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11506 NE 113th Pl., Kirkland, WA 98033

## Issue 46, Litha 10,009th year of the Goddess (Summer, 2009)

*The Beltane Papers exists to provide women with a safe place within which to explore and express the sacred in their lives, to educate, empower, encourage and entertain, to inspire, support and reinforce their perception of reality. Published 3 times annually. All rights revert. ISSN # 1074-3634.*

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**Special Thanks** to Thomas J. Quinn

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*Guiding Goddess: Epona, goddess of horses, of travel and dreams, of prosperity and protection, hear our plea.*

*Guide us through the dark times, help us find the way, bring dreams to our sleep and help us find them in the light of day, Help us to gain the means to make them real. Bring us health and prosperity, help our spirit to heal, Protect our children and keep them healthy and safe, guide them on their path of life and help them to learn to get back on if they fall, falter or fail.*

*Oh Great Epona, we honor you with an altar of three white roses and three white candles lit, three pearls upon the altar cloth and upon a luminous white plate, we offer you three licks of salt, three grains, oats, barley and corn, and three golden apples, one each, for Maid, Mother and Crone.*

**Disclaimer:** *The opinions and ideas of the contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of all the staff members.*

# The Beltane Papers

## A Journal of Women's Mysteries

Litha (Summer) 10,009th (2009) year of the Goddess Issue 46 - \$3.00



Epona - The Great Mare

## White Horses

Count the white horses you meet on the way,  
Count the white horses, child, day after day,  
Keep a wish ready for wishing - if you  
Wish on the ninth horse, your wish will come true.

I saw a white horse at the end of the lane,  
I saw a white horse canter down by the shore,  
I saw a white horse that was drawing a wain,  
And one drinking  
out of a trough: that made four.

I saw a white horse gallop over the down,  
I saw a white horse looking over a gate,  
I saw a white horse on the way into town,  
And one on the way coming back: that made eight.

But oh for the ninth one, where he tossed his mane,  
And cantered and galloped and whinnied and swished  
His silky white tail, I went looking in vain,  
And the wish I had ready could never be wished.

Count the white horses you meet on the way,  
Count the white horses, child, day after day,  
Keep a wish ready for wishing - if you  
Wish on the ninth horse your wish will come true.

Luna Deava

The goddess Epona is usually portrayed as riding a white mare side-saddle, sometimes with a foal, or standing surrounded by horses. Her symbol is the Cornucopia ("horn of plenty") which suggests that she may have been honoured as a fertility goddess, although she is most commonly known as a goddess of horses and travel. She also is the goddess of dreams, not only of the sleeping kind but the dreams of hope and ambition. She helps manifest the dreams if you allow her to accompany you on your path.

## About this issue...

The goddess Epona has brought us this beautiful issue on horses, spiritual guidance and direction. I got my first horse when I was 10 or so. Her name was Felicity, meaning bliss and happiness, and that is what she brought to me. I loved that horse with all my heart. She taught me responsibility, bravery, and honesty. On the really bad days I would even sleep in her stall. Her world was my refuge from the confusion and pain that was all too present in my life. When I read Flash Silvermoon's "Women and Horses: Magical Soul Mates" all these memories came flooding back, along with quite a few tears. I miss my horse!

This issue was slow to come out due to cash flow problems. I could not obtain any paid advertisements. These are important to TBP's continued success. I am using paid ad money to expand TBP from the 16 pages to 20. Currently about 1/2 of the subscriptions I fill are for life timer free subscriptions, which cost about \$160.00 per issue. TBP used all its money to print the last issue and has only taken in \$100.00 since. I am doing my best to keep the promises that TBP has made throughout the years. The first people to get this issue will be the paid subscribers, then the contributors, and then the rest. This will happen over the next 4 weeks as I can only do so much from each paycheck and I am spending all TBP has on printing and sending out to the paid subscribers.

TBP is in need of more help and volunteers. We always need proofers and editors, contributors and artists, but more importantly we need someone with experience in non-profit establishment and management. Marione and I were never any good at the business stuff and so we only got so far as to gain Washington state non-profit status. With a federal non-profit status I would feel comfortable in approaching people for donations. There is also a possibility of getting a grant to get us back to 64 pages and retail distribution. My mother writes grant proposals for living and she thinks it's worth a try and it certainly can't hurt. The only way anyone can say yes to us is if we ask!

We also need someone good at marketing who can pursue advertisers, exchange ads, and customer contact. We need to increase the revenue of TBP and we can do it through increased subscriptions and paid advertisements. Volunteers can be from almost anywhere as we collaborate over the internet. Our current staff is located all over the United States and one volunteer has just moved to South Korea for awhile. However, I think that the non-profit help status might be best done in Seattle, WA.

Even if you can't volunteer time you can still help by supporting a subscription drive; if we gained 100 new subscribers it would be fantastic, but even 50 would help. So tell all your friends about us, if you can, give gift subscriptions (our next issue will be a late fall/winter issue in time for Yule).

If you have products or services you should advertise with us in the next issue, as it will be out in time for the holidays. Advertising rates are \$10.00 per ad per issue. The ad size is 3.75 inches wide by 3.25 inches tall. As always, I want to thank you all for your continued support of TBP.

Lisé Quinn



# Horses as Spiritual Healers

From *Horses and the Mystical Path* by Adele von Rust McCormick, PhD, Marlena Deborah McCormick, PhD and Thomas E. McCormick, MD,

Our psychospiritual journey began with our work as psychotherapists treating severely emotionally disturbed people. Then we brought in our horses as healing partners. While our experiences with patients planted the seeds of our eventual change, our deepening involvement with horses encouraged us to nurture those seeds, and we began to experience a more mysterious side to life.

Through running our equine programs, we began to hear stories about other people's remarkable encounters with horses. People from a wide cross-section of careers and professions reported that they had met spirit horses. They described horses that live between the visible and invisible worlds, traveling back and forth between these worlds according to the needs of the humans in their lives. These interactions with spirit horses could be as subtle as a gentle breeze or as aggressive as a hammer blow. But they were always distinct and unforgettable.

What we began to observe was that the horse instinctively knows how and when to introduce humans to the unexpected and to the challenges of surprises and new difficulties. The horse becomes not only a soothing friend but a provocative adversary — what Celtic shamans call an *anam cara*, or “soul friend,” in Gaelic. It is this combination of soothing our doubts and fears and challenging our entrenched behaviors and beliefs that epitomizes the role of the *anam cara*. With laserlike precision, the horse easily assumes the role of soul friend, disturbing our comfort by frustrating our demands, withdrawing its compliance, becoming hard to handle, or shocking our rigid and deterministic minds. Thus, the horse is capable of opening doors of awareness that stretch the bounds of human consciousness.

Over the years we've been privileged to witness this special relationship between horses and their human counterparts many times. For example, there's the story of Laurie, who had been diagnosed with and treated for breast cancer, only to discover another tumor several years later. When the second tumor was found, Laurie was immedi-

ately scheduled for emergency surgery. She was terrified, since she did not know what the doctors would find once the surgery began. Laurie and her husband prayed that the tumor would be operable and had not metastasized. However, both were secretly pessimistic. They had heard that when a tumor of this kind returns, it is usually a death sentence.

Laurie was only forty-five years old and newly married. Understandably, her husband, Mark, was also terrified, fearing he would lose her.

