THE GEORGIAN NEWSLETTER

YULE 2007

What's Inside:

- Spotlight
- Recipes & Helpful Hints
- Musings from the readers
- Announcements
- Arts
- Tarot
- Warriors
- Georgian's Behaving Badly

SPOTLIGHT

Randy (Puck)

First, a little about Puck here. He is a Georgian High Priest and Elder. He is also the High Priest of The Coven of the Samhain Moon.

GNL – So puck, what's it like being an Georgian Elder? And no, I'm not referring to the fact that you just turned the big "five ooohhhhhh"

Puck - Well, sometimes I think, "SHEESH! I'm and ELDER!"... and sometimes, I think, "I'm an Elder?!?" LOL!
All in all, it feels good.

GNL - When did you "discover" Paganism and Wicca. Tell us a little bit. Have you always been a freak like the rest of us?

Puck - Define "Freak!" Seriously, I'd had an interest in Wicca and Witchcraft ever since I got the crap scared out of me, watching "The Wizard of Oz" when I was about 4! In Junior High School, I had a friend who said he was a witch, and we tried doing a few spells together...thankfully, none of 'em worked! <g>
I actually got really interested in it when I went into the Navy, and met Pat, Bobbie, and the Georgians during Samhain, 1976. Talk about an eye-opening experience!!! We had to do an emergency healing, and I could actually feel the energy they raised going around me. I went back to Monterey with Herb, (who I'd driven down with), and said, "OK, how do I study??" The rest is history!

GNL - Where did you grow up and where is home now? Any brothers or sisters you found joy is tormenting or found joy in tormenting you?

Puck - I grew up in Ypsilanti, MI, near Ann Arbor. Home is still there - been back for about a decade now. I'm the oldest of four kids - 2 other brothers and 1 sister. We were all pretty close during High School, although we did go through a rough time then! (It gets interesting having a sister who knows karate, let me tell ya!)

GNL - What tradition did you start in? if any? How long have you been practicing in the craft? How long have you been a Georgian

Puck - I started formally studying the Craft under Herb, while we were in the Navy together. I also lived in Bakersfield for over 10 years after getting out of the Navy, and studied the Georgian Tradition then. All told, I've been studying, practicing and now teaching the Craft for 31 years this year!

William Shakespeare's
Play
A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

GNL – Have you ever served in the military? If so, what branch and was it difficult being a military pagan

Puck - Yep - I'm a proud Navy Vet! In fact, that was where I first found the Craft! It was pretty hard then - they thought that I was some sort of nut, and I had to have a sit-down with some of my superiors a couple of times and try to explain to them that this was not some sort of cult, and that I made the choice to become a Witch.

GNL - Do any children of Georgians call you uncle, hey you or grandpa?

Puck - LOL!!! Well, being initiated by Bobbie, I'm a "Craft Grandfather" to several people, I guess!!! Mostly, it's "Hey, you!" <g>

GNL - Describe your life a little these days, what great things are going on?

Puck - Right now, I'm High Priest of the Circle of the Samhain Moon, in Ypsilanti, MI. That keeps me hopping, with 9 people in it now, and we have a couple of new people starting soon. I'm also involved with a Detroit-area based group called the Federation of Circles and Solitaries, and our coven has done a few Sabbat rituals for them over the past few years. In fact, we just did a FANTASTIC Samhain ritual, based on a 'tour' of Greek Mythology. If anyone wants to see it, please email me - I'd love to share it!

As if that's not enough, I'm also back in college after, well, a LOT of years, to get my BS in Teaching English and History. I plan to teach in Community College, and am currently a Senior (in several ways!), so I don't have long to go!

I'm also a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, in the Barony of Cynnabar, Midrealm. I am their Baronial Herald, so I keep busy helping people design their own Coats of Arms and Society names.

GNL - Attended/Missed many Mt Meets? I know you have been to a couple, that's where I met you first and was subjected to your folk music <grin>.

Puck - Yeah, I'm glad you like it so much! I've been to a lot of them when I lived in Bakersfield, but haven't been to a lot since moving to Michigan. (Someday....) I always had a great time, though - I remember a lot of stories that I can tell if people are interested!!!

GNL - Any stories that might make someone go….ohhhh shit, that you might like to share with the community…you know, maybe cause a "hit" to be put out on you? <g>

Puck - Who, ME?!? I'm innocent!!! (Batting his eyelashes innocently as possible!!!)

OK - let's see... actually, one of my favorite stories is when Bobbie's grandson got, well, 'relaxed' and we had to remind him that his shoes were on fire! We had to actually put them out and put HIM to bed! I won't go into the rest - this IS a family newsletter, afterall!!! (Anyone who wants the dirt - email me!) <eg>

One last thing I'd like to add is that with all the fooling around, we really ARE an extended 'family of choice', and I have loved being a part of it for so long!!! We've had a rep for doing amazing healings

over the years, and I personally have relied on everyone to help out during times of stress. It truly makes me proud to be a Georgian when that happens!!!

.

