THE GEORGIAN NEWSLETTER

SAMHAIN 2008

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~SPOTLIGHT

Cosette

GNL - Where did you grow up and where is home now?

Cosette - Miami, FL

GNL - When did you "discover" Paganism and Wicca. Tell us a little bit.

Cosette - I discovered ancient paganism reading Greek mythology in seventh grade. That led me to read more myth and also books on the Goddess in particular. In high school, some of my female teachers helped cultivate a kind of goddess consciousness, but it wasn't until I saw a classmate with Buckland's blue book and ran out and bought my own copy that the words Witchcraft and Wicca entered my lexicon. I was about 16.

GNL - What tradition did you start in? if any?

Cosette - None. For many years, I was an eclectic solitary though I sometimes circled with friends or went to a community event.

GNL - How long have you been a Georgian? Who damned you to this trad? <g>

Cosette It will be one year in November. Blame Canu and Rayna. I think Marla can also share some of the blame. :-)

GNL – Children? , grandchildren?

Cosette - Nope

GNL Describe your life a little these days, what great is going on?

Cosette - Madness. Full time work, part time school, family, friends, coven.

GNL - Attended/Missed many Mt Meets?

Cosette - I've never attended a Mt. Meet.

GNL - Any really good stories you fondly remember or shiver at the thought of these days you might wanna share with us?

Cosette with Dorothy Morrison

Cosette - I don't think I wanna tell you anything that makes me shiver, hahahaha.

GNL - Have and hobbies or interests? Tell us a little about yourself.

Cosette - I'm 30 (31 in November), a Cuban immigrant living in Miami. My American friends think it's cool that I came over on the Mariel boatlift like Scarface, hahaha. I prefer Coke over Pepsi, McDo's over BK, drink coffee regularly, and am making my peace with tea. I like reading, music, movies, and theater -- just the arts and humanities in general. I also really like to sleep when I get the chance.

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:
~1st degree
Ivy of Circle of the Samhain Moon!!
Raven (formerly Octavian) of Circle of the Imbolc Moon
Mari' of Circle of the Imbolc Moon
~2nd degree
Gypsey - October 10, 2008, while we were at Prairie Meet
~3rd degree
Dragonearl and Arumas
Tony and Emilie at Prairie Meet
Lady Autumn Star Shadowdrake of Samhain Moon on October 14th
Lord Tyr of Samhain Moon on October 18
Handfastings!
Dragonearl and Arumas in OKC under the almost full moon before Samhain

Birthdays!
Sibyl Shadowdrake - September 22, 1964.
Fig - October 17th
Taran YoungOak - October 13th at 4:43am
Raven Spirit - Oct 17 1970
Indigo – October 28th
Lord Josh-wa-ah - 10-13-1949

New Georgian Coven in Porterville

New Georgian Coven! As of Samhain a newly formed Georgian coven will surface in California. Coven Symbollic will be the offspring of Coven of the Children Between the Worlds in Porterville.
Lady Gaia Rose and Lord Bel Taran will lead this new coven. The name is an acronym that combines the first letter of each Sabbat and the first letter of the state in which it was formed (Samhain, Yule, Mabon, Beltane, Ostara, Lughnasadh, Litha, Imbolc, California).

Impending Grandparents:
--Lady Gaia Rose (Kate) will be a Grandmother again!

A bridge between old and new

~ Lady Autumn Star Shadowdrake ~

****Cindy made the suggestion I submit this to the newsletter so here it is without any changing or rearranging. I wrote this the morning on the day I was to do my vigil for 3rd degree. If you need to edit it in any way, it's okay.* (like I would do that! This comes from you…and who am I to edit you my dear?)

A bridge between old and new . . . That's me. And, to me, it is what every third degree in our Tradition and Elders in any tradition are supposed to represent.

We are the bridge between the way paganism in general and Wicca (or Witchcraft, if you prefer) was practiced through the ages, and the way it is practiced now. Much knowledge has been lost through the Burning Times and the rise of Christianity. But maybe, just maybe, this is the way it was supposed to be.