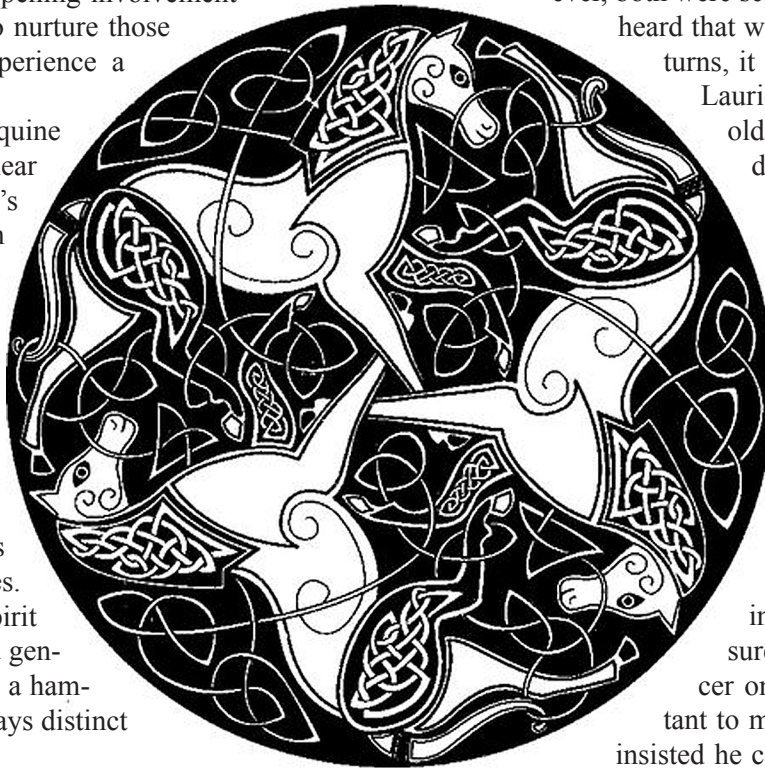
Mark was a kind and responsible man but had trouble relaxing and enjoying himself. He had a somewhat pessimistic view of life, always waiting for the other shoe to drop. Whenever life went smoothly, he felt a sense of dread, fearing that a catastrophe would surely follow. Having had cancer once, Laurie had been reluctant to marry, but Mark had bravely insisted he could handle whatever came up. Now, as he faced the harsh realities of

Laurie's prognosis, he did not feel so valiant. He withdrew emotionally and became increasingly uncommunicative, which was his way of dulling his anguish.

In response to Mark's behavior, Laurie felt abandoned and vulnerable, not only fearing the disease but now growing increasingly anxious that Mark was withdrawing his love. Laurie cried alone, hiding the truth of what she was feeling. It was a disturbing time for both Mark and Laurie, each silently distraught and secretly fearful of what was ahead.

On the day of Laurie's surgery, Mark stayed with her until she dozed off from the anesthesia. Laurie felt frightened as she watched her husband's face fade away. During the operation Laurie felt no pain, but she heard the doctors talking. The tone of their voices and the words they used made her anxious. They sounded so gloomy and foreboding.

Laurie began to panic, but at that moment a beautiful white winged horse appeared in her mind's eye. It radiated



light, and it mesmerized her. In that moment all her terror dissolved, and this majestic creature transported her to a magical world, a place that sparkled and was full of love. Laurie felt herself enveloped in a sensation of complete and utter tranquility. A white light encircled her and the horse. It was as if they were on a different planet.

As she looked around her, she saw many beautiful horses. They had manes and tails of silver and spun gold. They smiled at her, celebrating her presence, and their joy was truly contagious. Some of the horses grazed, while others played or slept. It was so peaceful and inviting. The fields were full of lush green grass, and there was a cool stream that the horses drank from. Wild flowers colored the landscape. Laurie wanted to sing and laugh. She could have rested with them all day, feeling very much at home in this idyllic place.

The white horse that had brought her to this place then motioned for her to follow, and soon Laurie was back in the operating room. The entire episode took only a moment, and then Laurie woke up with a floating sensation. Her entire body felt warm and tingly. As soon as she opened her eyes, she saw her husband's face and felt confident that the surgery had gone well.

Mark informed Laurie that things were very hopeful. The doctors were delighted because the tumor they had found was small, which was not what they had expected. They had removed the tumor, and tests revealed that the cancer had not metastasized. Some time later, Laurie confided in Mark, telling him she believed that she had been healed by the white horse.

Much relieved by the doctors' optimistic prognosis and by the deeply healing encounter with the white horse, Laurie and Mark shared their fears with each other. Over time they grew much closer and their relationship matured. They both knew they had been given a second chance, and out of the lessons they took away from this experience, they began to trust and confide in each other.

Over ten years passed, and there was no recurrence of the cancer. Then Laurie and her husband went to visit a horse ranch one Sunday afternoon. They loved getting away and spending time in the country. As they walked across an open field, a large white horse approached Laurie. When she looked up, she gasped. The horse stopped directly in front of her. It was the same horse she'd seen in her vision during her surgery over ten years before! Barely able to hold back her tears of joy and gratitude, Laurie looked up into the horse's face and said, "Thank you!" With that, he tossed his head and galloped gleefully away.

To this day, Laurie is certain this was the animal who had carried her away to that healing kingdom. Now, whenever she needs courage in her daily life, she remembers the white horse and his homeland, the invisible land of love.

Author Bios: Adele von Rust McCormick, PhD, Marlena Debo-

rah McCormick, PhD and Thomas E. McCormick, MD have been psychotherapists for a span of over forty years, designing and running a series of unique and innovative programs using horses to help people with mental illness, criminals, and individuals with drug and alcohol addiction. Currently, they are the co-directors of the Institute for Conscious Awareness and co-founders of the Hacienda Tres Aguilas Ltd. Equine Experience Programs in San Antonio Texas, which offers courses and retreats using ancient principles and practices of kinship with horses to develop human spirituality and intuition. Their website is [www.therapyhorsesandhealing.com](http://www.therapyhorsesandhealing.com). E mail is [thomasm@gvtc.com](mailto:thomasm@gvtc.com) Phone number is 830-438-2816

## The Meaning of Anam Cara

"In the Celtic Tradition there is a beautiful understanding of love and friendship.

One of the fascinating ideas here is the idea of soul-love; the old Gaelic term for this is anam cara. Anam is the Gaelic word for soul and cara is the word for friend. So anam cara in the Celtic world was the "soul friend".

In the early Celtic church a person who acted as teacher, companion, or spiritual guide was called an anam cara. It originally referred to someone to whom you confessed, revealing the hidden intimacies of your life. With the anam cara you could share your inner most self, your mind and your heart.

This friendship was an act of recognition and belonging. When you had an anam cara your friendship cut across all convention, morality, and category. You were joined in an ancient and eternal way with the "friend of your soul".

There is no cage for the soul. The soul is a divine light that flows into you and into your other. This art of belonging awakened and fostered a deep and special companionship.

In his **Confessions** John Cassian says this bond between friends is indissoluble. "this, I say, is what is broken by no chances, what interval of time or space can sever or destroy, and what even death itself cannot separate."

John O'Donahue's **Anam Cara: Mysticism from the Celtic World**, Bantam Press (September 4, 1997)



# Women and Horses: Magical Soul Mates

Excerpt from Flash's work in progress, *Lifetime Companions, Love Never Dies* by Flash Silvermoon

Since I have begun this equine journey with my own horse Chinamoon, as well as my work as an Animal Communicator, helping Julie Montgomery at her Holistic Horse Ranch, I have met many women and their horses and these are truly magical relationships.

First, I must share my relationship with Maddy who is a young Appaloosa Mustang rescued from one of the threatened last remaining wild horse herds from Wyoming.

I knew that I had a deep connection with Maddy when we first met and I treated her for the woman who rescued her. She would persistently whinny for me whenever I came and quickly decided that I was her new good friend. At that time, she had only interacted with humans for maybe a week and some of that had been under the horrid conditions of the aerial roundup.

These precious wild ones from the Wyoming Mountains were slammed into waiting pens and trains and trucks and all manner of trauma...

yet Maddy's innate good nature recognized others of like Spirit and her willingness and heart were and are truly amazing.

The second time that I came to work with Maddy, she beckoned to me with her eyes to come over, so I did and brought my flower essences. The only essence she dowsed for was one called Breathe.

Maddy has only been off the range maybe 2 weeks or so, but she really warmed to me and came right over and nuzzled my hand. I spoke to her looking deep into her soft brown eyes past the healing gash in the center of her head from her trip in the desert holding pens where she awaited adoption.

The shape of her face caught my attention too. She

has that rounded center place that is so ancient and wild looking. Brenton had put some Wound Balm salve on her wound and it was 100% better than a few days ago

when we first met. "Yeah girl, it's a long way from your old home but here you will be safe and always loved, well fed and cared for and that's the trade off."

Maddy gladly slurped down a dropper full of Breathe, and licked my hands. When we made eye contact again, I felt such gratitude and tenderness beaming from her face. I also saw a lot of yellow mucus coming out of one nostril. I went over to talk with Brenton, Julie's son who has been working with Maddy, and he said that the remedy was interesting as all the horses from her truck had strangles, which is a very nasty respiratory disease, and she actually was being quarantined!