Goethe's Faust, Part I

Puck on Walpurgis Night's Dream

Now comes Puck and whirls about
And slides his foot a-dancing;
After come a hundred out,
Themselves and him entrancing

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

It is always of the greatest pleasure that I get to put so many announcements into the newsletter! It has been a busy time since our last Sabbat and newsletter!! Congrats to all, Students, Teachers, Guides and Covens

Dedication: Tina of Coven Modron
Robert and of Travis Circle on our Mabon Sabbat celebration on the Sept 23rd
(a little late but earned) and wife Darlene on Yule.
~1st degree: Sitara of Beachfyre Coven on the dark moon of November
~2nd degree: Lavender, of Silver Oak Coven on Nov 11
~3rd degree: Mary of ElvenHeart on December 21st

Star Shadowdrake becomes a Grandmother!!
Connor Allan, born at 4:10 a.m. on November 15, at 8 pounds 12 ounces.

Recipe

Something Vegan this way comes

Creamy mushroom Puff

A third of a cup/60g/2oz of vegan margarine

4 tablespoons of plain white flour

1 onion

4 cloves of garlic, crushed or very finely chopped (this can be reduced or left out if desired)

3 cups of mushrooms, sliced

half a litre/500ml of soya milk

1 glass of white wine (or stock)

handful of chopped parsley

salt and pepper to taste

approx. 500g/18oz of frozen puff pastry (this even comes ready-rolled now for extra laziness!!!)

Melt the margarine and cook the onion and garlic in it for a few minutes and then add the sliced mushrooms and cook for a couple of minutes more. Add the flour and stir well. Gradually add the soya milk stirring all the time and then the wine and keep stirring on a low heat until the sauce thickens. Once thick remove from the heat and add your seasoning and the parsley. Allow to cool slightly while you prepare the pastry. Roll out into 2 wide rectangular shapes reserving some pastry for decoration. Place one sheet of pastry on a greased baking tray. Heap the slightly cooled sauce onto it leaving a space round the edges. Place the top sheet on and seal up the edges with some soya milk or water (fold over if needed). Make some small slits on the top of the puff and let your artistic side shine with the reserved pastry! I usually make holly leaves to place on the top but do whatever you like. Glaze with soya milk and then bake in a medium hot oven for about half an hour or until the pastry seems cooked (no soggy bits and nicely puffed up!)

Nice served with gravy, roast potatoes, stuffing, vegan sausages, cranberry sauce and vegetables of your choice - a feast!

This was dedicated to Rhiannonetain. Written by my son, Joseph Ford in 2004 when he was 15.

Submitted by Lady Kerridwen

THE ULTIMATE MOTHER

Earth, Fire, Water, Air
her power we all share
Within the Earth her roots grow deep
By word, her power we keep
In the fire her magik burns
As her power churns
In the ocean her magik flows
With the knowledge that she knows
We witness rebirth and death
with every new breath
We are all a part of her
This I know for sure

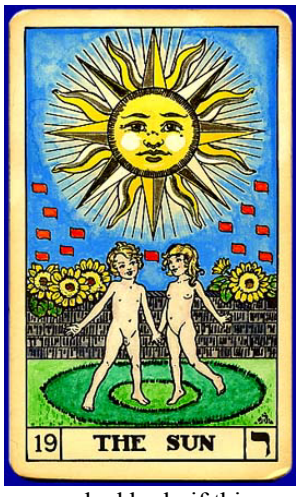
TAROT

Card #19

19 The Sun

Archetypes: Sun, success, fulfillment, joy
Psychology: Spiritual illumination, inner harmony, seeing the world with new eyes, spontaneous joy, the natural self, the inner child

19 The Sun. At last our Hero has truly succeeded – he reaches the sunlight – Percival finds the Holy Grail, Dante emerges from Hell, the lost children are joyfully reunited with their father. The two lovers are together and the two aspects of the self stand side by side in the sunlight. In another version of the story, brothers are reunited that were previously separated, or even fighting one another. In older tarot decks, this theme was represented by two children playing in the sun, rather than just one.



XIX. The Sun (KLN: 1)

You are like a new baby going into a new, positive direction. All negativity and upset is now hidden behind the wall and will not follow you into the future.

Sunflowers always mean new beginnings and the sun's

bright rays of energy and light will help you find your way. You are going in the right direction and have the wonderful orange flag to cover your naked body if things

get too overwhelming for you. You can then cover yourself

with stability, security, being grounded and able to prioritize your life. You are riding on a wonderful spiritual horse, which will bring you into the future with a good, and uplifting foundation.

Morgan-Greer Deck

Synopsis
Cheerfulness, prosperity, energy and optimism.

General Description
The Sun card expresses a great joy of living, vitality, warmth, and confidence. It also stands for the illuminating powers of the conscious mind with which we achieve clarity and overcome problems, annoyances, and uncanny fears. It is additionally a symbol of youthful freshness and the feeling of being reborn. It represents the sunny side of life. On a deeper level, it challenges us to overcome the darkness in ourselves, expand our sunlike nature, and free our "darkened" brother or sister and bring them into the light.

positive interpretations of this tarot card:
happiness, greatness, enlightenment, vitality, good health, love, fulfillment

negative interpretations of this tarot card:
misjudgment, delays, potential failure, inflated ego

The sun gives rewards to all who accept challenges; success comes through ambitious labor, which must be effectively channeled. It is the card of achievement through the practical application of talents by those who do not indulge in too many daydreams.