When something or someone is forced underground, it takes root and survives or dies. Much is made in history of the Christians and the lions. They went through their own burning time as well, went underground, and survived. I see their religion, however, as being a twisted perversion of what it needed to be . . . a loving, forgiving, and understanding religion of mankind's faults and flaws with guidelines to help bring out the best in an imperfect world. Instead, it turned into a persecution of everything and everyone that was, in its own twisted and perverted view, different and/or imperfect which, of course, included everyone for various reasons and differing levels of importance (a poor man who was a Christian had his faults and imperfections, but a Jew or Buddhist or, even worse, a Druid were beyond hope or redemption and, of course, a rich man was to be honored when he gave money to the church and envied because of his position).

I don't pretend to know what paganism and Witchcraft were like long ago or even 40 years ago. I know what I see now, and I see it has adapted to a changing and rapidly growing world. It had to in order to survive. But it hasn't been twisted and perverted overall. There are, I imagine, some who might have done so but they don't seem to last long. Instead our religion is a loving, forgiving, and understanding religion of mankind's faults and flaws with guidelines to bring out the best in an imperfect world.

Example: *Harm None* --- and that means yourself, too!

And, though the gods used to demand sacrifice, They, too, have changed . . . on the whole. The sacrifices, generally, are no longer human or animal, but instead choices of the heart, mind, body, and soul . . . a conscious decision to honor the body and life we have been given, and to live it as best we can, although imperfectly and with love and understanding and forgiveness of our strengths and flaws, to honor not only the gods but ourselves as well.

So how am *I* this bridge between old and new? Everyone has been initiated by Someone. Yes, Big S. Even the self-initiated have been initiated by the Gods. It is this line that has been passed down through the ages, and to which we are heir. Through dedication, first degree, and second degree, I have been able to see and to tap into a small portion of that line . . . A line of magick of true practitioners that carried the love of Witchcraft and the gods in their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls, and who showed it by living their religion every day of their life. This is what I will be able to tap into more and more as my own power of 3rd degree, and finally, as Elder grows with each passing minute, day, and year.

I have spoken a lot about the old. But what about the new? There are those who would enter our religion for their own gain or to try to change our religion back to the way it was or to something that benefits only them.

(Example: Sex and/or money as a requirement for lessons.)

Then there are those who wish to proselytize.

I am a mother, and have been a protectress most of my life. I see this as having been a life-long lesson for the journey on which I am to embark. But am I a protectress only?

No, for I am also a teacher and a student. There will be those who come to me for advice, but aren't meant to study with me. There will be students who stay for only a short time, and maybe one or two who wish to work for 3rd degree, and thereby achieve Elder status in the Georgian tradition. It is up to me to guide them as best I can, to see that it's okay to love and forgive yourself with a understanding of their strengths and faults.

I do not practice my religion the exact same way as those who have gone before, nor even the exact same as he who will initiate me. Those who come after me will not practice their religion in the exact same way as me, and they're not supposed to any more than I am. I was given the knowledge and the tools to make this religion my own, to grow at my own pace, and to show not only what I was capable of but also if I had what it took to earn my 3rd degree.

There will be changes after I am initiated to 3rd degree. I still don't like change, and that's okay because that's part of who I am. I can accept it and work to change it. I know they'll work out for the best. Am I still concerned? worried? afraid? Yes, I'm human.

As for our Coven, I see new members coming in. Some will be meant to stay through the long haul, and some will leave after a short time. I see quality students, difficult students, and perhaps even a rich one. I see a few more male students, but generally females. I see difficult times ahead for us, but I also see Circle of the Samhain Moon surviving and becoming stronger because of them.

My plans for our Coven are to make sure our students know their material from each lesson before continuing on; to counsel those who need to take a break from studying and encourage them to take care of themselves because at that point in time (although I probably won't point it out to them) they're probably not meant to continue their studies; to make sure that we have a firm foundation and don't spread ourselves too thin with too many outside involvements; that we move ahead to join C.O.G. and, possibly, the Federation as well; and that, as we gain more students, to delegate responsibilities appropriate to their abilities and make sure the duties are fulfilled. Instead of one long retreat someplace (until we can afford it), I'd like to see a series of mini-retreats (possibly scheduled for holiday weekends or once per season?).

In the spring, New Beginnings and Growth; summer, strength and how to apply it for the good of the Coven *and individual*; fall, what we have done and reaped; winter, how we can do and be better in the coming year. I'd also like to see Movie Nights, but with a small purpose --- to discuss them for everyone's opinion, and if it puts Witchcraft in a favorable light or not. It doesn't have to be a huge discussion, but more for insight on how our students think and feel. I want a MUCH more accurate way of keeping attendance to find out if there are any problems or emerging patterns (i.e., misses Sabbats). As discussed before, I want

someone separate to be Treasurer. We need to keep track of what lesson each person is on each week! This will give us an idea of how they're progressing and any difficulties.

