



EarthTides Pagan Network News

Living in Maine, Celebrating the Earth



The Imbolc Hearth

At this time of renewal and rededication of the Light, we turn our attention to the seat of that Light, the hearth. Simply speaking, the hearth is the floor of the fireplace upon which the home fire burns inside the house. Most people in Western society no longer have a literal hearth in their dwellings, but we all possess a figurative hearth – a spiritual or emotional center made material in some form in the places where we live, and it remains only for us to identify and honor it.

The hearth is the mystic center of our lives and our world, a form of “domestic sun,” and a symbol of our home – that place to which return to be rested and refreshed, and from which we emerge revitalized. The hearth is the Greek “omphalos” or the Latin “umbilicum orbis” – the navel of the world – the interior, spiritual center, and the point representing our natal connection to Goddess.

In Vedic tradition, the earth itself is the round hearth of life, the realm of humanity. Our term hearth, in fact comes from the Germanic word “erde,” meaning earth. Just as the earth is where our spirits incarnate in our bodies, the hearth is where spirit joins with matter. The hearth is most often conceptualized as female, but it is the conjunction of the male element, fire, with the female element, earth, to form material life. The hearth is always a material manifestation of spirit.

In many cultures, the hearth is associated with Bear, and in Native American tradition, the hearth stone is represented by Bear. This most sacred of animals, indeed

the earliest animal known to be worshiped by humans, is revered for its subterranean powers, living in caves, sleeping in underground dens, emerging from the life-giving hearth of the earth in spring with cubs already born – a symbol of resurrection, initiation, and inspiration. This “Bear Madonna” is found throughout the world.

There are Hearth Goddesses throughout the world. Familiar to us in Western culture are the Greek (Artemis) and the Roman (Diana) Goddesses. In the cult of Artemis (and later of Diana), She is the “Lady of the Beasts,” often portrayed as having the head of a bear. She is the protector of animals, and of the animal or instinctual nature of humans. In ancient times, girls from five to ten years of age dressed in yellow robes and imitated bears at the Brauronia – Festival of the Sacred Bear – and before marrying, had to spend a period of time in this guise, spiritually preparing to tend their won sacred hearths. Hestia, Goddess of the Sacred Hearth and ancient Greece’s oldest Goddess-matriarch, became Vesta in Roman times. Her devotees, the Vestal Virgins, guarded Her public hearth and kept Her perpetual flame burning. Some research suggests that their duties also included sex-sacraments to both ritually and physically keep the “flame” alight. Only women were allowed to attend Her festivals.

Farther north, in Scandinavian and Germanic tradition, Holle or Hel fulfilled the role of the Hearth Goddess. She was Queen of the Underworld and Her hearth

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The Goddess Silica and her consort, Lord Tecknos





The Imbolc Hearth (Cont'd)

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was a sacred cauldron, the womb of regeneration. She received the souls of the dead and released them as newborns. Unlike Mediterranean practice, however, where only women were allowed in Vesta's temple ceremonies, in the north men also participated in the rites of Hel, and were thus known as Helmen. Later, Hel was demonized by Christians, Her sacred flame became the fires of Hel (Hell), and she was banished to the underworld as the queen of witches. May we yet be warmed by Her loving flame!

At this Imbolc, locate the hearth in your home and create ways of honoring it. Your hearth might be an actual fireplace or wood stove, or any other place indoors that evokes a sense of centering and warmth. This is the place you go to become revitalized. If you lack a fireplace, a small cast iron pot on a well-insulated trivet could contain a small twig fire. In our house, we have two wood stoves – one for cooking and one for heating – but since both are “working fires,” there is no room to make them into altars. Instead, I keep a large jar full of a special herbal mix and take out a pinch of it to drop on the hot stove surface whenever I need a little centering or revitalizing. Reciting a chant or spell while sniffing the brief incense of the incinerating herbs is a quick and satisfying ritual.

Since the hearth is a seat of fire, it should involve some sort flame, but fire may not be possible or practical in your own dwelling. If this is your situation, you could make a “virtual fire” out of red foil or a small curtain of red glass beads.

