

THE TEMPLE BELL

Official newsletter of the Temple of Witchcraft

Quarterly

Lamas 2012

From the Editor...

The bright Sun of Litha is now waning, even as the temperatures still soar. Lammas brings the dog days, named not for the panting pooch under the front porch, but for Sirius, the Dog Star, one of the brightest stars in the sky. There is a trick to its brilliance - what the naked eye perceives as a single star is actually a binary star system, two stars doing the work of one.

Its power was both honored and feared by the ancient Romans, who held the yearly Robigalia in April to protect the upcoming wheat harvest from diseases they believed to be caused by the star's emanations. The life of the community, the life of the people, were both linked intimately and inseparably to the bounty of the grain.

And so now is the time of the first gathering in, the time of sacrifice and harvest, inextricable. Here is the time of bread, the soul of the wheat and the work of hands, broken upon our plates to nourish and serve and connect us. Our food - especially that most basic of nourishment, bread - is our link to each other. After all, the word "companion" comes from the Latin *com panis*, as in "bread with."

I have heard it said a witch is never alone. Indeed, one of the great understandings of this path is not only the knowledge that this is so, but a celebration of the connections we share with

other witches, with our guides and guardians and teachers, and with the different parts of ourselves. This quarter's newsletter is a part of that sharing. It comes with sacrifice - yes, much time and hard work go into each publication - but like the bread, the fruit

Founder's Corner column. Temple Bell co-editor Raye Snover contributes two interviews: one with Jocelyn VanBoke-lyn on the spiritual and material harvest of her work on the farm, and a second with Jhenah Telydru on her women's retreat celebrating the harvest of an authentic self.

Daedalus shares "grist for the mill" in his exploration of how the process of transforming grain into flour is an analogy for spiritual transformation. Howling Hill offers a primer on preserving the harvest bounty through canning, while Shea Morgan describes a very different kind of planting and harvesting in her piece on working with the banes (complete with photographs). Spirita Dulche celebrates the Sabbat through lyric in her poem "Lammas" and Colleen Corcoran conjures some divine masculine energy in her "Ode to the God." And - as always - you'll find all you need to stay up to date with the Temple through its Ministry Updates and a report on TempleFest 2012 (more photographs!).

Blessed Be!

Tina



of the harvest, it is offered with open hands and open hearts. May it be received with the same.

In this edition, Temple Co-Founder Christopher Penczak explains the unique spiritual and administrative structure of the Temple in this quarter's

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Blueprints, Foundations and Architecture

By Christopher Penczak

At the latest Temple of Witchcraft leadership retreat in April, we had some time to reflect upon our past goals and see how much we've accomplished in such a short amount of time since incorporating as an organization. Whoever said that organizing Pagans is like herding cats evidently didn't meet us (or we all happen to be a highly motivated breed of cat). We discussed the balance between the administrative and the mystical, and how not to lose sight of either when working in community. One of the proposed future goals was to do a better job of explaining our unique structure, which is unlike most traditions, temples, and non-profits. I found it an appropriate objective, since for me the structure is a strong blend of both the functional administrative work and the mystical principles guiding us.

The spiritual foundation of the Temple's organization is based upon the poetic and mystical inspiration that eventually became my book *The Three Rays of Witchcraft*. In essence, it is a focus on the spiritual principles of Will, Love, and Wisdom as a path to evolution and enlightenment. In the dawning Age of Aquarius, the modeling structure is more horizontal, based upon more lateral relationships. A circle, where each of us is a unique point making that circle, is a great image for this type of relationship. Yet as we transition from the Age of Pisces, whose hallmark is vertical structures and relationships, we strive to find an inclusive and effective balance of both. We have a cosmology of three worlds, like the shamanic practitioner with an upper world, underworld, and middle world. Through this vertical structure, we have the horizontal formation of three rays in each of the three worlds, diversifying the experience. By holding both of these principles, we can create something appropriate for this time of transition.

While much of the more theological teachings can be found in the *Three Rays* book for practitioners, the model of threes, rather than twos, inspires the organization of the Temple. The dualism of most Wiccan structures, focused on Goddess and God, and thereby High Priestess and High Priest, is the guiding force. Traditional coven structures create a family dynamic, with the HPS and HP taking on a somewhat parental role. While it might sound strange, in many religious traditions, students goes through a breaking down and building up in that religion's parental model, be-

coming able to eventually do the same when hiving off to create their own group in the tradition. After experiencing that—to a certain extent once in Wicca, and when I started studying Kundalini Yoga in the Sikh tradition—I was not willing to undergo the process to that extent again. It's a very Piscean procedure.

Unfortunately many who take on this parental role do so unconsciously and don't realize they are holding the space for others to experience the transformation. The coven dynamic then becomes the family dynamic, and rather than resolving issues from the birth family, such problems can be magnified and new ones created among the members. Because of this, less formal structures such as "circles," solitary practitioners, and public rituals have developed. These new models are results of exploration of different dynamics as we shift our consciousness.

The Temple's inspiration was based on three: Will, Love, and Wisdom. From the three points in the center, we work out in expansive rings, based upon the five elements and twelve zodiac signs. We work on a circular model moving from the inner ring outward and the outer rings inward. Many people hold dual or triple roles, one in each of the rings.

The inner ring of leadership consists of the spiritual founders of the Temple of Witchcraft. Each position is akin to a foundation stone, a necessary leg to a three-legged chair, like those tripods of the oracle of Delphi. Each founder embodies one of the three principles, and one of the three paths detailed in the teachings of *The Three Rays of Witchcraft*. Will is embodied by a figure of sovereignty and warrior-ship. They are responsible for the protection, boundaries and justice within the Temple. This founder asks, "What is the collective Will of the Temple?" The Red Ray of Will is closely aligned with both the angelic realm and the geomantic forces, or "dragon lines," of the Earth. Love is embodied by a seer or prophet. They bring a connection to the otherworldly forces of nature and temper our work with compassion, though often compassion is fierce, not sentimental. The most loving thing can be doing what is necessary, not what is easy. This founder asks, "Where does the heart lead?" The Blue Ray of Love is aligned with the Faery Races. Wisdom is embodied by a priest or priestess figure, or sorcerer-magician, putting knowledge into appropriate ac-



tion. This founder asks, “What is the wisest course to take?” The Yellow Ray of Wisdom is aligned with the Mighty Dead, the enlightened ancestors who lived a magickal life.

Currently the three founder positions are held by me, Steve Kenson, and Adam Sartwell, but can be passed on to successors upon death or resignation. If other semi-autonomous branches of the Temple were to develop in other locations, at a minimum three ministers would be required to anchor these principles. Every Spring Equinox, or Ostara, the founders rotate positions, each holding a principle for a year. Various spiritual rituals are the responsibility of each founder, based upon the energy of that position, for the good of the Temple. For example the Blue Ray Founder holds the Cauldron of Siochan annually, a ritual of peace and good will for the community and healing for all misgivings. As the body of Temple lore grows, so do these community rituals.

Legally, the Temple is run by a Board of Directors, with the traditional roles of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All legal and fiduciary duty is held by the Board of Directors. While the Founders are responsible for the spiritual vision and well-being of the Temple, they have no legal authority and can only advise the Board. The magickal symbolism of the board is based upon the elements, with the President representing fire, and leadership, the Vice-President representing water, and support, the Secretary representing air, with communication and record keeping, and the Treasurer representing earth, with financial responsibility. Additionally there is a fifth support member of the board, an overall troubleshooter, advisor, and aid for the element of Spirit.

Supporting the Board of Directors in the work of the Temple is a Council of Lead Ministers. Each Lead Minister heads a branch of the Temple's ministry, based upon the twelve zodiac signs and the twelve archetypes associated with them. Each ministry branch has aspects supporting the general public, as well as activities both specific to the Temple of Witchcraft community and the spiritual mystical side of each signs (threes again). Each Lead Minister can authorize three deputy ministers to help with the work, and form

committees and volunteers as needed. The Council as a whole, or individual Lead Ministers, can make recommendations to the Board.

These branches are as follows:

Aries – Warrior – Develops martial arts and warrior training, as well as outreach to Pagans within the armed forces.

Taurus – Steward – Educates and implements environmental and sustainability policies, as well as reconnects people to the mysteries of nature.

Gemini – Trickster – Fosters communication and networking, queer mysteries, and questions authority.

Cancer – Mother – Explores women's mystery and ministers to children, families, and provides “hearth” support of food and hospitality.

Leo – Artisan – Works in the areas of graphics and music as mediums of the spiritual practice.

Virgo – Healer – Maintains the healing lists and groups, and crafts apothecary products for the Temple gift store.

Libra – Judge – Focuses on conflict resolution through mediation, public relations, and higher education.

Scorpio – Guardian – Deals with the spiritual aspects of sexuality and death, providing support in crossing and grief.

