

Peppermint And Sage

20

Ostara 2016





Here we are late again. Unless submissions pick up next issue we are thinking about cutting back to four times a year. We have 162 members on our Facebook group. We should have a lot more submissions than we do. We should also get some feedback on the issues. Since we have all issues on line we have new downloads for each issue every month. For the first three months this year issue one which came out October 2014 had 116 downloads - which brings it to more than a 1000 downloads on the main site over 1000 on Martview and an unknown amount on YahooGroups and Facebook. So a lot of people download the issues and your submissions are seen by new readers all the time. If you are reading this drop us a line that you read us on PAS@dragonpalm.com. Feedback may bring back some of our regulars that haven't been with us the last few issues. To drop us a line cost nothing not even a stamp.

Blessed Be

Dreamweaver

DON'T FORGET TO WRITE

Peppermint And Sage Issue 20 Ostara 2016

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All submission should be sent to pas@dragonpalm.com

Peppermint And Sage is published eight times a year: Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lammas, and Mabon.

All issues are free in PDF format. Permission to print as long as all content is included and nothing is added.

Peppermint And Sage is created using PagePlus X8 by Serif.

April 2016

1	Fri	April Fool's Day
2	Sat	
3	Sun	
4	Mon	
5	Tue	
6	Wed	
7	Thu	New Moon
8	Fri	
9	Sat	
10	Sun	
11	Mon	
12	Tue	
13	Wed	
14	Thu	
15	Fri	
16	Sat	
17	Sun	
18	Mon	
19	Tue	
20	Wed	
21	Thu	Dragon Palm PNO
22	Fri	Earth Day / Full Moon
23	Sat	Deadline PAS 21
24	Sun	
25	Mon	
26	Tue	Arbor Day
27	Wed	
28	Thu	
29	Fri	
30	Sat	Walpurgis Night

May 2016

1	Sun	Beltane
2	Mon	
3	Tue	
4	Wed	
5	Thu	Cinco de Mayo
6	Fri	New Moon
7	Sat	
8	Sun	Mother's Day
9	Mon	
10	Tue	
11	Wed	
12	Thu	
13	Fri	
14	Sat	
15	Sun	
16	Mon	
17	Tue	
18	Wed	
19	Thu	Dragon Palm PNO
20	Fri	
21	Sat	Full Moon
22	Sun	
23	Mon	
24	Tue	
25	Wed	
26	Thu	
27	Fri	
28	Sat	
29	Sun	
30	Mon	Memorial Day
31	Tue	

Calendar Events:

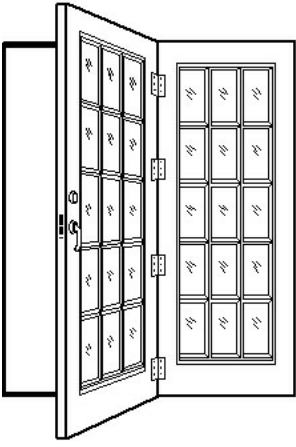
For more information on Dragon Palm Circle Events join the Dragon Palm Events group on Facebook or contact:

dreamweaver@dragonpalmcircle.org

For Earth'[s Web events information go to their web site: EarthsWeb.org

If you have a calendar event mail the information to: pas@dragonpalm.com. The calendar can be used for festivals, retreats, open rituals, PNO's, concerts and other events of interest to pagans.





The Door to the Beyond: Mental Health and Paganism by Moss Bliss

Door to the Beyond

Part XX

New Beginnings - Candlemas

I get the feeling I've been through this Door before, but let's do it again... I know Candlemas (or Imbolc, Oimeig, or what have you) was last month, but my timing is off as usual... soooo....

Most of the year, we Labelled Persons feel we are burning our candles at both ends. In February, we get to burn them all out, get new candles, and start over. In essence, Candlemas is the Pagan version of Mardi Gras. We should learn to have fun at it, like the Cajuns, Brazilians, and others around the world do.

