song.

Tonight, I am
Here, in sweet Eternity,
The Very Spirit of Olé!

Annie Hogsett is an escapee from the world of advertising who lives and writes a stone's throw from the shore of Lake Erie in Cleveland. She's currently working on a mystery novel, writing an occasional blog post, and waiting for the lake to freeze so she can then start waiting for the lake to thaw. She shares the shoreline with her husband, son, and a juvenile delinquent cat named Cujo.

Editor's Note from Tina:

My dear friend and creative writing partner Annie wrote this poem after hearing about my experience at a New Hampshire cemetery with Christopher Penczak and several members of my online Witchcraft Class. My class visited right before Samhain, with a light dusting of snow on the ground, and left bread and apples and candy and, yes, some excellent liquid spirits (St. Germain Elderflower liqueur, *Christopher has graciously*

Reawakening Ritual for Imbolc

Reawakening Ritual for Imbolc
By Shea Morgan

Imbolc is a beautiful time of year. We gaze out our windows from our cozy seat by the hearth fire and see the ice sparkling as the sunlight strikes the trees. We know that the sun is slowly igniting a spark in the landscape and that the warmth is growing. We have the opportunity at this time of year to allow our creative spark to flow, to catch fire and to feed the flames inside our souls.

The purpose of this ritual is to celebrate Imbolc through a ritual reawakening of our conscious selves to the spark of the Divine that lives, breathes and manifests through each of us. We endeavor to place ourselves in perfect alignment with our Higher Self and open to the spiritual guidance, growth, abilities and purpose for which we came into this incarnation.

This ritual can be performed with any circle casting, quarter calls and the Great Rite that you prefer. Mead, if available, or even a dark ale, would be an appropriate beverage for the ritual chalice in honor of Brigid. Perhaps set up a special place on the altar, a separate altar or use the hearth to place items representing projects you are working on this year.

Be creative and think of all the correspondences for fire, and also for water as associated with the cauldron. Animal correspondences for Brigid include the boar, cow, fish, sheep, snake, wolf, bear, badger, swan and vulture. Tree and plant correspondences include oak, willow, hazel, rowan, rosemary and red clover. Of course, Brigid has associations with the Fey, and this ritual honors them as well.

Call to Brigid:

Hail Brigid! Goddess of the hearth fire!
Goddess of prosperity and sovereignty!

Brigid, Brede, Brigantina, by many names
we have known you

You are the Triple Goddess, providing
healing and inspiration to those who call
your name

We call on you now to set the spark aflame,
to stoke the fires of the dreams we have
created

We ask for your three blessings of healing,
inspiration and craft

We honor you and call on you to walk with
us

Lend us your power as we seek the spiritual
source of our souls

Safely hold the sacred space we have
created through our will; join your will to
ours.

Guide and protect the Circle; guide and
make safe our path.

Hail and Welcome!

Turning of the Wheel:

The winter landscape remains grey and
somehow dim. Yet we can see the hint of
light peeking over the horizon. We feel the
rays of the sun, growing slowly stronger
and higher in the sky each day. We have
known winter and still are in her cold
embrace. Yet we feel the warmth of the
sun start to seep through the cracks in the
ice. We are coming home again to our
hearth fire. We warm our hands, and know
that this fire is soon to be replaced by the
heat and warmth of the sun on our faces
and in the core of our being.

We are thankful for the Spirit of Winter,
for the crone, The Callieach, and the
lessons she has taught us. We honor her as
we turn the wheel tonight. As The
Callieach turns her head, her face becoming
that of Brigid, the young bright one. The
Maiden and yet the Mother to us all.
Brigid comes, and so does the promise of
renewal and the spark of life.

The Earth has new life within its womb,
waiting to be born again in the Spring. We
see it in the mother's milk at the ready to
feed the lambs of spring. The animals peek
from their hiding places, as if they too
sense the spring's approach. They dream of
the nests and the babies they will have. Or
we dream for them, as they are simply
being what they are in the present moment
of this winter's day. Yet they too sense the
renewal that is to come.