Sagittarius – Teacher – Tends to the Mystery

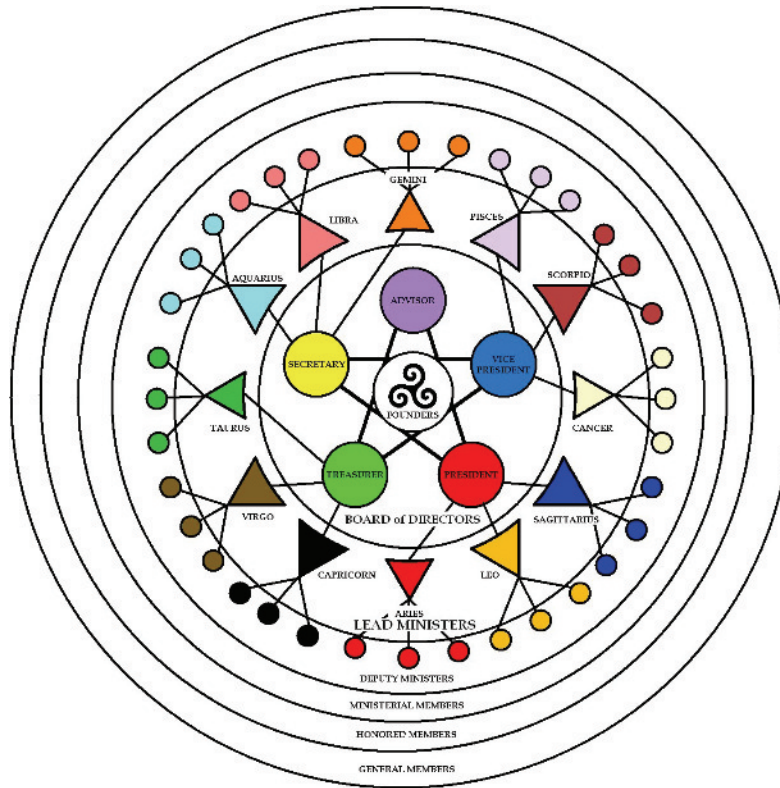
School, Seminary, and public education series.

Capricorn – Father – Coordinates Rites of Passage and Prison outreach/education.

Aquarius – Rebel – Focuses on community building and social consciousness

Pisces – Ecstatic – Organizes public rituals and community divination projects.

If the concentric rings can be seen as the horizontal movement of the Temple leadership structure, another division of three can be seen as the expression of the vertical



axis. The Temple membership can be divided into three main bodies and three main types of membership.

The Temple's largest base is what is known as the Ministerial Church, comprised of our General Members. It provides an arena for our ministers to minister to the Pagan community. To become a General Member, you simply need to attend three official Temple events. General members can be consecrated and formally welcomed into the community at a Sabbat or Moon ritual.

Students attend the Mystery School of the Temple, learning the first four degrees of the Temple of Witchcraft tradition. Each degree is based upon the elements, moving through fire, earth, water, and air. Enrollment in the Mystery School, in person or online, grants Honored Membership (not Honorary). Honored Members often volunteer in some service capacity in the Temple as a part of their learning.

Graduates of all four levels of the Mystery School can apply to the Seminary program for training as a High Priest/ess in the Temple. While not the educational equivalent of a Master of Divinity, the training does provide a curriculum of both the inner mysteries experience and the education for ministering to the greater community. Graduates of the program become Ministerial Members. Ministerial Members are more likely to hold positions of leadership within the Temple. We know they have done a minimum level of introspective work to function effectively in the community.

Ministerial Members seeking legal recognition as ministers—including teaching and performing spiritual counsel—can seek legal ordination through the Temple. Many graduates never seek ordination or leadership in the Temple, and simply pursue education for their own personal development, though public service is encouraged.

We could be classified as a cooperative meritocracy. Similar to other orders and secret societies based upon merit, the Temple grants more responsibility to those who demonstrate they can handle it effectively and act in an appropriate way. Cooperation is also essential, and refers to different departments in the Temple working together collaboratively. Individual will and drive is important, as various members spearhead projects important to them that fall under the Temple's overall mission, seeking support from other appropriate areas in the Temple, and in turn offering their support when asked.

The most difficult aspect of the Temple's structure is encouraging those who wish to serve, who want to be put to “work,” but who don’t know how or where to serve. As the Temple is Will-motivated, such individuals are encouraged to serve where they feel most passionate, as any Witch should feel passionate about their magick and their service. Those wishing to volunteer should seek out the Lead Minister of

the areas they are most passionate about, and ask about volunteer opportunities. Everything begins with Will, and then is supported by compassion and the wisdom to adapt and change as necessary.

Our spiritual code for ministers, and ideally for all members, is summed up by seven key words: Responsibility, Community, Spirituality, Reverence, Tolerance, Boundaries, Mediation, and Empowerment. The first seven principles can be associated with the seven gates/planets/charkas explored in depth in the Ministerial Training of The Living Temple of Witchcraft Volume I. The correspondences are Responsibility — Root/Saturn; Community—Belly/Jupiter; Boundaries — Solar Plexus/Mars; Mediation — Heart/Venus; Tolerance — Throat/Mercury; Spirituality — Brow/Moon; Reverence — Crown/Sun. Together, their union leads to true Empowerment. We take responsibility for ourselves, our thoughts and words and actions. We seek to build a cooperative community together, and relate to the greater community around us. Active pursuit of our spiritual path is necessary at all stages of development. We revere nature and spirit as both divine, and tolerate other religious views, Pagan and non-pagan. We always seek to maintain appropriate boundaries and seek mediation when conflicts cannot be easily resolved. Ultimately the magickal path is the path of personal, and community, empowerment, and we take actions that empower us through Will, Love and Wisdom.

Christopher Penczak is co-founder of the Temple of Witchcraft tradition and organization, as well as its Sagittarius Lead minister overseeing education in the Temple. A metaphysical author and teacher, Christopher is best known for his Temple of Witchcraft series. His latest book, Buddha, Christ, Merlin: Three Wise Men for our Age, is now available. Visit www.christopherpenczak.com for more information.

Canning Tips

By *Howling Hill*

Lughnasadh is the celebration of the harvest. And what better way to celebrate the harvest than to preserve food for the lean months of winter and early spring when your body most wants those summer eats?

I did not have family members to teach me the art of preserving food. Not because my relatives were gone, but because they were skills my mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law never learned. They rejected the teaching of their elders because at that time, prosperity in America was shown by buying in a store rather than making things at home. My skills come from trial and error, watching videos on YouTube, reading blogs and asking questions.

There are no "cheats" in canning. You cannot take short cuts. Directions are made to be followed. If you cut corners, the possibility of poisoning those you love increases. Canning is easy once you get past the fear that you will foul it up and poison yourself. So follow the directions, and you'll have some delectable foods in March to eat.

There are two kinds of canning: water bath and pressure. Water bath is the method used for most vegetables and fruits. Pressure canning is used for meats, broths, and soups and is "advanced" canning. Water bath is the method I recommend for canning newbies and what I will focus on here.

Canning jars come in a variety of sizes though the most common are quart and pint. The lids can be screw-on or wire. Wire topped jars aren't easy to find anymore, although the opposite is true for screw-on. Most stores carry the former around the time of the harvest (generally speaking around August). I find screw-on tops at the local grocery store, although they are also found at hardware stores and online. My first canning jars came from Freecycle.org, so I didn't have to pay a dime. The screw-on rings and jars are reusable, but the lids themselves are one-time-only use. Make sure you discard them after you've finished whatever you canned in the jar.

The first thing I canned was Eden's Zucchini Pickles. I thought it would be a nice recipe to share since it's so easy.

Supplies:

2 1/2 cups sugar (do not use sugar substitutes. Ever.)
 2 cups apple cider vinegar (unpasteurized works best)
 1 cup water
 1 teaspoon kosher salt (table salt is not recommended in canning)

1 teaspoon celery seed
 1 1/2 tablespoons mustard seed
 2 large green (or red or yellow or orange) pepper sliced into strips
 2 medium onions sliced into strips or rings (not minced)
 3 1/2 pounds unpeeled, sliced zucchini (rounds or long slices, whatever fits in the jar)
 Five-quart pot
 4 one-pint canning jars with lids and screw rings
 Canning pot **with rack**
 Wire cookie sheet

In a five-quart pot, combine sugar, vinegar, water, salt, celery seed, and mustard seed. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat, stirring constantly to dissolve sugar.

Place zucchini, pepper, and onion evenly amongst sterilized jars.

Pour syrup over veggies leaving 1/4 inch head space.

Put lids and screw tops on jar. Tighten lightly.

Cook for 30 minutes in a water bath canner.

The water bath must be boiling for 30 minutes. So, if you were to put the jars in the water when the water is cold, the 30 minutes doesn't start until the water is boiling. I don't suggest you put the jars in the cold water. Rather, get the water boiling, sterilize the jars, then put the veggies and syrup in the jar, cover with sterilized lids, then put into water for 30 minutes (see below for further directions on sterilizing and filling).

After taking jars out of the bath, put them on a wire cookie sheet. Make sure the screw tops are tight, but BE CAREFUL not to break the thin seal the lid has made. Let cool. You may well hear the lid finishing the sealing process. It has a distinctive and very, very satisfying sound. Date your pickles and eat within six months.

Vocabulary and Further Information:

Head space: the space in the jar between the top of the liquid/veggies and the top of the jar. Generally directions call for one-inch head space, though it could be more or less. This leaves air in the jar which will create a vacuum during the cooling process.