"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." (attributed to Albert Einstein)

Hey, I'm crazy. I know it. I try to be the best crazy I can be (as opposed to the **most** crazy I can be). It's not easy, it's not hard, it just *is*.

Hmmm, what have I done in previous years... well, I did a one-hour recorded video interview about the homelessness issue on local public access television, which broadcast January 5, 2008 and several other times – unscheduled, like me, LOL -- which led me to make 2008 the best year ever for the homeless of Asheville. New programs, a new shelter, more volunteers. Now if City Council would repeal some of the laws on the books which, essentially, make homelessness illegal without providing any relief for those who find themselves on the streets.

I won't republish my entire Yule Letter here, sorry. There would be no use writing this article if I was just going to republish things I had already written, now, would there? Oh, wait, that's just what I've been doing in P&S... my bad. But I had a **lot** of big things in 2008, making it a hard act to follow. In 2009 and 2010 my big moves were getting promoted to Senior Editor at Eternal Press/Damnation Books and moving from Asheville to East Tennessee.

So what do you have planned? Is this just going to be another year of surviving for you? Are you going to accept depression, things beyond your control, same old boring stuff? Well, if you've been reading The Door, you probably have lots of ideas for changing all that; if you haven't, you can find the back issues in the archives and at my website, so go be positive and read what has been written.

Always good to get a plug in – and I'm always amazed when I re-read these articles how good they were.

Note: I'm often down on myself, it's an old habit I'm still working to change. It amazes me no end when I do something well or write something good, and even more when I read it later and still find it exceptional. One of the reasons for this amazement is that I tend to write these articles virtually out a mindset of stream-of-consciousness, and only revisit them after they're in print.

Here's a thought: perhaps one thing you could do is start writing things down, and then you could put them somewhere that you'll find them in a year or six months, and see what you think of what you've written then. If you still love it, polish it a bit and see if Peppermint&Sage, WitchVox or another online zine might be interested in publishing it. You might get MY job. I wouldn't be mad, you'd be freeing my schedule up for something else.

Last month, we discussed the new "candles" we sent to Washington in January of 2008. If that was important, how much more important would it be to clean out your own house? I don't mean dusting and vacuuming (something I don't do enough of). I mean making changes. Finding little things that you can feel good about, and adding them to your routine. Just a bit at a time. Only what you can do, not some ambitious program that you will back down from when it appears that you have over-reached.

Set large, sweeping goals. Then find tiny steps to take to get there. I have been working on my devotion to Deity in the past year. You might understand that I have been continuing to learn and honor various Hindu deities as I grow into my path.

I started out getting pictures from online searches. I printed them out and taped them to the wall. I then started building a small altar, along the lines of the Wicca I knew but changing it, one thing at a time, to reflect the Hindu aspects of worship. I then started waking up, and going to bed, with a prayer to the deity (I started with Ganesha, added in my beloved Ardhanarishwara, and then later Brahma-as-Guru, adding in deities as desired and tweaking the formula). Then I started chanting the mantra to Ganesha (Om gam Ganapatyei Namah). Later, I made it 5 times through the chant (Discordian that I am at the core). Then added in the chant to Ardhanarishwara (Om Ardhanarishwara swarapaya Namah). [I actually had to search the Web to find that one – which some of my friends have thanked me for). And finally, the chant to Brahma-as-Guru (Om gurur sakshad paramBrahma tasmai Sri Grurama Namah). (General translations available if asked.)

All of this took me 6 months to get going, get consistent with (I still mess up occasionally), and even get to say the chant (that last one took quite some time). Nowadays, I use my mala (meditation beads) or even my knitting to do these chants – which will mean 108 repetitions (3 rows on my hats are the same as 2 mala repetitions). It took a lot of work, but a tiny step at a time is all it takes.

You don't have to take the same actions I did, but taking the same or similar steps to accomplish **your** goals is the point. Baby steps. I actually grouped a lot of my steps together above, so if the steps seem large that's because they were.