We turn the Wheel together, as those of
like mind who have joined us tonight to
honor the Spirit of Winter as She slowly
begins to melt her mantle of snow, as it
transforms into the flowery mantle of the
Spring Bride. We call Brigid now together,
the Mother giving birth to the Spring . . .

(All: 3X in unison)

Brigid, Brigid, Brigid, come to us now,

Open the doors wide, Brigid enter our
homes, hearts.

Bring the spark of light and warmth to our
land.

Blessing:

We called to the Goddess Brigid, for her
triple blessing, her powers of healing,
inspiration and gift of smithcrafting to
bring her power to this Rite. Brigid, we
call to you now to bring us that which we
seek. We ask you to manifest our goals and
dreams for our highest good and the
highest good of all. We ask for your
threefold blessing.

Think now of three things which you seek
to bring into your life for your highest
good, in line with your highest will, your
True Will, the Will of your Souls. You may
also wish to write an affirmation for what
you will bring into your life. When you are
ready, share your dreams with the group. It
may be for healing, for inspiration, for
creativity, or for success in crafting a

project you are working on. Whatever you seek, it is for you and only you can determine what is best for you.

After you have shared your thoughts, take your three wishes, blow them into your hands, and place them in the cauldron. After you have placed them in the cauldron, with thanks and gratitude in your heart to Brigid, pour from our libations pitcher an offering of milk, butter and honey to the Bright Ones. Later, we will pour these offerings as a gift to the Earth as she awakens from her winter's slumber and to the Faery Kingdom who partners with her for the green of the Earth. And know that your Will is Manifest.

(Each go around circle and when all is done, all say in unison . . .)

By the power of 3x3x3 and as we will it,

Our will to our True Wills,

Our selves to our True Selves,

Our divinity to the Divine that runs through all things,

So must it be!

Blessed be.

Farewell to Brigid:

Hail Brigid! Goddess of the hearth fire!
Goddess of prosperity and sovereignty!

Brigid, Breed, Brigantina, by many names
we have known you

You are the Triple Goddess, providing
healing and inspiration to those who call
your name

As we called on you now to set the spark
afire, to stoke the fires of the dreams we
have created

You gifted us with your three blessings of
healing, inspiration and craft

We honor you and thank you for walking
with us

And for lending us your power as we seek
the spiritual source of our souls

Thank you for safely holding this space we
created through our will, and joining your
will to ours.

And for guiding and protecting the Circle,
guiding and making safe our path.

Hail and Farewell!

Shea Morgan is a Witchcraft IV student with a 20+ year career in government/public affairs. She is a voracious reader and student of all things spiritual and has been on the path of a Witch since 2001. She lives in St. Louis, MO with her two cats, and enjoys gardening, antiquing, hanging out with coven, friends and family, and visiting the family "century" farm.

The Best Drug On The Planet

Raye Snover

At Imbolc as the earth, pregnant with new life, bides her time waiting for the product of her womb to arrive, who better to speak to this than someone familiar with the birth process —a doula. Jessica Arsenault is a warrior. When one meets this small, dark-haired Boudicca, you quickly realize she is equal parts toughness and tenderness tempered with a healthy dose of humor. Being a fierce proponent of women, as seen with her Red Tent and doula work, Arsenault speaks to *The Temple Bell* from her home in North Wales, where she lives with her husband and three-year-old son, about the most precious of work —childbirth.

The Temple Bell: What is a doula?

Jessica Arsenault: A doula is a labor coach or a birth assistant. The word doula is a Greek word, which directly translated means servant or slave. The doula would be the head woman, or servant in the household, a caregiver. She would also know what everybody's job was. In modern day experience, it's a woman who offers emotional and practical support to laboring parents.

TB: As a doula what are your responsibilities?