Bright Blessings, Marigold

Discover Spiral Scouts!

Looking for a different kind of scouting experience for your kid?

We are an eclectic, nature-based Pagan Circle. We seek to help boys and girls cultivate a holistic spiritual worldview as they learn, work and play together. Children are actively involved in creating and directing their own learning in an inclusive, accepting and nurturing environment. We have openings for girls and boys ages 5-12.

For more information, contact: Lisa Marie: 423-5184, lminden@usm.maine.edu
Nikki: 929-3574, nikmat@psouth.net
Hope: 799-1912, beckers@gwi.net
www.spiralscouts.org



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About the EarthTides Pagan Network

The Maine Pagan community is diverse, independent and geographically distant. We worship in groups or alone, but sometimes need contact and a shared forum to express our ideas and concerns for this community.

The EarthTides Pagan Network was established in 1989 as a support resource for Maine Pagans. All solitaries and groups are welcome to join.

A subscription to this newsletter is available for a

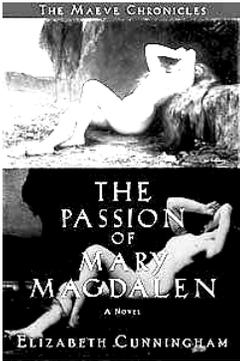
suggested donation of \$11.00 per year. Single copies may be obtained by sending a \$1.50 donation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: EPN, P.O. Box 161, E. Winthrop, ME 04343.

E-mail: e pn@maine.rr.com

Submission deadline for the Ostara, 06 issue is February 21, 2006.

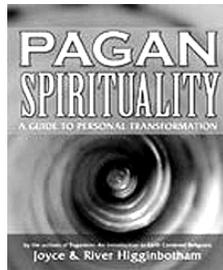


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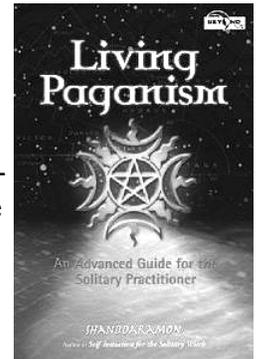


The Passion of Mary Magdalen by Elizabeth Cunningham is the second in her Maeve Chronicles trilogy, which stands on its own as a great story. Maeve is a strong, feisty woman, Druid raised and trained, who finds herself a slave in Ancient Rome. Her life takes her to Judea, where she settles in the town of Magdala and is called Mary. The rest, to those who read and enjoyed the Da Vinci Code, is history. Good writing, good characters, and a bit more of the feminine view of biblical events. Monkfish Publishing, \$29.95, due out April, 2006.

Pagan Spirituality, by Joyce and River Higginbotham, leads readers on the path of personal transformation. The Higginbothams are experienced teachers, and authors of the excellent introductory text *Paganism: An Introduction to Earth-Centered Religions*. Their second book takes seekers beyond the beginners' level, encouraging development in magick and energy work, divination, communing and spiritual relationships, and conscious creation. Using journaling, exercises, discussion questions, and ritual, the authors present a clear path to follow. Llewellyn, \$14.95.



Living Paganism, by Shanddaramon, is also on the intermediate level. Taking as his premise the belief that Paganism isn't just a "Saturday go to circle" kind of religion, the author suggests ways to live a Pagan life. Through the self-determination of spiritual goals and how to achieve them, relating personal life cycles to those of nature and the Pagan year, a series of exercises, and some good information on correspondences, Shanddaramon offers the intermediate practitioner some good ideas for moving forward. New Page, \$14.99.



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting for the EarthTides Pagan Network will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2006. We will meet at "Ironwood Grove" in the town of Sidney, Maine (between Augusta and Waterville). For directions, please call Harper and/or Arwen at 547-4200.

Please think about what you want to see EarthTides accomplishing in the coming year. Bring your ideas (and a snack to share) to the meeting. See you there!!!