MOTHER EARTH

She is within me, I worship Her
With eye of newt, salt and myrrh
Through the water, I see the sky
For my pagan Mother is not shy
Her presence is with me everyday
She always listens to what I say
Within the ring of rocks burns her fire
She is the Mother from ocean to shire
Her names are Demeter, Innana and Hecate
I salute her with my athame
She is also known as Mother Earth
I witness her power with each new birth
Every time I pick up a mirror
I know I will always be near Her.

Written by Joseph Ford in 2004 when he was 15.
Submitted by Lady Kerridwen

Recipe

Sage and Onion Roast Potatoes

4 teaspoons of dried sage or 8 teaspoons of freshly chopped sage

4 tablespoons of sunflower oil

1 finely chopped onion

4 tablespoons of medium oatmeal

Potatoes, peeled and cut to desired size (this coating is enough for about 4 or 5 lbs/2 or 3 kilos.)

salt to taste

Par boil the potatoes then just when they are beginning to soften remove from heat and drain. Place in baking tray and rub the coating all over them (careful!) - roast in a hot oven until nice and crispy (30 minutes plus). You might want to baste with a little more oil half way through for extra crispiness!

Variation: sesame roast potatoes - coat the potatoes in sunflower oil and plenty sesame seeds before roasting - this has a lovely flavor too.

Lady Gaia of the Coven of the Children Between the Worlds

Chrissy of ShadowDragon Coven

Lady Kundalini and Lord Josh-wa-ah. High Priestess and High Priest of the Coven of the Children Between the Worlds

Georgians Behaving Badly

By Cosette

CAUTION! *Some material talked about in this musing may cause mental anguish to some members of the male gender! Proceed at your own risk*

I'm a brand spanking new Georgian initiate; I'm still shiny (or perhaps glowing). But when I attended Florida Pagan Gathering (FPG) in early November, I was a dedicant looking forward to spending time with Georgian friends over a weekend of food and wine and maybe even a little ritual.

It was after dark on Thursday when my coven, Beachfyre, arrived at the campsite and on the heels of

fellow Georgians Marla and Gypsey. After much hugging, kissing, and, oh yes, registering for the event, we went off to find Cabin 3, which we'd all be sharing for the weekend. We were settling in and I was making my bed with my satin sheets and comforter (I really know how to rough it), when Dorothy Morrison entered, cigarettes in one hand and a large cup of coffee in the other. She looked fabulous! Whereas I was looking pretty rough after a six-hour drive, with disheveled hair and dirt under my fingernails, Dorothy looked like she was at weekend resort with her sequined flip-flops, jewelry, and immaculate hair and nails. I only knew her from her books and when I saw her and, more importantly, heard her, I knew this was going to be an interesting weekend and that I shouldn't miss her workshop Saturday morning. Like Marla said, they don't call her Tex for nothing.

Since it was my first time at this event, a Strega friend who is an FPG veteran gave me a tour of the grounds. I met some new friends and greeted old ones along the way and once I had my bearings and was convinced Cabin 3 was the place to be, I headed back. Pretty soon all the Georgians were gathered together here with other friends. It wasn't long before we went through most of the wine we'd brought for the entire weekend amidst discussions of circle casting,

planetary rituals, the summoning of entities, and body chocolate paint. The rest of that night is mostly a blur.

I found myself awake early the next morning. Maybe it was because I'm accustomed to getting up early on Fridays for work. Maybe it was the excitement. Maybe it was the abundant jingling coming from Gypsey who was wearing what appeared to be a sexy version of a burka and lots of bells. It was her job to herald and she did an excellent job, bullhorn or not. So I got up very, very slowly, grabbed a Pop-Tart (the breakfast of champions) and poured myself a cup of hot coffee, which there was plenty of at all times, a reminder that I was in the right company.

I spent the day roaming about, exploring the merchant goods, and taking in a couple of workshops. In the early evening, we gathered, Georgians and friends, for a brief healing and protection ritual for some of those in our Georgian community who knew we would be together this weekend and thinking of them and their needs. When dinnertime came round, Lady Pleiades and her coven, Silver Oak, provided delicious shrimp kabobs and other goodies. The Georgian Party Cabin was not only the fun cabin, but the eatenest one too.

We spent the rest of the evening gabbing and laughing. Flask Man and Chaser Boy were making their rounds and stopped by for a game of pick a number and drink. As you can imagine, the rules are simple. Flask Man wore a kilt and in his belt he had flasks, five of them to be precise, each holding some mysterious and delicious liquor. Pick a number from one to five, he gives you the appropriate flask, and you drink. Chaser Boy, who wore a red union suit, those old-fashioned one-piece long underwear buttoned up the front with a button-up rear access hatch, and provided, you guessed it, a variety of chasers should you want one. In return, Flask Man wanted a kiss, a detail he mentioned only after we had drunk, but not a request that at least one bad-behaving Georgian would refuse. One long, hot kiss from Marla was enough to make Flask Man forget about any other ladies present and made Chaser Boy want in on that party. By the way, Marla may deny this story, but the photographic evidence does not lie.