Give Yourself A Break. If you're working too hard or too fast on something, you will "backslide" (to use a Methodist term). This is not saying you are doing the *wrong* thing, just that you are going too fast or are expecting too much too soon. Slow down. Start over, or back up a few steps and resume from there.

Oh, gods, Anxiety. If I don't do things perfectly, I'm just **not good enough**. Don't go there. "Fear is the mind-killer." – Bene Gesserit saying. Nobody is perfect, nothing you try to do will ever be per-

fect... but it doesn't need to be. It only has to be Good Enough. That's all. And if you're anything like me, you will need to set your standards a lot lower until you have "Good Enough" set where it is in reach of your everyday ability.

ALWAYS give yourself a break. ALWAYS give yourself a pat on the back. "Endorse for the effort, not the result." Endorsing yourself for every little step is like getting paid for every minute of work. Do it.

This could be the year we learn a new way to burn our candles. Maybe we can learn to burn them only at ONE end... or maybe we just use more artsy candles. However you choose to do it, be inventive, creative, bold, and feisty!

Until next month and another walk through the Door,

Hugs,
Moss

Moss Bliss is a Pagan Priest, a follower of disparate paths, and a fallible human being. He is a Bard of the Triad Bardic College. He is available to play living rooms, small rooms, small stages, large stages, and grows in many stages.



How to Teach Wicca 101.

by Dreamweaver

If you are a Witch you will have someone want you to teach them the craft. Now if you are part of a Coven that is part of a Tradition – you know what to do or you have someone in your Coven who will be able to teach them.

But if you are not – you may wonder where to start. The first thing you may want is a text book and the best text book on Witchcraft is Raymond Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft. Now I'm not saying that it's the best book on Witchcraft – since there are so many books on the craft out there we could debate which is the best book for a hundred years. But Buckland's book is a good text book, where the rest are more like books on Wicca. It gives you a good outline of what to cover. Now to make the class to work you need to add a lot to it. I use several other books, that all have things in them that disagree with one another.

Now that you have a list of books for them to read, you need to decide on the activities. The first few weeks should be mostly talking about history, philosophy, beliefs and ethics of the craft. Make sure you are ready to answer questions.

Once you get beyond this point you need to have activities ready each week. Talking about tools, have tools to show what they look like and how they are used. Also how to make a tool.

Besides the weekly class they need to come to full moon and Sabbat rituals. With the Sabbats you may want the class before a Sabbat to cover it so they understand why it's being celebrated. When you get to the week on casting circle – your student should already been in a few circles. That class they should try to cast their own circle.

By using Buckland as an outline it will give you an order of how to teach the class – you can check out our online class at dragonpalmcircle.org/wicca101 – now the online class has to be different from a live class – with the live class the sabbats can be rearranged to when they are happening.

Also on our site dragonpalm.com/pagan/index.html we have some things to work with. If you click on the link PDF you find our teaching manual and student manual we use for our classes. The teaching manual is used mostly as an outline – the teacher is expected to be able to bring a lot to the course.

Now if you want, feel free to use our handbooks to teach by, but my main reason for pointing you in its direction is so you can create your own class. In the appendix of the teaching manual you will find our Pre-test. We use this to find out what our new students already know. A pre-test is something that really helps with the teaching – and you may want to take out and add some questions.

One of the greatest things about teaching a class is sometimes the teacher learns more than the student. It forces you to look deeper into things you have just done in the past because you must be able to answer questions and you can never answer a question with "That's just the way it is" because it's not just the way it is, there is a reason for everything we do.