I was glad that I mentioned her remedy because I needed that information to keep my mare safe. I

washed up really well so as not to bring the disease home with me! She whinnied after me as I left and that sound touched me so deeply. I wanted to stay all day with her and listen to her stories of the wild mustangs she left behind, but my not so wild equine was calling me back to my home, Moonhaven, for her afternoon fruit treat. Why I could almost hear Chinamoon stamping her striped Appy hooves into the bricks on the patio saying, "Where's my Mom and, better still, where's my food?"

I will continue to work with Maddy as time allows. I can tell that she is a really special horse and is already responding so well to humans. She was a bit shy at first but clearly did not want me to leave.



Photo by Danny Blom

It is so rewarding to see a horse really come from little or no connection with people and just warm to the love and care given by some, in spite of the harsh initial experiences with those who would take her from her natural home.

I know that the Adopt a Mustang Program saves the lives of so many wild horses that might otherwise starve on the open range, or be abused or worse. It's just hard to see such beautiful wild creatures being separated from their birthright, their native homeland. Just as it is hard to know that the ancestors of these ranchers were responsible for stealing these same lands from the Native Americans forcing them into the holding pens of the Res!

It is about a week since I last saw Maddy and today she called me with her whinny to visit her when I got out of the car at Julie's farm. I immediately went over to her and stroked her, and looked into her eyes, which were brighter and with not a trace of the mucus from a week before; no strangles and her wound was less raw and swollen. You could still see her ribs from the starvation she had been facing on the open range, but she was putting on some weight little by little thanks to the incredible healing power of Dynamite food, which was surely in part responsible for my horse's speedy recovery from West Nile as well.

Today when I checked her essences, her prescription was New Beginnings, Outburst, and Run and Play, which I am happy to say she eagerly awaited and slurped down.

I had learned from bad experiences with other critters to never administer Run and Play before the other essences; otherwise the animal runs and plays and you can't catch them long enough for a New Beginning! It is wonderful to have the opportunity to see the subtle and not so subtle changes that evolve weekly with this beautiful but wounded mare. I have a feeling that she will have much to teach us all.

While I was still there, Maddy was already acting happier and more connected and kept whinnying for me whenever I went to treat another horse. I went over to her and stood with my head slightly bowed next to hers touching her cheek slightly with mine and I could feel her whole head relax against mine as we hugged horse style. I had learned this from my horse Chinamoon, who also is an Appaloosa, as it seems to be a way that they like to show affection and submission perhaps with each other. I could tell that she appreciated her essences and our growing relationship and that I could "horse around" with her.

Maddy's first Mom suddenly lost her job and need-

ed to move away, so now Maddy needed a new Mom. I would have taken her myself if I had more room and felt that my mare, China, would surely want company, but I had a better idea which would prove to be a huge success.

My friend Aurora, who is herself part Lakota and connected to these wild horses, has a daughter, Maya, who was badly needing a deep love of her own. What could be more perfect for a teenage girl than her own mustang and a free one at that? Maya admitted that she always wanted the Mustang car but that Maddy just might be perfect!

It has been the beginning of a most beautiful relationship for these two young ones and they will teach each other much about heart, conviction, strength and, most of all, the healing power of love. Maya is a fantastic young woman, yet was having trouble fitting in and having solid good influences around her. Now she spends all of her free time with Maddy and after a few short weeks has already ridden her, which is nothing short of amazing given the mustang's harsh beginnings. This story can't help but have a great ending.

Both Maddy and Maya have learned and grown so much together as each has matured and taught the other about responsibilities, boundaries, respect, and that empowering relationship of a young woman and her horse.



Photo by Tara Allen

Flash Silvermoon is a nationally known psychic, astrologer, Animal Communicator, musician, teacher, talk show host, and author. She is an eclectic Dianic Priestess as well as being a vibrational healer, serving the community for 39 years as a psychic astrologer and healer.

Her groundbreaking work with animals brought her to [www.Internetvoicesradio.com](http://www.Internetvoicesradio.com) where she hosts a weekly talk show "What the Animals Tell Me" Wed

8:30-9 PMEST

Flash also specializes in the use of stones and crystals, working with them through layout on the body, grids, elixirs and her own unique combinations called "Power Tools."

Flash has been a leader in her field since the early 70's and has produced and co Priestessed the Wise Woman's Festival, entering its 7th Year!

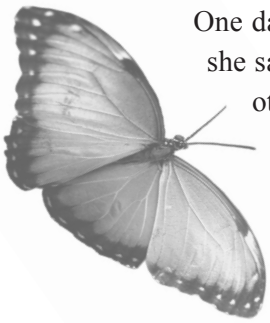
Call Flash for a reading for you or you our pet 352-475-2432. Class and seminars available. For more information visit her website at [www.flashsilvermoon.com](http://www.flashsilvermoon.com) Her e-mail address is [flashsilvermoon@gmail.com](mailto:flashsilvermoon@gmail.com) or write to her at 7603 NE 221



# Spirit Guides

by Mar-Garet Andreas

My Creative Writing teacher (about 20 years ago) had just assigned to us: 'Imagine an entity who would symbolize to you great wisdom.' Then we were to write a dialogue with that entity in our journals. My 'entity' turned out to be a Porpoise by the name of Rosa! I enjoyed our journal dialogues so much...I could ask her anything, and she'd always end up give me good (if sometimes quite hilarious) advice!



One day, I was dialoguing with her when she said to me, 'Wait, I must assume another form in order to answer that question.' What was going on? She changed form into a beautiful and wise female 'presence' who has been with me since I was a very young child. The name of this 'presence' I called 'Saji.'

It turned out that Rosa was simply one aspect, or form, of Saji. I had always wondered why a porpoise would be named after a Rose... then I remembered that the Rose was one of Saji's 'symbols.' Saji, I finally comprehended, is one of my Life Guides (I have two of them, one female -- Saji -- and one male). Saji has always been there for me, through all my good times and bad times, to comfort me when I was young, and to guide me as I grew older. Her presence is total love, and I love her with all my heart. To me, she is the voice of the Goddess in my soul.

As I continued my journal dialogues, I found that Saji was there for me whenever I needed her. Sometimes, my male guide, Zohar, would come through---a completely different energy than Saji, but still full of love. I knew they were my Spiritual Guides because they seemed to embody my 'ideal' Self, and they never steered me toward any kind of negativity, always toward love and positivity. And they never demanded that I 'obey' them. They simply communicated their perspective to me... and it was and IS a much wider perspective than I am usually able to see! And it was then up to me to decide whether to follow their advice or not. When I DID follow their advice, I always found a positive experience.

My Creative Writing teacher was interested in hypnosis as a creative writing tool, and he asked for volunteers to participate in his experiment. I readily agreed to be a volunteer. For 32 hypnosis sessions, we explored the world of my Guides, and met other Spirits also.

These Spirits included: Many of my own past selves, writers and other historical figures who had lived in the past and who we admired, extra-terrestrials, nature-spirits and elementals, dragons, unicorns, etc. Once Spirit called itself (it was beyond gender) my 'Oversoul,' and mostly showed itself as a bright light! I met Saji's teacher and was told that his name was Carrefour. I was curious about this and found that in the Vodou religion, Carrefour means 'crossroads' and is the Moon God.

I was a little concerned about Carrefour, as I had read that he sometimes has a negative aspect. Eventually, I came to realize that what is important is how *I* relate to him, because I feel that every Spirit I meet reflects something within my own soul. The Carrefour that I know is a Trickster spirit, and yet he is so full of love and compassion that he practically overflows with these qualities!

My subsequent research into Vodou has brought me a lot of interaction with that pantheon. I am learning a very positive path, but always there is much struggle against the prejudices associated with this ancient way. That is part of the challenge I have chosen in this particular incarnation. To me, these 'Lwa's' (as they are called in their own language -- also called Loa's) are ancestors who have progressed to the point of merging with world-Archetypes as interpreted through their own tribal mythology.



My own past lives often come to me and inspire me with creative ideas and projects. Some of them teach me (or, more accurately, remind me) what I have forgotten! They also help me recognize certain spiritual qualities in other people, which can come in handy



when I am doing a reading or a healing, and they always bring with them Spiritual contacts that harmonize with the culture, mythology, and worldview of those past lives. Working with past life selves is simple -- as long as you remember that the PRESENT is where power resides. The purpose and work of the PRESENT LIFE is the most vital and most important.

Certain of my Guides and past lives also serve as 'Gatekeeper' when I am searching psychically for information and communication from other spirits. They keep it positive, healthy, and filter out any negative vibes.