The site that hosts FPG is so large that there's a trolley. Naturally, we had to go for a ride. We grabbed it right outside the Georgian Party Cabin, but when the driver learned that none of us actually needed to get anywhere, he told us the trolley would stop at the staff cabin for maintenance. We figured that was good enough and hopped on, waving and wailing at everybody we passed. We were ready to get off at the staff cabin when our driver parked and hopped off, but another driver almost immediately replaced him. We realized that our first driver just didn't want to deal with these rowdy Georgians. So we stayed on the trolley hollering at people until the driver asked those people who didn't need to go anywhere to get off. That would be us.

Saturday morning started much the same as Friday, with Pop-Tarts, coffee, and a jingling Gypsey. This morning, we went to Dorothy's workshop. Whereas I looked like a wet rat with my damp hair and bloodshot eyes, Dorothy, once again, looked fabulous. A few minutes before she was set to start, she was standing outside smoking a cigarette, drinking from a large cup of coffee, wearing cute flip-flops and nice jewelry, with her hair and nails impeccable. The workshop, called the Curse of the 11" Fashion Doll, was based on her new book, Utterly Wicked: Curses, Hexes, and Other Unsavory Notions. It was a lesson in using 11-inch fashion dolls (like Barbie dolls) as poppets for hexes, curses, and other unsavory things. It was a riot and while some Witches might have some ethical issues with this, we were all too anxious to get to work with our dolls. To be fair, Dorothy did remind us that the fashion dolls could be used to create positive results as well.

The rest of the day was spent roaming the grounds, socializing, taking in the Celtic games, and I found time to take a much-needed nap. That afternoon, we met with friends and had another fine dinner. Gypsey was kind enough to host an informal rectangular picnic table discussion, Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About Transexuality But Were Afraid To Ask, in which she demonstrated a certain surgical procedure using a banana. It was highly educational. We were having so much fun that we didn't even notice the main ritual had begun nearby and someone aptly named Tantrum told us to keep it

down from the safety of her golf cart. Twice. It was shortly after that we became inspired to take another ride on the trolley. This time we had a destination. We took the trolley to the registration site where a couple of friends were volunteering. From here, we walked back, stopping at Viking Camp for liquor in tiny chocolate bottles and Jell-O shots. After pledging our eternal devotion to the Vikings, we wandered off and eventually made our way to the fire circle for some very fine drumming and to cheer the burning of a wicker man created by our neighbors in cabin two.

Sunday morning was chaotic with hurried farewells and everyone rushing to get packed and on the road. I got on the road pretty early myself, my head spinning from the lack of sleep, the caffeine buzz, and the weekend's events. Over the next few days, I would replay in my head some of those dinner conversations about first-time sex and late night chats in the cabin about how wonderful the Georgian Tradition is. It is very warming to see the connection between everyone regardless of what Georgian branch we were coming from. And although some have stayed exclusively within the Tradition and others have moved on, a family connection remains.

Thanks to Marla for her contributions to this little essay and to Artimus for her incriminating photographs.

Recipe

Something "NOT SO" Vegan this way comes

Roasted Lamb
Feast For A (Sun) King !

1-3 pound shank leg of lamb
2 teaspoons olive or canola oil
1/8 teaspoon each, salt and pepper
4 large sweet potatoes, peeled, cubed
8 cloves garlic
6 parsnips, cut into 1" pieces
2 large sprigs fresh rosemary
1 lemon, sliced

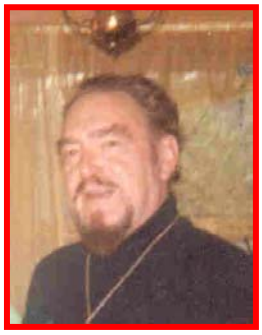
With a sharp knife, trim all fat and cartilage from the lamb. Season with the salt and pepper. Make 1" deep slits all over the leg of lamb. Use most of the garlic and all of the rosemary by pushing 1/2 garlic cloves and a few rosemary leaves into each slit. In a large roasting pan, combine oil with the sweet potatoes, the parsnips (turnips may be substituted), and the rest of the garlic. Move the vegetables to the side of the pan, and place the leg of lamb in the center. Move the vegetables around the lamb, surrounding it. Roast the lamb and vegetables for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Turn the vegetables occasionally so that they cook evenly. Remove from the oven, and with a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to a serving dish. Keep warm. Place the lamb on a carving platter and cover with foil. Allow to stand for 5-10 minutes. Slice the roasted lamb and serve with warm vegetables. Makes 6 servings.

Warriors

This story shall the good man teach his son; and Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by, from this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remember'd; We few, we happy few, We Band of Brothers, For he to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition;

And gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhood's cheap whiles any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. "

William Shakespeare's, King Henry V
Act IV, Scene III



George Elliot "Pat" Patterson, III known as Lord Scorpio, Lord Hermes and Lord Mercury, with the approach of World War II, Pat enlisted in the Army and left to serve his country.

Here is a young Duane 'Raven Spirit' Marshall as a new recruit in 1989 and a not so young anymore.

Here I am (Loye) in 1980 when I joined the United States Air Force at the tender age of 19 and here I am 27 years later a little older!
(BTW, I served 22 years, 9 months and 15 days). I have a son in the Marines, one in the Air Force and a daughter in law in the Army.

Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Tabitha of the United States Navy…currently assigned in Taji (Iraq),

Gypsey Joined the Army as an Enlisted troop, then got commissioned and rose to Captain before separating from the service. Here she is in her Mess Dress Uniform

Randy Weiser AKA Puck
I was a 'lowly E-2" - i.e. Seaman Apprentice - from Sept. 1975 to April, 1977.

RoseWynde, a Marine brat and member of the "Silent Ranks" KKKKKKKKK Sweetie!

Dago and Spiritmother flank their son Shaun, a member of the USAF. Drago is also a military brat. It's hard being members of the "Silent Ranks". Shaun is due to ship out to Kuwait soon.

Robert served his time in the United States Air Force as a flight engineer and retired out of Travis AFB.

Jeff, once a Marine, always a Marine! And his wife Peggy lives with his jarhead attitude daily ☺, bless her pea pickin heart!

The Silent Ranks

~This poem applies to all branches of the service and genders of~

I wear no uniforms, no blues or whites,
But I am in the Army cause I am his wife.
I'm in the ranks that are rarely seen,
I have no rank upon my shoulders.
Salutes I do not give.
But the military world is the place where I live.
I'm not in the chain of command, Orders I do not get.
But my husband is the one who does, this I can not forget.
I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line.
But my job is just as tough. I'm the one who's left behind.
My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man.
And the call to serve his country not all can understand.
Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free.
My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do our kids and me.
I love the man I married. Soldiering is his life.
But I stand among the silent ranks known as the Army Wife.

A Tale For All.

~A different twist on a story told many ways~

The snow drifts slowly and softly to the earth, alder and oak trees forest the thick woodland. The soft crunching of snow under foot guides the wintery white owl through the trees to his query. THERE! The wise old bird sees a splash of red in the distance through the snowy woods, he swoops left then right, dodging the trees and limbs. A red sleeved arm lifts and the owl lands silently on the presented perch. The old man leans his head towards the owl, the owl excitedly whispers his secret to his old friend. With a smile the old man tells the owl…"hurry my friend, tell the others the time is upon us!" and with an upward thrust of his arm the owl leads into the air only to vanish seconds later amid the snowy air and white covered trees.

With a sigh, the old man leaned heavily on his staff, gazing off in the distance, not so much distance than time. Was Yule upon us already he mused? He reflected with a sad smile on the things he had learned and seen in his short but wonderful life, he knew it was time, he was weary and in need of a rest. His was a time of rest, reflection and learning, a time that was soon to pass.

He felt a chill wash over him as he made his was through the snow covered forest, the wind picked up and icy snow blew into his face, frosting his white beard, pulling his long red cloak tighter to his neck he plowed through the snow and wind towards the cozy little cabin nestled deep in the oaken woods.

Cast in a warm golden glow of the hearth fire she sat, weaving a golden gown to match the wreath of oak leaves, a cradle to the side, ornately carved with mystical runes, a golden luster making it seem to glow shown from it. Surrounded by small chittering animals and anxious birds the woman giggled as a small gray squirrel stretched it's paws and laid it's head gently on her large tummy, listening with eyes

wide and nose twitching as a thump from inside dislodged the little fellow who snapped upright on her knee, clasping his paws excitedly! Tilting his head he looks at the woman, she smiles at him warmly and says "soon my little friend, very soon".

Outside, the wind howls darkly, snow and ice swirl and twirl around the little house, the well in the front yard iced over. In the frozen forest a small glowing wisp of light shoots through the blizzard, through the shuttered window and in a mad spiral, circles the lady at dizzying speeds! Without looking up the lady sighs and says "if you keep this up, you'll make me dizzy". As if it hit a wall the little light stops right in front of the lady, the little ball of light suddenly has a form, a little golden faery hovered there as her wings made a humming sound and are but a blur. "thank you sweetie" the woman smiles and says as she continues to sew. Slowly the little faery settles to the ladies knee, sitting cross legged with chin on her tiny knuckles.

Through the forest the proud old owl fly's, spreading the word near and far. He tells the wise old fox, the bears, the big cats and little. As he spreads the word he can feel the excitement grow in the snowy woods, he sees the reindeer running through the woods, all headed towards the oaken grove and the little cottage where the lady lives with the wise old man who wears red.

As the old man reaches the clearing to his cabin the night has settled in deeply, snow and wind howling around him and his home, around the cabin he sees his friends…the bears, fox, deer, the wintery white owl and all the other creatures of the woods. The Doe looks over and alerts the rest of the crowd of the man's arrival, they open the way to the door. Many nuzzle his hands as he walks through them to the door, absently he pets and rubs heads, necks and backs as he makes his way to the door. With trembling hands he reaches for the handle, a moan on the other side of the door pulled him through the door without further thought. Snow and ice swirled into the warm little cottage, the warm glow from the hearth flickered on the wall and the Lady looked over at him, her labor at hand, but through the pain, the love she had for him was unmistakable. She was both elated and saddened by what must occur, but those thoughts must wait she thought, as another contraction kicked her hard.

As the night wore on, the little one drew nearer, the animals anxious, their own little ones fidgeting and trying to see through the frosted windows of the little cottage.

