

## PATTIE'S POLYTHEIST CALENDAR

June 4 Rose Festival/Dragon Boat Festival  
 June 5 The Sheela-na-Gig  
 June 6-7 Shavuot  
 June 13 Feast of Epona  
 June 13 - 17 Free Spirit Festival in Maryland  
 June 14 Full Moon 16:16  
 June 14 Birthday of the Muses  
 June 16 Bloomsday  
 June 21 Summer Solstice 3:10 pm  
 June 24 Fates Feast Day

July 1 Ratha Yatra  
 July 4 Independence Day  
 July 5 Tynwald Day (Isle of Man, forgive your neighbor)  
 July 10 Lady Godiva/White Holda/Black Hela/Skadi  
 July 13 Full Moon 14:21 Birth of the Muses  
 July 13-15 Festival of Souls (Obon) (Shinto, lunar date)  
 July 15 St Swithin's Day (the July equivalent of Ground Hog Day... Check for rain)  
 July 14 Bastille Day  
 July 16 Rosa/Feast of Roses (Roman)  
 July 19 Great Panathenaia (1st of 6 days)  
 July 26 Sleinper's Feast

August 1 Lughnassad (Lammas)  
 August 7 Tisha B'av  
 August 11 Raksha Bandhan  
 August 12 Full Moon 23:48 / Raksha Bandhan  
 August 12 The Glorious Twelfth---go hunting, or just eat grouse  
 August 13-15 Festival of Souls (Obon) (Shinto, solar date)  
 August 13 Festival of Diana and Hecate  
 August 15 Isis' Birthday/Dharma Day  
 August 20 Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi

September 8 Abbots Bromley Horn Dance (the first Monday after the first Sunday after September 4th)(go figure)  
 September 10 Full Moon 11:36PM  
 September 13 Banquet of Venus  
 September 17 Birth of Hildegard von Bingen  
 September 21 Equinox / Festival of Trinity-Eleusis / Rites of Eleusis  
 September 22 Mabon  
 September 23 The Greater Eleusinian Mysteries (1st of 9 days)  
 September 26 - October 4 Navarata Dashara  
 September 28 Greater Eleusinian Mysteries Day 6: Iacchos  
 September 29 Michaelmas

*To be continued, of course....*

## UPCOMING GROVE EVENTS:

**Meditatateria:** Open Every Other Frigga's Day in New Brunswick  
 Next dates: May 9th 2003, May 23rd, June 6th...

A meditation space will be available for silent meditation between 8 and 9pm for our Dedicants and anyone else who wishes to sit and meditate and maybe talk about it afterward. Started on Frigga's Day July 26th 2002; Contact us for more info.

### **Our Druid Dedicants Group:**

Next meeting Saturn's Day July 19th 2003, 3pm

Our second group is almost through ADF's Dedicants Program. It's been a lot of fun, revealing self-knowledge and knowledge of each other as well as Druid lore and techniques.

\*\*\*\*\***A NEW Dedicants Group is forming!**\*\*\*\*\*

If you'd like to go through ADF's Dedicants Program with our third dedicants group, email us as soon as possible. This is open to ADF members only, but it's only \$15 to join ADF these days. We are currently working out a schedule of meetings. Email us at Eternalansw@earthlink.net

Saturn's Day June 7: **Crucible, a gathering of mages, pagans, mystics and occultists.** Secaucus, NJ.

An opportunity to spend a weekend in the company of other practitioners of magic from a wide variety of traditions. This will be in the convention space of a large hotel and will involve socializing, formal workshops, demonstrations and talk. If you'd like to go, contact [www.EvenFalseThingsAreTrue.com](http://www.EvenFalseThingsAreTrue.com) Several GOG members will be presenting.

Frigga's Day, Saturn's Day, Sun's Day; June 13-15, 2003: **YURICON** Newark, New Jersey, Gateway Hilton

Yuricon—join us for three days filled with fun, friends and animated lesbians. Yes, you read that right—Yuricon is a celebration of lesbians in Japanese animation and comics. Yuricon is the brainchild of long-time grove member Erica Friedman, and if you look closely at the teeming throngs, you'll see quite a few of our members

drifting through the crowd as volunteers and attendees. Why exactly will you find a big chunk of our grove hanging out at an anime convention, you ask? Chalk it up to Erica's magical lesbian powers. :-) But do drop by for games, contests, anime showings, international guests and more! Basically, we'll all be there. For information about lesbians in Japanese animation and comics, visit <http://www.yuricon.org> For information about Yuricon 2003, visit <http://www.yuricon.org/03/Home.htm>.

### **40th Anniversary of American Druidism—June 20-23 2003:**

Reformed Druids of North America, the group that started it all (ADF, Keltria, Primitive Celtic Church, Reformed Druidic Wicca, and the Order of Mithril Star are all spin-offs of the RDNA) are holding an anniversary celebration June 20-23 2003 at Carleton College in Northfield, MN (where it all started). It's free. Attend services, sing at bonfires, loll at picnics. Go to <http://geocities.com/mikerdna/anniversary.html>. "All Druids & interested are cordially invited to this forested campus."

Saturn's Day, June 21: **GOG's Summer Solstice Pageant and Ritual:** A Pageant and Parade celebrating a Day and Night in New Brunswick NJ—local people, nature spirits, spirits of place, local Goddesses and Gods. Dress silly like a student, professor, doctor, nurse, sorority chick, fraternity dude, drug dealer, hooker, homeless person, J&J salaryperson, Silent Willie, etc... facepainting, props, songs, Druid ritual on the hoof. IF YOU CAN, BRING A DONATION OF CANS OF FOOD OR BOXES OF FOOD FOR LOCAL CHARITIES—mail us at [eternalansw@earthlink.net](mailto:eternalansw@earthlink.net)

Saturn's Day, August 2, 2003 6th Annual Hands of Change **PAGAN PICNIC:** 10am–7pm Johnson Park–Grove 5 Piscataway, NJ  
 Join area Pagans for a day of fun, food, and fellowship. Families and respectful seekers are welcome! GOG Druids will be involved in the planning and festivities. This has been a great time in the past, so SAVE THE DATE!! E-mail us at [eternalansw@earthlink.net](mailto:eternalansw@earthlink.net)