One book that I found helpful in 'discerning' Spirits (and Lwa's) is *Initiation: A Woman's Spiritual Adventure in the Heart of the Andes* by Elizabeth B. Jenkins. In this book, Ms. Jenkins describes her spiritual quest in the Andes, and how she progressed from a worldview that was dominant/submissive to one that was more egalitarian. As a family therapist herself, she had a unique view of Spirit-Human relationships and she had a 'feel' for when they became dysfunctional. She explains her own spiritual lessons and how she went from a child-level to an adult-level in functioning on the spiritual plane.

In Ms. Jenkins' perspective (as well as mine) one becomes a member of a FAMILY of both human and spiritual beings. A family works together for the good of all, and Spirits assist only if invited and welcomed. As the Spirits participate and prove themselves as allies, they become part of the family, too. (You may substitute 'coven' for 'family' here, also.)

James Redfield, in his book *The Tenth Insight: Holding the Vision*, describes 'Soul Groups' that contain all the past selves of each individual human. These 'Soul Groups' contain all the knowledge that the individual has gleaned from life so far! As we move into the Aquarian Age, we find that groups are becoming more and more important in our spiritual evolution. Working with groups is challenging, but promises a great leap forward in our consciousness. As we work 'for the good of all, according to free will' (Thanks, Marion Weinstein!), we learn the meaning of spiritual cooperation, without the loss of

individuality.

I enjoy groups that form themselves 'organically,' and just come together in a natural way. As such, families can be defined as a group of entities who have come together related to each other in intimate ways. Families have something intrinsic in common. And the families we create are connected by love.

Families do not always get along, nor are they always in the same mood. However, they ARE always close to each other, whether they are in group-formation or not. They experience kinship; that is, they recognize each other as 'my kind.'

In spiritual pantheons like Vodou, or in shamanic paths, one can be called by, adopted by, mentored by, and even married to, a Spirit or a Lwa. This is a more intimate connection and requires a greater level of commitment than just working together. One becomes, essentially, a priest or priestess of that Spirit or Lwa's specialty. This doesn't cancel out one's HUMAN parent, mentor or mate. However, it does require a certain amount of time that must be dedicated to the relationship between the person and the Spirit or Lwa. During this special dedicated time, the person and the Spirit/Lwa learn from each other and cooperate in channeling specialized energy through that archetype.

I have considered being a Priestess of a certain Spirit/Lwa, but have decided that I like to keep things more flexible. I like being able to have a variety of Spirits/Lwa's to relate to! This is similar to the way I like to relate to my human family and friends. I like a large variety, to bring out the different aspects of myself. (My Venus and Jupiter are in Aquarius, for those astrologically inclined!) I have had many varied incarnations, and I think that I am a very international person!

Other people may have kept to one culture during a lot of their incarnations and, therefore, relate with a smaller number of Spirits/Lwa's, in a closer and more intimate way. There is nothing wrong with that inclination, either. There are many ways to relate, and many ways to group. There are many kinds of families, but the ones we CHOOSE to create need to be those that encourage us, bring out our talents, support us emotionally, and merge with our own individual style!

Bio: Mar-Garet Andreas has been a Witch forever, formally initiated in her own Joie de Vivre tradition 22 years ago. She has written and created art for Circle Network News, Womanspirit, Mountain Laurel and many other publications. She is currently

# Midsummer Solstice



Summer Solstice falls at the precise moment when the Sun's power is at its zenith. It is the time of year when the noon sun appears to be farthest north from the celestial equator. "Solstice" is Latin for "sun stands still" (*sol* "sun" and *sistere* "to stand"). Summer Solstice is so named because, to the naked eye, the sun appears stationary in its northern and southern progression. The sun is directly over the tropic of Cancer at the Summer Solstice, at which time the sun is 23;27' north. The sun travels 23.5 degrees to reach its maximum distance from the celestial equator during both the summer and winter solstice.

It is the longest day and shortest night of the year. From the moment of the Summer Solstice, the Sun immediately begins to wane. The journey into the harvest season has begun.

Midsummer has been one of the important solar events throughout the evolution of humankind. It was an indicator that the year was about to begin waning, thus winter would be again returning. Although not all the ancients were as precise in the calculations from an astronomical point, you can be sure that they were keenly aware of the sun's progression, and did most assuredly know when Solstice was upon them, as the sun appeared to stand still in its northern progression.

The axis of Stonehenge, which aligns with the monument's entrance, is oriented in the direction of the midsummer sunrise. The Teotihuacn Temple of the Sun, a pre-Columbian temple located in Mexico, was also oriented to the sun's passage at the Summer Solstice. During the time of the ancient Egyptians, Sirius (the dog star) rose on the Summer Solstice (today it rises August 10) heralding the beginning of their new year, just before the season of the Nile's flooding. Richard Hinckley Allen suggests that the star is connected with the dog because it was thought of by the ancients as the "guardian of the horizon and also the solstices"

(Richard Hinckley Allen's *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning*). The impact of the sun's journey was one that traversed all the world's population throughout all time.

The ancients knew that life came from the sun. It was life giving, life supporting; without it life would be lost. The journey of the sun impacted life at every level in the course of time. Only relatively recently with the advances of electricity, greenhouses, transportation networks, has human reliance on the passage of the sun been lessened. Even with this dependence lessening, in this technological age, necessity of the sun and its path is crucial to our existence, however, it is not as apparent today to many.

Midsummer celebrations begin with Midsummer Eve, as the Celts and many ancient groups reckoned the beginning of day to occur at dream-time or nightfall. Through the progression of Christianity, Midsummer's Eve became Saint John's Eve, the roots of which were and are firmly planted in their Pagan origins.

Midsummer Eve is the evening of herbs. The herbs and flowers gathered this night are considered exceptionally potent. St John's wort, burdock, thorn, and nettle, harvested on Midsummer Eve are hung on doors and windows and placed around the home for protection. Houses are decorated with fennel, orpine (also know as Sedum; live forever; stone crop), St. John's Wort and birch branches. Royal Fern (Raithneach na Ri) seeds which are gathered on Midsummer are said to make the possessor invisible. They who find Royal Fern blossoms on Midsummer's Eve become wise, lucky, wealthy and all around happy folk. Women wear braided circlets of clover and flowers, while men wear chaplets of oak leaves and flowers around their heads. In times past livestock were also decorated with garlands made of flowers, foliage, and oak leaves.

It is at Midsummer that the Holly King, God of the Waning Year, has encountered the Oak King and succeeded

"Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you." -- Maori proverb



in usurping the reign of the year. In Celtic Mythology the Young God withdraws into the Wheel of the Stars and it is here he waits and learn before his rebirth at Winter Solstice. It is the time when Belenus, Belenos - the Sun god, begins to die. Balefires were kindled to light his downward path. He will return again at the Winter Solstice, when the Yule logs and lit fir-braches will guide His return. A few of other deities associated with Midsummer include: Lugh, Lleu, Lugos, Aine.

Fire is an important aspect to Midsummer celebrations. The balefires, bonfires on hilltops, at crossroads, or any place where folks could gather reaches far back through the progression of time. The fire of Midsummer is traditionally kindled from the friction of two sacred woods, fir and oak. Nine different types of herbs are thrown upon the Midsummer fire. These consist of mistletoe, vervain, St. John's Wort, heartsease, lavender, and a choice of four others chosen from herbs typical of this season such as yarrow. Folks would feast, dance and jump the fire for luck and fertility. The herds were driven through the embers in days long ago to purge disease and illness from them. When the fires had burned down, folks would carry ashes back to their homes to sprinkle on fields, the four corners, and lay embers on the hearth. Ashes bring powers of protection, health and luck.

Water is the other important aspect of Midsummer. In times past, folks swam in waters that flowed towards the rising sun as it climbed in Midsummer morning sky. Bathing in springs and rivers on Midsummer brings healing, cleansing and protection. The dew of Midsummer is said to bestow health to whomever drinks of it. Especially powerful is fetching running water of Midsummer morn and mixing it with ashes from the bonfire. Sprinkling it around the house, yard and on oneself bestows protection and luck.

