

Peppermint And Sage



Ostara Issue **2014**



MERRY MEET



April 2014

We have made it to our forth issue! Trying a few changes this issue. Articles are now getting full pages instead of columns , hope this will make it easier to read on all devices. Poems, jokes, welcome will still be in a column format.(I share space with the calendar which by nature is in a column format). Let us know if you like the full page format or you want us to go back to columns. We still need to get feedback from our readers. Pas@dragonpalm.com is our address. Each issue so far has gone pass 1000 downloads and we have only gotten one letter. I know our contributors would like to hear from you. The zine is free and no one gets paid - so drop a note and let us know what you like and what you don't, and what you would like to see in future issues.

We badly need artwork. Everything form covers to small fill pictures. We like to have both a front cover and back cover - the front will have issue information added to it and the back will be as it come in. And our FUN pages can use cartoons.

Ads are still FREE as long as they are for Pagan related items.

Blessed Be

Dreamweaver

**Peppermint and Sage issue 4
Ostara 2014**

All material copyright by their respective owners Editorial content copyright©2014 by Dragon Palm Circle.

Editor/Publisher: Dreamweaver
(dreamweaver@dragonpalmtree.org)

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 and Martveiv format. Permission to print it as long as all content is included and nothing is added.

1	Tue	
2	Wed	
3	Thu	
4	Fri	
5	Sat	
6	Sun	
7	Mon	
8	Tue	WIP
9	Wed	
10	Thu	
11	Fri	
12	Sat	Earth Web Full Moon Rit
13	Sun	
14	Mon	
15	Tue	Full Moon
16	Wed	
17	Thu	Dragon Palm PNO
18	Fri	
19	Sat	
20	Sun	Easter Sunday PAS deadline
21	Mon	
22	Tue	
23	Wed	
24	Thu	
25	Fri	,Earths Web Beltane Many Paths Beltane
26	Sat	Earths Web Beltane Many path Beltane
27	Sun	Earth Web Beltane/ Many Paths Beltane
28	Mon	
29	Tue	New Moon
30	Wed	

May 2014

1 Thu Beltane
2 Fri
3 Sat Beltain Family Gathering (Boozerveal)
4 Sun
5 Mon
6 Tue
7 Wed
8 Thu
9 Fri
10 Sat
11 Sun
12 Mon
13 Tue WIP
14 Wed FULL MOON
15 Thu Dragon Palm PNO
16 Fri
17 Sat Earth Web Full Moon Rit
18 Sun
19 Mon
20 Tue
21 Wed
22 Thu
23 Fri
24 Sat
25 Sun
26 Mon Memorial Day
/ Earth Web Men's retreat
27 Tue
28 Wed
29 Thu
30 Fri
31 Sat



This is our letter column. Write pas@dragonpalm.com

I nearly didn't send you a message because I really have no constructive criticism. I think the magazine flows well and I like the articles. Also, I access the magazine via the following

link: <http://www.dragonpalm.com/PAS/pas3.pdf> . Here goes... as far as input.

Sometimes the spacing from one article will run over into the next page by a single paragraph and then a new article starts. I know it seems like wasted space to dedicate an entire page to a single paragraph but it almost seems to crowded when you run it smack dab into the front end of the next article. It's really not that bad though so maybe it's nothing to worry about. Plus I did read where you were saying your having some difficulty getting filler material so once that resolves it may fix it's self in that way.

I really related to the Explorations into Indo Paganism by Moss by the way. As a neophyte I have all these strange attractions and feelings of belonging to groups that I have no known connection to and that touches on both the question of reincarnation and the question of... path choice maybe?

In Ask Tiger Lilly you can really hear her voice and the responses are both personally attentive and intuitively fun and wise.

I think The Broom Closet section is a brilliant idea! And I love the practicality and realness of Lady Pinkie Luna Fae.

Aaaannnnnd I still have two more articles to go! I find it impressive that you address real world issues like mental health and relationships and... viability / budget and cooking and regular household concerns. I just find your articles relatable and worth reading. Thanks team for letting me explore new thoughts and revisit old ones if that makes sense.

Be well and live with joy!
~Wendy

P.S. - the posting on East West North and South were a little hard to read.



Around the Hearth.....