# Ostara Invocation



rising waxing  
morning s redness  
an egg in the palm  
a seed in the soil



Ostara, i can hear your footsteps  
in sparrow song  
in robin trill



waxing, rising  
thrusting, lusting  
hare of dusk and  
dawning s robin



Ostara, i can see your tresses  
in scarlet maples  
the daffodil

girl of gold and  
morning s redness  
blooming, singing  
rutting, springing



a bloom springing forth  
the down of willow  
blooming, singing  
rutting, springing

sap flows sweet  
the birds are waking  
waking, knowing  
stretching, growing



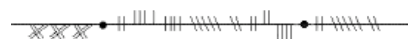
sap flows sweet  
the songbirds waking  
waking, knowing  
stretching, growing

the egg in the palm  
a seed in the soil

*Jenne Micale*



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**SOME RECENT GROVE EVENTS:** ♣ May 3: Our 11th Beltane May Faire. At a park in Morristown, NJ: May Faire, and the usual Mayhem. Floral Headwreath Making! Hobby-Horse, Dragon and Other Beasts! Altars to all sorts of things! Labyrinth! Feasting! Fairybox & Cthulhu Crafts workshops! Fairy dance! May Pole! And Erica led a Druid Ritual! 34 attended, and the weather was fabulous! VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE BELTANE 2003 PHOTOS! ♣ April 30 to May 1st- Beltane Night Vigil and Beltane Dawn Hobby Horse: 5 of us stayed up all night (and 2 more stopped by) with stories, songs and faery cakes (and we repaired our Beltane banners) and, at \*\*THE BREAK OF DAWN\*\* on Thor's Day, May 1st, in the DRIZZLE and RAIN, 10 of us met in Princeton, NJ to help Morris Dancers, Molly Dancers and Maypole Dancers wake up the earth. GOG contributed to the Dawn festivities with a Hobby Horse ritual and a traditional May Song, in front of 60+ spectators (in the drizzle at dawn). Yes, it was too early in the morning and it was in the middle of the week and it was raining, but it was also a lot of fun, and one of the most amazingly beautiful things you'll ever see.... ♣ April 17th: GOG Glamourbombing Rutgers Pagan Student Assoc. 5 GOG members talked and demonstrated the shiny and subversive art of Glamourbombing. ♣ April 3: Middle Eastern Belly Dancing Rutgers Pagan Student Assoc. Peg and her American Tribal troupe hosted a bellydancing workshop. VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE PHOTOS! ♣ March 29: Loki Blot: 10 attended a blot to one of our Justin's patron deities. For more on this, VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE PHOTOS! ♣ March 26: RUPSA Pagan Panel Discussion: In the Rutgers University Student Center. The topics were "Sex" and "Death": Paganism and Alternative Lifestyles and Pagan Death and the Afterlife. Norma represented GOG's ADF Druid viewpoint on the panel. ♣ March 23 : Spring Equinox Trance Ritual Journey to the Land of Manannan Mac Lir. Jen Martin and Ed led a trance journey to the land of Manannan Mac Lir to honor and praise our gatekeeper, and celebrate the gray dawn of Spring. We blessed our skills and talents - those tools of body and mind and spirit that we use in our work - through the 5 senses. We consecrated our well to magic for another year. 18 in attendance. VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE PHOTOS! VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE THE SCRIPT(!) for the trance ritual! ♣ March 19: Beach Ritual to Manannan Mac Lir. 7 of us met at Pt. Pleasant at the Jersey Shore to collect 9 waves water and honor Manannan, our Gatekeeper, and freeze our balls off. VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE PHOTO! ♣ Feb. 9th: GOG ADF Druids visit Orange Unitarian Church Norma was invited to do a sermon: Feb. 9th, 2003, in Orange, NJ. The theme was Brigid and Imbolc: *Spring's Underground Beginnings*-Rev. Norma Hoffman, ADF, Guest Speaker: *In the cold of early February, many ancient and modern traditions have a celebration to anticipate the arrival of Spring. Join us as the Rev. Hoffman, Senior Druid of Grove of the Other Gods, ADF, discusses the folk traditions, myths, and contemporary Pagan practices that connect the holidays of Imbolc, Candlemass and Groundhog Day. Come and herald the underground beginnings of Spring.* Thanks to Greg and Liz for help, and Carolyne for tremendous hospitality! For rough sermon notes visit our web site. ♣ February 1st: Imbolc: Ritual to our Muse, Patroness and Bright Goddess Brigid. Liturgists: Jenne and Betty and Jack and Ed. Jenne did a fantastic job leading the ritual, even when Brigid jumped in and claimed Her own offerings. 29 people. Wonderful praise, good omens, tasty food, tall fire, lovely dolly, lots of candles. We made Brigid's crosses. Jack drew throughout the ritual (see cover). VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE PHOTOS!



# Flying in the Face of Convention: Beltane Myths Demystified

**F**lying in the face of convention—because I can't fly a plane—I'm going to begin this article with a list of sources because I feel they are that important. Anyone who is serious about doing research on the topic of British customs and traditions needs to make a trip to the library (but not mine, I stole all the topical books!) (Yes, yes, I paid for them...) Anyway, here's the list, and I'm putting them in 'Pattie's Order of Importance.' So, right off the bat, you must buy this book:

*The Stations of the Sun* by Ronald Hutton. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996.

Not only a great read, it's indispensable as a resource. Go buy it... now... I'll wait...

Then find: *The National Trust Guide to Traditional Customs of Britain* by Brian Shuel. Webb & Bower, Exeter 1985.

My first theft on the topic! An excellent book, not only for the info, but the pictures are magical... steal it if you can't buy it. (Sadly yes, it's still out of print. Maybe some enterprising young perky American will do a revision... in my ample spare time.)

*Chamber's Book of Days* by R.L. Chamber 1863-64.

These two volumes, a set, are perhaps the oldest books in our house. Happily the whole has been scanned in by The University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries (bless them and their spare time!) <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/BookofDays/> Lots of fun all around!!

*The Customs and Ceremonies of Britain* by Charles Kightly (no, that is not a typo.) Thames and Hudson (where would we be without T&H?!!) London, 1986.

This book has more mayors in it than all of America. (It seems England just loves to dress its mayors up and do things with them... like, weigh them.) This resource is set up like a dictionary, which is great for avoiding things like... mayors.

*Customs and Traditions of England* by Garry Hogg. Arco Publishing Comp, New York 1971.

Yes, it's an old book, but another that's a gold mine of pictures (and besides, laughing at the fashions of the time only adds to the fun!)

*Once a Year: Some Traditional British Customs* by Homer Skyes. Gordon Fraser, London 1977.

Of the two 1970's books I'd like to see this one re-done more, which would suggest it should precede the Hogg, but until it is revised, I'll have to rely on Hogg first.