I do have a problem with over-organization and perfectionism. I will have to be reigned in from time-to-time, and I recognize this. I also have a difficulty arriving at 6 p.m. or before on Friday. It is my fervent hope that my high priest will start the lesson before I arrive. And, if class needs to be canceled, we need to do ti in a timely manner so everyone will be informed and, if it's for First Degree class, to make sure Karen is called.

As for my role in the pagan community, I need to find a way that I'm comfortable with to become more involved. It may be that I need to be a bridge between the Federation of Circles and Solitaries that was (the old) and what it is now (the new). Maybe. For now, I'll give it some thought. And Maybe that's one of the changes the gods have in store for me. Maybe.

I need to sit down and add up exactly (or as very close as I can) what I need monetarily and specifically both immediately and for a new job, and to ask the gods for help (a.k.a. Swifting of Energy).

I need to practice! practice! practice! both my Witchcraft (to make sure I have truly earned my 3rd degree and to honor the Gods and my teachers and myself!) and my (ugh!) decluttering skills. Well, one of out of 2 ain't bad! (AND, NO, THIS IS *NOT* ***NOT*** ***NOT*** A CHALLENGE TO THE GODS!)

And I also have to think and decide what I want and need for me, personally. I've never been comfortable doing this because I felt everyone else was more important than me. Not any more. It's still strange and a bit uncomfortable, but I know now that I'm the only one there is, and I'm important too. So I'm my own bridge between the old me (the experiences that have made me who I am) and the new me that I am now and will be & become after 3rd degree. I see myself in a more loving and forgiving way with a better (not complete!) understanding of my strengths and faults. What I choose to do about them is up to **ME**! I can listen to other's advice, but the final decision is MINE BECAUSE NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL ME HOW TO LIVE ***MY LIFE***!!! Okay. That's huge. Whew!

I see my life getting better, day-by-day.
In a year, I see 2 Second Degrees, and I'm better off financially (possibly with a new job).
In 5 years, I see at least 5 more First Degrees, one more second degree, and possibly two 3rd degrees. I'll have a better job, my house will be in MUCH better shape, and I may even have a boyfriend.
In 10 years, I see 2 or more hivings (as many as 5?), and I'm preparing to step down, if it hasn't already happened. I am involved in the pagan community, and I am also preparing to retire from working.
In 20 years, I have slowed down but am still active in both the pagan community and the coven.
And, throughout all the years, I will be the bridge to the old and the new with love because that's the only foundation that survives.

Recipe

Samhain Pork Roast

1 pork loin
mushrooms
onions
garlic
bread crumbs
sage
parsley
rosemary
salt
pepper
1 egg

Take a very sharp knife and begin cutting the roast, a slice about one inch think, but don't cut through. Keep cutting and unrolling the roast until you have one, continuous slice. Spread a thick layer of the stuffing on the slice and, carefully, roll it back up. Tie it shut with butcher's twine and lay in a roasting pan and cover with foil. Roast on 350 degrees for 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

For the stuffing, figure the amounts according to the size of the roast. You want enough to be able to spread over the entire unrolled loin. Dried herbs are okay, but fresh offers a much fuller flavor. I use whatever mushrooms I can get, usually white mushrooms, tree ears, shitake, but porcini are okay if you want to go to the trouble of peeling the tough skin off the tops. With the onions, try to use yellow mushrooms, they are at their fullest flavor right now. Use the entire garlic, if you want, it won't hurt and it's good for you.

Chop everything very finely and mix together in a bowl with a tiny bit of water if you need a little more moisture to make a paste-like spread, but not much, you don't want it to quirt out of the roast.

Submitted by Cindy and her spiderpigs

~Samhain~

(October 31)
Page 154 of The Craft, A Witches Book of Shadows
By Dorothy Morrison

Related Deities: Hecate, Pan, Persephone, Hades, the Morrigan
Related Herbs: Bay leaf, lavender, mugwort, nutmeg, sage
Related Stones: Obsidian, black onyx, bloodstone, amethyst, opal

Samhain (sow'-en) is held on October 31, and is also known throughout the world as Halloween, Hallows, or All Hallows Eve. It's the only festival we observe that deals directly with the dead. For this reason, the Samhain celebration completely defines the role of Death in the cycle of Life, and the importance of its lessons in our personal realities.