JA: I think that my responsibilities change with each person that I'm a doula for. My job is to support parents and the decisions they make. I can offer them information-based support . . . I would normally have one or two meetings with the couple before the labor and go over their birth plan. If it

weren't very realistic, I would help them find better information so they could make more informed choices. I may also go over different techniques that I have learned for childbirth or positions that may help the labor move on or slow down or whatever it is we might need at that time.

Mostly I'm becoming friends with the family and becoming more comfortable with them. In an ideal world as a doula, I'd like to sit in the corner and do nothing, just be a witness and hold the space. I think that that's the part I really enjoy, witnessing new people coming into the world, feeling like the guardian at the gate.

TB: What decisions do you help your clients make?

JA: Well, I think it depends on the couple. I might suggest that they think about, do they want the Dad to cut the cord? Would they like to have a water birth, a home birth or a hospital birth? Are they making an informed decision about having a caesarean? It really is as individual as people are as to what kind of support I give. Each woman, each couple, is going to need something different.

TB: You are a birth doula and a postpartum doula. Aside from the obvious, what are the differences between the two?

JA: As a birth doula, I would have two or three meetings with a couple before they have the baby or just the Mum depending on what the birth team is. She may want a friend there as well. I'm there to support whoever's there. We go over what they would like me to do. They're telling me what my job is, and I'm holding that for them in the birth situation. I go on call for four weeks, usually two weeks before the birth and two weeks after the birth. That means that they can phone me twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week with questions. Or maybe they think they are going into labor and they're not really sure; I'm there to support them through that whole process. Once they go into labor, they call me out to their house; then I'm there until they ask me to leave. I'm there for the whole length of the labor, the birth and a bit of time afterwards to make sure they're comfortable and capable of taking care of everything that they need to take care of. Then I'll go back at least once after the birth to go over the birth story with them, help them sort of fill in the amnesia gaps that happened: "What happened for those six hours I was contracting every two minutes?" When I'm there I take notes and I write down things like what kind of music we were listening to, maybe a funny joke here or there that was said, something lovely that the partner might have done for the Mum, just to help them remember the parts of the birth that they may have forgotten. That's what I do as a birth doula.

As a postpartum doula, I do between twenty and forty hours with the Mum over the next two or three weeks. I come in for three or four hours a day if she wants me for that long. Again, it's totally dependent on the Mum, on what she wants and needs. I may go in for four hours for the first four days after the baby is born. For new mums I may be helping with breastfeeding, showing them how to bathe the baby, helping them to become more confident in taking care of the baby. I think it's quite sad, because as a society we don't see children in the way that we did when we lived in a village and everybody was part of everything. We saw children being raised, we saw children being born, we saw children being breastfed and taken care of. Now we live in such nuclear families that we don't see any of that anymore. A lot of women get pregnant, have babies, and they've never even

held a newborn. So as a postpartum doula, I go in and support them with what they need help with. It's prescriptive to each woman and what it is that she specifically needs. Sometimes that's a bit of light cleaning, or some women what to have a shower because they haven't been able to do it on their own; some women want you to take care of their house so they can just hold their baby. Other women want a break from the baby. I just go in and support them in whatever they want and need.

TB: How did you become interested in becoming a doula?

JA: I have to say I think that a lot of my friends knew what I was going to do before I did and asked me to be with them. They had their babies, starting with my sister who had my nephew Michael, who is now seventeen. That was the first birth I was at, seventeen years ago. It's an amazing opportunity to stand at the gate when it opens and a new person is handed into this world to take care of. The energy in the room changes, the smell in the room changes, there is an air of magic that is so deep and profound that it's like the best drug on the planet and I just want more . . . I had a friend who said, "Please come and be at my birth" and gave me four books and said, "Can you read these before you come?" That's when I decided, "Oh, this is what I want to do." They were books like, *Spiritual Midwifery*, *The Birth Partner* and I can't think of the others right now, books about being a doula. *Mothering the Mother* was another one. Reading these books and journeying from the east coast of America all the way to the west coast to be with one of my oldest friends while she had her daughter — it made me realize this is what I really want to be doing with my life.