**O**kay, there you have the basis for almost all of my research. I have other books, but nothing as factual as these, and they form the bedrock of my library. When you begin to seriously delve into this topic you will come across the usual crowd of re-creationists, and Philip Stubbes, over and over, but with perseverance you'll come out the other side with a better understanding,

and a delight in all things quizzical. Now onto the topic at hand: *Beltane*!

## Beltane Trivia

I began this years 'talk' by disenchanting those present of the age-old belief that the May Pole, in all its phallic glory, is the upright part of a Pagan fertility rite. It is, in fact, nothing of the sort. Hard to believe? The funny thing is, if you tell yourself something, and it makes perfect, logical sense, you'll believe it. If you mention it to a friend, and they agree it's an obvious idea and why didn't they think of it, you then begin the cycle that, while charming in its nature, is the death knell to factual research. There probably isn't a person in the Pagan community who hasn't, at one point, picked up anything by Graves and been blown away. After all, you're in your early 20s and are a blank page for people like Graves and Frazer to paint on. You'll believe anything. Including, and not limited to, that that large white pole on the village green is an enormous penis screwing the earth mother. A perpetual Great Rite right under our very noses.

Well, sorry to say, there is no supporting evidence to this assertion; and while it makes all us Pagans feel like we've gotten another one over on our less enlightened neighbors, i.e. the local Christians, the bottom line is, there is no Pagan connection. No Great Rite. The May Pole wasn't a Pagan custom that the Christians, in their eagerness to fit in, subsumed.

May Poles were, and in some rare cases are, a sort of communal Christmas tree. (And, indeed, at one time every house had a "may bush," indoors.) Imagine a community coming together to celebrate the fact that they can now go abroad without a coat, and for the express purpose of decorating the May Pole. Fresh greens, flowers, ribbons... all harkening back to the Roman festival of Flora, which 99.9% of the people of long-ago Britain couldn't possibly have known about. And while they are indeed using the Pagan fire festival of Beltane as the night/day for the party, the free license of the evening had become less important and had transmuted to the tradition we call Dancing the May Pole. You wonder why perhaps? Everything loops around to one thing, improving infant mortality.

But 'Maying' was a party, plain and simple, and the hidden meaning was only grafted onto it later. In fact, we can lay the basis for this incorrect assertion at the feet of one Philip Stubbes ("Anatomie of Abuses," 1583... a rollicking good read...) in his oft (and I mean oft!) quoted statement: *...But the chieftest jewel they bring from thence is their Maypole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus. They have twentie or fortie yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nose-gay of flouers placed on the tip of his hornes, and these oxen drawe home this May-*

*pole (this stinkyng ydol, rather...)* (sic, in case you couldn't tell.) For the rest we will call Sir James Frazer to task. As Hutton says in your new copy of *Stations of the Sun*, Frazer saw forest spirits in everything.

Now, while Stubbes does manage to paint a delightful picture in my mind, (fresh-faced nymphs, et al) this is one of those cases I warned you about earlier (and did you notice the other?) If he says it, and I believe it, it becomes fact. Get ready for the cold water to the face, okay? (And speaking of water, there are some sources who say that "May Pole" is actually a poor translation of "May Pool"! Imagine dancing around a pool of water... but I digress...)

If a town did indeed have a forest around them that might yield a suitable tree, and they did manage to make off with it without the landowner's knowledge, they would hardly bring the pilfered pole home with pomp and procession! They'd do it under cover of the night and pray that all involved kept their bloody traps shut because you know what a talker George is when he gets a few in him and why did I let them talk me into this and if the wife finds out I'm in the goad come Sunday... but it did seem like a good idea last night at the pub.... whoops, I'm getting away from the point.

Suitable trees would have been slated for the noble occupation of ship's-mast (more on that later) and what town had access to 20-40 oxen? (And even if they did, would all the owners be on good enough terms with each other to allow the animals to be thus employed?) May Poles were, in fact, such an expense that parishes would sometimes pool their funds to buy one. There are even cases of poles being stolen by rival parishes! Is nothing sacred?! To combat this, some poles were left up all year. These poles came down on a regular schedule, say every 3-7 years, to be repainted and repaired if need be. The tallest May Pole on record was 86 feet tall, and was actually 2 trees spliced together.

Someone this year asked if apple trees were preferred owing to their trainability. The ready answer is no. No working tree would have been used for such a frivolous task, and while I agree apples are eminently trainable, they would not reach the height needed for a pole.

Another commonly held belief (and we're talking Pagans here) is that this year's May Pole is this year's Yule Log. An enchanting idea, yes? I think I've adequately explained why this would have been a foolish waste of good wood.

But what about places where trees, any trees, were scarce? Enterprising man will always find a way to have his cake and eat it too. Did you know ship's masts were removable? They are. They had to be, in case repairs needed to be done, or heaven forbid they should splinter and break. You can't scuttle a ship for want of a mainmast! So there were some May Poles that were doing double duty. Neat huh?

Let's move closer to the big city, where there are even less trees. There is a record of the last May Pole in London coming down in 1795, and we have to assume that

that one was of the permanent variety. May Poles suffered occasional lulls in interest, owing to things like, oh, Cromwell, and then a revival owing to things like, oh, the Restoration of the Monarchy. And the Victorians were wild for the golden days of Medieval England where they believed all was idyllic and, oddly, whitewashed.

It was during this time that milk-maids began parading the streets with pyramids of silver on their heads, and chimney sweeps ('climbing boys') began employing 'Greens' for fund raising during the long summer months when their services were no longer needed. But I've already written on that topic and you can read all about it on the Web page: <http://www.othergods.org/research/green%20jack.html>

There! You've gone there and read that. I've torn this bucolic scene to shreds and am ready to move on.

Speaking of bucolic (and ovcolic!?) Beltane was, in almost all parts of England, the time when you turned the flocks out into the summer pastures. But would you allow them to just go without some sort of protection? A sort of charmed flea collar was needed. Livestock was invaluable and every care had to be taken to ensure their good health.

There has been the suggestion that Beltane was the age-old festival of Baal, the Canaanite solar deity (that must have been a hefty airfare!) or, Belenos, a local solar guy, and that owing to this solar association Beltane was a fire festival. It was during this feast that bonfires would be lit on hilltops, and in some places, lit closer to home. The real reason for this was to bless the cows before turning them out.

Imagine if you will, two raging bonfires, and a herd of panicking cows. Now the idea is to walk (drive) them between the twin gateposts of flaming matter, and to make sure the smoke coated them. This done they would have received the blessing of Baal and you could release them with a clear conscience. Not surprisingly there came a time when one cow, representing 'all cows' was smoked, rather than driven between the fires.