Sterilized jars, lids, and rings: jars, lids, and rings must be sterilized before use to kill any germs and bacteria. Be careful when adding food to the jars once sterilized (don't touch the inside of your jars, or the inside of the lids, after you've sterilized) or you'll have to do it again.

The best method for sterilizing I've found is to put the rack into the canning pot and fill the canning pot with enough water to cover all the jars completely. Add jars to the pot with the lids off, allowing the water to fill each jar. Turn the stove on high. Allow the water to boil while you're putting the canning recipe together.

In a separate pot, put the lids and screw tops in water and bring to a boil. Once boiling, turn down the heat and simmer through the remainder of the canning process.

Once the pot with the jars is boiling, take the jars out of the bath and pour any water inside the jars back into the pot, leaving the stove on high. Place the HOT (very, very hot!) jar on a wet facecloth in the sink (use hot water to wet the facecloth). Then add veggies, then syrup. Put the lid and screw top on (lightly). Put the filled jar back into the canning pot (make sure it's still boiling). There's a time component here. You don't want the jars to cool too much, or they'll break in the canning process, so move as quickly as you can while keeping the syrup and jars hot.

When done, don't throw the water out. Rather, put it in your garden, use it for a bath, or just to flush the toilet. Water is a precious commodity these days, a nonrenewable resource. We don't want to waste a drop.

There are kits you buy which have wide mouth funnels, tongs, and other items. I recommend picking one up if only for the tongs. They are, by far, the most useful tool in canning. Getting the jars out of the water without burning yourself, spilling hot water everywhere, and without breaking the fragile seal is so much easier when you have the right tool.

Canning pots with wire racks are also really useful. You don't want the jars to sit on the bottom of the pot, so I suggest you pick one up. Maybe your grandmother has one or a friend's mother. Use Freecycle and yard sales before buying new. The exception to this rule is pressure canners. Those you need to buy new because if you get a defective one, it could quite possibly blow up if it's cracked, broken, or defective in any way. I bought ours for \$99.99 on Amazon a few years ago. It was a lot of money, but well worth it. .

Canning my own food is one of my great achievements each year. There is nothing more satisfying than to look at my pantry and see jars filled with yummys of all different colors and textures and think to myself, *I made that!* Canning my own food helps reduce my carbon footprint because I spend less at the grocery store where no one knows where the food came from. I know the food is organic because I grew it myself, bought it from a local farm, or got it from my CSA. I feel good about eating, no longer thinking myself shameful when I sit down at the table, knowing I am giving my body good nutrition in the lean months of winter and early spring.

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](#).



Farm Interview with Jocelyn VanBokelyn

By Raye Snover

As Lammas approaches, signaling the start of the harvest season, we watch as farmers bring in their crops and in some cases start readying their fields for the next year. In a phone interview from her home in New Hampshire, The Temple of Witchcraft's own treasurer and farmer Jocelyn Van Bokelyn gives *The Temple Bell* some insights into the farming life.

TB: How long have you been farming?

JVB: I don't know because you could count having horses in my backyard as having a little bit of that farmer mentality in terms of caring for livestock which I've been doing since I've been seven. But I didn't learn to drive a tractor and start interacting with the land until 1994. I bought this place and started making hay. Then 2000, I think, I bought some cattle, which I don't have anymore. But I'm still making hay. In between, I sort of picked up things.

TB: Such as?

JVB: Farming is not really something that you learn from books . . . You can't learn how to run this piece of equipment or that piece of equipment, how to set up a field for a crop by reading a book about it. I got close with an old farmer here in town. We got his property when he had to retire, but we gave him a life tenancy, so he lives right there which is awesome. I wasn't really realizing that when you have land, you have to maintain it or it becomes all forest again. If you want to maintain it as crop land, you have to at least mow it. So I was pretty much focusing on hay and renovating fields for hay. In the process of learning how to use various pieces of equipment like plows . . . I was repairing old equipment. I was going to the local farmer, the old guy. He spent a lot of time with me teaching me

how to do things properly. There are things a book just can't tell you.

TB: What are some of the things he taught you?

JVB: How a plow feels when you are plowing a field . . . how the tractor feels . . . how to make those in time adjustments when you adapt your speed to get the earth to turn over right. It's a weird transition going from "Oh I can do this because I read about it in a book" to "Oh, so that's how it happens." It's like witchcraft in that you can read about it, and read about it, but until you practice it and do it and practice it and do it, you're not going to really know it. So if I had to pick a time where I really understood the scope of all of the skills that I would eventually need to be a farmer, I would say it was probably 2004 or 2005.

TB: Do you just grow hay now or do you grow vegetables?

JVB: Right now I'm just growing hay. I have a little flock of chickens, hens specifically for eggs. I have to kind of rebuild the infrastructure at my new place to get set up for it again, but I probably pick up this summer three or four baby pigs and one or two steer . . . just to raise them for food. I guess there are two reasons I'm a farmer. I started with a little garden and a couple of animals to eat because I wanted good food. I was completely appalled at what comes out of the agribusiness . . . the way most things we call food at the grocery store [are] produced are not healthy. Not healthy in the final product for the people that are eating it [or] for the people that are producing it. In fact when I switched my diet over to primarily either grown by me or grown by my tenants—we were keeping it local, keeping it "I know what land this was grown on"—over the course of a few years my transition [went] from

having lots of allergies to using pharmaceuticals [only] about two weeks a year.

I started farming to get food to eat. I have deepened my knowledge and experience and sensitivity. I feel it all that much more, and I feel the land. You get the old farmers who did it because that's the way their Dad did it, and it's always been done, and that's the way they learned; the real young farmers are coming out of ag school, and they're all gung ho with these great wonderful ideas and "Oh, I'm going to do it this way" and sometimes they fall flat on their face. If they had an older farmer there to say "now hold up there son, why don't you slow down and incorporate some of these elements in there." . . . Then you get people like me. I'm not farming to make a living off it, but I basically just do what the land tells me to do. I think I'm the only person I know who has ever cut hay based on a tarot card reading.

TB: How do you do that?

JVB: In order to have your hay come out right you have to—you've heard presumably to make hay when the sun shines? There is no truer phrase in the English language. In order for me to make hay that is nontoxic to my horses—forget healthy, nutritious and all that, just nontoxic—I have to cut the grass and have three days with no rain in order to get it properly dried before I bale it and put it in the barn. It usually takes three days in the climate that we generate here. There are a lot of factors that go into that. I had taken a course in tarot (from Christopher of course); it was really good to get into that by pulling a card every day. I found some interesting co-relations between what cards I was seeing and having my hay come out right and having the weather cooperate with me.

TB: What cards are those?

JVB: The queen of wands is a really good omen for making hay. I'm very much unlike any other farmer you will ever meet.

Making a living off of farming is the amount of work that I can't believe any human wants to do. I have tenants that are vegetable farmers and they work from sun-up to sundown pretty much six and a half days a week; sometimes it's sunup to sundown seven days a week. You cannot call in sick . . . the work has got to get done. They help me out, and I help them out. I know I can go down there and get whatever it is that just came in and get good food.

TB: Do you find being a witch is helpful in being a farmer?

JVB: Absolutely. It makes me more attuned and more observant. It also makes me happier in doing what I'm doing, even though I'm not doing it for a living, even though I can take my time; it's work. It's serious work. But it's the sort of thing where I can appreciate what I'm doing in terms of keeping my land suitable for humans and balancing the needs of the land and the needs of the humans . . . I think it's somewhat easier for me because I can intuitively work with my land and, believe it or not, intuitively work with my equipment. When I took over doing equipment maintenance and operation, it broke less. I would catch things. I would touch little things before they turned into big things. It's weird because it's stuff like "Gee, I should check that bolt today" and that bolt would be loose.

TB: And you would have no apparent reason to check that bolt?

JVB: No, I would have no reason to check the bolt, but it saved me probably two hours of downtime later. That's a big difference when you've got hay to bale, and the clouds are coming in, and "Oh my God it's gonna rain in two hours. and I really want to get this hay in." I still have not yet learned welding and engine repair. I do equip-

ment repair if it's a bolt or spring, if I can look at it and see how it works. I can generally fix it . . . If something breaks on a Sunday and the repair shop isn't open, you need you know how to fix it . . . You get out your tools and you fix it.

TB: Are you organic?

JVB: I'm not certified organic. I'm kind of organic by default . . . conditioning with horse manure; there is a horse boarding facility here on the farm, and I have horses also. Pretty much the only thing I do in my hay fields is spread that manure on it and spread lime on it because we have magnesium poor soil. My vegetable farmers aren't organic. They do use some pesticides, and because we share lawns, I really can't be organic. We swap out—there will be hay in the fields for a bunch of years, and then they want to let something go and not plant vegetables on it, so we'll plant hay, and we'll plant vegetables where the hay was if the hay gets too wheaty. It's a weird crop rotation. It also means I can walk into my field and grab an ear of corn whenever I want to. One of the reasons that they're not organic, and I really wish more people would understand this, is that worms in your corn means that there weren't a lot of nasty chemicals put on it. If your corn has no worms, that mean that there were lots of nasty chemicals put on it to make there be no worms. Between you and me, I'd rather eat a worm now and then.