Midsummer is the time of sweet strawberries, blueberries, cherries, blackberries and more. New potatoes, lettuce, peas, carrots, radishes and onions are ready for picking. Tarragon, chamomile, sweet woodruff, St. John's wort, hysop, lovage, mint and other herbs are fresh and delightfully robust. Bee balm, phylox, oxeye daisies, roses, lily of the valley, calendulas, St John's wort, marigolds and others are in bloom, it is a time of olfactory abundance. Foods and decorations center around what nature has bestowed, rich, colorful and flavorful - mint iced teas, dandelion salads, strawberry shortcakes, geranium leaf sorbet, berry pies, daisy chains, lavender wreaths, rosemary garlands. The pure enjoyment that only summer fresh foods, sweet summer flowers and joyful company that only Midsummer can bestow.

Midsummer is the time when everything is abundant and flourishing. Flowers smell their sweetest, colors are their most vibrant, trees are their greenest, berries are their sweetest, and faeries are their most playful; it is the time that nature's lavishness has reached a pinnacle point. It is said that during a full moon on Midsummer Eve a mortal may witness fairy dances and celebrations. Be sure to leave an offering for the fey on Midsummer Eve, so they may think fondly of you and yours.

The passion at Midsummer has escalated from the playfulness of Beltane to a more fervent intensity. Couples who handfasted the year before at Beltane, tend to marry in

a more formal handfasting at Midsummer or Lughnasadh. Divination on matters of love are especially powerful Midsummer's eve. In Scandinavian countries, the night before Midsummer, every young girl places a bunch of flowers tied with nine pieces of grass or nine flowers under her pillow, upon which she will sleep and dream of her future husband. In Ireland the young lassies place yarrow under their pillows to dream of their mates.

The moon of Midsummer have a few names, one being the Honey Moon, as this is a time when the hives are rich in honey, which is gathered and fermented into a drink known as mead, customarily, drunk at wedding parties. Mead is rumored to be an aphrodisiac; thus we can observe the roots of modern day marriage practices and "honeymoons", in their Pagan soil.

This being the season of passion, will, strength and surprisingly that of soothing love - Midsummer is the perfect time to understand the dynamic aspects of passion, will, strength and the need of the corresponding gentle aspects that love can bestow. The Sun and fire, akin to the Spirit upon which we ride, is coupled with, the Soul, the softening Lunar and water influence. Spirit without Soul is ego in a frenzy whereas Soul without Spirit languishes, there needs to be a proper balance between Fire and Water; Sun and Moon; Spirit and Soul. For it is only through understanding these dynamics, acknowledging our deep pounding passions, our intense sense of will, and the strength united with the gentility of love that is bestowed upon us we can utilize them correctly., giving us a sense of purpose, a direction, a heartfelt and determined course upon which we can set sail. For these passions, will take us to heights unseen, will fuel our creativity, and bring us into realms unrealized in the mundane mind and life.

It is through this season that we can see the beauty of life, the intensity of being, the rapture of passion, the exhilaration of awareness, possibilities of creation and the surprising tenderness of love. For it is passion and love that have driven humankind to realize some of its greatest treasures and its most extreme violations. It is only through awareness and conscious action that passion can bring us to the zenith of existence. This is the time to experience our passions and the force within, to be conscious of how we use them and the gifts they can bring and experience our own true power.

Blessed Midsummer to you and yours!

Profile: I am a blissfully happy wife and mother. My interest in the Goddess began as my pregnancy with my first child commenced. I purchased my first Goddess statue during my first trimester of her pregnancy. Together she and I found our way on this path, which led us to my husband, and then further to the birth of my son. I have found this path as wife, mother and Witch to be remarkably educational and abundant in both love and delight beyond my ability to express.

Witches' Voice Duties: Christina is the Pagan Parenting coordinator at Witchvox and if it's related to Pagan Parenting she is a powerful resource.

# A God/dess for any Woman

by Debra McVay

*Global Goddess Mandala by Amara Wahaba Karuna*

One of the things that make polytheistic religions in general so diverse is that we have many deities to choose from, a lot. The Hindu faith, for example, has over 33 million Gods and Goddesses to choose from. Fortunately, most Western pagan traditions have only a dozen or so major God/desses to deal with, which is plenty in my opinion. Since ours is a magic-using Pagan tradition, that plethora of divinities around us gives us many different options as far as correspondences and spellwork and such. I've noticed, however, when you look at any of our major Western Pagan religions in a purely historical context, one can get the impression that our ancestors' ideas about such things were very different from our own.

Like so many of the particulars in Wicca, the idea of relegating deities to the Tables of Correspondence, is something that seems to have been borrowed from the Kabbalah. In Kabbalistic magic, you have God (as in JHVH) over everything and an entire host of angels that mortal wizards may contact and work with. Later, you see the same principle applied in the multitude of Catholic and Orthodox saints. Not to offend anyone, but it's starting to look like the idea of selecting a higher power associated with a certain domain, the way we do today, is a peculiarly monotheistic idea.

Historical Paganism (as opposed to the above) seemed to revolve around cults to the individual Gods and Goddess of a pantheon while the lay public worships different deities as needed. This is the case, at least, in the big pantheons- Greco/Roman, Egyptian, Hindu and in cosmopolitan cities throughout the ancient world. Often, temples were dedicated to a single deity or at most a small collection of similar Ones, or Ones related as family. You can see a glimmer of this type of worship in the modern Church of the Eternal Source, whose clergy are High Priest/esses of individual cults. The Norse are different again in that the Aesir, their main pantheon, are a tightly knit family that are not bound to a particular location and are often worshiped together, so as far as I know old Norse worship was similar to modern paganism in that respect.

And then there were the Celts. As with everything else it seems, Celts do these things a little differently. For one thing, Wicca cannot be considered a revival of Celtic pa-

ganism no matter how many of their deities we use because Celts practiced Druidism (for lack of a better term) and Druids are a gigantic paradox of speculation and conjecture. Druids belonged to a unified order that had centralized training facilities and stretched from Ireland to Turkey (yes, Turkey). A Druid's influence was such that they could, through the Brehon Laws, tell a king how many shirts he was allowed to own. While Druids were safe from all harm

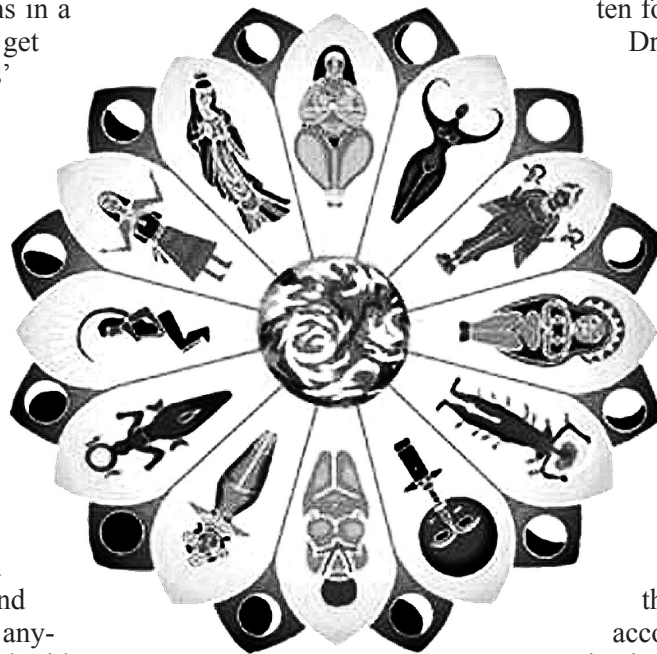
in combat, they nevertheless were strong advocates of their individual tribes and often fought battles against their fellow Druids by magically supporting and countering the support of their respective warriors.

What really seems to obscure the reality of Celtic Paganism is how anthropologists and historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries insisted on cramming Celtic spirituality into the same mold as Greco/Roman Paganism, which is a poor fit indeed. To be fair, this pigeon-holing of the Celts is literally as old as Julius Caesar. The Gaelic Wars is the most complete contemporary account of Celtic practices to survive into the modern age, and it is hope-

lessly biased. To try to get a clearer picture of Celtic Paganism, I avoid the scholarly works and stick to the old legends - The Book of Invasions, the Mabinogion, the Brehon Laws (those that have survived, anyway) and, as near as I can tell, the figures from these stories have more in common with Odysseus, Theseus and Achilles than with Zeus, Hera and Ares. It also seems to me that the important functions of the Druids are as keepers of the laws and history of the people, rather than as Priest/ess in the conventional sense. As long as there was a single Druid living and people willing to listen to that Druid, Celtic culture would never die. Unfortunately, there are no living Druids. The line has been broken - a few clues and hints are all that remain.