Ah me, another pastoral scene destroyed, but at least I didn't ruin this one.

In conclusion I'd like to expand upon something that I personally do every May morning, namely, washing my face in May dew.

It has long been believed that the dew that collects on Beltane had the ability to 'cure' freckles, keep your skin fresher as you age, and reduce wrinkles. All of these I have no problem with, and make it a habit to pat May dew on my face once a year. What you may not know is that there are differing views about where this dew should come from. (Personally I'm not picky... that grass right over there that no one's walked on yet is just fine...) Good dew gathering points were: hawthorne bushes (heck, they were the source for 'knots of May' so this wasn't a stretch,) ivy (another non-surprise,) under oak trees (like that one) and perhaps the strangest, from new-filled graves.

I'll leave you to ponder that at your leisure.



# WILLIAM BLAKE

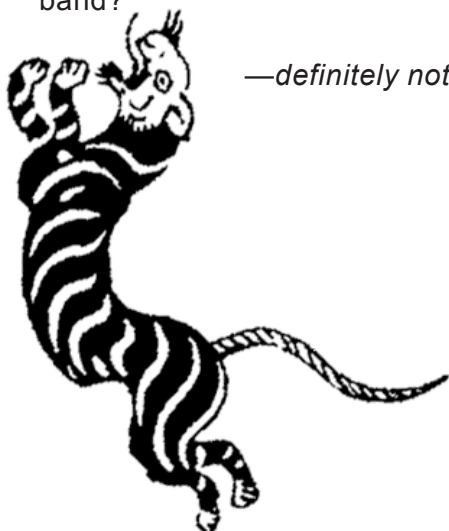
a go-go

## The Tyger

Tyger tyger blushing bright  
In the goth clubs of the night  
What mere mortal tongue or hand  
Could snap thee like a rubber band?

What the whip and what the  
scourge?  
What dark fetish was thine urge?  
What the %^&\*<br>What great ass  
Erased the shyness of thy past?

Tyger tyger blushing bright  
In the goth clubs of the night  
What mere mortal tongue or hand  
Has snapped thee like a rubber  
band?



—definitely not nej ;)



## The Lamb

(or, LITTLE LAMB LOST)

Little lamb, who took thee?  
Dost thou know who took thee?  
Gave thee thrust & bid thee moan,  
By the stream & o'er the stone;  
Gave thee pleasure and delight,  
Up thine arse in dark of night;  
Gave thee such a rod so hard  
Lesser lambs have sure been  
scarred.

Little lamb, who took thee?  
Dost thou know who took thee?

Little lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by this name:  
One and all, we call him Pan.  
Some might call his urges ill;  
He is shameless, buggers still --  
The lad, the lass, the chickadee  
Have a bum as sore as yours.

Little lamb gods help thee.  
Little lamb gods help thee.

—Jenniforensic



# The Cloak

I first saw it draped over a chair near the entrance of the dining hall. It was deep blue velvet and shimmered like the night sky with its thousands of stars. How I longed to touch it! I tried in vain to control myself, and finally gave in to temptation... just a gentle touch. Soft, it was, as if it had been woven by the fairies. "What sort of person could be the possessor of such a garment?" I wondered.

Everywhere I went I saw it, draped over a rock in the glen, hung over a branch near the sweat lodge, lying casually on a blanket in the meadow, and I couldn't resist touching it each time. The thought of it possessed my mind... imagination taking off on flights of fancy totally lacking in self-control. Was the sex of its owner, male or female? The Cloak was long, so the person had to be tall in stature. As long as it was my fantasy, I pictured the wearer as a man, large and bearded... not so unusual at a festival.

And finally, at twilight one night my questions were answered. There was the Cloak actually being worn by a glorious figure of a man, slim of face with a short beard and light brown hair touching his shoulders. I smiled at him from a distance, and he smiled back. I think he knew of the secret meetings I'd been having with his cloak. The firelighting ritual began, and as the circle of participants began to move to the rhythm of the drums, I couldn't take my eyes from the graceful movements of the deep blue cloak and his flowing hair. Although others were there, I only had eyes for him.

He circled the fire twice, and then stepped within the foliage surrounding the open area. Not wanting to be obvious in my interest, I went around a few more times and then went looking for this mysterious stranger. What manner of man would own such a miraculous garment!? A man such as this would have to be as wonderful as the garment he wore, wouldn't he... and certainly worth searching for.

All of a sudden I caught a glimpse of the shimmer of blue velvet from reflected firelight. There he was, standing tall and strong among the trees just beyond the clearing. Approaching him, I asked him if I might touch the Cloak. He assented in a mellow baritone voice. The night grew darker as I stroked it... tentatively at first. Oh, how much more beautiful it felt with his muscular arm beneath it! Like a cat I petted it, first with short strokes—then longer. I felt him move beneath my touch. He asked if I would like to feel its lining. It was silky, and my hand brushed against a nude body beneath it. He leaned toward me and kissed me deeply, and his cloak took me into its soft expanses. I had little but jewelry on under mine as well, and he started to stroke my body. We sank slowly to the ground. What an amazing touch he had. He stroked my breasts and caressed my legs. He did miraculous things to all of me... it was as if he had four hands pleasuring me, and pleasure me they did! The drums were loud, and everyone else was occupied at the dance. We made love twice in those woods, and leaned back to rest afterward. There was complete contentment, and then I heard a resonant bass voice come from deep within the cloak. "Thank you. That was amazing. I'll be right back... I have to pee..." The Cloak lifted and from within its folds came a small man not more than three feet tall, who headed into the woods. The man whom I thought was my only lover of the evening said, "He and I have been friends our whole lives. Sometimes women don't realize what a remarkable man he is! Did you find it enjoyable?" I swallowed hard, and nodded.

After a while the small nude man returned to the shelter of the Cloak, and the three of us talked. We've been together many times since then, and I'm sure that the three of us will remain friends forever. After all, we have in common a deep and abiding love of soft soft velvet the color of the midnight sky.

—Sue Wolfson,  
March 2003



## Samhain in April (St. Jack)

St. Jack sits, incorruptible,  
in my April garden, mummified;  
his head, as light as papier-maché,  
grinning in the warm sunshine.

Other pumpkins have rotted,  
other Gods have tumbled away,  
but Jack sits where he's sat since Samhain  
to terrify the passers-by.

They've almost gotten used to him,  
my neighbor says, "Why not let him  
sit there and see what happens?"