TB: With hay, when do you plant and when do you harvest?

JVB: Well, hay is thankfully a perennial. If I am renovating a field, I renovate in August. September, I'll plant it. Maybe I'll get to it the following year. Maybe I'll just rotary cut it and get to it the year after that. It takes a bit of time to get established. It is mostly grasses, and they do very well if you leave them alone. Right now, I look out my window, and the hay is growing, and that's good. I go to the edge of the field, and

I pat the ground and say, "Thank you very much for growing very nicely for me." When it gets to a certain maturity level—which will be the end of May, beginning of June—we're usually good from the beginning of June to the middle of July for the correct maturity to make nutritious hay. Then it's a matter of, do I have the right weather to cut this? I get my equipment out, get it all ready, and wait for the sun to shine. If I see the weather forecast, and I see three days with no rain, preferably with a little bit of heat in there, I'll go and I'll cut a section and let it dry and bale it over the course of three days. Once the field is cut, then we start the fertilization process for that year. In the Northeast, two cuttings are the most people will do unless they are very serious about it, and then they'll do third in September. To sustain the preservation of my field, I take that first cutting off and will mow it with a rotary cutter to use the stalks and stems as fertilizer. Most farmers don't have the luxury to be able to do that.

TB: What about animals?

JVB: You have to really separate what is your pet and what is your food. People look at you and ask, how could you possibly eat an animal that you have raised? The distinction is that I would not have raised an animal if I wasn't going to eat it. That is the reason for this animal's existence, and it's part of the cycle of life. So no, I don't have any problem eating my animals I've raised.

TB: When do you do your butchering?

JVB: With pigs, we get them in the early spring like March or April, and then they'll go to slaughter around Samhain . . . It really is the festival of the meat. Cattle don't come into their full size until they are two. I will raise my steers to between a year and 18 months. It's a balance between having your meat be tender and have flavor.

TB: Aside from the health benefits from raising your own food, what is the biggest satisfaction or benefit you get from farming?

JVB: This is going to sound strange—I like driving my tractor around the field. I'm right out there, and yes, I'm using loud equipment. I'm mechanized. It's not like I'm doing this with a horse drawn anything . . . but even then the local wildlife—specifically the hawks—they know that when I'm out there cutting hay, I'm uncovering food for them. So they will follow the tractor around the field hunting. I have seen hawks pull up snakes, pull up other birds, pull up rodents. I try real hard not to hit anything. The worst experience I ever had was hitting a fawn with my big hay cutter. I didn't even know it until I went back with the tether that turns the hay over . . . That was a little rough. The deer picked the wrong spot to set their fawn that year. There are negatives of it, and that is one of the negatives. I do get to see an awful lot of wildlife, and I get to

interact with the growing cycles of grass. It's being outside, and it's a different thing every day. That's one of the beautiful things of it, is that haying is really, really hard, but I work for two months, and then I don't have to do it again until next year. It's an interesting combination of doing what I want when I want to do it and having to do something when the weather says do it . . . It's not just physically hard; it's mentally and emotionally hard. Really, everything we do is dependent on the weather.

TB: Would you recommend farming to anyone?

JVB: No, you'd have to be pretty much crazy to be a farmer. I'm pretty serious about that. There is one thing I would recommend, and that is having a garden. Having some chickens in your backyard if you can. Low investment in time and money, but it can bring you closer to the earth, closer to your food. Even if you if have two tomato plants in containers on your windowsill—if you actually grow those tomatoes and

eat those tomatoes, then you have the satisfaction of actually nourishing yourself. Any little thing a person can do to take responsibility for their own nourishment is putting your own energy back into yourself . . . I think it is a beautiful thing for people to take responsibility for their own nourishment. I've done a couple of workshops now on why as a witch, it is important to be environmentally conscious. It really comes down to if you don't take care of yourself, you cannot take care of anybody else. It sounds selfish, but the stronger each individual is, the stronger the group.

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.



Lammas

By Spirita Dulce

With Queen Danu and great Sun God Lugh,
 We rejoice at first harvest with much ado!
 With breads and dollies both made of corn,
 Now is not the time to mourn ~
 For this Sabbat is focused on grain, fruit, and maize,
 So the slaughters can wait; let the animals graze.
 Loaf-Mass, Lughnasadh, call it what you will;
 It's time for the honey, and try not to spill,
 Because sweet is sticky and August is hot;
 But a tankard of mead should hit the right spot!
 It's time to prepare for the waning of light;
 Although the Sun will still put up a fight.
 The dark half is coming, no denying that,
 So begins harvest season when we fill the vat

With grains and corn and breads so yummy,
 They'll put a big smile on a growing tummy!
 Of the harvest Sabbats, this is the first of three,
 So save up some energy and Blessed Be!

Spirita Dulce started her studies with Christopher Penczak in 2005, and was ordained as a Rev. HPs in 2010. Currently a Ministerial member of TOW, she has been our Raffle Queen for three years and looks forward to future projects within the Temple.

Harvesting the Gift of Banes

By Shea Morgan

Photographs by Shea Morgan

The Banes. Mysterious. Witchy. Alluring. They call to us. Baneful plants are those that may have poisonous properties or are harmful to consume, or in some cases, even handle their roots. Yet, the attraction is there. These dark, mysterious sprouts call to a deeper part of our soul that longs to understand that which is not seen.

Baneful plants, or simply the banes, include plants such as Datura, Mandrake (Mandragora), Belladonna, Henbane (Hyoscyamus Niger), Nightshade, Monkshood (Aconitum Napellus or Wolf's Bane) and Foxglove (Digitalis). Their plant spirits have a way of finding their way into your life. Years ago I had someone offer me a Datura plant. At the time, I declined, but little was I to know how persistent Datura would be in gaining my attention.

My path with the banes officially started with a visit about five years ago to a local nursery. I have extensive gardens with a bevy of bird and animal activity, causing some to joke that Snow White must live in my house. Even with my green thumb, I had never had any luck with growing Delphiniums in our humid Missouri summers, though I wanted to grow them due to their beautiful blue flowers. As I walked through this nursery, I stumbled upon this gorgeous, green leafy plant with leaves similar to the structure of the Delphinium, but stronger, tougher and greener – or deeper. It would grow blue flowers! I picked it up and took it home. It was my new friend, Monkshood.

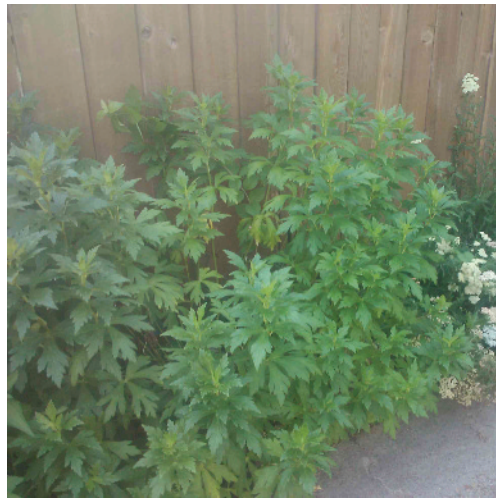
The label came with a warning about touching it, but I dismissed it. I mean, it was a plant, how dangerous could it be? I usually plant with bare hands as I love the feel of the dirt in my fingers and being so close with the earth. It is an intimate relationship with the soil and the plant. Clearly I had not done my witchy homework, as Monkshood is one whose roots are harmful to handle as

they are highly poisonous. I planted it as soon as I got home, asking the plant where it wanted to live in my garden. It chose a spot along my driveway. With bare hands, I planted it. Luckily, I had no adverse reactions to handling the Monkshood. It was in a root ball, which provided some protection from dirt around some of the roots, and I did not have any cuts or breaks in the skin, which would have allowed toxins to more readily enter my system. Though the root is highly toxic, experts advise caution even when generally handling the plant. Monkshood does not require any pruning or deadheading, which helps. If I weed around the plant, I try to use gloves and make sure I do not have any cuts on my arms that would brush up against the plant.

I made it through the experience, and the Monkshood has been happily ensconced in my driveway garden and in my life ever since. The plant holds court amongst the other flowers and with my other allies. It lives next to my Yarrow at the entrance to my driveway garden and next to my backyard gate. Monkshood acts as a gatekeeper. In fact, it was the gatekeeper opening the floodgates for me to the world of the banes.

I approached this world cautiously once I understood it. These are plants where you must be very careful of children and pets. I do grow some of my banes inside, such as Datura, Nightshade and Belladonna, but I keep them up off of the floor and am very careful with picking up any plant material that drops. I also know my cats, and my cats will not bother them. However, other cats and pets – and children – might, so you must use extreme caution.

In our Shamanic Temple of Witchcraft online course, over the winter of 2010-2011, I started working to plant more of the banes. I planted two Foxglove plants that spring, which came back heartily this year. They are a perennial plant in our region. I planted Datura, Henbane, Belladonna and Nightshade from seed. I had good luck with them all, but I had the most success with Datura. At the fall initiation for our year-long Outer Temple of Witchcraft/W2 class, Christopher Penczak gave us each one of his brown Datura seed pods. Similar to working with banes in general, one had better have gloves when working with Datura seed pods. The first time we “met,” when Christopher gave me my first Datura seed pod, I ended up with a splinter; Datura had staked its claim. The other seeds were not quite so colorful of a story, I purchased them online from a well-respected source.