About the EarthTides Pagan Network News

This newsletter comes out eight times a year, around the Sabbats. Literary, poetic and artistic contributions are welcome, as are opinion pieces. Please keep submissions to no more than two pages, double-spaced. Please submit on disk or e-mail to anu_dudley@umit.maine.edu

Subscribers' names, addresses and other personal information are kept confidential except to other network members. EPN will aid in establishing contact between individuals, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results.

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Starcat's Corner: Paying Attention

It is Imbolc, the time when we plant the seeds of the spiritual work we want to pursue this year. We pledge our goals and intents, letting the growing light feed them as the wheel begins to turn slowly toward spring. But what about the step that comes before that pledge? How do we know what our goals should be? How do we decide where to focus our magick?

To some people, those questions will be moot. The

focus is obvious: if you are feeling ill, your intent will be to heal; if you're looking for a new job or home, you'll want to put your energy behind that process. But for others, it may not be so crystal-clear. Perhaps you're feeling uninspired, and not sure what to focus on. Or maybe there are so many exciting possibilities that you're having trouble choosing. A simple-

sounding yet profound technique may be just the tool you need: mindfulness meditation. Or, even more simply put: paying attention.

Mindfulness meditation is an ancient Buddhist practice. Depending on where you learn it, there are certain techniques and ways of practicing. What I'm talking about here, though, is the art of being in the moment, of paying careful attention as you go through daily life. No matter what you are doing, the idea is to stay present, rather than allowing your thoughts to dwell in the past or speculate about the future.

In his book *Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), Jon Kabat-Zinn describes mindfulness as "the art of conscious living." He goes on, "mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality. It wakes us up to the fact

that our lives unfold only in moments. If we are not fully present for many of those moments, we may not only miss what is most valuable in our lives but also fail to realize the richness and the depth of our possibilities for growth and transformation (page 4)."

You may wonder about the seeming paradox between "being with what is" and actively practicing magick ("the art of changing consciousness at will"). However, used as a tool, mindfulness meditation can pro-

vide clues about potential goals. You can then pursue those goals with a clear, strong intent, consciously choosing the best path for your future growth.

There are various ways these clues might arise. First, as you practice being in the moment, you'll notice that it is sometimes difficult and at



other times easy. Ask yourself: "What is it difficult for me to be here for?" "What activities or places cause me joy and ease in the moment?" Explore the emotions that arise, not judging them, but noticing what they are and what situations seem to trigger them. You may find some new insights into areas you want to explore.

Second, as you clear your mind, you may begin to notice things you would have once overlooked. Augury, or the art of divination by the observation of natural phenomena, can bring you personalized information. For example, seeing a deer break away from the herd and leap joyfully over a fallen log might spark a thought in you about a new approach to a troubled relationship. You can then form that crystallized awareness into a resolution for your work this year.

In a similar vein, you might begin to notice moments of synchronicity that point you toward your goals. Perhaps you've been thinking of going back to college, but you don't quite know what you want to study. A friend happens to mention an article she read

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Greenwitch: Marigold's Herbal Hearth Mixture

For a quick hearth ritual, I keep an apothecary jar filled with a mixture of dried cedar twigs and garden thyme. I gather cedar tips in the fall and dry them on screens in a dark, warm place for several weeks til they snap easily between my fingers. The thyme gets trimmed at the end of the summer after it has gathered lots of sunshine. I dry it, again, on screens for a few weeks. Then, I crumble both together and place the mixture in my jar, which has a mouth large enough for my fist to pass in and out comfortably. The jar has a tight fitting cover which keeps the contents dry.

Cedar, ruled by the sun and elementally related to fire, is used in healing, purification, and protection spells. It is a favorite of Native Americans for purification during sweat lodge ceremonies. Thyme, for healing and purification, was used traditionally in ancient Greek temple incense to cleanse the space for ritual.

While tidying up, getting ready to prepare a meal, when I need a little grounding, or just for the heck of it, I take a bit of Hearth Mix between my fingers and drop it on the hottest part of the stove. Then I inhale the little puff of smoke while visualizing myself incandescing like the herbs and being purified and renewed.