In many ancient cultures, Samhain marked the last day of the calendar year. For that reason, it was a time for tying up loose ends and putting things to rest. Grazing days over, herds were gathered from the fields, and either selected for slaughter or put up for the winter. Farmers put their crops to bed, and anything that was left back to the Earth Mother by leaving it in the fields to rot. Other tasks were tended to as well: Unpaid debts were rendered in full and arguments were settled. In fact, anything that might mar personal luck in the New Year was not only handled completely, but expediently and efficiently.

Perhaps the main function of this day, however, had to do with those who had died during the year. It was important that they be put to peaceful rest before the coming year, that they were honored and given their due, that their spirits not be allowed any discomforts or displeasure, lest they walk the face of the Earth. And since the veil between the physical worlds is very thin on Hallows, it was an excellent time to tend them.

Like our ancestors, we will tend the Dead on Samhain today. We invite them into our circles, give them piece of mind, and let them speak through us. We honor them, praise their worldly deeds, give them their due. Then we lead them back through the veil where they may rest until the time comes for them to live on Earth again.

Since the veil is thinnest at Samhain, we also learn much from those in the Spirit World. It's the one time a year when their messages reach us easily. This is why most people work with divinatory tools at Samhain. While I usually use the tarot for messaging during ritual, others work with runes, pendulums, black mirrors and so forth. And sometimes, tools aren't necessary at all; the messages are so loud and clear, you'd think someone was speaking directly into your ear! Be that as it may, some messages come through very quickly, so it's a good idea to keep a pencil and pad near you to take notes. Every message is important, and you won't want to forget anything you've been told.

Samhain Circle Notes

Use an orange or black altar cloth, orange and black candles, and decorate with apples, pomegranates, chrysanthemums, and marigolds. Burn Samhain incense (a mixture of bay leaves, nutmeg, and sage). Use small jack-o'-lanterns to mark the quarters, placing Element-appropriate colored candles in each.

Cast this Circle using the athame. After the circle is cast go to the Western Quarter and draw an invoking pentagram with the athame to open the gate. Then evoke the dead by saying:

Spirits walking on this night –
Hearken! Hearken to my call!
Gather in this Circle Light
Enter! Enter! one and all!
Whether you are plant or pet
Or human spirit roaming free
Into this circle you are let
Blessings we bestow upon thee
Please say to us what you must say
And give us all your worries, deep
And we will guide you on your way
To peace and rest and gentle sleep
Spirits walking on this night-
Hearken! Hearken! To my call!
Gather in this Circle Light!
Enter! Enter one and all!

Then invoke Pan, the Guardian of the Summerland, and bestow blessings on the Dead by saying:

O Mighty Pan of the Summerland:
Guardian of the beloved Dead
We pour forth love on those you keep
Safely, in Your peaceful stead
We bless those who have walked the path
That someday, we as well, shall rove
We offer peace unto their souls
While resting in Your arms, below

Perform any divinatory measures that your wish, then return to the Western Quarter with the athame. Say something like:

Blessings be upon you, O wondrous Spirits of the Dead, we thank you for your presence in our circle and honor you on this sacred night. We beseech you, O Pan, keeper of the sacred Dead, embrace once again those souls within your keep and hold tightly
to your breast those that have been lost and wandering. Grant

them safe passage to the Summerland, where they may rest peace-
fully in Your strength until they are refreshed and reborn again in perfect love. We bid you each a fond farewell, So mote it me!

Using the athame, draw a banishing pentagram in the Western Quarter to close the Circle gate. (note: closing the gate is of utmost importance here. Left open, the Spirits cannot find their way to Summerland, and continue to roam the Earthly plane. They will be left in a state of confusion and could actually wreak havoc on your personal life. It's an aggravation that you and the walking dead can do without.)