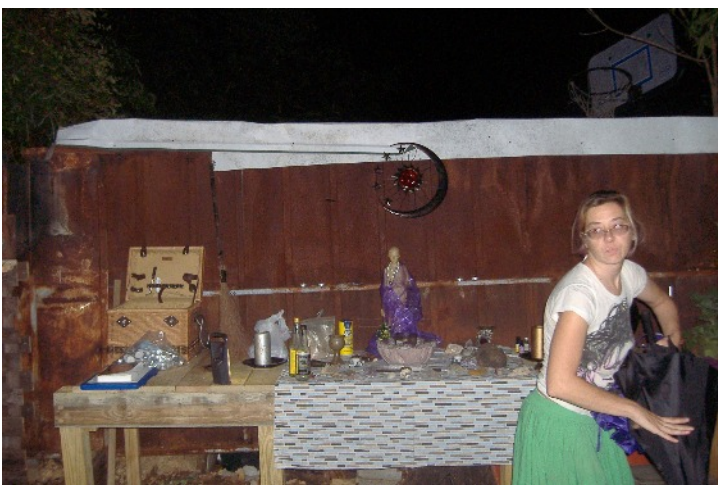
by Lady Pinkie Luna Fae

WELCOME BACK! Glad to see everyone made it through the cold nasty winter. Although we may not be completely out of the woods yet, it is easy to see the signs of spring to come by now. Birds returning, new growth beginning. In some places you may even be seeing the first flowers, daffodils, tulips, and the accompanying bees. The first babies are being born, early lambs, spring pigs, rabbits. All of these things are echoed in the themes of Ostara. All representing new growth, beginnings, and the promise of returning life. This is when we consider the courtship of the Goddess by the God to begin in earnest. He is pursuing her, wooing her.... between now and Beltain we will have a building of this energy, this relationship. Now is the time to begin working toward that fruition, that abundance of fertility and the end result of all that is produced. What we sow now in love, we will reap in joy as the wheel turns through the year.

As I write this, we have had a week of beautiful weather, warm enough for the doors to be open, that was ushered in by the first thunderstorms of the year. With the first thaw, I turn to my garden, which we started last year. We have built a space on a patch of land that had no other real use. Using pal-



lets, Angus built a corral looking enclosure.



Inside, it has two raised beds, a bench shelf down one side, flower boxes, and a lovely, large outdoor altar and working space. We also put in a small firepit for rituals, and he painted a reclaimed gate purple with sparkles for me. Everything, except the dirt and a few decorations and the seed has been reclaimed.



We

use coolers, defunct storage tubs, bits and pieces of lumber from other projects or reclaimed from projects others have done. Not only does it end up having a lot of grow space, but it becomes a sanctuary for bees, and for us during the spring and summer. This year I will be adding too it, and extending my boxes to other parts of the property. I am going to try to grow corn this year, using the three sisters method of growing beans with the corn, and squash in between each mound of corn and beans. The following website has very good explanations, diagrams, history, and even a simple breakdown of why these plants grow together if you are interested into looking into this method of planting further. <http://www.reneesgarden.com/articles/3sisters.html>



This being only the second year I have been able to have a garden, I think I am more excited than I was last year. This year I will have a little more variety, and I have a better idea of what to expect. Just like anything else, it has a learning curve that only comes with doing. It is a whole new classroom for me, and I get to learn with my kids as we go along. Everyone likes to help with the garden, especially the youngest. After some of the meals that we had last year, the kids are even more excited about what we will produce this year. I love that with this one project, we are feeding our minds with new knowledge, feeding our spirits by making it a family activity and being outdoors, feeding our bodies physically, not only with the nutrients from food grown with no added chemicals, and eaten as fresh as you can get, but with the exercise we each put into watering, weeding, planting, etc. We all seem to be provided with a nice boost of self esteem as well when we look at our dinner table and say we did this together.... It really helps tie our modern age back into the land, back into the heart of our spiritual beliefs. Even if you live in a small apartment, I see no reason why you cant grow some-



Around the Hearth.....

by Lady Pinkie Luna Fae

thing you will use... a tomato plant in a pot, some herbs on the window sill... even a pretty flower, something you can look at each day, nurture, and will make you smile when you look at it. I recommend every pagan at least give growing things a try sometime in their life, it really does give one a deeper feeling for ones craft.

This time of year we are also getting ready for Gather Season. Dragging tents out, checking the stove, the air mattresses... It is a real chore, but one that builds the excitement of looking forward to seeing friends and phamily. We love going to our festivals, and are very active in our community year round, but especially during the camping season. Spending time every month and a half or so in the summer with like minded people in a safe environment has got to be one of the most growth inducing and grounding influences in my life today. If you have never been to a Gather, I highly recommend that you find one nearby and participate. You will make new friends, learn new things, and may even be surprised to find yourself in a new home. Most Gathers will have some type of workshops or classes, a fire pit, rituals, and opportunities to have fun and meet new people. **DISCLAIMER:** Some of these Gathers have skyclad options, so please pay very close attention to rules for individual gathers according to your taste preferences.

All this brings me round to another theme in our house... serving. Service to others, this is part of being Human. Teaching our children how to give without giving to much, and how to measure their own costs, and draw and enforce their own lines with people. This is a major point brought up by our teens in a program I am working on developing with their help. We want to serve others, but must not assume that they wont ask too much of us, finding a balance isnt always easy for those with a caring heart. We have to empower ourselves, before we can empower the next generation to do so. These are the things goddess teaches me and reminds me to mind, through my teenagers.