Many of these plants have an association with Saturn, with the deep mysteries, shadow, protection and boundaries. Some also have associations with Venus or Pluto. It is no wonder that the banes have been happiest along my driveway and my fence line. They also are excellent plant spirit allies to work with during shadow work, which was the key goal of the shamanic year of studies. It was clear from the beginning that Datura in particular wanted to be my ally.

In planting these seeds, I discovered that Datura grew the easiest. Seeds for the banes come with complex planting instructions all related to seed germination, oftentimes involving a refrigerator. I decided to just let Mother Nature take her course. What I found is that Saturn plants or those with similar qualities take longer to germinate. However, with Datura, I simply stick the seeds into the dirt in pots, and it grows. Boy, does it grow! The first year, I had two huge, Datura plants that made it through much of the winter. I planted more seeds in late fall last year, and they are still growing and living in my breakfast room. Others are coming up now as young seedlings. At this writing, I have just planted the black seed Datura for the first time, which will be a new adventure for me.

I found the other baneful seeds required more time to germinate and a little more delicacy than the Datura seeds did. For the other seeds, I use peat pots with potting soil. I generally water from the bottom, particularly after the seeds start to sprout, as they are subject to “damping off” or breaking off at the base of the plant. Letting the water soak up through the peat pots has been much more effective in nursing these seedlings along. Outside it is the same story, at least with the length of germination. The winter of our shamanic class, I planted many of the baneful seeds outside, but many of them did not come up. Not to worry—they have come up this year. They are on Saturn-time as opposed to my schedule. Patience is often needed when working with these plants. Everything is on their schedule and will play out in its own unique way, orchestrated by the plant spirits.

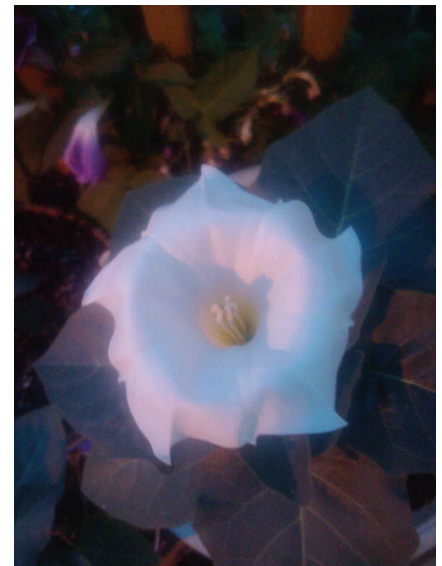
Successfully planting and growing these plants is all about relationships. The better relationship you have with the plant spirit, the better ability you will have to grow its seeds. Any relationship takes love, and these plants are no exception. Early on in my relationship with Datura, I did a journey with Datura. Before I planted the Datura seeds, I did a “vibrate in harmony with” meditation from *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft* by Christopher Penczak. This is one of my favorite meditations, and I use it to communicate with plant spirits to great effect. I closed my eyes, called on the plant spirit of Datura, and stated over and over “I vibrate in harmony with Datura.” I then had a journey with the plant spirit, where it would talk with me about its wants and needs and how we could partner together, and I would ask for its

help in growing the seeds. I could see, feel and hear the Spirit of Datura.

Different from what others have experienced, to me, Datura unusually looked like a lithe, thin, black-suited trickster. I say unusually, as for most, Datura appears as the beautiful and alluring lady. Later, Lady Datura was to appear to me in that form as well. Just like deity appears to you in a form that you need to work with in a given time or situation, the plant spirits can take on different forms and appearances as well. The spirits that I worked with through these meditations or journeys were not of a particular plant. Rather, they were the overarching plant spirit of the species that came to me. By comparison, when I asked the Monkshood earlier in our story where it wanted to be planted, that was the spirit of that particular individual plant that spoke to me.

Plant spirits tend to partner with each other. Other banes will introduce you to more banes. They also have relationships with other plants. In the pot where my Belladonna grows, yet not in any of my other pots I have, a type of mushroom that I have never seen before grows. I do end up removing the mushrooms, but it is interesting. A year ago, I had someone work with me on an animal totem tree journey to identify which animals were in which chakras as allies for me. In this journey, Belladonna (and Henbane) came as did Mushroom; they both circled around me. Fast forward a year later and here they are again, growing together in the pot. That journey prompted my further relationship with these plants.

In November, I attended a Plant Spirit Familiar class where Christopher guided us on a journey to meet a plant spirit familiar. In this journey, the spirits of two plant allies came, along with a third. Yarrow, who appeared as a man to me, and Datura, who appeared to me for the first time as this magnetically beautiful and powerful lady, Dame Datura. They were a balance of strength and beauty. Yet, Ivy also came, which at first took me by surprise as we had never worked together or had a relationship, though it does tend to try to grow on my fence line. The three plant spirits had instructions that they would work and partner together, with me, to help form a strong shield and boundaries for me.



When I thought of the nature these plants, it made perfect sense. In fact, I had been working with Yarrow as part

of my shields on a daily basis, including using a plant spirit essence that I made. Yarrow is great with boundaries, but so is Datura. Datura may be beautiful and appealing, yet she is also tough with spiky seed pods. Ivy was strong and persistent and helped to weave them together into an incredibly strong boundary. This has since morphed into a new type of a boundary in a recent working that my allies have asked me to write about in the future, as both a personal shield/boundary and as a boundary for a ritual working. Plant allies are always growing their efforts with you as you work with them, and increasing your ties and connections in the plant spirit world.

I have also found that the plant spirits, including my baneful allies, find their way into my rituals more and more. I have written circle castings with these allies and called on their spirits in ritual. I have written prose and ritual language honoring the plant spirits and their gifts.

But how do you physically work with the plants themselves? When you look at working with the physical plant as a gateway to the plant spirit, there are many things you can do when harvesting the plants for use.

Part of our shamanic year of witchcraft involved making plant essences, though I took that to an additional level of effort, given my need to work more closely with my plant allies for various reasons last year. Now I have closet shelves being silently taken over by a multitude of plant essences. I made Datura, Foxglove and Nightshade essences on my own. As part of the support I needed through the process of distilling my shadow (i.e. working through shadow issues), I made a daily magickal essence bottle that included those essences that I had made, and also included Henbane and Belladonna essences that I purchased from a dear sister.

Those essences, among other plant essences, made up this magickal essence support for my shadow work. I found that these plants resonated with me so well that we have continued to partner together in this manner. Essences are a diluted form of the plant, made by floating a few flowers on water. Through di-

lution, their physical properties are not present, yet their metaphysical or magickal properties are present and even enhanced. Their use is similar to the idea of homeopathy. For more information on how to make a magickal essence, please consult *The Plant Spirit Familiar* by Christopher Penczak.

To make the essences, I would first begin by communing with the plant. I would do the “vibrate in harmony with” meditation to speak with the overarching plant spirit. When actually harvesting the flowers to use for the essence, I would commune with the spirit of the individual plant and leave an offering of my hair after harvesting the flowers. You can leave other offerings. This is just my preferred offering.

Another way to work with these plant spirits is to make a root fetish of the plant. I had two Datura plants from my first year. The first one that I grew, from my very first Datura seeds planted, came to me in a vision and told me that it wanted to act as a small stang on my altar. Remember that I have had Datura come to me in both a masculine and a feminine appearance. It was a large root, and its stem is long and in the shape of a “Y.” The other Datura root wanted to be used for my fetish. Datura is also associated with the planet Venus. On the Venus transit, I prepared my root fetish. This was the first one I had ever made, and it was an incredibly powerful experience through its simplicity and the communion involved with the plant spirit. As it turned out, Datura wanted to partner with another ally of mine – Apple. I now have a Datura Root and Apple Seed fetish that are combined into one. I used oils and essences to anoint them and burned a candle to Venus on my altar that was dressed up for the Venus transit.

This first experience in making a root fetish was just over a month ago. When I was asked to write this article, I thought, what do I really

know of banes? There are so many more people that know so much more than me on this subject. They have worked with these plants more. They have grown more of the plants. I have not worked with Mandrake, for example. I was asked



to call on Mandrake in the Temple of Witchcraft Samhain North Quarter of the Underworld last fall, which was the



first time I communed with Mandrake. I called on Mandrake leading up to that ritual to be able to carry its current in the ritual. Today, for the first time, I planted Mandrake seeds.

Given this, how was I to find the current to share of their rich story? How would I do them justice? My first clue came when I went to Templefest. Stevie Grant had made these beautiful gourds. They were meticulously and carefully carved and then painted into beautiful works of art. What was the gourd that appealed to me? It is titled “The Four Powers of the Underworld Manifesting in the Garden.” It is made from an Apple Gourd, with Mandrake in the North, Monkshood in the East, Henbane in the South and Datura in the West, with a profusion of Foxglove and a Crow overseeing it. Of course, Crow also is one of my allies and is an ally of my matron deity, the Morrighan.