Samhain Celebration Ideas

Place a white seven – day candle in the window to guide the Dead to the Spirit World. Light the candle and say:

O little flame that burns so bright
Be a beacon on this night
Light the path for all the Dead
That they may see what's ahead
And lead them to the Summerland
And shine until Pan takes their hands
And with Your light, please bring them peace
That they may rest and sleep with ease

Because this is a time of endings, Magic is often used to get rid of unsavory personal characteristics or break bad habits. Just write the character trait or habit on a piece of paper, light it and toss it into the cauldron or a fire proof dish, saying something like:

I burn this trait now from my life
Upon this sacred Samhain night
It is gone from me at last
Just a memory from the past

Since this is the beginning of the dark time of the year, say goodbye to the Sun and wish Him well as He rests now until the time of his rebirth on Yule. At the end of ritual, include a farewell by saying something like:

Farewell Dear Sun, Who warms the Earth
Who, with Your Light, brings joy and mirth
Close Your eyes now – go to sleep
Rest peacefully in Darkness deep
Until the Yuletide fest begins
And You are born to us again

Extinguish all candles to signify His absence.

To feed the dead on their journey and gain their blessings, either leave or bury a few apples and a pomegranate outdoors after libation. As you leave the fruit say something like:

O Fruit of Death and Fruit of Life
Fruit that eases mortal strife
Ease the hunger of the Dead
Until They reach Their final stead
Be food enough for everyone
Until their journey's fully done

Recipe

Creepy Witches' Fingers

Yield: 5 dozen

1 cup Butter, softened
1 cup Icing sugar (powdered sugar)
1 Egg
1 tsp Almond extract
1 tsp Vanilla
2 2/3 cups Flour
1 tsp Baking powder
1 tsp Salt
3/4 cup Almonds, whole blanched
1 Tube red decorator gel
(optional, not pictured)

Gross everyone out with these creepy cookies.
In bowl, beat together butter, sugar, egg, almond extract and vanilla. Beat in flour, baking soda, and salt. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes. Working with one quarter of the dough at a time and keeping remainder refrigerated, roll heaping teaspoonful of dough into finger shape for each cookie. Press almond firmly into 1 end for nail. Squeeze in centre to create knuckle shape. (Accompanying picture showed long rolled shape with bulge at centre for knuckle; you puff it out rather than squeeze it in.) Using paring knife, make slashes in several places to form knuckle.

Place on lightly greased baking sheets; bake in 325F (160C) oven for 20-25 minutes or until pale golden. Let cool for 3 minutes. Lift up almond, squeeze red decorator gel onto nail bed and press

almond back in place, so gel oozes out from underneath. You can also make slashes in the finger and fill them with "blood." (ed. note - I opted not to go for the bloody effect as you can see in my picture above, and my guests were still grossed out! - Britta) Remove from baking sheets and let cool on racks. Repeat with remaining dough.

Here we have a pen & ink and pencil "Pagan Priestess". I didn't really have a direction when I started it, just sorta let me artistic self lead.

Wheel of the Year pine plaque. I made this one for a member of our local circle that was leaving us for places far far away.

Samhain at the Travis Earth Circle

So, on October 25th the Travis Earth Circle celebrated Samhain! Four out of five celebrants were Georgian with a guest from the Reclaiming trad standing in as the High Priestess and a very special guest that goes by the name of Prince William the stupid. The temperature was great, no wind so the candles all burned! Yours truly wove the tale of the Green Hag then we did the symbolic last harvest of the season by harvesting the one and only pumpkin that actually grew up in my garden while singing horribly OUT of key "Hoof and Horn" In attendance were Lord Bel Taran, Panthera of the Reclaiming, Robert and wife Darlene and my daughter Miranda and as I mentioned…Prince William the Stupid. A great time was had by all, Pan and Persephone was invited to bless our little circle.

←Miranda, Prince William, Loye, Panthera, Robert and Darlene

And, let us not forget those that went before us. On this sacred night of Samhain, a time when we remember our passed Loved ones, Ancestors and not to be forgotten, our family members that often was there when no others were, who accepted us for who we are regardless of who we are, our family and friends of the animal kingdom.

Spike, My son's great and awesome cat
Rhiannonetain

Spooky, Gypsey's familar passed in March.

DECEMBER, 2007:
12/28/2007 - LaVern Turman Williams - (friend of mine from high school)

JANUARY, 2008:
1/9 - Samantha Poe's unborn daughter - (Her father, Fig, is a Georgian)

February, 2008:
2/20 - Iron Dragon's Mother-in-law - (He didn't give her name, but I think it's a nice gesture, anyway!)