TB: How long have you been a doula?

JA: I've just recently done my training in this country. I trained in 2004 in America, and I'm now doing my certification in this country. I've just started in March, and I've been to the two of the three births that I need for my certification. I'm in the process of becoming a certified doula in this country as we speak. I have been, over the years, at more than a dozen births.

TB: What's the certification process like and what is required of you?

JA: I trained with an organization called Nurturing Birth; in their process you have to read five books and then you go to a weekend training, a three-day training. Then after the weekend training, we need to attend three births. I have a mentor who I can speak with in between the births or while the births are going on. She's at the other end of the phone for me if I have any questions or need any help. At the end

of these three births, I will be assessed by the parents; also if the midwives are up for assessing me, that's great. I will get certified with Doula UK, which is the largest organization in the UK for doulas at the moment.

TB: What's the difference between a doula and a midwife?

JA: A doula does not do anything medical. I don't give medical advice; I don't do any kind of procedures. I'm not a medical person in any way, shape or form. I'm there to support a woman in her own decisions, energetically and emotionally, not medically.

In an ideal world, the way I look at it, if I do my job really well, the midwife gets to come and sit and watch a baby being born because Mum is going to do everything that she needs to do. I was at a birth last week, and that is exactly what happened. The midwife sat in the living room on the sofa talking and laughing, the Mum was in the kitchen laboring away alone, and I was in the kitchen with her but really hands off. We had a little dance around the kitchen, and she breathed her baby into the world without even pushing . . . she was just so in tune with her body and with what was going on. There are some women in the world that are made to have babies, and I believe she is one of them. I've been with her for two of her children now, and it's been an amazing gift. Sometimes it's an amazing honor and a gift and very, very easy.

TB: How do you pick your clients or visa versa?

JA: I would say my clients pick me. Living in North Wales where people have never heard of a doula and it is a very midwife lov[ing] area (although there are very, very few midwives), there is a great call for midwives but the NHS (National Health Service) isn't hiring any right now. A lot of women need support on different levels, but they don't know that it is available. So my job here in North Wales is to educate. I run a birth group once a month and I support pregnant women. We all have tea and cake in my house, and they come sit in my living room and we have conversations about all different kinds of things. Basically I put it out there [that] it's going to be on this day, [and] if there's something specific you'd like to talk about, let me

know and I'll do my research. If you come with a question and I don't know the answer, I'll do my best to get it for you. It's mostly about pregnant women getting together so they have a bit of a support network. With that I would say that out of my last group of pregnant women, I was a doula to two of six of them. So that's one way I do find work; it's mostly from word of mouth. I'm not eager to have lots and lots of doula clients. I know that the right ones will come and they will choose me. I don't feel like it's my place to choose them.

TB: There is a quote by Dr. John Kennel, who says, "If a doula were a drug, it would be malpractice not to use it."

JA: What a fantastic quote! . . . I absolutely love the article that you found that in. I truly love what he has to say, and I do agree — if we were a drug, then the NHS would be handing us out to every pregnant woman possible.

TB: Why is it so important to have a doula?

JA: This is a very hard question to answer because I have a very big passion for this, and so in my mind, women need women to support them. Not all women need a doula. Some women are very, very capable of doing it themselves because they have the support they need in their lives. I think that the women who don't necessarily have the female support in their lives from a mother or grandmother or a coach friend could very much benefit from having a doula at their birth. Having a strong potent presence, somebody who has an awareness of what the birth process is like and who says, "Yes, this is normal, it's okay, you're going to make it." It can help them get that much further to opening.

TB: Do most of your clients give birth at home or at hospitals?