This gourd partnered with me in this process. I used the gourd, my other allies and altars, and I

called on the banes. I went to my breakfast room and I called on my baneful allies residing there. I felt their energy run through me. I took their magickal essences and called on their spirits to inspire me to tell their story. I planted more baneful seeds. I watered my Monkshood outside. I called on the banes to speak to me in my dreams. I would walk by the plants and hear their voice, though they really answered me in my dreams. I had intense dreams the weekend of writing this article in both the evening and in naps where I called to the plant spirits to be with me, partner with me and guide me. I dreamed of the beautiful flowers, the berries, and working with them as allies in the form of essences, plants and more. I also have the message that I am to write a ritual now involving the Latin names of the banes with which I work.

If you call on the plant spirits of the banes with sincerity, they will answer and are willing to partner with you. But approach them with the respect they are due as spirits and as partners, and on a physical level approach them with the common sense befitting their baneful nature. Most of all enjoy the journey, as you never know where it will take you.

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.



Harvesting the Authentic Self

By Raye Snover

What woman hasn't wished at some point that she could be a Priestess of Avalon? The Priestesses of this mist-enshrouded isle were strong, confident, and venerated. They spent their lives working in service to the Lady with other strong, confident women. Jhenah Telyndru, author of *Avalon Within: A Sacred Journey of Myth, Mystery And Wisdom*, is offering women the chance to harvest their Divine feminine so they can "remember, reclaim, and renew the traditions of Avalon." Founding The Sisterhood of Avalon in 1995, Telyndru, also the director of The Avalonian Theological Seminary, took some time out of her schedule to chat with *The Temple Bell* about her Mystery Tradition.

The Temple Bell: How did you get involved with Women's Mysteries?

Jhenah Telyndru: I'll have to say the first book I ever found about paganism was *The Women's Spirituality Book* by Diane Stein back in the mid-eighties. I was always interested in mythology and goddesses from the past and always wished that I had lived back then so that I could worship. When I came across her book and saw that there were women doing it, it just changed my whole life. I was young, about fifteen. It not only got me into goddess spirituality but also ignited a feminist spark within me. That was really the book that started it all for me.

TB: How did you become involved with the Welsh pantheon and the Arthurian lore?

JT: I was very much into Arthurian fiction as a youth, in my teenage years as well, everything from *The Once and Future King* to the *Mists of Avalon* and everything in between. When I went away to university on Long Island, I ran into a group that was doing Druidic and Arthurian Avalonian-sort-of-based stuff, so that kind of started me on my path. It just felt like home.

TB: What prompted you to start the Sisterhood of Avalon?

JT: When I went away to graduate school, I left my women's community, and this was about 1994, 1995 when the Internet came its way to me. I put out a preliminary website; you know how awful they were back then. I was hoping to connect with other women who believed as I did. What wound up happening was that people were emailing me asking me to teach them—how to do this work, how to follow the lore of Avalon?

I never intended to found a tradition or start an organization, but it became clear to me that there was a love for this work, a love for the lore. It became my privilege to serve her (the Lady) and serve the community in this way by pulling together all the things I had learned in the past and often my own research. My undergraduate work is in archeology, specifically on Iron-age Britain. So I drew from all of those things and tried to synthesize that.

TB: What women come to you? What are they looking for when they ask you to teach them?

JT: I think that from the feedback we get, it's that we seek to empower women by helping them to find who they are in truth. Consenting or challenging them to be the women they were born to be. In a way we are different from other traditions because we have that very reflective looking within. We have a very spiritual perspective; we're always taking what we've learned and integrating it within and turning it into ourselves. A lot of women like the challenge of that inner work, that deft psychology work and learning to see the Goddess within themselves. I guess that's the biggest feedback—that women love that challenge of becoming who they are and they like the fact that we are a very directed tradition. We work with specific goddesses; we have a very specific structure. I like to think of the sisterhood as a loom, and each woman can weave on it what they wish. If they want to honor their personal sovereignty and all the ways that they can approach that . . . it also has a structure for those that seek that as well.

TB: Do you find that today women have a hard time trying to find their own sovereignty?

JT: I do, because I believe that society is bombarding us with ideas about what it is to be a woman, and it usually has to do with surface things. How we look, how young we are. Feminism teaches us that to be successful women we have to have it all. We've become completely career oriented or we must be a career woman, have children and have a family. A lot of us grow up with this notion that there is a certain way to be and what we try to say is: take a step back to look at the ways in which society has told us who we are and to think about who we want ourselves to be. So yes, it's very difficult to manifest that in the world and that challenge and service is to find that place within themselves that is uniquely and authentically them.

TB: When people apply for your tradition what are some of the criteria you are looking for?

JT: Part of our application process is to make sure that we are both on the same page. That people understand what

kind of tradition that we are. That we are not necessarily Wiccan, but we are concentrating on the Divine Feminine, not that we don't believe in the Divine Masculine, but coming from a dualistic pagan path and coming to a path just working with Goddesses can sometimes be jarring so we try to be really up front about that. We have a series of essay questions to fill out, things about what Avalon is to them. What does personal empowerment mean to them? What is the difference between victimhood and woundedness? What is the definition of sovereignty? Just so they have a sound sense of the self-reflective meditations that we do. That's the focus of our tradition—that internal work and the external manifestation of changes of the self.

TB: Do you think sometimes people have a hard time relating to Avalon because it may or may not have existed?

JT: We have a pretty broad perspective of it. We try not to define for our sisters their experience of Avalon. For some women Avalon is simply metaphor. It's symbolic. For others it was a place a women's temple existed, if not necessarily in Glastonbury in some place in the British Isles. We know from different mythological and even historical sources that the Celts did have enclaves of women, of priestesses drawn apart that served the Goddess, several different Goddesses. They were healers, they were known as shape shifters...they would perform weather working. So there is some historical mention to that. So we have history, we have metaphor, and then we have the legendary aspects of it; the concept that myth endures is because it has something to teach us. We try not to say.

We recognize that there is a broad experience of what Avalon is. The most important thing is this: inside of ourselves, Avalon represents the wholeness. A woman who is fully connected to the source—the island produces everything in and of itself. We use the metaphor of going to Avalon as parting the mists, the delusion preventing ourselves from being who we are. Traveling over the lake entering into the unconscious where all of the gifts and all of the challenges, all of the growth occurs deep within ourselves in order to reach that island called us. We try not to be dogmatic about the definition of it as long as we all agree on the concept that it is a place of personal growth and connection with the self and the Divine.

TB: I noticed that the people who come to you can belong to other traditions.

JT: Absolutely. Believe it or not, we've had female Episcopal priests among our membership. We have women who identify as witches, as other kind of Wiccans, other kinds of pagans, others who walk a Christian and pagan path. As long as there is no conflict within the self, there is no conflict as far as we are concerned.

TB: You seem to do a lot of weekend intensives. When you do an intensive, what do they entail?

JT: We have lessons Thursday through Sunday. We rent a retreat center or cabin and spend the weekend immersing ourselves. We have four different levels . . . we do self-exploration, we do labyrinths, we do projects and we do ritual . . . We learn the traditions from its teacher and in person and being able to take that information back home.

TB: It's not like you take your intensive and the next day you are a priestess?

JT: Correct. We don't confer priestess on anyone. We found that that is a personal thing between the self and Goddess. That doesn't enter into it. We are not a degree system. All of our sisters are equal. Some have more responsibility, but we are non-hierarchical in that way.

TB: When they take this back home, do they teach it to others?

JT: Some women will. In order to be a hearth (a teaching group) we have our in-person groups. We have a couple of different manifestations of them. We have learning circles, we have novice hearths, and we have hearths. In order to have a novice hearth, at least one woman has to have attended our Seeking Avalon Within intensive. So yes, if they choose they can go home and serve their own community by creating a hearth group, but it is not required . . . We also provide learning support for our hearths as well.

TB: Do you find that some women who have been empowered encounter issues when they go home, sometimes in their marriages?

JT: Well, I think what does wind up happening, is that there have been women who have joined—especially long term members—[and] when women do go home and they do this work . . . the Cycle of Healing, which is one of the big tools we use, and they come to a realization that they are being oppressed. They entered into a relationship because it was expected of them, and it's not a reflective of who they are or who they need to be. Yes, women do make huge life changes, and it can be getting a divorce or opening up that business that they want or going back to graduate school—there any number of ways that this can manifest. I think women do accept change in their lives in many different ways. And it can have a huge affect on the difference from where they've begun and where they've ended up.

TB: I sometimes find that when people do things that are better for themselves, they upset the apple cart so to speak.

JT: Absolutely! Especially if the people around you aren't growing the way that you've grown, or they liked it the other way. We do encounter that, absolutely.

TB: Your group is going on a pilgrimage . . . where do you go on these trips?