MARCH, 2008:
3/4 - Gary Gygax
3/18 - Mairead Dunleavy - (Costumer extroidenaire in the SCA)
3/19 - Arthur C. Clarke
Shirley Vanderpool (Lady Raven's mother)
3/29 - Robert Fagles - Poet and Professor of Classics

APRIL, 2008:
4/1 - Gypsy's familiar (didn't know her name - you might want to email her about it)
4/30 - Julianna McGill - Georgian Elder

MAY, 2008:
5/2 - Cora Anderson - Leader of the Faery Trad.
5/22 - Robert Lynn Aspirin (SF Writer, SCA member, Pagan)

JUNE, 2008:
6/1 - BooBoo - feline fur-spirit, Familar friends adoptee
6/2 - Kahn - Beloved fur-spirit, Familiar Friends helper extrodenaire
6/5 - Paula Gunn Allen - Native American Rights Activist
6/23 - Barbara Lewis - Celtic Enchantress - HPS from Grand Rapids, MI
and owner of Enchanted Attic.

JULY, 2008:
7/28 - Danessa Smith - Founder of the TEMPEST Foundation for Tolerance

AUGUST, 2008:
8/9 - Fred Adams, founder of Fereferia
8/22 - Phoenix (Tom K.) - Gardnarian HP
8/27 - Del Martin - Lesbian Activist

SEPTEMBER, 2008:
9/14 - John Lyon Burnside - Long-time Gay Rights activist
Winter Wren - Michigan Wiccan HPS; (Don't know the exact date yet, but will find out and send it to you.)

The Halloween Witch

Each year they parade her about ... the traditional Halloween witch.
Misshapen green face, stringy scraps of hair, and a toothless mouth beneath her disfigured nose. Gnarled, knobby fingers twisted into a claw, protracting from a bent and twisted torso that lurches about on wobbly legs.

Most think this abject image to be the creation of a prejudiced mind, or merely a Halloween caricature.

I disagree. I believe this to be how witches were really seen.

Consider that most witches: were women, were abducted in the night, and smuggled into dungeons or prisons under the secrecy of darkness, to be presented by the light of day as a confessed witch.

Few, if any, saw a frightened, normal looking woman being dragged into a secret room filled with instruments of torture. To be questioned until she confessed to anything that was suggested to her, and to give names or whatever would stop the questions. Crowds saw the aberration denounced to the world as a self-proclaimed witch.

As the witch was paraded through the town, en route to be burned, hanged, drowned, stoned, or disposed of in various other forms of Christian love ... all created to free and save her soul from her depraved body. The jeering crowds viewed the results of hours of torture. The face, bruised and broken by countless blows, bore a hue of sickly green. The once warm and loving smile gone. Replaced by a grimace of broken teeth and torn gums that leers beneath a battered, disfigured nose. The disheveled hair conceals bleeding gaps of torn scalp from whence cruel hands had torn away the lovely tresses. Broken, twisted hands clutched the wagon for support. Fractured fingers locked like groping claws to steady her broken body. All semblance of humanity gone. This was truly a demon, a bride of Satan, a witch.

I revere this Halloween crone and hold her sacred above all. I honor her courage and listen to her warnings of the dark side of humanity.

Each year I shed tears of respect.

Written by Angel, 6/99

Each year I weave this tale myself with both my coven in Porterville (Children Between the Worlds) and my local group (The Travis Earth Circle). If I do nothing else in the Samhain ritual it is expected that I'll don my black robes and as I walk deosil slowly around the circle , staff in hand tell the tale, always changing it up a little year to year but always at leas one individual will be seen wiping their eyes at the end or during it.

So, reclaim the old green hag my brothers and sisters.
BB and Blessed Samhain!

Bel Taran

Recipe

Sinister Skulls

plastic wrap
1 small party favor plastic skull candy container
1 package cream cheese
1 jar chili sauce or salsa
crackers for spreading

Set the cream cheese out to thaw to room temperature. Line the inside of the plastic skull dish with plastic wrap leaving enough edges to wrap around later. Spoon the softened cream cheese into the plastic-lined skull dish, mashing in as much cream cheese as possible to pick up the most detail in the mold. Scrape any extra cream cheese off the top so it is flat. Close the plastic wrap over the flat cream cheese top and place in the freezer to set. Once set, remove the plastic wrap from the skull dish, and carefully wrap in foil to cushion the face shape. Line the skull dish with fresh plastic wrap to make more cream cheese skulls. Store in the freezer until night before the party, then thaw in the refrigerator. To serve, place the skull in a shallow dish, garnish with your preferred bloody salsa or chili mixture, including inside the eye sockets, and stab with your favorite spreader. You can extend the time before needing to refill by placing the skull on half a block of cream cheese, but cover the plain cream cheese with enough sauce so you can only see the skull above the "blood."