JA: I've had a mixed group. It's important for women to make decisions where they feel safe . . . I have been at a few hospital births where it was just exactly what the woman needed. She felt safe; she felt if anything went wrong, she was in the right place to be taken care of and everything worked out really well. I've had women who were absolutely petrified of a hospital and had the baby at home because they feel very comfortable there. It's not about only



supporting women who have home births or water births, which I think is a common delusion put out there about doulas. I've supported somebody just recently who was induced two weeks early because of her anxiety around having this baby, and it was just what she needed. It was a very calm thing, and she was only in labor for six hours when she was induced, and her little son came into the world in a very beautiful way. It is about helping women making informed decisions that work for them. It's not about having a hospital or at-home [birth]; it's really individual to each woman.

TB: Some health plans do have coverage for doulas, but there is the question as to whether a doula working privately or a doula working for an insurance company may have a conflict of interest. What do you think?

JA: I think that every woman that needs support in bringing a new person into the world should have it. Whether that is funded privately by that woman or from an insurance company, that part doesn't matter to me; what matters is where the heart of the doula is. Each woman will pick a doula that works for them, and I trust in that process, that women who are becoming doulas are taking themselves out of the equation and being a pure support for the person no matter where the money is coming from. I'd like to just trust in the integrity of the doula.

TB: Do you just have one client at a time?

JA: I recently have just met the one and only other doula in North Wales. Her name is also Jessica, and she's also an American. Having her and I working together means that we can support more women; she can back me up. I would go on call with each woman and the third week of that month, take on another client. So I may overlap ever so slightly with them (the clients) knowing that the first person I'm committed to, I would go to first if they are both in labor at the same time. Jess my partner would go to the second one. She's a witch too.

TB: Do you find that the medical personnel scoff at you or are they more supportive?

JA: I think that in a lot of ways as a doula, I'm doing the job that the midwives signed up to do. I think that a lot of midwives think that they will be able to support a woman energetically, [that] they'll be able to hold her hand during the hard moments, and they'll be able to be there for the whole birth. The reality with the NHS in this country is that a midwife may be dealing with three laboring women at the same time, and there is just no way that she can give that constant care. Depending on the midwife, I think I am stepping into a place where some of these women really signed up [to be]. That causes a bit of a problem. But for the

most part, I have built amazing bridges with the midwives around here. And they're very, very happy to have me at a birth because I make their job a lot easier most of the time.

TB: You're also being trained in kinesiology.

JA: I just finished the first part of my kinesiology training, which is Life Tracking, and I am now moving into the second part of my training, which is the professional aspect of the training called the Way of the Tracker. In Way of the Tracker, I'm learning how to body douse using different muscles in the body as indicators. It's amazing what our bodies have to tell us, really.

TB: How does this knowledge help in your work as a doula?

JA: This something that is evolving and changing; as I learn more I realize more and more how it will support me in my work as a doula . . . The work we can do in ourselves before these little people come into the work can make their entrance easier, can make their entrance more beautiful and more harmonious. I believe as a creative kinesiologist and a doula, I will do work with Moms and Dads and families. I will create a harmony for this little person to come into. In doing that, these people who are coming into an environment have a stronger, sturdier base in the world to help them.

TB: What would be the best overall reason to have a doula?

JA: If you found the right doula then your birth can be easy and joyous . . . The most important thing is being really clear with who you are and knowing what you need as support, and if that means having a doula in the room who knows what birth is like and has experienced many births, that may make you feel more comfortable and more relaxed in yourself. The more comfortable and relaxed you are, the easier your birth will be.

TB: Anything that you would like to add?

JA: Our responsibility on the planet at the moment is to step into our power, walk in beauty, and be shining beings on this planet. And oh yes, don't take yourself too seriously!

The Artisan's Role in the Craft

By Daedalus

Research into the folklore of core shamanism, especially of the Evenk (Tungus) tribes of the Siberian forests where the word "shaman" originated, tells us that there has always been a link between the blacksmith and the shaman. In his book *The Shaman*, Piers Vitebsky describes how the blacksmith and the shaman were usually descended from the same bloodline, shared a hereditary rite or quality called "udkha" which can be traced back to the celestial origin of their line. In many cases the blacksmith served as both the "older brother" to the shaman and as master at the shaman's initiation ceremony. The blacksmith would make the tools, charms, amulets, talismans and other items the shamans required to operate in all worlds. They also shared an ability to see and talk to the spirits in these worlds. According to Vitebsky, the blacksmith's soul was protected by Fire, and that protection shielded a blacksmith from any harmful energies directed by other shamans.