JT: It depends on the pilgrimage we are doing. We do two kinds, and sometimes we combine them. We're not doing that this year, but we usually go to Wales because that is where our pantheon is centered, and we also go to the sacred sites that are associated with our Goddesses. One of the beautiful things about the mythic cycle that we work with, which is the Mabinogi or Mabinogian, there are very specific places that are connected to our Goddesses. We bring these women to these sacred sites connected with our Goddess, and we do ritual, and it's just beautiful. Of course we do a lot of tromping through sheep poop, but this is all part of the thing. We do Wales, then we come to southwest England; we stay in Glastonbury. The place we like to stay in Glastonbury is the Chalice Well Gardens . . . The beauty of staying there is that you have twenty-four hour access to the gardens. So midnight, whenever you want to, you can just walk in the garden, go to the wellhead, immerse yourself in the water; it's beautiful. We go to Glastonbury. We go to Stonehenge, Avesbury, Cornwall, Tintagel—places associated with Avalon, with Arthur and specifically places associated with Mabinogi.

TB: Do you find these pilgrimages have a transforming effect on the women that go with you?

JT: Absolutely. Glastonbury in and of itself, even if Avalon was never there, has a very powerful transformational energy. It has to do with the ley lines there. If you talk to anybody, no matter what tradition, they talk about how the energies there are transformative. As far as the other places we go, a lot of women find that actually being in the landscape and connecting with the land, places that are associated with the Goddesses that we work with, has deepened their connection with the living culture. The Welsh are descendants of the Celts of Britain. We firmly believe that when you're dealing with a living culture . . . it is important to give back to that culture that has given you so much inspiration for your spiritual path. So going there, learning language, [and] giving back reties the sisterhood to museums that hold some of the artifacts associated with some of the sites that we go to. We connect with people who are vocal. We try to get immersed in some level, so we are supporting the culture; we are not just taking from it. That connection is very important, especially in light of the preparation issues. The fact that we give back to these cultures and try to support it especially in Wales, where the language and the culture struggle to survive, it's been transformative. There have been women who have attended every single pilgrimage because it has been so empowering to them.

TB: What is the ultimate goal for your tradition?

JT: I think a lot of it has to do with when we have a center, both metaphorically and literally. When we have a center . . . when we have a place of healing, a retreat space, a place where women come and find themselves. Having that place, holding that center, is powerful in and itself, for those in the community who master it. The reverberations of even people who are different from us, to know that someone is tending her fire, is holding the space for women to come into their sovereignty. The tradition helps women to transform themselves, and that's where we want to go. We want to do our part to hold that hearth, that fire light, so that women find themselves.

TB: Do you think that the internet has helped more with this?

JT: We talked a little bit about our pilgrimages and our intensives, but we offer a great deal of online learning and community opportunities. We have our feminist program, and we offer a ton of learning opportunities online and also community sharing opportunities.

TB: What is the best advice you could give a woman who is trying to find herself?

JT: The best thing to do is to look into the places that are the most uncomfortable to look. To praise yourself with as truthful a gaze as you can. That is difficult; it is difficult to do in a vacuum, and difficult to do without first understanding the ways in which we deceive ourselves about our life situation and who we truly are. That is part of the process that we seek to facilitate with our process of healing. What the Cycle of Healing really talks about is "aligning our nature with Nature." That's a quote from Joseph Campbell, and it's saying what's interesting that our process is like the way the universe works. The cycle of the seasons, the cycle of the moon—understand that we too ebb and flow. Sometimes we're filled with sorrow; sometimes we are filled with joy. Sometimes things go our way; sometimes they don't. This is a constant flow . . . acknowledging those patterns in our lives we begin to understand who we are, how our energy works, and begin to see ourselves for who we are. This is a complex thing, but the bottom line is, it always starts within. We always have to work within first before we can make the changes that are outside.

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.

Templefest 2012

The third annual Templefest took place in South-ampton, New Hampshire June 23 & 24th, where the Temple of Witchcraft honored Aroxana, Queen of the Fae Folk. Dorothy Morrison, author of *Sun Magic* and *Utterly Wicked*, was the keynote speaker, and there were two days of classes including self-defense, Hoodoo and Conjure, Hawaiian Shamanism and Tree Magick to mention just a few.

Dorothy Morrison and Christopher Penczak conducted an author's panel where they discussed the unglamorous—though often humorous—life of a writer,

while vendors selling wares from crowns to incense to Yule logs to wands occupied the time between classes. There was an afternoon Summer Solstice ritual where the rain held off until almost the end of the circle. The festival included camping, a red tent, readers and drumming. Andrea Johnston, the Templefest photographer, has shared some images of this year's festivities with *The Temple Bell*. We hope you enjoy them, and we look forward to seeing you at next year's Templefest.

Photography by Andrea Johnston



Ode to the God

By Colleen Corcoran

I am the strength of man, the iron in the forge, the rock that forms the core of the earth. I have fathered all that you know, and my seed flows through the rivers and streams of the world. All trees, rocks, and animals are my children.

I am the hunter. I wrap myself in the skins and wear horns and run with bare cleft feet, the hunger within me driving me to destroy. My spear pierces the side of the animals I fathered, and I feel their warm blood drip down my chin as I take them in, and they nourish me, only to be reborn from my loins some day in the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

I dance with the Goddess in the midst of stars floating on a sea of darkness, she the Earth Mother, and I the Sky God, her full breasts pressed against my chest, her softness a contrast to my hardness. I take her, rough against soft, hair against skin, our breaths mingle and my seed finds her womb. And I am reborn again, as her son, as her child infused with her hopes for the world, and I grow up to dance with her as her consort once again.

I am made of sky, of rock, of oak, of holly, of horn, of hoof, of blood. I am thunder, I am lightning, I am all seasons. I can be seen in the eyes of all men, a shadow of horns visible to those who know my secret: I whisper to you with each gust of wind that passes over your body, I shout with claps of thunder, and I show my power when the world shifts and cracks and forms chasms. To those who believe, to those brave enough to enter the forest dressed in skins worn by your ancestors and search for me, I will be found, as a stag, as a father, as a lover, as a hunter. Honor me as you do the Great Mother, and I will protect you

Colleen Corcoran is a graduate of Christopher Penczak's Witchcraft I-V classes. She has multiple degrees in health care, but her true bliss is writing, and the goddess Brigid is her muse. She lives in Boston with her husband and three feline familiars.

Running Through the Mill

By *Daedalus*

In the Temple of Witchcraft Mystery school, we are now at the point when climbing the Tree of Life we get to the fifth sephira—Geburah. One of the things thrown into the mix by our teacher was the concept of "grist to the mill," how something may need to be transformed in order to become more useful to us. This particular saying refers to the raw grain or grist, which we cannot use in its original form. We need to transform it into flour by passing it through a process, like a mill, and grinding it into a fine powder in order to utilize it. The correspondence to the magickal/spiritual side of our studies in the Mystery School is that many times things that are not apparently useful can, under the right circumstances and appropriate process, become just like that grain. They can be transformed into something that can nourish and help us grow.

When this topic was first brought up, two other concepts from the lower sephiroth of the TOW came to mind—The Machinery of the Universe and the two-sided question of "what is your will, and to what end?"

Back in the time when most things were done by hand, the simple tasks required to harvest, thresh, winnow and mill grain were jobs that allowed us to engage with both the world around us and the Earth that nourished us physically and spiritually. These simple chores with their rhythms and repetitive motions kept our bodies and rational minds busy while freeing our subconscious to work on other problems while we entered a near-trance state.

As we delegated our labor to machines, the cost to us was twofold: an increased disconnect from our environment and the Spirit of the Earth, complicated by our trading the near-trance "processing state" for less tiring and tedious, though more closely focused, guidance of the machines we had developed. What does this have to do with the mill? The answer is found in the grain and even more specifically the thing that brought the grain into being—intent.

When the milling is all done, you can evaluate the product and see that in order to get what you truly need, you have to feed the mill the appropriate material, in the proper quantity, at the proper consistency and rate. That material usually required preliminary work to prepare it for the mill in order to produce acceptable results and not damage the mill itself. For grain (the grist in this case) this process entails harvesting at the proper time and conditions, drying, threshing and winnowing. All this preliminary work needs to be done before the grain can even be transported to where the milling will take place. Very little grain ever goes from stalk to stomach on the same patch of ground.

We know that the energy and intent of everything that touches something that feeds and nourishes us, that contributes to our growth and evolution in this world, leaves an imprint on the Earth, our environment, and our physical and spiritual lives. That being said, as we move from sticks and stones to gears, pulleys, hydraulics and microchips, one question remains: "What is it that powers YOUR mill?"

In the beginning, we took life much slower. Milling grain involved just a few people, perhaps even a solitary individual beating grain into flour using wood and/or stone, while their mind processed other things as they fell into that rhythmic, repetitive process. At the end of the day, they hopefully had what they needed to feed their family plus at least a little more to either sell, trade, or store as a hedge against leaner times. We also learned to partner with animals and add their power to the process.

Somewhere along the line, water power came into the picture. Now what an animal once did could be done by coupling the stone wheels of the grain mill to a water wheel. Some areas used wind instead of water power to run their mills—the windmills of Holland are the classic example of this. Things still moved in a circular motion—they just did it on a much grander scale. The wheels became bigger, and the mills became larger. At some point, farmers stopped doing their own milling and began handing it off to someone with better equipment as they felt these professionals could get better and more consistent results.