Socrates'

Prayer to Pan - and Pan as the "Highest God"

"Oh dear Pan and all the other Gods of this place, grant that I may be beautiful inside. Let all my external possessions be in friendly harmony with what is within. May I consider the wise man rich. As for gold, let me have as much as a moderate man could bear and carry with him."

This prayer comes at the very end of the *Phaedrus*. After offering this prayer, Socrates says to his young friend, with whom he has just spent an idyllic afternoon discussing Beauty surrounded by nature, "Do we need anything else, Phaedrus? I believe my prayer is enough for me." To which Phaedrus responds, "Make it a prayer for me as well. Friends have everything in common."

The Phaedrus is one of Plato's most celebrated dialogs, and one of the first translated into Latin during the early stages of the Renaissance. It is also one of only three Platonic dialogs that Marsilio Ficino wrote a commentary on, although he had hoped to write commentaries on all of the dialogs. The *Phaedrus* was also at the center of the controversy over the very acceptability of Plato as a philosophical influence for Christians - this controversy involved intellectuals and churchmen from both the Latin West and the Byzantine East, including Plethon, Bessarion, Ficino and many others.

In his Commentaries on the Phaedrus, Ficino tells us this about Pan:

He is called Pan (as if he were all), because he occupies the greatest rank in the order of the local Gods. For just as the supercelestial Gods are brought back to the prime intellect and the celestial Gods to the world-soul, so all the sublunar Gods and daemons, the local ones, are finally brought back to Pan, who reigns everywhere under the moon. Whenever I have spoken of Pan as the highest God, however, I have spoken not with a Platonic reason, but with some other.

Here Ficino makes two points - one directly and one enigmatically. The first, and direct, point is to identify Pan as the Great God of the material ("sublunar") world. In other wods, the supreme God of Nature.

The second point, to which Ficino alludes to with discretion, is that Pan has an even higher station - that of the "highest" God. Elsewhere in Ficino's work he holds that Pan "corresponds to Saturn, the prime intellect and highest God" - according to Michael Allen. But Allen does not state what Ficino's "other", non-Platonic "reason" is. Allen implies that Ficino might simply be using etymology (according to which Pan obviously means "all") - but Ficino might very well be referring to Macrobius' description of Pan in the Saturnalia, in which Pan is portrayed as a supreme, solar Deity.

Prairie Meet 2008

Once again we have pictures from Prairie Meet, the pics and information are courtesy Marla and Erin! In the announcement section we mentioned a Handfasting….here are some pics of it!

Prairie Meet 2008

Georgian Family and Friends gathered once again at beautiful Boling Springs State Park. We were so lucky this year that Marla, Gypsey and Debra made the drive to see us, Marla and Gypsey from South Carolina and Debra from Arkansas!!!

We had approx. 22 in attendance. The ladies from Southernwood Coven (Texas) were our kitchen witches and main lodge altar designers. They make a mean Sunday breakfast, all of us were especially grateful for those yummy vittles after our usual late night of post main-ritual reveling.

But let me start at the beginning..

Friday was the usual gathering in, setting up camp and reconnecting with each other. Dinner was lasagna, salad and garlic bread, thanks Sean for being our kitchen witch and chef on Friday.

Opening Ritual was down in our usual firepit/amphitheater area, my students Emilie, Tony and Erin along with their students Julie and Phillip did an excellent job in setting the tone and energy for the weekend!!! Marla and I were all misty eyed with pride as we watched the ritual un-fold; those were our babes and grand babes out there!!! (awwwwww, how sweet)

Later in the evening was " Initiation Marathon the Sequel" (last year was also a busy initiation time). Gypsey received her 2nd degree officiated by Marla and Tony. Congrats Gypsey!! We then switched gears and Sean and I initiated Tony and Emilie (working couple) to the 3rd degree!!! Whew!!! We worked up a sweat!!! And Blessed Be!!