So what does this abridged history lecture teach us about modern Paganism? Honestly, not much. If anything it demonstrates how little connection most modern Craft traditions have to what we know about the Old Religion- a phrase that has little or no historical meaning in itself.

Whose old religion again? Other than the names of our deities, when we worship Them, and our chosen holy days,



I see precious little that is “old” about Wicca.

Make no mistake, kinfolk: Wicca is a religion of the future. I say this not because our beatifying of environmental doctrine was absolutely spot-on and ahead of its time, nor because we are the only current religion that espouses complete gender equality as a core belief rather than as a recent addition. I say that ours is the religion of the future because as science uncovers more miracles - and it will - we will find that Wicca, for all its mystic, new age-y, hippie mumbo-jumbo is more and more the religion that most closely conforms to observable reality. As long as we continue to grow along with our species’ knowledge of itself, our future is very bright indeed.

I think one of our great strengths is that Wicca is the punk-rock of religion. I realize that may take a bit of explaining, but if you promise to be patient with me, I promise to make it worth your while. Hey, you’ve come along this far...right?

Let’s use the band The Ramones as our metaphorical example: Musically, The Ramones are considered one of the great rock legends, not just for their own body of work but for their undeniable influence on other rock legends, such as U2, Nirvana and Green Day. What made The Ramones famous was not that they did anything new per se, but that they saw their current music scene as hopeless and decided to tear down and start over. Essentially, The Ramones pretended that the late sixties and early seventies didn’t exist. They took the sounds of Doo-wop and Motown into their present and made it short, fast and ruthless. The Ramones’ hits such as I Want to be Sedated, The KKK Took my Baby Away, and Rock-n- Roll High School sound like early rock had been sucked into a time warp into the late seventies and early eighties and reborn as scathing social commentary.

That’s Wicca in its truest essence. Our fore-parents in the early sixties looked around at the current social scene- dead presidents, unpopular war, missile crises, Apartheid in Birmingham- they looked around and decided to tear down and start over, pretend that the entire Christian era never happened. Wicca is elements of Paganism sucked into a time-warp into the twentieth century and reborn as spiritual revolution. (See, that was worth your patience...wasn’t it?)

In the strictest technical sense, Wicca should be classified as a bi-theistic primalism. The Great Goddess and the Horned God are not part of any organized religion and yet are acknowledged in many of them because they are ubiquitous icons from the very dawn of our species. They represent the ultimate expression of our biological perfection as it relates to consciousness. This is a great idea-worship of the apex of human potential as an ideal. The problem remains, however, that they can’t just jump from a sick culture like mid-twentieth century Western mechanism into full communion with the Great Goddess. Or at least not often.

This is where all of our little gods and goddess come into the picture. All of the deities and heroes of old serve as a bridge between our current state and the primal state to which we aspire. For all intents and purposes, our species’ god/desses help to facilitate a paradigm shift.

Our cultural paradigm (or worldview) is one of separa-

tion and subjugation of women. I’m not going to argue it, I’m just going to give a few examples of how insidious this paradigm is and how difficult it is to surmount.

First, find me a good, primal, feminine role-model in the years between Boudicca and Z. Budapest and I’ll eat your ritual hood. Sure, they have been strong, extraordinary, outstanding women in the interim, but these women have been defined as extraordinary by masculine standards. Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, Mother Jones- see what I mean? The second point I wanted to bring up hits a little closer to home, as it is a timber I found in mine own eye while I was looking for motes in yours. Since my early college days I have been all about feminism. I would even point out to other women I knew that they were allowing themselves to be suppressed. You see where I’m going with this? I, a woman, used feminism to try to control the behavior of other women. This is what we’re dealing with here. And not just me – the collapse of the great Feminist movement in the Seventies can be traced in part to its leadership trying to exert too much control over things that all women should feel free to make their own choices about.

Suffice to say, it can be difficult to feel a sense of communion with the primal ideal, even if you try hard. Fortunately, the gods and goddesses of organized religion can give us an “in”. These deities are all aspects of the Primal Couple; we’re familiar with Them, read about Them in school, and many Witches have their first inkling about their future path through connection to one of them. Despite their familiarity, these deities are sufficiently removed from our current paradigm that we can use Their energies help bridge the gap between Park Avenue and Primal Goddess.

Which deities you choose for this part of your journey depends on - well, everything. My advice is to start with a pantheon you are feel comfortable with and a deity you really like and build up a real relationship. What are this deity’s values? What are the animals, plants, or objects favored by your deity? Try to empathize with your chosen divine focus by learning all you can and forging a strong link. Once you and your chosen deity are getting along pretty well, start to ease yourself out of your divine comfort zone by hooking up with a more primal deity in the same pantheon. If you like Greeks, go to Hecate; if you like Celts, go to Cerridwen; Egyptian, go to Ma’at. It is like the sacred spiral- gradually inward and inward.

Remember, even if you do develop a personal relationship with a single deity, you can still call on any One that would be of use to you in your spell work. Just because our ancestors probably didn’t do things that way doesn’t mean we have to stop. It’s called progress

*Debra McVay :I’m a 31 year old mother of three, and have been married for nine years to a fellow practitioner in the Craft. I specialize in the study of Chakras and their effect on helth and happiness, herbalism, homeopathy and I am also a homeschooler and a unassisted homebirth advocate. We do not follow any one tradition because we believe that wisdom can come from any source. We live in rural Alabama.*





# My Year in the Outer Grove II

by Luis Green Stone

*(This Outer Grove is taught by Moonson and Woodson of Hearthstone Coven, a Gardnerian based group just outside of Renton, WA We start interviews in December and they are ongoing until the first class, usually beginning in early February. Send mail to srval@comcast.net for more info)*

**Editor's note: This article is being split in half, the first half in issue 45 and the second half in issue 46.**

## Autumn

Early in September, Bran and I trimmed back the stout shooters from the Rowan tree that had started to push up under the eaves of the roof. "Better us than some stranger," we thought! Bran cut a sturdy staff for me from some of the precious wood; I carefully peeled the bark off the staff. I wove the bark into a Bridget's cross, also for my final project.

By Mabon, we had been packing for about a month! We were active in the SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism); I had materials from my craft business; we had ten very full bookcases and, well, we just had a lot of stuff! It took a week to move out and clean up the old place. Everything was packed and, therefore to me, missing! All my magickal books and tools, my art supplies, my shoes! I couldn't find anything. I felt that all my treasures, including my Harry Potter collection, had been swept up into the "portal" we had set up in one of our OG classes! Still, there we were at "Acorn Bungalow," as we had named our new home. Looking out the front room window, I could see my old friend, the moon, shining through the branches of a massive pin oak that grew in the yard. In the morning I startled two young raccoons that scurried up into the branches of the old oak for safety. My Rowan staff was now in my basement studio, which was full of boxes. I wanted to wood burn a sigil rune onto it, but my pyrography kit was packed. I'd just have to be patient and chip away at things, eh?

In my recent past, I had lost several close family members (including my brother) in a short space of time, which accounted for much of the extensive mental discipline work

I was going through at this time. In many ways I was beginning to re-invent myself after a long dark period of grief and sorrow. My mental exercises were helping me to feel better. In place of reliving traumatic events over and over in my head, I filled my mind with my meditations on Nature; I watched and listened for all that Nature had to say to me.

Samhain didn't make me feel sad at all. I'd always loved Hallowe'en time and had in the past put up my own *Dia de los Muertos* altars. The altar set up in my Outer Grove class brought to mind the "happy times". As we decorated our "calaveras" (sugar skulls), I was able to tell part of my story to my Outer Grove friends whom I had come to like and trust.

From the workshop\_ Bran and I attended last summer, I had learned some insightful elemental working that I now incorporated into my morning mental health routine. My commute was now much longer from my new house, but that was OK because it gave me more time for my meditations and observations.

My class was to attend a "Hecate's Night". To ease my nervousness, I put up a strong shield before the event; this helped keep me balanced and comfortable. After the long ritual that was held outside on a cold, clear November night, I entered the house in silence for the "Dumb Supper," when I saw something very strange: a huge bumblebee flying in circles above and around the Dumb Supper that had been set out in the dining room. Her droning buzz the only sound in the room, she circled the table three times and then, just as most of the other people were coming in from the outside, she landed on a nearby hutch and crawled into a little cubby, just like it was her little home! Nature always has important information if we are willing to listen. Perhaps this bumblebee was going to guide the souls of the dead safely to the path of the otherworld?