Since this is not about teaching a tradition – which would already have it's own teaching guidelines, you have to let the student know many things have many ways of doing it. When your student goes out into the Pagan community he will see people doing things different – don't let him tell the people doing something they are doing it wrong because your teacher told you the correct and only way of doing it. Several years ago one of our advanced first degree's was doing a workshop at a festival – attending the workshop was several third degree from other Covens, a few students of another Witch along with others of various degrees. Everyone who attended the workshop felt he did a good job, many learned something new. But when these student went back to their teacher- and told her about it she was mad because what he taught at the workshop went against something she had taught in her class, instead of telling the students there were many different ways of doing something – she went off the deep end, to the point of calling our High Priestess about our First Degree not knowing what he was talking about. She did a few thing wrong there – first since she wasn't teaching a Trad, but just Wicca 101 – she was teaching her version of it as the only way. Second she could have talked to others who were at the workshop and found out what was said. Third – calling a High Priestess over something like that shows a lack of knowledge of Covens. Don't put yourself in her position. Make sure you let them know the fact there are many ways of doing things – even if you don't cover

more than one. If you are part of a Coven you can let them know this is the way your group does them and this is why you are teaching it that way.

If you are part of a group, you may want certain a class or classes taught by other members of your group that are better than you are with the subject. (But you should always be ready to teach the section if they can not).

One of the most important things is that the student should be active. Don't let them just set back and watch – make them part of what ever is going on. Test them all the time, if in a group have others test them also. Even though we have a final exam on the online Wicca 101 – with a live class you should know before the end of the year and a day if they know what they should. When we give a final sometimes it is only one question. They must be able to cast their own circle before they are finished. They should have a basic understanding of the craft.

One question we ask at the beginning – about half way through – and at the end of the class. That question is : Why do you want to be a Witch? The answer to this question can tell you a lot about the student. The first time you ask it, can tell you whether or not you want to teach them. The second time will show you how they have changed. The third time will let you know if they are truly ready. (With some the answer may never change – this in it self is neither good nor bad – it depends on what their answer is.)



Dreamweaver

SINGING IN THE TREES: THE MAKING OF BARDS

by Moss Bliss, Steward of Shemai



Singing in the Trees
Ostara 2016
by Moss Bliss
Elder Bard, Steward of Shernai

All things must pass...

Not today, not this month, maybe not this year... but it seems my stewardship of Shernai is coming to a close after too short a time. The world being what it is, and it not being my position to out other peoples' issues, I will be looking for a place to move the Heart of Triad and my home.

In the meantime, life goes on. Lady Emrys and I played at a private wine-tasting party last week at a local winery (Goodwater). It was fun, and we got decent tips for the size of the event. Over two hours, Emmie played a killer set on her harp, Taliesin, I played a really good set with the help of Arthur, and Emmie played another set with her guitar, Ane'.

I would very much welcome invitations to play anywhere, living rooms, pubs, open mics... I need to sing, and don't get started without someone to sing to.

This June will see me as a Guest at ConCarolinas in Charlotte. This will be the first non-paid Guest appearance I've made that I can remember (they cover my con membership but not my hotel room or other expenses). It will also be a return to ConCarolinas after a many-year absence. And at present, it is the only convention on my schedule until my annual trip to Georgia in January.

So... the Spring has sprung, has it? We didn't have much of a Winter this year, a few icy blasts and lots of warmth, and it seems odd to have 70s in March. It's time to plant seeds. You also need to till that soil, rid it of the past year's weeds and other unwanted growth.

My own growth this year will do with moving my roots to another location. I'm trying to stay in the three-county (Cocke, Jefferson, Hamblen) area, but am limited in funds and futures. So I just have to throw the seeds out there and see what takes root, and determine whether the site meets my needs and abilities.

Writing has still be slow and difficult, although I did break the ice a bit back in January. Changing the parameters of my situation will either help, hinder, or have no effect. Time will tell.

You may have noted that my titles above have changed. Sadly, Earth's Web lost critical mass and is no more. I have many friends and loves who were part of that family, and I hope to retain my contact with each of them... but you never know what you lose when you lose something.

Too many things in the wind. Too much uncertainty. But we shall see what grows where, and nurture it to the best of our abilities.