Indeed... Jack sees:

fat bumblebees cruise the trees,  
pink buds open like doors;  
yellow daffodils are blooming,  
violets slowly creeping up the lawn—

St. Jack sits, incorruptible,  
looking smug, and amused, by it all.

—Edwin Chapman, 04-28-2003

On the pumpkin I carved before Samhain,  
and brought to Beltane.

## Cross

It's that dream again  
Caught by the mad happiness of flight  
Shortly before my teeth and  
eyes have gone missing  
She's watching  
Streaks of red  
hair. blood. heart. memories.  
Her geese are leaving  
She is leaving  
Broken promises remembered  
Forgiveness rendered maudlin  
Too much  
Always too much  
Until I am hiding under my bed  
Trying not to breathe  
Blending into bras, socks, dustbunnyscapes  
Forget.

—Deb Castellano



Brigid's Cross. Photo by Xuk.

**BRIGID'S BRAT?** Is there a connection between the Goddess Brigid and the Jersey Devil??!  
<http://www.cynthialamb.com/reviews.html>

## SAVE THE DATE!!

August 2, 2003

### 6th Annual PAGAN PICNIC

10:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.

Johnson Park - Grove 5  
Piscataway, NJ

Join area Pagans for a day of  
fun, food, and fellowship.

Families and respectful seekers  
are welcome!

## SAVE THE DATE!!

MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.handsofchange.org/>

**Grove of the Other Gods, ADF**—formerly Green Man Grove, ADF—serves Druids and like-minded Pagans in the greater New York metropolitan area. We've held celebrations and rituals in Jersey City, New Brunswick, Manhattan, Morristown, Long Island, the Jersey Shore, Connecticut, and as far north as Woodstock. We've also been involved in rituals and workshops at various Pagan festivals. ☘ We've been around since Samhain 1990, when we performed our first ritual—in Liberty State Park under the skirts of the Goddess of Liberty Enlightening the World—and we're members of Ár nDraíocht Féin (ADF), which is Gaelic for "Our Own Druidry." ☘ We are a group of experienced Pagans who believe that the best way to approach the Goddesses and Gods of an earth-centered religion is through practice and dedication and scholarship and fun.

☘ Ár nDraíocht Féin is an international NeoPagan organization, whose worship centers on Indo-European pantheons. The study program is based on guilds that are devoted to specific areas of interest. They have a clergy training program, a magazine, and groves throughout North America and Europe. ADF is recognized as a non-profit religious organization, and they are also an honorary member of the British Council of Druids. To learn more about ADF, check out their web site at [www.adf.org](http://www.adf.org).

☘ Our rituals and workshops are open to the public. We also work with the ADF Druids Dedicants Program, and can hook people up with ADF's study program. ☘ The Metro-Pagan area is full of people who already have some general Pagan knowledge, and who have experience in various arts: music, performance, poetry, prose, satire, painting and sculpture and, of course, ritual— and, so, we try to provide a conducive forum for them. ☘ Nuff said—Come and join us!



# Imbolc 2003

by Jenne Micale

Prior to the arrival of worshipers, we arranged the altar before the sacred tree. Candles crisscrossed in a knot pattern on a white silken cloth, interspersed with white roses, glass beads, and statues of Brigid from Betty's altar. We assembled small packages of joss paper, pencils and Brigid's brats, which are cloths left out on Imbolc Eve to receive her blessing. We formed a dolly of wheat, garbing her in white lace. And then the socialization occurred as people trickled in, and then the rite.

I drummed and sang the Brigid song on the porch as the insiders prepared the hallway. Once Norma let us in, Jack went first, escorting Bride in her wicker basket. We received the blessings of earth—a dab of Stonehenge dirt on the forehead, and water—a splash of said stuff, and air—incense, before parting the purple veil and entering the room. Once inside, I sang as they processed, one by one, passing Jack and Bride, taking a package for later use. Jack recited Brigid's banns as we lit the 13 candles, and then the chime announced the start. We invoked the earth mother (Vigile), the directions (Josh), the well (Sandrock), the fire (Jenniforensic), and the tree (Brenda), the ancestors (Nej), the nature spirits (Deb), the gods and goddesses (Carol) with the usual aplomb and songs. Somewhere in there, Ed summoned Brigid again as muse, while Norma opened the gates, with Manannan.

Erica cursed, drank the outsiders' offering and left the ritual, as outsiders must. She didn't come back. And Brigid felt sad at her harsh words, for her husband, Breas, is Fomhoire, and she does not mean to drive any from her service.

After Betty's long, lovely invocation to Bride, we had the usual praise offerings: a song by Nora, poems by others. Jack offered the portraits of Brigid that he'd drawn while the ritual progressed (see the cover of this newsletter). We had a main sacrifice scheduled for Bride. As the ritual went on, I sat beside the sacred tree, ready with the water to make offerings in the hazel-nut-speckled well. Brigid, it seemed, wanted to occupy the lawn chair of power. She sat there briefly, and then flitted to Betty's side to assist in the invocation. "Well, you can use me if you will," said I, clad in long green dress and torque. "Use me, sit on me. I'll be your avatar, your vessel, as long as you let me run the ritual." A silent conversation. And as I gazed at the 13 flames, I seemed to fall into them, dazzled by brightness. The room seemed full of golden light, and my body was filled with a strange giddiness, although my mind was observant, at a distance. Still in control. As the others recited, I smiled in glee—her glee at the honor, the attention; flattery. I realized we had not left a piece of bread aside for her as the main sacrifice. "Why not take it yourself, then?" I asked silently.

And she did. I rose and I spoke but the words were not me. "You forgot my offering. You try to be conscientious, but sometimes you forget. So I'll take it my damned self." She

spoke through me, and my inner eyes watched distantly as she strode across the room, picking in disappointment over the unassembled feast. She thumbed her nose at the organic milk and the roast chicken. I sensed she wanted sweetness, confections of a sort. She picked out some scones, some carrots ("I like orange"), a shiny red apple ("this will do") and a half-drunk bottle of hard cider ("this will definitely do.") "I'd eat them now, but you're all looking at me," she said. "So I'll put them behind the tree. Put them out for me later, don't forget. You try to be conscientious, but sometimes you forget." She grabbed the sickle from the mantle, and touched the food. "Since you didn't bless it for me, I'll bless it my damn self."