In Japan and other Eastern countries, the craftsmen who build the temples are held in high esteem and have to go through rigorous spiritual training as well as completing their apprenticeship for their trade. Wood is one of the five elements in some Eastern religions, so the people who work that wood and build the temples must be capable of communing with the spirits they are building the temples for; these craftspeople are many times held in equal esteem as the priests who work in the temple after it's built. Wherever there is a shaman or priest, there is usually an artisan of some sort supplying the tools, costumes, temples, music, poetry and various other things that aid them in the practice of their Craft.



As with the blacksmith and shaman who speak to other worlds, a death walker can see and communicate with the spirits of the recently departed and allow them to finish what

they need to in this world in order to move to their next incarnation in peace. While I know a few of these death walkers, it never occurred to me that I might be one of them until one of my medium friends suggested that might be the case. The more I think about it, the more I think she was right. I too am capable of hearing the voices of the newly deceased. In my case, the departed souls I hear are the spirits of wood, stone and metal calling to me, asking that I help them begin their transition into lives as something new and different.



I am drawn to construction sites, landfills, scrap piles and mounds of debris along the shoreline of oceans and rivers. I come to these places because I hear the spirits of things that are ready to cross over and begin the process of transformation. More than once while pawing through these piles trying to find what is calling me, I have heard the term "crow" being used. I heard "There goes one of the local crows" from a contractor while I was climbing the pile of wood scrap at the local transfer station. I, like the crow who collect things simply because they catch his eye, was retrieving an interesting piece. The crow is a psychopomp; like the boatman on the river Styx, they help spirits and souls cross from this world to the next. They are keen-sighted animals who can see the usefulness and beauty around them when other animals are only interested in chasing what feeds and shelters them. The crows and I may hear and see many of the same things.

We humans cast off an incredible amount of still useful material. We cut down trees and pull up stumps to make way for our houses, stores, and the parking lots those stores require. Some of those trees call to me on a regular basis. If I hear a chainsaw, I make note of where that sound is coming from, and once it stops, I can usually hear the Dryads calling me. The Dryads are one of the many spirits that are connected to and live within the trees. I hop in my truck and go see why they are calling and what I can do for them.

You will find some incredible wood in the pieces of trees that are left behind, pieces like the main forks of the tree and the stumps. They are left behind or buried because they won't even make good firewood. Their swirling, interlocking

grain makes them too hard to split, and even if you do manage to split them, they take forever to dry and usually rot before they're dry enough to burn. I believe the Universe designed the trees that way so the spirits within the trees would have a place to safely hide from our destructive and wasteful ways.



I go to the places where I can find this wood that nobody wants and ask the trees if they are ready to forgive and work with us at least one

more time. If they are open to that, I do what I can to help the Dryads find peace and perhaps a new life. Once everything that wants to be released has transitioned, there are always a few spirits who want to stay in this world and continue to work with us; the trees are very forgiving. Together we decide who is coming home with me to begin a new life, and I help them get in the truck.

Back at my shop, I listen to them as they tell me where to cut in order to release them so they can show how beautiful they really are. They cast off their bark, and together we begin what is to be their new life as a useful object or tool.

Just as the living trees shelter the birds and other woodland creatures, the lumber from those trees shelters us in our homes. The framing, sheathing, roof deck, subfloor, trim and furniture does for us what a living tree does for the rest of the animal kingdom. Just like them, we are surrounded by the essence of trees. Our more developed brains cause us to treat trees, metal, and stone as commodities to be harvested and exploited. We get our wood and stone from the lumber yard, just like we get our food from the grocery store, and that's where the disconnect between us and what feeds and sustains us comes from. We no longer feel those psychic cords that connect us to everything else, including the tree spirits that surround and keep us safe, even while we sleep. If an artisan is truly connected to the material they work, then they can hear and partner with the souls within it. They become a vessel or channel for the archetypal Craftsperson and commune with their muse by combining their skills and their spirits with the spirits of the materials they are working with.