Bright Blessings, Marigold

EPN T-Shirts

In case you missed it, EPN still has a few more of our beautiful T-Shirts available for sale. This design sports the original EPN logo and is available in Birch, Sand and Natural.

\$15.00 S,M,L,XL

\$17.00 2X

Order now for Yule!

E.P.N. P.O. Box 161,



Acorn Circle

A meeting will be held at Sam's Restaurant in Lisbon Falls on Lisbon Road 5:30-7:00 PM the fourth Wednesday of each month until further notice. We will meet and discuss the Acorn Circle with potential new members who may be interested in being a part of the Acorn Circle, an eclectic American Wiccan group. We are a structured circle with degree training available that holds rituals for the holidays and moon ritual work. All training is free and done entirely on a voluntary basis. The Acorn Circle at this time is only accepting adult members. If you are interested in learning more, simply come to the meeting or e-mail me at vernalnox1@yahoo.com.



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Starcat's Corner (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 4)

about Native American artifacts being unearthed in Vermont, and the next day you see an ad for a nearby college that mentions their acclaimed archaeology program. You remember that when you were in elementary school, that was what you wanted to do when you grew up. Aha! Suddenly you're excited about this new path. Opening and clearing your mind can allow long-held desires to rise to the surface.

The ideas and insights that come up for you while practicing mindfulness will be uniquely yours. You can then mold them into a magickal intent to plant at Imbolc, and concrete actions to take throughout the year. Who knows, you may even find that the further practice of mindfulness itself becomes a goal! May you find and plant the seeds that are just right for your own spiritual garden. Blessed Imbolc!



Calendar of Events

NOTE: If you'd like your event included in our calendar of events, please send us an e-mail, with Calendar Listings as the subject, to grove@ctel.net before the deadline for the issue in which you'd like it listed. Each issue of the newsletter lists the next deadline on the front page.

If you would like an extra copy of this calendar to post on a public bulletin board, please feel free to photocopy it freely. If you know a business in your area which would like to post one, please send the information to the above e-mail address and we'll add it to the mailing list.

As a service to the Pagan community, we seek to list as many events as possible that would be of interest to Maine Pagans. You need not be a member of EPN, or even a subscriber to this newsletter, to list an event here. All we ask is that events be non-profit -- that is, that any fees for participating not exceed the reasonable cost of putting on the event -- and submitted to us by e-mail or post by the publication deadline. (Those planning for-profit events are welcome to avail themselves of our very affordable advertising opportunities.)

We make no claim as to the value or safety of any of these events, and caution our readers to rely on their own best judgment when assessing any situation, particularly those involving strangers. That said, we also encourage you to participate in as wide a spectrum of the Pagan community as you can, both for your own enjoyment and because our community needs your positive energy and good fellowship.

No Known Open Activities February—April

Feb 2 Imbolc, 12 Full Moon, 27 New Moon

March

14 Full Moon and eclipse, 20 Spring Equinox
29 New Moon and early morning solar eclipse

April 13 Full Moon

September

30 Saturday—Norse Blot at Ironwood Hollow in Sidney. Drinking age only. Norse all-night toasting/blessing mead ritual. We'll need firm early RSVP, in order to supply sufficient beverages, so that's why the early announcement. Not restricted to Norse practitioners! For details and directions, e-mail grove@ctel.net.

Monthly Events

Open Circles in Lubec, Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. Circle meetings are open to all like-minded individuals. For details on the subject each month, contact the store at 733-4999. 10 Barker Lane. From Route 1 in Whiting, take 189 to Lubec, and in 6 miles, watch for the pretty purple building.

Pagan Coffee Klatch, Quilting Bee and Clothing Swap. Gardiner. For further information, contact Jani at fritti.cat@verizon.net.

Druidry/Pagan Practice and Training, Bar Mills. For further information, contact Kevin at shathod@sacoriver.net. These are two-hour sessions, held one Sunday afternoon per month, and open to beginners and more advanced practitioners; participants of all Pagan paths are welcome.

Acorn Circle 4th Wednesday of each month until further notice at Sam's Restaurant in Lisbon Falls on Lisbon Road 5:30-7:00 PM For Info email: vernalnox1@yahoo.com.