And then she left, but not entirely, as she was still present in the ritual. Filled with strange rollicking laughter, I fell to my knees. "Now back to our regularly scheduled program." And then I pressed my head to the floor as I smiled and laughed, filled with a strange fiery energy and lightness. And then on to the omens, which I do not remember. The waters of life, poured and distributed. I played my dulcimer and sang "Brigid of the healers" to the rustle of papers, as participants wrote down the projects they wish to foster in the waxing year. And then I donned my silver cloak and sandals and led the walk outside, to burn the doll and supplications.

We did so, on a nest of yuletide greens. The flames shot upward from the hibachi, brilliant in the darkness, and we stretched our hands forward for warmth. Vigile led chants, and we sang to goddess and god. And then, spontaneously, we broke into "auld lang syne." I offered the prayers to Brigid, and closed the rite, herding people into the chamber of warmth. Thankfully, Nora supplied me with a plate of grounding food after I draped myself, rollicking giddy and ritual-drunk, on the couch. And slowly, the giddiness drained and I became myself entirely again.

[We had 29 in attendance. To look at a few Imbolc photos go to <http://www.othergods.org/photoimbolc03/photoimbolc03.html> Our omens: Broom, Beech, Spindle and Ash. "We have our magical tools, we have our scholarly tools, now we need to work with them in our hearths and in our communities, gathering ancient knowledge from nature herself and from doing in the world." Additional odd omen: Brenda & Jim's "Bridget" peirogies. See photos on our website.]

CONGRATULATIONS TO ERICA,  
THE FIRST OF OUR DEDICANTS  
TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM AND BE  
OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED BY ADF!

AND A BIG THANK YOU TO ERICA  
FROM THE DEDICANTS GROUP  
FOR HER PATIENT MENTORING!



# Equinox 2003: Trance Journey to the Land of Manannan Mac Lir

by Jen Martin

It started on the Equinox. There seemed a place that was very close, but again far, far away. When we went down to Point Pleasant to collect nine waves for our Well for the year, I could almost make it out on the horizon; the waves stretched into a broad, stoneless road to Somewhere Else. As the ocean rushed to greet us, it seemed to be welcoming us joyously. Manannan was there then, laughing at the childlike devotion of those silly human-types that he had come to know and love over many years of serving as their Cranky Old Gatekeeper. It seemed to my small human mind that he appreciated the simple gestures of gratitude and honor we offered.

I must have jumped in then, somehow, searching for the Road. I had been playing with the words that I thought would create it, assembling them into patterns that sounded pleasing to the ear and yet were structurally sound—the beach, the boat, the road, the fire, the isle. The ocean's waters followed my steps when we left the beach, and in a way I was rather surprised that I wasn't leaving squishy footprints behind me as I walked the familiar paths to my home, to my office, to my favorite haunts.

The Avenue seemed even more solid when I returned to the ocean the Saturday prior to the ritual. It was gorgeous, warm, painfully beautiful that day. I allowed myself the apparent indulgence of feeling the waters that had been following me for those few days to wash over me as the cold, glittering waters of the Atlantic washed over my feet. It purified me, prepared me, entered my veins and flowed through me. I found the visions I had been trying to create in the days of preparation for the ritual, all those words so carefully scripted coming to life in just the right way to make it work.

"To make it work"—as if I, or Ed, or any of us, really, had the power to make it work. We would go if the gods wanted us to go, and stay if they didn't feel they could countenance the intrusion.

I was a little doubtful that we'd be going anywhere when I showed up at Norma and Ed's place. Still, something inside me had faith that things would be all right. They would, of course, no matter what—things work out as they do and that is generally the end of that. We loaded up the cars and headed over to Sue's, allowing the Fates to have their way with us. We cleared the yard and set up shop, and Manannan stepped in to offer some preliminary assistance (another thing to be grateful for, Friend!). Ed says he owes Manannan big-time for passing his kidney stone shortly before the ritual, allowing him to participate.

It was the perfect sort of day—warm in the sun with that touch of cold in the air that lets you know that winter isn't entirely finished... it was very similar to the gray ocean's waters—warm one minute, frigid in the next. We brought

stones and shells that we had collected during our foray into Point Pleasant Beach, and as we set up our altar with quite possibly the most beautifully aquamarine cloth I've ever seen, I set them into a spiral pattern in the front that pulled me deeper still as it grew. We set up a candle in a lighthouse—simple, but meaningful. There was the seahorse—strong, steadfast, and shiny! We scattered stones and shells, and the candle in the conch shell that is my own recognition of the Gray One was lit in his honor. It felt like we had a little bit of the ocean in Sue's marvelous backyard.

As for the ritual itself, I'm certain no one will be surprised to read I don't remember very much. I wish I could say I felt solid and prepared that morning as we cleared the yard and set up our space, but I spent more time taming the butterflies in my stomach than anything else. From about "We are here to honor the gods ..." on, I can't quite say where I was, but I wasn't at Sue's and I was only peripherally with all of you.

Ironically, I invited the participants to relax, though I myself could not (at least not at first). This was, after all, a bit of a different sort of ritual for the Grove, and a different sort of undertaking for me personally. I was torn up with different fears: fear that it might not work, fear that it might work too well, fear that the participants might not enjoy or get anything out of it, fear that we might lose someone because they got into it too much.

We stood on the beach, becoming familiar with a suddenly new environment, standing near the crashing shoreline in the predawn gray fog. Norma blew a conch shell and then invoked the Earth Mother beautifully and soundly. We relaxed, we looked around, we put our troubles and our skepticism in a rucksack down on the sand and dug in with our toes. The air seemed to get more heavy and damp as we went on, and a little more foggy and cool. It wrapped around us as Ed sent our Outsiders down to Jack & Bill's Bar and we bid them adieu, stepping down to the shoreline and finding our very own boats to ride in for our trip to the Blessed Isle. And there was Manannan, just before us, his warm wave of friendship bringing us off the beach and into the serene, supporting waters of the ocean (here, we made our first offering of whiskey to Him—it was the first of several invocations). We left the land and ventured out, safely and securely, onto the sea, following our Friend and Guide. Ed brought us onto the Isle of Promise, thronging with a fairy host. We enjoyed the marvels we found there, including the Shining Well of Five Streams (our Sacred Well), the Three Rings of Fire that surround the Isle (our Sacred Fire), and the Nine Purple Hazels that shaded the well (our Sacred Tree). Ed described for us a beautiful door of our own design, inscribed with symbols perhaps only we ourselves understood—the Door to the Palace of Manannan. We asked him to open the Door, which was the combination of the

Three Gates of Well, Tree and Fire, invoking Manannan again, begging him to open the Door to which we had traveled and he had in his kindness guided us:

"We stand at your door, dear Friend and Guide, Gray One to whose beautiful and happy home we have traveled long, here to celebrate with you, to share our joy and friendship.... Dear Manannan, Sun-Dappled Wanderer, Wise Trickster and Honorable One, we will do all we can where we are, if you will but allow this well to be a gate (we knocked once on the door), this fire to be a gate (we knocked again on the door), this tree to be a gate (we knocked the third time on the door) ... and Manannan MacLir, Keeper of the Ways Between the Worlds ..."