Any moderately skilled worker can be trained to the point where they can impose their will on an appropriate material to produce serviceable goods. However, all of the truly

inspired craftspeople I know have a deep connection to the material they work. They don't see what they hold in their hands as "just a stone" or "just a board" or "just a piece of metal"; they see it as an opportunity to work with their allies directly. They invoke the archetypal Craftsperson and begin the opening stages of a discussion, hoping to be provided a chance to enter into a partnership or a new adventure with an old friend. This partnership combines the maker's will with Divine Will to begin the transformation process.

A truly inspired craftsperson or artist learns as much from the material as they do from any formal training they may have received; every collaboration has the potential to be an incredible learning experience. Each new project brings the opportunity to dance with the spirit of the things we work with and help them transform into something if not beautiful, then at the very least useful. The challenge a craftsperson faces is to do this while reviving and preserving the spirit that lies dormant in the material. An inspired artisan doesn't impose their will on the material. They combine their will and spirit with the one in the material they're working with. Then that combined and transformed



spirit can move into the next incarnation resurrected, able to interact with the world in a whole new way.

Like the shaman, the blacksmith, and the temple builder, the artisan must gather

the pieces of the spirit that remain and help it become what the Universe has planned for it to be. As with a death walker, the craftsperson plays a part in leading the soul of something from one life to the next and hopefully establishes enough connection so it can anchor itself in that new life and continue to interact, inspire or serve others in some capacity. The role of an artisan is to act as a bridge as things pass from hand to hand and transition from old life to new. Through vision, spirit and connection, a craftsperson brings their particular version of magic to the craft.

After leading a nomadic life, Daedalus and his wife Raven decided to settle on the coast of Maine. He has devoted his life to magick and working with his hands. He has several decades of experience making a wide variety of things in wood, metal, stone and bone, up to and including custom motorcycles and yachts. His current focus is on tools, including ritual and shamanic tools. He and Raven are in their 4th year of study with the Temple's Mystery School.

The Temple and its Ministries are always in need of volunteers willing to contribute their time, energy, and expertise to our Great Work. You can contact the Temple Volunteer Coordinator at info@templeofwitchcraft.org. Specific volunteer opportunities include the following:

DRUMMERS

The Leo Ministry wants more drummers for larger rituals, such as Samhain, and wants to establish a core drum group for Temple events and to develop new music and beats. Email sagittarius@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information.

ENVIRONMENTALISM

The Taurus Ministry is looking for volunteers who would like to aid the Lead Minister in a variety of environmental projects and education. Please contact taurus@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

The Gemini Ministry is on the lookout for Temple members with graphic design experience and resources, particularly Mac OS X based, and skill with page layout and desktop publishing iWork or Adobe CS . Email gemini@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information or to volunteer.

HEALING

The Virgo Ministry needs a volunteer to coordinate its healing work, including, but not limited to, organizing Reiki shares and other healing events and management of the Temple's online healing list. Experience in different healing modalities is preferred, but not required. Email virgo@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information or to volunteer.

MENTORING

The Sagittarius Ministry is looking for previous graduates of Witchcraft III, IV, and V interested in serving as mentors in the online education program. Mentorship includes giving feedback on homework, answering questions and encouraging students in the Mystery School and Seminary. Interested applications should email sagittarius@templeofwitchcraft.org.

RAFFLE ITEMS

The Temple runs a regular raffle at our Sabbats, and we're always looking for new and unique items to be donated for the raffle to help raise funds. Email raffle@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information or to donate items.