Water power gave way to steam power, then internal combustion engines and finally electric power. Even today where we have microchips and hydraulic controls, we still use the simple, ancient process of stone-on-stone to grind appropriate material into a useable final product. Only the methods of power and control have changed.

All grain mills, regardless of power, rely on two surfaces grinding against each other to process grain into either meal or flour. The simplest mills consist of a pair of stone wheels, one stationary and one rotating above the fixed wheel, pressing down on it to do the grinding. Most wheels have grooves cut into the faces to keep the grain, meal, or flour moving and grinding. The grain enters from above and pours into the center of the upper wheel. As it is ground, it moves outward until it falls free of the stones and the grinding process is done. So the process starts at center and

moves outward until it ends with the final product. From there, the end result is directed away from the stones to be put into bags or bins.

So what powers your mill? Is it individual will and intent? An ass traveling in circles? Is your mill powered by Air (knowledge and intellect) or Water (emotion)? Perhaps your mill is powered by steam (high energy emotions) or the Fire (will and passion) of an internal combustion engine or boiler? Maybe your mill is more modern and is powered by electricity (Spirit)?

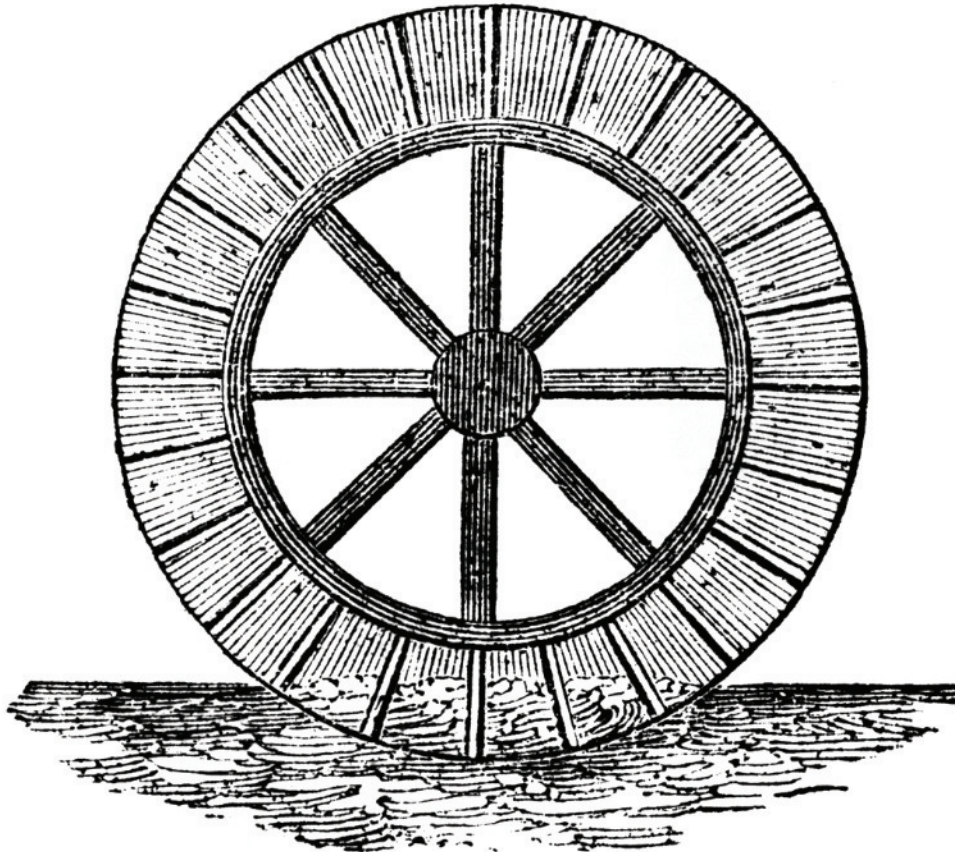
There is another aspect to the discussion—control. The miller depends on training and experience to adjust the speed of the mill, the clearance between the wheels (factored by the pressure from the upper wheel and the rate of grain feed), and the grinding duration (time spent between the wheels). All these things working together affect the final outcome and whether the finished product is useable or not. Now if the miller lets his mind wander, and not enough grain is fed into those stone millwheels, they begin to grind on each other instead of the grain. This creates stone dust, which contaminates the flour. If that lapse in attention continues it could also wear the millstones down, causing damage and shutting down the mill. Likewise if the miller feeds too much grain into the mill, things won't be ground finely enough, and instead of delicate flour, the product is a coarse meal unsuitable for use unless the process is repeated.

What really produced the end product that is supposed to sustain you and your family? Was it your individual

will and intent, your guides and allies, or the skills and abilities of another that you handed the work off to? How much does Divine Will or outside influences and imprints play in what you intend to put to use?

Lastly, is what your mill produced what you really need, or did you settle for what was handed to you? Did you see this harvest all the way through yourself, from sowing the seeds to reaping and preparing the grain with no cut corners, or did you hand off the bulk of the work and then accept a replacement you were assured was every bit as good your own workings? Before you leave the mill, you'll want to open that sack and take a look at what's really inside. You don't want to get your oven all fired up and an entire kitchen's worth of pans prepared only to find that what you thought was finely ground wheat flour is actually moldy cornmeal, now do you?

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.



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:

Treasurer's Report
June 2012

Account Balances:

Opening Balance : May 31, 2012:
\$39,415.49

Closing Balance: June 30, 2012 \$34,714.48

Petty Cash \$397.40

Paypal balance: \$5170.29

Certificate of Deposit: \$2509.49

Events:

Income from W 1-5 net \$701.93

Yoga continues with 2-3 people attending each time.

Drum making: \$60

Myan ritual \$175 Thanks to Aurielle for donating her time to facilitate this ritual.

Singing \$80 Thanks to Krista for donating her time.

Full Moon \$25

Women's Circle \$21

Templefest \$1984

Temple store @ Templefest \$1500

Aries

Aries Ministry created a servitor spirit as part of preparation for this summer's TempleFest and provided security for the festival, including the casting of wards during the opening ritual.

Taurus

Taurus Ministry reports great attendance for the "Witch in the Woods" series of meditative and prayerful nature walks led by Wren.

Gemini

Gemini Ministry has reported a slow start to the Queer Spirit Ministry, but a continued effort, including an online mailing list for distance members and students. Interested parties can email gemini@templeofwitchcraft.org for more information.

Cancer

Cancer Ministry held the Temple's first Red Tent at TempleFest in June, in addition to coordinating food vending and feeding busy volunteers. A Children's Ministry project is in the works.

Leo

Leo Ministry provided the artwork for TempleFest T-shirts and advertising and handled the production of Temple logo hats and water bottles for the festival.

Virgo

Virgo Ministry had busy weeks leading up to TempleFest as lead minister Adam Sartwell created various incenses, candles, and other goods for the Temple Store along with restocking books. Virgo also provided support for the St. Louis Pagan Picnic and is working on new crafts for this Fall's Pagan Pride events.

Libra

Kali Fyre has been named Libra Ministry deputy in charge of Public Relations and has been handling press releases and working with the media. Interested parties can contact her at libradeputy@gmail.com.

Scorpio

Scorpio Ministry continues to hold monthly bereavement circles and work on funerary, crossing, and sacred sexuality education.

Sagittarius

Sagittarius Ministry is handling registration for a new round of Mystery School classes, starting in the Fall. More information—

including registration forms—on the "Education" page of the Temple's website. Sagittarius also continues working with Copper Cauldron Publishing on fundraiser anthologies for the Temple, the next being *The Green Lovers*, a collection of essays on plant spirits.

Capricorn

Capricorn's prison ministry program includes both answering correspondence from inmates and maintaining a correspondence course for educational purposes.

Aquarius

Aquarius Ministry is pleased to report this year's TempleFest was our largest and most successful yet! Temple members, guests, and vendors gathered in South Hampton, NH, to enjoy the hot summer weather, a few gusty storms, and plenty of workshops and rituals, including a talk from special guest Dorothy Morrison! Planning for TempleFest 2013 is already underway!

Pisces

Pisces Ministry conducted the Midsummer ritual at TempleFest and is planning Lammas and the forthcoming Feast of Hecate in August.

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,

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
Salem, NH 03079

As a federally recognized nonprofit, donations to the Temple are tax deductible.

LEVELS OF DONATION

The Temple welcomes donations in whatever denomination contributors can offer.

We recognize five levels of donation:

Quicksilver • \$5-\$25

Iron • \$26-\$50

Copper • \$51-\$100

Silver • \$101-\$250

Gold • \$251+

A special "Diamond" level is reserved for patrons of the Temple who establish lasting endowments and trusts. Please contact 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 a 501c 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 Witchcrafts 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.

Board of Directors

Christopher Penczak • President, Founder
Steve Kenson • Vice President, Founder
Jocelyn VanBokelyn • Treasurer
Alix Wright • Secretary
Adam Sartwell • Board Advisor, Founder
Mary Hurley • Board Advisor

Public Relations

For general questions regarding the Temple, or to contact the Board of Directors, please email info@templeofwitchcraft.org.

For technical or website related questions, please email admin@templeofwitchcraft.org.

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

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Salem, NH 03079