Monthly Full Moon rituals in Phippsburg. Please contact us at 207-389-2423 or labrinth@whisperinggrove.com to find out if an event has been cancelled due to weather conditions. All events are universal and though they may use liturgy or ritual from various traditions, it is not implied that the Whispering Grove Labyrinth of Spiritual Community is affiliated with any particular tradition or religion. We are an open community and everyone is welcome.

Portland Pagan Meetup Group, each third Sunday at Boarder's Cafe in South Portland, 6:00 PM. Interested people please sign up on the Meetup website, letting Diane know. 430 Gorham Road in South Portland. Website: <http://pagan.meetup.com/361/>

Website II: <http://groups.msn.com/MysticalMaineMoon>



Networking

The people and groups listed here are mentioned because they have done two things: They have volunteered to serve as points of contact for those seeking Pagan community, and they have agreed to follow a set of basic rules of ethical conduct. Any person or group may be listed here by subscribing to this newsletter and agreeing to those expectations; please contact EPN to arrange such a listing.

EPN has no interest in serving as the "Pagan police," and explicitly supports the autonomy of each person and group in matters of faith, belief and worship. The Maine Pagan community encompasses a wide variety of people and practices, and seekers are cautioned that any person or activity that makes you uncomfortable is probably wrong for you.

Groups and individuals who seek networking opportunities but are reluctant to sign the Standards are encouraged to take advantage of our advertising columns.

AUGUSTA AREA

Bill and Johanna Chellis. Pantheists working with the circle, wheel and labyrinth. 685-3860

Immanent Grove. A fellowship of practicing Pagans of all persuasions. Members pursue their own personal relationships with the Gods. We're interested in corresponding with experienced Pagans who would like to work with us. Harper and Arwen, Immanent Grove, Box 2328 Middle Road, Sidney, ME 04330

OXFORD HILLS AREA

Khyrohn Ni Mara. Eclectic Wiccan focusing on healing through herbs and drumming. RR1 Box 2606, N. Waterford, ME 04267. 583-4215.

PORTLAND/YORK COUNTY

Temple of Brigantia. Wiccan group honoring the Goddesses and Gods of Britain and Rome. Offering open Full Moon rituals and accepting selected candidates for apprenticeship. Jane/Cassius, 646-6634 or temple@janeraeburn.com

Circle of the Silver Cauldron, Atlantic. Eclectic Wiccan coven emphasizing creativity and self-development. Great Day celebrations open to the community. Contact Thea or Harry, 282-1491 or oldewtch@maine.rr.com

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Deaf Pagans. I would love to meet Deaf adults who are Pagan and other Pagan parents of Deaf children. Ede, 353-6202 (V/TTY) or ede@clinic.net

PanCraft. Pagan artists, musicians and others beloved of the Muses get together to share their work and honor the Deities who inspire them. Harper and Arwen, Box 2328 Middle Road, Sidney, ME 04330

ONLINE RESOURCES

EPN website <http://www.earthtides.org>

Maine Pagan Resource Page,

<http://www.janeraeburn.com/maine>

Maine Pagan Clergy Association website,

<http://www.maine paganclergy.org>

Maine Pagan Mailing List, to join send blank e-mail to: mepagan-subscribe@egroups.com

EPN Mailing List (open to newsletter subscribers only), to join send blank e-mail to: earthtides-subscribe@egroups.com

Maine Pagan Politics List, to join send blank e-mail to: meppolitics-subscribe@egroups.com

<http://www.frappr.com/mep> is an online site that maps the location of voluntarily supplied Pagan folks in Maine. Check it out, add yourself, meet some fellow Pagans in your area!

BE A PART OF EPN

Stay connected with the community! Annual subscription is \$11.00 for 8 issues of this newsletter.

NAME: _____

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This is a (check one):

New membership Renewal

STATE: _____

Mail to: EPN, P.O. Box 161, E. Winthrop, ME 04343.

See Annual Meeting notice on Page 3!

**EPN
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www.earthtides.org**