...And you know the rest. He allowed us, very graciously I might add, access to his home and sanctuary for us to bring him friendship and praise. Brigid came—as did our Ancestors, our Nature Spirits, and Gods and Goddesses—to enjoy our celebration of Manannan. Nora brought in Brigid, and then you couldn't hear a breath as Sue invoked our ancestors. Carol invoked the nature spirits around us and those in the sea. Norma invoked the Goddesses and Gods. Sue sang a really wonderful song about the coming of Spring, I think I read Whitman's "Patrolling Barnegat," and Nora sang a lovely song in French to Manannan. Others offered stories and poems and praises. I spent the remainder of the time thinking how lovely it was that so many folks came to the party.

We had a great time and then settled in by the Shining Well to gather our omens. We had given our predetermined omen people each a liter-size bottle of water labeled with one of the Five Senses. Each bottle composed one of the Five Streams that flowed into the Well. This caused some consternation but we got it worked out and I still couldn't get it out of my head that all these folks were so lovely to come to the party.

Our omen for Smell was the Knight of Swords (*don't overthink it*). Our omen for Taste was Strength (*revel, try new tastes, be brave*). The one for Touch was the Empress (*self-explanatory*), and for Sight we received the Queen of Swords (*in the Golden Dawn deck, Kali: cut off your ego, preconceptions; see what's really there*). Our blessing for Hearing concerned the Queen of Pentacles (*marshmallow in the Herbal Tarot, relevant to our marshmallow peeps; listen to the stories of the people around you*). Then the Five Senses poured their waters into a communal punch bowl to distribute the blessings.

We performed the Catechism of the Waters, and we tacked on a verbal blessing of waters as they were blessed with the omens.

As we continued to hang out with Manannan in his living room, we brought waters from our own well and many people poured water from their homes or special places, making our Grove well truly a community one.

Then Manannan said, "C'mon, party's over, I'll take you home." We had a tough time bringing the

revelers back to a place where they could climb back into their boats and make the journey back to the beach, but we managed to do that. We all picked up the things we had left on the beach and, before you could say "Spring has sprung!" everyone was burning Peeps and giggling.

I remember that at that point the most fascinating thing in the universe was the way a vanilla crème Peeps egg tasted after it was roasted over an open flame, and the way it stuck to your fingers.

It was sometime shortly thereafter that my shoes pretty well stopped squishing and I got to come fully back to the mundane world. I remember thinking that Nej was really the most wonderful person in the world for bringing me food, and that the person who invented chicken nuggets was really quite fabulous because you could eat those with fingers. Overall, it seems that a good time was had by all, whether they went with us or hung out on the beach or even in the backyard; and for that I was really quite happy and grateful.

Although it was not part of the ritual, the Peace Altar was a lovely side addition (thanks Sandrock!). We were bringing in the Spring and partying with Manannan as the nation was at war, and as our soldiers were putting their lives at risk for us. It was a great reminder that, no matter how we felt about the war, we shared a hope for peace and a sadness for the destruction it causes.

[We had 18 in attendance. Go to <http://www.othergods.org/photobeach03.html> to see photos from the Beach Ritual to Manannan we did on the weekday Equinox; go to <http://www.othergods.org/photoeq03/equinox03.html> to see some photos of the altar for the weekend Manannan ritual; go to <http://www.othergods.org/Manannan%20ritual%20script.html> for the Trance Ritual Script; go to <http://www.othergods.org/Manannan%20clips.html> for excerpts from some of the Manannan stories we worked with.]

## Patrolling Barnegat (written 1880)

Wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running,  
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering,  
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,  
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,  
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,  
On beachy slush and sand spirits of snow fierce slanting,  
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting,  
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,  
(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)  
Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,  
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,  
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,  
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,  
That savage trinity warily watching.

—Walt Whitman

# *Beltane 2003*

by Deb Castellano

“This is the story of how we forget to remember, this is the power of pulsing of love in your veins/after the dream of falling and calling your name out/these are the roots of rhythm and the roots of rhythm remain. . .” —Paul Simon

Stretch:: Just finished posting up the Beltane pics. It's an open album, go look! <http://photos.yahoo.com/bc/akasha124/lst?.dir=/Beltane+2003&.src=ph&.view=t>. For even more GOG Beltane 2003 photos, go to our grove site at <http://www.othergods.org/photos/BeltanePage.html>.

Should be cleaning the house. Really really should. Should be lovealing Max who is whining plaintively. But... I've been wanting to write my ritual report and I'm scared I'll forget it.

It was such a lovely day. It really was, considering it was supposed to rain buckets and be cold and wretched. It was a bit on the cold side, but not awful and it was so bright and sunny out. The gods gave us our best omen before the day even started.

So I had gotten into my silly little brain that, hey, wouldn't it be cool to do an altar to Eris for the under-appreciated goddess of choice?

It's not quite (quite) as crackheaded as it initially sounds. When I tranced out on All Soul's Day I was drawn to her picture which had a neat little fuzzy feather under her and i was petting it very carefully at ed and norma's and didn't know who she was until norma said all gleefully, “That's Eris' feather you're stroking.”

I was like, d'oh. Nar good. But she kept knocking insistently. So fine, I started looking into the discordian stuff and I saw that they had a lot of really beautiful stuff hidden in their mess of silliness. No offense to Discordians, but it didn't really fit for me (some Discordians are silly for the sake of being silly and that's cool, it's just not who I am or how I see her). So I kind of put it aside some, but occasionally I found myself doing stuff that would be like her. I'm not into hurting people for the sake of hurting people and I'm a crap liar, but sometimes minor situations can be interesting to turn a little and see what happens. Also, my own internal sense of humor is so not funny to the general masses generally. Anyway, so I decided to do an altar for her. I thought, since she wasn't invited to the original party, why not have a picnic for her? So I got a piece of the picnic gingham with the ants on it, used my good dinnerware for her place, and painted a picture of her. I then used a silver tray for a golden delicious apple and used red paper and used Word greek and wrote, “To the Fairest” with a small english subtitle. I baked cupcakes (it was actually brownie mix. Apparently, she wanted cupcake brownies because I could swear I pulled cake mix off the shelf) and wrote, “Cake or Death?” the same way. No one touched the brownie-cupcakes—which made sense, it was on an altar. I just thought more ppl would choose cake over death. ;p And then I used Ani's quote

“Those people who smile a lot/ watch the eyes/ I know that because I'm like that a lot/ you think everything's okay... and it is... until it's not” for her altar sign. The night before, she wanted me to invoke her, so I did. Believe me, it didn't seem like the keenest idea at the time to me either, but pissing her off wouldn't help either. Wound up getting into a huge fight with josh over lord knows what but it got me thinking about the lesson there— How can you sow discord (which can be a fancy word for change that's difficult to see) if you don't know what it feels like when it's done to you? And it gave me perspective on the issue of compassion— thinking about how to show it because most people deserve it, and thinking about when not to because some people don't. Interesting. I found people had one of two reactions to her altar— either to stand there giggling or to widely veer away from it.