Saturday morning started bright and early. Tony led a morning Tai-chi exercise, in the beautiful morning sunshine. Breakfast followed, and then Erin took over with her workshop that taught us how to manifest change through meditation. Emilie followed with a tarot and spell work workshop, which in turn led to our 1st Annual Iron Witch Competition. Iron Witch is a take-off on Iron Chef, Georgia was the "chairman, chairperson" who judged every round. Each round had a secret ingredient that had to be used in a spell, the spells were then each presented to the "chairperson" for judging, three witches competed in each round. The competition

was hot and fierce, typical Georgian style. The prize was an awesome "witches hat" trophy handmade by Emilie and Tony and their gang. Phillip then followed with another workshop on ESP. Whew!!! We ate lunch, caught our breaths and prepared for Emilie and Tony's Handfasting. Story by Marla…….

We caught our breath in the afternoon; Sean and Andy worked on preparing for main ritual. A big thank you must go out to Azure

for carving one heck of a jack o' lantern for our Lord of the Underworld effigy!!!!

Dinner was our traditional Greek Fare, gyros, tabouli and yum!!, baklava (gotta love Sam's Club). As daylight faded and darkness approached we all delighted in watching the antics of a porcupine in the field in front of the main lodge...Main Ritual followed, led by Sean and Deborah, the burning of our Lord of the Underworld did not disappoint, he went up in a blaze of glory and almost sent this HPS into a panic, but all was well and we shared in a feast of pumpkin bread, cider and song together. Our standard reveling by the fire followed the ritual, we shared stories, laughter and a bit of drumming.

Morning came way too soon!! We had an awesome breakfast, packed up, cleaned up, hugged a lot and headed back to our mundane lives in the muggle world. Another Prairie Meet for the record books!! So mote it be!!!

Prairie Meet participants

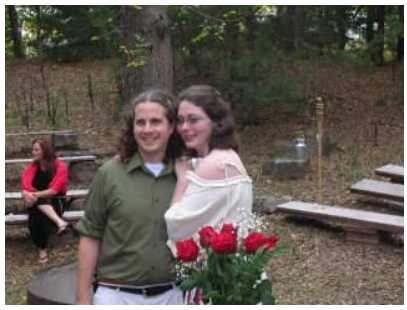
Altar

Georgia
The Georgian Salute

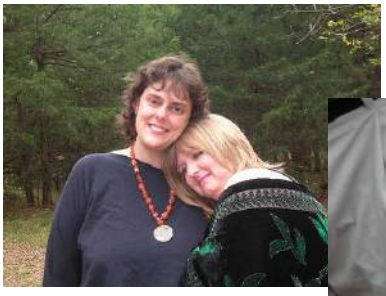
Branwen Southernwood (October 2008)

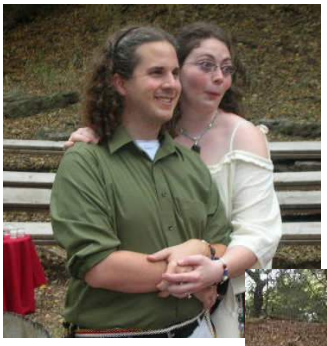
The Handfasting Of Emilie and Tony

I was honored to be asked by Tony and Emilie G to officiate their handfasting at Prairie Meet this year. The ritual was based on the Georgian handfasting ritual with a few changes to honor their needs and wishes. The circle was cast by Deborah, their initiating 3rd degree High Priestess. Andy guarded the circle. Erin introduced Tony and Emilie to the four quarters The four quarters were attended to and called by Chris, Debra, Gypsey, and Sean. During the ceremony, Tony and Emilie pledged to stay together "as long as love shall last". They exchanged spirit totems, wedding bands, and were then bound together by a lovely bracelet that Susan had made for the occasion. While bound, Erin, escorted them to each guest who gave them an individual blessing. We finished it off with Tony and Emilie jumping the broom. It was a very lovely occassion with both the bride and groom looking especially witchy.



Beth and Deborah





Nothin but sexy here!

May the Goddess bless them both as they continue on this path and the Georgian path.

Marla - Georgian Elder and HPS

Erin's Prairie Meet page
http://picasaweb.google.com/erin.adams.security/PrairieMeet_200802#

Marla's Prairie Meet page
http://www.flickr.com/gp/34631404@N00/45p8VH