WRITING & ART

The Gemini Ministry needs writers and artists to work on *The Temple Bell* newsletter. We're looking for articles, poetry, art, photos, and reviews. Contact editors in chief Raye Snover and

Tina Whittle at templebell@templeofwitchcraft.org for complete submission guidelines.

The Leo Ministry is looking for artists interested in creating new pagan oriented works for the Temple and its members. Contact the Lead Minister at leo@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information.

You can also volunteer for work with particular ministries of the Temple by contacting the appropriate lead minister. See the Ministries page of the Temple website and Contacting Us below for details.

CONTACTING US

For general questions and inquiries e mail info@templeofwitchcraft.org.

For website or technical issues, e mail admin@templeofwitchcraft.org.

For questions or inquiries related to a specific ministry, see the Ministries page or e mail that minister at ministry name @ templeofwitchcraft dot org, such as gemini@templeofwitchcraft.org.

Send surface mail to:

Temple of Witchcraft
PO Box 2252
Salem, NH 03079

NETWORKING

The Temple maintains an email notification list through Constant Contact, giving subscribers all the up to date information on our rituals, classes, and other events. To sign up, visit our website at www.templeofwitchcraft.org and go to the "Contact Us" page, where you'll find a "Sign Up for Our Newsletter" box. Just enter your email address to sign up.

If you are a Temple member at any level, you can also join the Temple Web, our interactive Yahoo! group email list for members to stay in touch and network. Registration requires membership verification, so please include your full name along with your request. You can find the mailing list's home page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/templeweb>

You can also find and friend us on Facebook and MySpace for updates and to help spread the word about the Temple!

Donating to the Temple

The Temple of Witchcraft is a 501(c)(3)e nonprofit organization, funded by the generous donations of its members to bring you services such as our website, mailing lists, and this newsletter.

If you are interested in making a secure online donation via PayPal including credit card donations, just go to the "Donations" page of our website and click on the "Donate" button and fill out the necessary information.

We can also accept checks and money orders made out to "Temple of Witchcraft" via surface mail at:

Temple of Witchcraft
PO Box 2252
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As a federally recognized nonprofit, donations to the Temple are tax deductible.

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The Temple welcomes donations in whatever denomination contributors can offer. We recognize five levels of donation:

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A special "Diamond" level is reserved for patrons of the Temple who establish lasting endowments and trusts. Please

contract us directly if you are interested in doing so.

We regularly thank members who donate to the Temple by offering special Wheel of the Year meditations as audio file downloads. See the Donations page of our website for the current thank you offer and watch our website and social networks like Facebook for announcements concerning new thank you meditations and special offers to our generous patrons.

A B O U T T H E T E M P L E

The Temple of Witchcraft is 501 c 3 religious nonprofit organization based in the State of New Hampshire. Co founded by Christopher Penczak, the Temple started in 1998 as a system of magickal training and personal development, and eventually developed into a formal tradition of Witchcraft. Now, as an outgrowth of the work of students, initiates and graduates of the programs, the Temple of Witchcraft has evolved into an organization based on traditions of modern magick, Witchcraft, and Neopaganism. The work of the Temple is both otherworldly and terrestrial, seeking to strengthen the connections between spirit and matter through inner transformation and public service.

The Temple of Witchcraft's goal on an individual level is to awaken the potential of the human soul to its natural gifts of psychic awareness, communion with nature and the spirits, and magick. Each individual seeks to live a magickal life. Through these awakenings, we seek an expansion of consciousness through the alignment of our souls with Love, Will, and Wisdom to complete the Great Work.

On a greater scale, we seek the restoration, maintenance, and evolution of humanity to the Garden of the Gods, the cooperative consciousness where all things are in harmony and community. Our myths define this awareness as the First Garden, known as Avalon, Hesperides, Zep Tepi, Shamballa, Lemuria and even Eden. We manifest this vision through both our inner workings and service to the greater community. By these actions, we plant the seeds and tend the garden of Witchcraft culture, tradition and community.

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Contact geminii@templeofwitchcraft.org for access to promotional materials, fliers, and other media.

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