Mordewis ap Llys

[Moss Bliss is a fallible human being who also appears to be a decent musician, singer, and songwriter, and is an Elder Bard in the Triad Bardic College (website triadbardic.org) tradition. He can be reached at zaivalananda@gmail.com or at TBC's phone, (865) 344-7156.]



we meet every third Thursday of the month at 8 PM at the Sevierville Books-A-Million in the coffee shop. If the weather is nice we meet on the outside patio. They are located at 190 Collier Drive, Sevierville, TN. (Collier Drive is the light at the Sevierville Walmart). This is not an official BAM event, so do not contact them for information on the PNO, but for directions their number is 865-908-8994. Contact dreamweaver@dragonpalmcircle.org for more information or join our Facebook group "dragon Palm Events" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/221898301197684/>

2016 PNO

Jan. 21	Feb. 18
March 17	April 21
May 19	June 16
July 21	Aug. TBA
Sept. 16	Oct. 20
Nov. 17	Dec. 15

Our PNO's are informal gathering of Pagans - we talk about just about everything and check out the new books. We always welcome new people. Check out our website to see our pictures so you know who we are.

www.dragonpalmcircle.org



Caroline DI



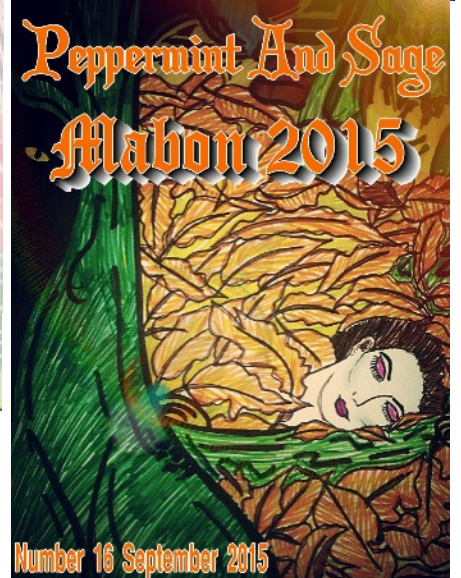
Caroline DI



This Issues Cover



Ayesha Khan is a student at the University of Karachi in Pakistan. She has done several covers for PAS - this is her 2nd Ostara cover. She is a regular within the pages of PAS with her art, poems and stories.



WO-MAN

By Ayesha Khan

Of silence and sound,
Thunderstorm and calmth,
Chaos and rest,
She does it best.

Of love and hate,
Purpose and mistake,
All alone,
Wanders her soul.

Too numb and so cold,
Let her story be told.

Born was she in a house of religion,
Raised with morals
Higher than castle walls,
Told never to sin or wrong,
Taught never to steal or lust,
Wish not too much,
Dream not too often,
Remember her confines, and
Be a lady as ones before her.

Alas, she wasn't fit enough!

Born was she with a mind of her own,
Fueled with secret desires,
Impelling her to
Wrong and sin,
Steal and lust,
Wish far too much and
Dream far too often,
And forgot she her confines
That she was to
Be nothing but a lady.

Then, she wasn't ignorant,
See, she knew.

She knew something was wrong,
With that mind of hers,
For thinking out of the box,
All this time.

She knew something was wrong,
With that heart of hers,
For beating too loud and vigorous,

All these years.

She knew something was wrong,
With her,
For being so different,
In this monotonous society,
All her life.

Despite knowing all,
She didn't change –
Herself or the ways.

If you told her she was wrong
She'd say,
She doesn't wanna be right.

If you told her to be a girl,
She'd ask if she
Could be a lioness instead?

And if you told her to smile and be pretty,
She'd ask
What was it so beautiful about a roar?

People took it for vanity,
Silly pride and sheer madness,
When all she was being was,
Herself.

Girls don't just smile.
Girls aren't just pretty.
They don't just love.
They don't always cry.

Girls could roar and howl,
Get coated in mud and shout,
Hate and get mad,
Laugh and dance,
Be more than just a gender,
More than little and weak.

That's just how she felt.

She was a free bird and
She wanted to fly.

She was a thirsty fish and
She wanted to dive.

She was a hungry lioness and
She wanted to rip out the darkness.

She was a lost soul and
She wanted to find a home.