Suddenly! The winds died, the air felt ever so slightly warmer, the eastern horizon trimmed in orange. A robin landed on the windowsill, puffed his chest out and sang! Announcing the birth of the newborn Oak King. As if on queue, the door to the little cottage swung open and in the arms of the Holy King was the splendid Lady and the little bundle all had waited for, the new born Oak King. The couple strolled into the midst of their friends, letting all look upon the little king.

The old King indeed looked weary. The time now was one of growth, development, healing and new projects and beginnings…a time of the new born Sun.

Come Imbolc the old King would journey to Caer Arianrhod and await his own re-birth at Midsummer, but for now he would stay with his love and child and cherish the time offered.

Written by Loye Pourner at the request of Amy & Andi of the Travis Earth Circle Yule 2005

2007 F.O.C.A.S. SAMHAIN RITUAL:
(Written by the Circle of the Samhain Moon, Georgian Tradition)

Submitted by Puck
He's knows it's late, but wanted to share!

SET-UP:

The area of the ritual should ideally be sectioned off with fabric, creating a tunnel approx. 10-13' long, for participants to travel down.

The actual ritual area should be delineated by stones, dead branches (painted white) or such things that should suggest a cave. The four watchtowers should be represented by hanging bowls, containing flames. (This can be found at any Halloween supply shop.)

The Altar should be in the center, suitably decorated with a black cloth, containing a bag of tea-light candles, 2 plates of Cakes (preferably pumpkin cookies, bread or cake), and 2 chalices of Pomegranite juice.

Near Demeter, Hades, Persephone and Hecate, small tables should be set up and suitably decorated. The one near Demeter should have a large sheaf of wheat, for giving out to the participants. The one near Persephone and Hades should have a large cauldron on it, as well as a bowl of acorns, for Persephone to pass out to the participants. The one near Hecate should have 4 Black mirrors on it for later in the ritual, as well as a deck of "Oracle cards" (copies of the Self-Care cards) for participants to choose from.

Lighting should be low – use black 7-day glass candles at the quarters.

Incense, if used, should be a light one, such as Frankincense. Hanging ghosts from the ceiling and bats would also be appropriate, as would tombstones, skulls, etc.

Before the ritual begins, 2 volunteers will go around to all who are participating, giving them a coin and a small piece of flash paper to write something that they want to get rid of over the coming winter or the rest of the year.

TO BEGIN THE RITE:

To begin the Ceremony, HERMES and CHARON will step out from the back of the hall. CHARON will call people to attention, saying:

"**GENTLES ALL, THIS IS THE TIME OF SAMHAIN, WHERE WE WILL JOURNEY TOGETHER TO THE UNDERWORLD TO MEET GRIM-FACED HADES, PERSEPHONE, HIS DARK QUEEN, AND OTHER DEITIES."** He will then take his place in line in back of the hall.

HERMES will then say: **"AS THIS CAN BE AN INTENSE RITE, AND A PERILOUS JOURNEY, IF ANYONE FEELS THAT THEY WILL HAVE PROBLEMS WHILE THIS GOES ON, PLEASE CALL IT QUIETLY TO MY ATTENTION, AND WE WILL DEAL WITH IT. WITH THIS IN MIND, QUIET YOUR MINDS, AND PREPARE TO ENTER RITUAL SPACE."** He will then step back to the back of the hall, taking his place at the beginning of the line. All participating in the ritual will line up, giving the deities room to pass by them.

HERMES will enter first, announcing:

"**MAKE WAY FOR THEIR DARK MAJESTIES –HADES, AND PERSEPHONE, HIS QUEEN! MAKE WAY FOR BLESSED DEMETER, MOTHER OF THE HARVEST! MAKE WAY FOR CHARON, YOUR GUIDE, AND DARK HECATE OF THE CROSSROADS!"** As they pass, everyone will bow.

HADES, PERSEPHONE, HECATE, DEMETER, CHARON and HERMES process into the area as follows:

- **Hermes**
- **Hades and Persephone**
- **Demeter**
- **Charon and Hecate**

They will take up their positions in the Ritual area. At a nod from HADES, all will raise their arms, palms up, until they are over their heads. Then they

will bring their arms toward their bodies, then down to the floor, raising sacred space.
(All this will be done in silence.)

HERMES and CHARON will then come to the beginning of the tunnel. HERMES will lead the people to CHARON, who will raise his hand and say:

"YE WHO WOULD ENTER THE REALM OF THE DEAD
MARK YE WELL THESE WORDS THAT ARE SAID:
NO TRIP BEGIN, NOR PASSAGE START WITHOUT COIN TO ME, 'ERE WE DEPART!"

Participants pay their coins to CHARON, who takes them, 10 @ a time, down the corridor to HERMES.

HERMES says: **"AS I GUIDED THE SOULS IN ANCIENT TIMES, SO NOW AM I YOUR GUIDE. BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY BY SEEKING DEMETER, MOTHER OF THE HARVEST."** He points them over to DEMETER.

DEMETER gives them each a stalk of wheat, saying:
"LIFE CONTINUES ABOVE WHILE YOU JOURNEY BELOW. AS GRAIN HAS ALREADY BEEN HARVESTED, IT IS NOW TIME TO TURN INWARD TO SEE WHAT YOU HAVE HARVESTED THIS PAST YEAR."

She then points them over to where HADES and PERSEPHONE are sitting on thrones.