So the next interesting event of the day (besides the usual nice flower wreath making, and there was Nej's fairy-box making which was nice, but i was a little glamourised out still from the glamour bombing workshop we did for Rutgers Pagans so i wasn't as into it as i usually would be, and there was Jen's Cthulu-making which was amusing, you could make tiny pocket sized ones because you never know when you need to whip one out for mass destruction. You could give them little sand pails and shovels and stuff too. April would have been greatly amused.) was the faery dancing which Ed found from the Druid ancient archives from 1985 (think that's the date).

Nej and Ed made a pretty faery circle with incense burning, lavender, shiny things, etc. A bunch of people were drumming, and we were going to dance around the circle 27 times (don't know the significance of the number besides the obvious [enough times to get you loosened up and enough times to get you worn out]). Lauren and Christoph had come with, and Lauren was dancing with me and the boys were taking pictures. Ed gave this rock solid invocation to the fae and we all bolted off like a herd of deer. It was a really odd feeling for me, I had danced for hours during my Lammass and was only mostly-pickled, but after the first few laps I started breathing hard. I had taken off my shoes and I was wearing bells, my wings, barefeet. I didn't even realize it but josh said I took off into a serious sprint at one point. I would close my eyes and start twirling and dancing and my hands were buzzing from it and I would lose whole moments, which was scary for me and when I'd open my eyes, I'd be dancing very very close to the circle but not close enough to burn myself. I kept coming to when I was just short of burning myself. I didn't really feel a specific something, but I felt like I couldn't stop, like I was being urged on and I felt like they (the fae?) would run me to death if I let them. A lot of

people say it's because the fae don't care. I don't think it's a lack of caring *per se*, I think it's more like if they smell enough otherkin in you they think you are and forget your human body can't handle it. When we ended, I needed to ground hard. I threw myself on the ground and tried to ground out. I had my forehead to the ground and I was practically eating grass to try to come down. I hadn't had such a hard time grounding since I did a power spiral for the first time with the dianics five years ago. It felt totally different to me than doing the Orisha stuff. This felt a lot harsher. But it was so intense at the same time. Josh came over and I curled into his lap and that helped a lot. Norma came by and said, "How are you, O Toasted One?" I said, "I don't know \*what\* you are talking about." Josh said, "Ah. Your inner court name is She Who Lies Badly." Norma cackled and said, "It always has been." Norma seems to take a lot of joy in seeing me totally plastered off my ass on the energy. But of course, me being the crackhead I am, the first thing I say to Ed (who is generally similiarly crackheaded), is "Again! Again!"

And the actual ADF ritual was cool. I like the way Erica runs Beltane, it's quick and to the point. She asked me to invoke fire. Around that time, I felt Eris kind of step in. I felt really again... intense but in a totally different way. It was like leashed cold anger, waiting for someone to fuck up or piss me off. I felt the way I carried myself become totally different, like old school courtly. I invoked fire and even though I didn't say much and had a lot of candles to burn (for the balefire) everyone was dead quiet, which was interesting in itself. Brenda's little girl had been eyeing up my wings all day and when i asked her before if she wanted to put them on, she was all shy and shook her head no. So she was watching me again all interested (don't ask me what she was seeing) and I said, Do you want to wear them? And this time she nodded all enthusiastic. So I knelt in the mud and put them on her. It was very cute. I hadn't been planning on offering praise, but right before the cue for it, I asked (okay, still in Eris mode, so let's just say strongly suggested) Josh to bring me the champagne glass full of sparkling cider (heh) to me. Erica said, who has praise? I felt I should go first (more like a hard internal push) but I resisted because I hate going first and no one went so finally I let myself get shoved and I said (again, feeling totally different in how I carry myself), "Eris, I may not have wanted you here, but you are." I drank half and poured

the other onto the ground (the instinct was to pour it into the well, but I didn't want to squick ppl) and spun on my heel. I hear Erica say, "Hail Eris!" and hear everyone say that.

So it was a really keen day. Josh and I took our usual long walk into the woods and were all gushy and kissy faced and it was so groovy. I love going a-Maying with him, I always remember full force how in love we are. Yeah. Ending before there's excessive gushing.

[34 people attended. Omens: Ancestors- a ribbon in a tree from last year; Nature Spirits- site is happy we're here, thinks Porsche fanciers on the hill are weird; Goddesses and Gods- "Conduct yourselves well"; Seer- nice weather, notice darkness all around us, we're in a puddle of light.]

## Eris

We were driving and I said  
 You smell like exboyfriend  
 all still wearing the same cologne  
 smelling like eveapples  
 with your nice safe girlfriend  
 who isn't prone to fits  
 or animal behavior  
 no riot grrrl thoughts drowning in her head  
 You said  
 I will be the girlfriend that always  
 haunts your brain  
 I laughed  
 and took off my jackie o sunglasses  
 put up my roof  
 and said  
 You and everyone else, darling  
 You paused  
 in the parking lot at my work where  
 everyone thinks we're having an affair  
 and said (wistful as a jane austen hero)  
 I wish I was someone special to you  
 not just another broken exboyfriend  
 (you and everyone else, darling)

—Deb Castellano

*News from the Other Grove*, formerly the *MetroDruid Nüz Dispatch* is published by **Grove of the Other Gods, ADF**, and its branches and friends, in order to provide Druids and Pagans in the New Jersey / New York area and beyond with information of interest concerning Pagan holidays, workshops, serious stuff, fun stuff, and such-like things. **Grove of the Other Gods** has been providing open public rituals, workshops, serious stuff, fun stuff, and such-like things for the above-mentioned Pagan community since 1990.

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