I had to admit it was getting difficult to continue with our training as we had so many other activities going on. I was going to vend at a couple of craft shows, and I was pushing really hard to get my online shop up and going before the holidays.

Bran and I were feeling really tanked; we'd look at each

other and say: “Yay, verily yay!” But since we were nearly through our year and a day, no sense stopping now!

I was now able to sustain a sense of calm as I wove a little magick into my life every day; the presence of something divine helped me to grow stronger with each passing day and the changing seasons.

## Winter

After our very last day of Outer Grove, Bran and I attended a henna tribe party hosted by a friend of mine who is an excellent henna artist. I study the exotic Mehndi she had done on my hand, which resembles a Moroccan snowflake. The design perfectly marks the end of my training with my group as the wheel of my Outer Grove training completes its cycle.

Bran and I were booked solid during the holidays (including breaking in our new kitchen by baking 35 dozen cookies which we gave as Christmas gifts!), but I also did a couple of craft shows and, since we both have relatives that live nearby, we had lots of family activities.

As a vegetarian, non-commercial Pagan, I often felt like a “Stranger in a Strange Land” during the Christmas season. One thing that helped me put things in perspective this year was the fact that my Outer Grove class was going to create and present a Yule celebration to our teachers and elders. I loved helping to write the ritual and taking the time to reflect on the nature of winter. For my part, I put together a candle-making workshop. We used our hand-made candles as part of our ritual, which was well received by all. We concluded with a delicious feast, which offered several tasty vegetarian items. Driving home that evening, Bran and I felt satisfied that all our hard work had indeed made for a very memorable Yule event, the beautiful moon (Long Night Moon) following us all the way back to our new home.

About a week before our last class and “final project,” I found my Rowanberry mala. I also found my pyrography supplies, so I was able to do some wood-burning designs on the wand I had made and to burn a sigil rune on my staff for my Outer Grove final: “What the Rowan tree gave me”.

What a year for Bran and me! Had I known what a hectic year this was going to be, I may have postponed my Outer Grove training for another year. But you know what? My life is always busy and hectic: I’m a writer and an artist, I teach classes, I work full time, and do an occasional henna gig. By the Goddess, I get tired just thinking about it! “Well, don’t think about it then, just do it,” my new inner voice says. There is never “downtime” for Bran and me. So I’m glad we took Outer Grove when we did.

I look at the sepia brown Moroccan snowflake on my

hand as I go through my very full Outer Grove notebook. I’ve come across a red triangle, carefully drawn on a white sheet of paper, secured in a clear sheet protector like many of the other handouts and bits of information I’d collected that year. I can sort of visualize a shape now, but I realize, “hey, that’s OK!” I can control my inner chatter; I can produce an adequate protective shield (well, it’s not a Patronus Charm, but it does keep me safe in the busy, slightly scary downtown area where I work). I can even “block” trouble-makers from entering my shop or loitering in the doorway.

Some folks are Techno Mages; some people are naturally clairvoyant and gifted at divination; others have constructed astral-temples with Doric style columns, blue swans in a crystal pond and an etheric cat that accompanies them on their shamanic journeys.

My magick is expressed physically; my connection to the divine is obtained when I am crafting or writing; my spirituality shows itself through my poetry or designs. When I craft henna designs on a person’s hands that becomes my form of divination or a vehicle for sending healing energy. I’ve come to understand that my life in the Craft comes to me by crafting. And my astral temple? It’s all around me: crocuses blooming in my new yard, the moon shining through the branches of our pin oak. All of Nature is the perfect church for Bran and me. As well as crafting, promoting Nature any way I can is a prominent aspect of my new practice.

That is what Outer Grove was like for me, a year of personal growth and discovery. Outer Grove is different for each individual who goes through the training. Here I have shared with you the details of my personal journey through the year. Yes, I’ve left out the details of the curriculum we used or the rituals we participated in. To truly know the mysteries of Outer Grove, it is necessary to become an Outer Grove student and discover its secrets for oneself.

I move forward from my Outer Grove year with a great sense of accomplishment. For me, Outer Grove occurred in the middle of my life-long learning process, and at the same time was a great place to start over and discover a new me.

Finally, to those who teach: who give freely of their time and energy to keep the Craft alive, and who bring it to life for knowledge-seekers like me, my profound THANKS! I couldn’t have done it without you.

*Luis Green Stone is a visionary artist and writer. She is also a Henna artist and art teacher. For over two decades she has plied her crafts at festivals and galleries along the West Coast. Luis also publishes under the name Lisa Noble, and has currently opened her new on-line shop: Goddess Within Fine Arts: [www.cafepress.com/lisanoble](http://www.cafepress.com/lisanoble)*

# Wild Women!

## *Exploring Your Inner Amazon*

by Gloria Taylor Brown

Wildness is our birthright as women. It allows us to step out of the mold of “good little girls” and “nice ladies” into a more powerful position of being who we are, complete and whole.

Many women have lost touch with their wildness, and are even actively afraid of exploring that part of their psyche. Several years ago, I led women’s circles in Costa Rica. After the International Women’s Congress in San Jose, we had a full moon circle that had over 75 women participating. As we ended the circle, I began a “howl” and encouraged others to join in. For 15 minutes, the sound of women howling at the moon rose up to the heavens. All the neighboring dogs joined in. It was a beautiful, wild sound. (The neighbors were probably less impressed.)

Later, many of the women came to me, and told me that this experience had been the first time they had EVER contacted that wild spirit that lives in all of us. Some shared that they were sure we would be arrested. (Actually a real fear; we were in fact breaking the law, I found out later.)

This was so sad. Here were these bright, wonderful women from many countries who were terribly frightened to have a simple howl at the moon.

We now know that many of today’s evil witches and villainesses were once yesterday’s Goddesses. But patriarchy, society, even women themselves have discouraged and outlawed the mere thought of wildness.

Yet... this wildness lives. I can see it in their eyes. I can feel it in the drumbeats. I can hear it in their songs. There is great power there. I want to help them harness that power, and USE it to strengthen their lives today.

Reviled by the patriarchy, seen as a threat to the status quo, the female archetype of the Wild Woman is present in myths and cultures around the world. From Kali in India to Medusa in Greece, to Donesequah in the Pacific NW, these women and their followers were portrayed as monsters, devouring men and children.

Women should know Bast, the sensual cat goddess of Egypt, and they should also know Sekhmet, the lion headed goddess of power. They could have a close relationship with the beautiful goddess of abundance from India, Sarasvati, and still experience Kali, the Indian goddess of death and destruction.

Kali is an aspect of Devi, the one who saved the world when Shiva, her male counterpart, could not, who defeated the demon Durga, then took Durga as part of her name to honor her victory. Kali is the essence of the night, wor-

shipped on the 9th day of the month; she releases the soul from the bonds of existence. Frightening and terrible as she appears, she is compassionate and caring, gathering to her those that have no one else, surrounded by female spirits.

Sekhmet has a terrible reputation, since she was sent to earth to put fear of Ra in the hearts of humans, and almost destroyed them to do it, yet she is also the compassionate healer that is called upon in times of plague. When I take people to Egypt, as we stand before the statue of Sekhmet, where she has stood for over 3000 years, people weep at the love that they feel, the understanding and caring that comes from Sekhmet, whose very name means power.

Entering the wild can be scary. We are trained from birth to suppress our wilder urges. And in order to live in a society there must be some rules, some agreement of civilized behavior. And yet — when you push the wild out of your life so completely, it has to find other places to live. If it can’t be in you - then it will exist outside of you and be much scarier than coming to terms with that inner wildness, for no matter how hard we try to weed it out, it is still there.

For in that wild, shadowy part of us lives great power and great spirit. When we try to suppress and marginalize it, we end up losing a part of ourselves. We each need to have a wild corner in the well-tended garden of our souls.

Explore your wildness. Go on hikes into nature, swim with dolphins, howl with wolves, and walk in the woods. Create a place where you can explore the wild, in yourself, and in your world.

We were never meant to live a tame, sedentary, boring life all the time. We are designed to seek the thrill of adrenaline, the rush that comes with excitement, the quickened pulse of doing something that scares us. This is what being physical is all about! Moving our bodies, exploring the physical world, creating a life filled with passion and purpose. This is where the power of the wild can come into our civilized world and be harnessed to help us get where we want to go. When we marginalize, ostracize and deny it, it comes through as disease, and unhappiness, for the wild will always find a place to live.