But such wasn't ladylike so
They out casted her.
Society wouldn't accept aberrations and
Her family couldn't let that happen,
So, out she went, far, far away,
Into the wild with nothing but
A dragon heart.

Wandered she about,
From cities to towns,
States to villages,
Countries to counties,
And found –

There's a male in female,
A man in woman,
A lion in lioness,
A tiger in tigress.

Why are women not equal to men then?
Why is there discrimination?
That fuss about feminism?
About racism?

Aren't all humans born equal?
Yes, they are.

Did God stamp anyone with W or B mark?
No.
Then who did?
Us.

Did God give men extra hearts or feet?
No.
Then why are they superior?

Now, you know.

All these races,
Classes and castes,
Is nothing but manmade mold,
To be broken by men.

All these problems,
Pain and agendas,
Is nothing but a product of our selfishness,
To be solved by true selflessness.

Can we do this world a favor?
Can we stop judging?
Stop spilling saltwater on wounds?
That'd only leave ugly scars.

Can we stop fighting against something we
can't control?
Did you choose to be black or white?
Did you choose to be ugly or pretty?
Did you choose to be big or small?
God did.

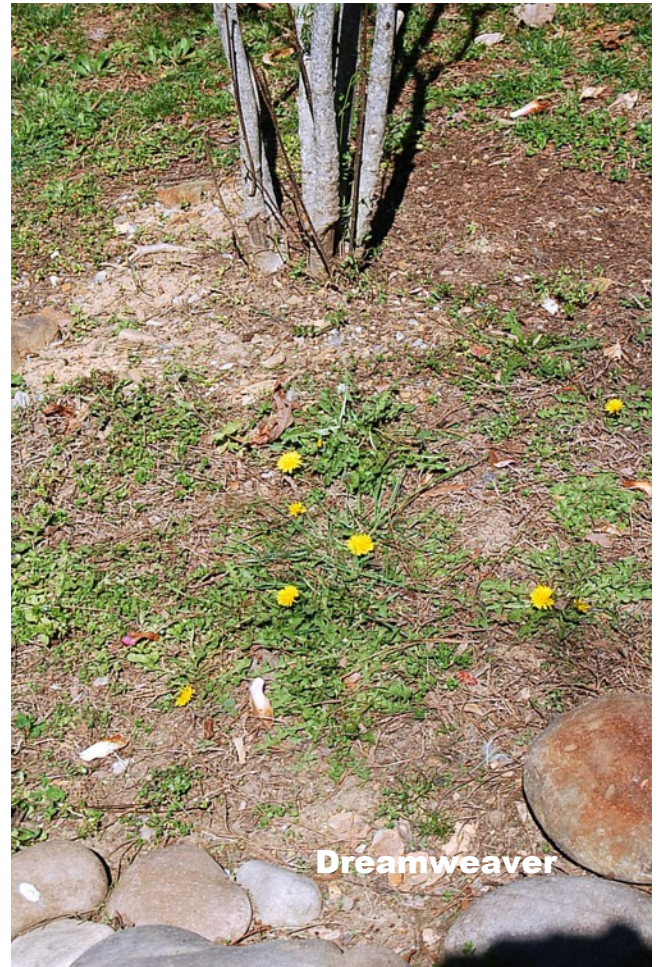
Why blame a human for choices he didn't
make?
Why accuse someone of the color they had no
choice in?
Why discriminate someone of the gender they
didn't pick?
Why have a heart but be so heartless?

God made us flawed but perfect,
How it is that we can be two
Different things at once and yet,
Still breathe as one.

With thoughts like these
Came she back,
With her head high,
Smile on her lips,
Eyes like diamonds and
Fire in her irises;
And said she to her momma,
"You're the fairest lady I know, mother
How can then she breed something not fair, fa-
ther?
And when all I ever stole is happiness
Doing things I love,
How did it dishonor you, my brother?
Or how the lust for a dream
To be merry and make merry
Hurt you, oh sweet sister?
Or how the fire in my chest
For books and words and best
Made me an outlaw, oh, Holy Father?
Or the wishes for the love of my kind and
Other life,

Let my faith down?"