HADES asks them: **"WHAT DO YOU WISH TO LEAVE BEHIND IN MY KINGDOM?"** Participants then give him the small slip of paper, with what they want to leave behind. As they do, he says: **"YOU HAVE CHOSEN WISELY AND WELL. KNOW THAT THIS WILL NEVER AGAIN SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY."**

PERSEPHONE then gives them an acorn, saying:

"AS THIS SMALL SEED BECOMES A MIGHTY OAK, PLANT THE SEED WITHIN YOURSELF. LET IT TAKE ROOT OVER THE WINTER, AND LET IT BE A SYMBOL OF WHAT YOU WISH TO GROW IN THE COMING YEAR." She then points the way to HECATE.

HECATE holds the Oracle deck and has them pick a card from the deck, and says: "**LET THE MESSAGE IN THIS ORACLE GUIDE YOU THROUGHOUT THE COMING YEAR."**

HERMES then leads them around the circle, so they form an outer circle around the deities.

HECATE raises the Scrying Mirror, saying:

"LOOK INTO THE MIRROR FOR A MOMENT, REMEMBERING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US, AS WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR GUIDANCE."

HECATE, HADES, PERSEPHONE and CHARON then take the Scrying mirrors from the West, picking up the mirrors, then go back to their respective quarters. At a nod from Hecate, they turn around, and go from their quarters to the next quarter, allowing about 5-10 seconds for each person to gaze into the mirror. All wait until everyone has seen, then all go to the West and set down the Mirrors, and stand at the Altar.

HADES takes the cauldron from his table and, setting it down on the Altar, says: **"YOU HAVE ALL CHOSEN WISELY AND WELL. AS YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO LEAVE THESE WISHES BEHIND, SO I SAY – LET THEM GO!"**
At the word "GO!" he lights the flash paper, burning up all the papers.

<u>CAKES AND WINE:</u>
HADES then raises the Cakes, and walks around the Ritual Space one time deosil, saying:

"AS YOU JOURNEYED VOLUNTARILY ACROSS THE RIVER STYX AND YOU HAVE NOT COME TO STAY... (Here. He inserts a dramatic pause**...) YOUR SOULS ARE SAFE FOR ANOTHER DAY!"**

HADES and PERSEPHONE hold their hands over the Cakes and Wine and say together: **"AS WE BLESS THESE CAKES AND THE WINE TOO, CONSIDER THEM A GIFT FROM US TO YOU. BLESSED BE!"**
ALL**: "BLESSED BE!"**

HADES, PERSEPHONE, CHARON and HECATE then take the two plates of Cakes and the two chalices of juice and take up positions – HADES and PERSEPHONE starting in the West and CHARON and HECATE starting from the East – and go around to the other point, feeding the participants. While they are doing this, DEMETER will lead them in a Call and Response chant. When everyone in the Circle is finished, they return to the Altar and feed all deities.

TO END THE RITUAL:

CHARON will say: **"THE JOURNEY HOME COMPLETES YOUR JOURNEY HERE. YOU ARE LIGHTER THAN WHEN YOU CAME IN, FOR YOU HAVE DEPOSITED THAT WHICH HAS HELD YOU BACK.**

TAKE THESE TOKENS OF LIFE TO REMIND YOU OF YOUR JOURNEY HERE, AND MAY THE INSIGHT YOU HAVE GAINED HERE SUSTAIN YOU THROUGHOUT THE COMING DARK OF THE YEAR."

Everyone then hands out a tea light to each participant, saying:

"HAVING RECEIVED LIGHT, LET LIGHT GUIDE YOU."

CHARON will then guide them to follow HERMES, PERSEPHONE, DEMETER and HECATE out the tunnel again. CHARON and then HADES will take up the rear.

As CHARON leaves the tunnel, HADES will stop at the end of it and raise his hand silently, bringing it down slowly, closing down Sacred Space, then step back into the tunnel again.

Lady Tabitha

"*Spirits of the fire! Guardians of the watchtowers of the South, bless and*…never mind, Lady Tabitha has it covered!'

Lady Tabitha is the Distinguished Faith Group Leader (DFGL - that is Army speak for Priestess) for the Taji Open Circle in Iraq. The Open Circle is sponsored by the Chaplains of 1st Sustainment Brigade. During Open Circle, I provide training in basic craft information - Ethics, Grace of Etiquette, how to cast a circle, etc.? We are holding a Yule Ritual on the 21st. It will be the classic enactment of the Oak King and Holly King with the outgoing DFGL in the role of Holly King. We will also have a Yule Fire! I'm really looking forward to it.

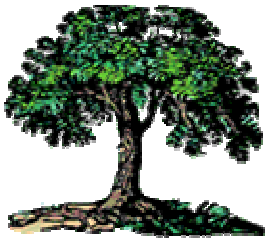
Other things I have done to minister to the local pagans. WE have a chaplain sponsored coffee house were people donate time and supplies. It's a good place to grab a free cup of coffee/tea/latte/whatever. We gather most nights around a bonfire there (well - trashcan fire). I offer tarot readings about 3 nights a week on average. Other folk fill in when I cannot.

I've told the chaplains that I am clergy and that I am available to minister to any pagan folk who have a need.