How can you tell if you are a Wild Woman?

### **Wild Women Don’t**

- Accept limitations based on gender
- Follow rules designed to keep women in “their



place”

- Fit into a niche or a stereotype

### **Wild Women Do**

- Create their own universe
- Make their own rules
- Accept responsibility for their emotions at all times. They realize that happiness or unhappiness is a choice.
- Recognize their own skills and talents and use them to their fullest
- Allow other women and men rights and privileges as though they were hers
- Care for children, the ill, the disabled, and the aged to the best of their abilities without guilt or anger
- See clearly
- Seek their desires
- Enjoy sex and intimacy, or not, as they choose
- Work with others to realize their goals
- Support their sisters

The following is a guided meditation, a shamanic journey to meet your Inner Amazon. It is also available online as a downloadable voice recording at [www.gloriataylorbrown.com/journeys](http://www.gloriataylorbrown.com/journeys)

First, a brief bit of history about the Amazon and then we will go on a journey:

The earliest written records of the Amazon women are from the Greek historian Herodotus in the 5th century BCE.

The stories of the Amazons have grown in the telling, but there is little doubt that they did exist. Their land was to the north of Greece, along the Black Sea. These women fought so well as to win the admiration of the Greeks, a war-like people famous for conquering neighboring countries.

However, they were not always warring. One writer says that the Amazons occupied their time performing various tasks, planting, pasturing cattle, and particularly training horses, though the bravest engage mostly in hunting on horseback and practicing warlike exercises. They are trained in the use of the bow and the javelin, the double bit-tem ax and a light shield. They make helmets and clothing from the skins of wild animals. They rode horses, like they were part of the animal.

Were they an exclusively female group? Probably not, however, the evidence is clear that this was a matriarchy, ruled by two queens, one for external affairs, the other for domestic.

Another writer, a current archeologist who is excavating the graves of Amazons in Southern Russia, states that from the evidence of the graves it is clear...females held a unique position in society. They seem to have controlled

much of the wealth, performed rituals for their families and their clans, rode horseback, and hunted steppe antelope and other small game. In times of stress, when their territory or possessions were threatened, they took to their saddles, bows and arrows ready, to defend their animals, pastures and clan.

The Amazons bring us strength and resolve, the ability to do what needs doing, when it needs doing. They show us how to be leaders and to keep ourselves honest and true to our calling.

This shamanic journey will allow you to make connections with the Amazons, in fact to become one of them and to become one with them. Give yourself plenty of space to stand and move around.

Put any animals out that would interfere with your journey, silence the phone, and give yourself the space you need to truly experience this meditation.

### **Journey to the land of the Amazons**

Stand with your body loose and free, searching out any tension or stress. Release all the tension. Ground and center your body, anchoring yourself to the planet and providing yourself with a safe space. Send down a grounding cord, deep into the earth. Feel it connecting and moving around the roots and rocks of the earth, to the warm heart center of the planet.

Breathe deeply, allowing yourself to relax all expectation of what will occur next, what changes will be wrought by this meditation. Accept what happens, as it happens.

Continue to breathe, up from the earth, down from the sky, filling your being with the air you so need. Allow your knees to flex, and your hands to hang relaxed at your sides.

You may feel a rustle in the air, or hear the clank of armor as Amazons enter this space and time, and one will come to stand behind you. She is fully armored, and offers her weapons and skills to you. She whispers her name in your ear.

If you accept, she will move into your body, you will feel her strength, and you will know that she is there. As you accept her more and more, her arms will become your arms, her heart, yours. As her strength and power merge with yours, you see before you a path of rough-cut stones.

Walk down the path, feeling your armor, your weapons, your powerful strong body. You may find you are leading a horse, or that another animal has joined you.

At the end of the path, you come into a clearing, and the other women are there to greet you, many women, young and old, some in armor, some in fine linens. This is your clan and you have come together for an important ceremony. It is very dark in the forest around you, but there is a fire in the center of the clearing, lighting you and warming you. The drums begin playing, slowly ramping up in

intensity, and you notice they have the sound of the wild within them. As the fire flares up, heating the clearing more and more, the other women begin to lay down their shields and their weapons.

The drums beat stronger and stronger, as the women begin to dance around the fire. Some dance with one another, some dance alone, but they are all aware of each other and this important moment they have come to share. This is a moment of cleansing, of clearing, a time to release all that no longer serves them.

Then, first one woman, and then another step into the fire, the fire shoots up around them and they dance within the flames, and as they dance, they become clearer and brighter, until they themselves are blue flames, burning away all that no longer serves them, becoming stronger and clearer in their power. And as you watch, you may choose to enter the fire, to dance inside the fire, to feel your power increase, your inner warrior become stronger.

The women dance in the fire, until there is no more fire. Until all that remains is a pile of coals and ash. Even if you have not danced in the fire, you know that anything you no longer need has burned away, any emotions - anger or upset that you no longer want or need burns away, leaving you a clear, clean heart. You now have the heart of an Amazon, forever strong, forever changing.

As the women fall to the floor of the forest, exhausted from their dance, you sit and rest, and remember this experience, to bring back with you to this time and place, that you too have been through the fire, and come clean on the other side. A cool breeze blows through the clearing, and the women once more don their clothes and armor. One by one, they come to you, pressing their hands in yours, pledging their support to you. They may have a word of advice, or a gift for you.

You may give them gifts, or merely thanks for being there for you. It is time to leave now, and return to this time and place.

Come back now, knowing you are always safe. You may release your Amazon, or you may ask her to stay with you, to provide you with protection in your every day life. Whichever you choose, you keep the armor. It will defend you from this day forth, as you go forward, acknowledging your wild spirit within.

Rest in your body, and in your power as an Amazon, a true Wild Woman.

Write in your journals, recording any images you may have received, as well as any messages.

*Gloria Taylor Brown is proud to be called a Wild Woman. She has studied with many teachers, taught classes in several countries, and continues to explore the wild. For more information, go to <http://www.gloriataylorbrown.com>. Gloria's free A Voice for Spirit broadcasts are available at <http://avoiceforspirit.com>. She will be teaching this summer at Nicki Scully's Egyptian Mysteries retreat in Eugene. August 19-23rd, 2009. <http://www.shamanicmysteries.com> Gloria will be co-leading a tour for writers to Egypt with Normandi Ellis, author of *Awakening Osiris*: Oct. 13-27th, 2009.*

## When I Am An Old Horsewoman

When I Am An Old Horsewoman  
I shall wear turquoise and diamonds,  
and a straw hat that doesn't suit me.  
And I shall spend my social security on  
white wine and carrots.

And sit in the alleyway of my barn  
and listen to my horses breathe.  
I will sneak out in the middle of a summer night,  
and ride the old bay mare across the  
moonstruck meadow.

If my old bones will allow and when people  
come to call,  
I will smile and nod as I walk past the  
gardens to the barn.  
And show instead of the flowers growing,  
inside stalls fresh-lined with straw.  
I will shovel and sweat  
and wear hay in my hair  
as if it were a jewel.

And I will be an embarrassment to all  
who will not yet have found the peace  
in being free to have a horse as a best  
friend.

A friend who waits at midnight hour  
With muzzle and nicker and patient eyes.

The kind of woman I will be  
When I am old.  
An old horsewoman.

~ Anonymous

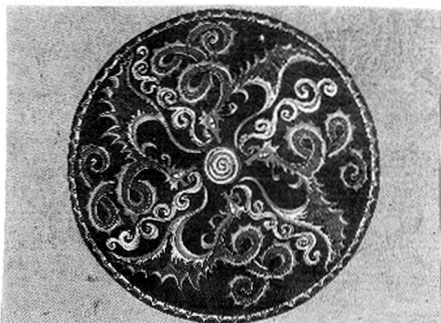
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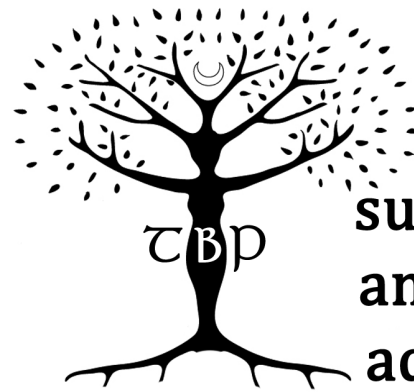


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