So she spoke and so she spoke,
That lioness of spirit,
"You said I was a girl, daddy
But you've never been so wrong before
I was a baby when mommy gave me birth
I become a pretty child when I grew up
And they called me a girl
When I appealed to them
All those boys and lovers
But that girl is grown up now
She's learnt how to fight
And survive
And how to live
Before she dies;
I'm no more red, daddy
I'm no longer blue, mommy
I'm rainbow, oh, I'm all colors
I'm intense Sun and
Light shimmer.
Your sister isn't a lamb any longer, brother
She's shoved her fangs and became a wolf, sister
I'm no longer a little weak girl, daddy
I'm strong and mighty;
She doesn't need anyone else
She's a proud woman."





Ayesha Khan

Spring Is Finally Here!

While the sun shines and green grass grows,
let us all remember that this is the time of rebirth.
Renewal and transformation.

Now it's our chance to blossom.

Remember the rebirth of the land is the rebirth of
us all.

Help our plants and animals to flourish,
so we can thrive and strengthen each other.

When we build each other up, we are all living bet-
ter.

Feel the sun warming your heart as it warms your
body.

Feel the air in your lungs as you feel the breeze.

Feel the spring rain cleanse you as it waters the
ground.

Feel the earth strengthen you as you watch it
grow.

All these elements are put together to form a
peace

within us. An abundance of life and love.

An abundance of acceptance, wellbeing, and
change.

As we plant seeds in the ground to grow our
plants,

remember we are also nurturing our own personal
growth.

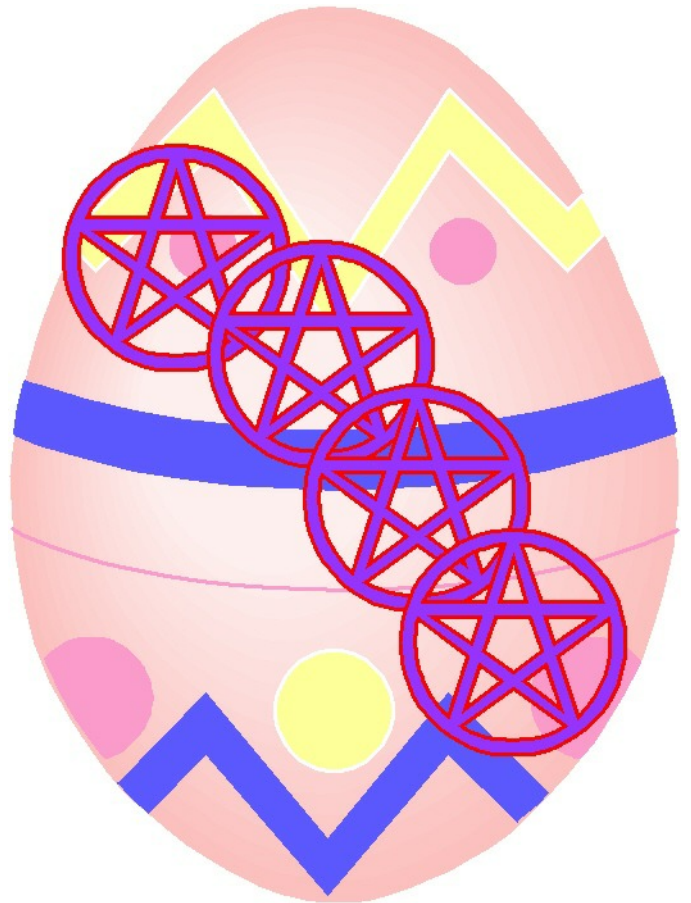
If we don't take the time to change and grow
we are not going to truly experience our life!

We need that fire inside us to take hold and build
so we can make the most of the time we have!

Everyone needs to remember we all have built in
expiration dates, but we don't have a best if used
by date!

None of us know how many Springs we have left!

Spring is here! Go out and live your life!



Lady sky





Caroline DI



Caroline DI