Hugs,
Tabitha

Lets all light candles, send care packages and think happy happy thoughts for our own Lady Tabitha and all those other troops deployed. Also, lets not forget Shaun who is soon to deploy to Kuwait and my own son who is currently in Iraq approx 45 miles from Baghdad

Aim High and Semper Fi .
TSgt Retired Loye Pourner
Marine Father
Air Force Father
Army Father in Law



Talking to Trees

By Rowan Moonstone

The clouds hang low over the mountains, as though the spirits of the dead have returned for Halloween, and finding the warmth of the land of the living, are reluctant to depart again. Even the golden exuberance of the trees in autumn splendor seems dimmed. They, too, feel the coming of winter and the period of rest and sleep. Only the evergreens remain awake, awaiting the garlands of snow and tinsel that comfort those of us in the human world during the dark season.

Mankind has not evolved as far as we might like to think. We still fear the dark and gather together in our islands of warmth and light to await the return of life in the spring. Like children afraid of bad dreams, we seek the company of others of our kind to comfort us and remind us that life will go on beyond the confines of the cloud-draped grey months of winter.

Only the wisest of us see the true value of this time. The very young and the very old, whether in body or soul, know the inestimable value of the shape of a snowflake, the feel of the cold, crisp air on our cheeks, or the fuzzy warmth of an old, comfortable sweater worn to thinness at the elbows with years of lovingly-shared adventures.

Perhaps if we could slow ourselves, as the trees do at this time of year, we would see the grand gifts of life that present themselves as exquisite wonders with each day that dawns. Perhaps we should learn to speak to the trees. What stories they could tell us!

A Yuletide Tale

by Sean McCullough (Lord Wotan)

Behold a small larch-wood shack in a Norwegian fishing village. It is dark -- completely dark, as it has been since mid-november -- and bitter, bitter cold. Sif Egvindsdottir, pregnant, stumbles out of her bed. She is worried. She is unmarried and desperately poor.....she fears having to give birth in an unheated shack, alone and without help.

Fortunately, it is merely another cramp, such as pregnant women have; it was not the dreaded labor, after all; she returns to sleep. Once she is safely asleep, I arrive.....silently opening the door to the shack, I creep to the fireplace, and leave a small sack there. Leaving, I close the door behind me silently, and stealthily creep away.....

The next morning, Sif Egvindsdottir finds the sack, and enough gold therein to take care of her all that winter. Four days later, the baby boy was born of Sif at the very moment the first twilight was seen in the little fishing village.....

For I saw it all from my home, whence I went from Sif's house.

****

A small hut on the shores of western Anatolia. The days end early now, even down here in sunny Asia Minor. 'Tis rather chilly these days, also!! Sunset on the Sea of Marmara. The fading sky tells Sophia that it is that time. Her husband, Petros, is still out to sea..... but midwives cost money!! Where and to whom can Sophia go for help?? Sophia's cries end the shortest day of the year. For her it is bitter.

Then I come. I drop a small sack down her chimney. That sack isn't cheap on an Orthodox bishop's salary, I assure you!! But it is enough to hire a midwife for Sophia's child when he is born, and to ensure it a fair entry into life ..... which occurred at dawn, a few hours after my departure.....

****

An urban shack in imperial Rome. Pompeia, Freedwoman, has no illusions about help with her expected baby. She knows that she can expect little or no help with it. Her man, still yet styled "The slave Cassius" by law, is still under the thumb of his master. Cassius managed to buy Pompeia's freedom, but naught more as he could not buy his own.

Thinking about her yet beloved Cassius, and his child that she is about to bear into freedom – but desperate poverty, Pompeia cries herself to sleep.

And then I come. This time, I come with her husband, the Freedman Cassius, upon whom I bestow a small sack containing not only coins, but also a scroll -- the certificate of freedom for the former slave. I bid Cassius enter the bed and gently waken his wife. When he does so, I depart silently.

As dawn breaks, Pompeia's boy-child Apollinus is born.

A shanty on the south side of Colorado Springs. Maria is awaiting the arrival of her baby.
Again, the anguish as the time approaches; again, I come like a thief in the night; again, the small sack to give a young'un a decent chance in the world. One of the things the Catholic church defrocked me for was the sale of my chalice -- to make up the sack for Maria among other things -- and my suggestion that the Catholic church do the same.

But, screw 'em. What good would golden artworks have done Maria, anyway? Our spendable coins aren't made of real metals anymore ; haven't been in years!

In Community Hospital, at dawn, young Jesus is born and Maria "made it" quite well also. The sight of dawn met Maria well. It met me well also.

Can you tell who I am?

I am Odin.
I am Jupiter Hospitaler.
I am Nicholas.
I am Stephen Handen, sometime Catholic priest in this city.
I am also known by many other names:
Grandfather, Grey Man, Old One: the old sun in the experience of the old year.

The boy-child is known by many names, also, and yet is one: Thor, Jesus, Horus, Mithras: the new solar year, our future and our life.
As the child is born, we are renewed, as the sun is also renewed unto us
And my mission is fulfilled in very deed.
He is here!!
Behold his star blazing hotly in the east!!

May your power blossom, Gentle Sire. May it blossom until you become puissant enough to enforce.

Peace on earth: benevolence to everyone.

Now let your servant depart in peace.