And then there is my youngest... through her, i have found myself mother hen in our community at large. All the babies belong to me (that is a joke, i just love kids).... they gravitate towards the lady with the pink hair who , up until recently, did all the arts and crafts with them at gather. And Ostara is my favorite one. I get to tell stories to my child and all her friends, while we paint and glue and have a good time. We do egg races and hunts, and talk about why we do the things we do this time of year. Nothing says Ostara like the joy in a child's face. Gather is a special time for my daughter. She sees the special friends that she gets to see only 5 or 6 times a year. All of the adults are safe and friendly. There are fun things to do, and **CAMPING!!!** I love that through these experiences, my daughter is exposed to so much positivity, and so many different types of people and perspectives. And I am happy that through her, I have been able to participate in providing that for my community, as much as they have provided it for me.

These are the things that Ostara means to me. The thoughts this time of year conjure. When we turn the wheel this time, is when my motors really get running. It is when i find myself coming alive with the ideas to carry out the dreams i conjured during the long dark. It is when I give birth to many lists, and those lists have lists, like little bunny rabbits..... I am a solar powered pixie after all.

Until next time,





ALLIANNA



ASK TIGER-LILY

by Tiger-Lily Dancing Dragons

Dear readers,

Each issue will feature questions sent in by you. All questions will remain anonymous unless you specifically ask

otherwise. If I can't find your answer, I can find someone who can. Questions may be sent to

asktigerlily@pas.dragonpalm.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Brightest Blessings,

Tiger-lily

Q: Intuitively or in your experience what is your opinion on lab created stones and their effectiveness in energy and spell work? Do you think they hold the same properties? I'm feeling really... unsure about them.

A: Lab created stones can be very pretty and in some case much less costly than natural stones. There are pros and cons to both lab created and natural. Natural stones would, in my opinion, be less contaminated with human energy. That being said, some stones, such as diamonds, have a very violent and bloody history. The process of mining some natural stones can also be very damaging to the earth. I think back to a camping trip in southern Arkansas when some friends and I visited a quartz crystal mine. The top of a mountain had literally been blown to bits in order to expose the crystals. The destruction of what had once been a beautiful mountain top was heart breaking. Lab created stones can be created with chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Either way, there are environmental impacts. Lab created stones are made with the same elements as natural stones, just in a lab instead of underground, and sped up through science (many thanks to Madison for verifying this for me). It is important if using lab created stones to make sure they are a lab created equal and not an imitation, as there is a difference. Know the source of your stones, lab created or natural. Deal with vendors you trust to tell you the truth about the origin of their stones. Cleanse your stones before you use them. And as always, go with your gut. If a stone doesn't feel right, put it back and pick another.

Q: I'm sure you know lots of natural remedies and such. My question is, is there something natural I can do for "winter itch" ie eczema? Im not big on the steroid cream my mom told me about. Any ideas?

A: Coconut oil! You can use just the plain old coconut oil from the grocery store or if you want to spend a little more money (or get creative yourself) you can use coconut oil lotion bars and soap. If your skin will tolerate it, soaking in a warm bath with epsom salts can also be helpful. As always, be sure to eat healthfully and drink plenty of water as well. If our insides aren't getting what they need, our outsides won't be healthy.

Q: Help! I have too many books. I hate to throw them away and a yard sale is a pain. What can I do?

A: First things first. There is no such thing as too many books. If you have a bare space on any of your walls, hang shelves. They don't have to be anything fancy, just make sure they are anchored in to the studs so they can support the weight of the books. Stacks of books can also make interesting tables. If you really must get rid of books, check with your area hospitals, prisons, and nursing homes as they are always looking for books to keep their residents and visitors occupied. And if all else fails, drop them off at my house! (just kidding, my wife might kill me) (ok, so not really kidding, I have never turned down books)

Q: is there a spell or candle that can be lit to actually SELL a house or get a house sold?

A: I have been here many times before and getting ready to go there again. Selling a house can be a long and frustrating process. Only once have I been lucky enough to sell a house quickly. The rest sold eventually, sort of. If you look online, you will find websites selling Saint Joseph statues. These are actually small plastic statues that come with an instruction card. The instructions vary, but are something along the lines of telling you to bury the statue upside down, facing the street, near the front door. I did this once. Almost two years later we ended up deeding the house back to the bank, not something I recommend. Did the statue fail me, or was I screwed by a mortgage broker who was more interested in his commission than in making a reasonable loan for the house? I will probably never know but I suspect both. First things first. Listen to your realtor. Most of them are hard working people and they don't make any money if your house doesn't sell. Your realtor can advise of changes that need to be made to the price, curb appeal, and decor that could help. Getting back to the specifics of your question, there are of course spells, herbs, and candles that can be used to help. I suggest if you wish to do a spell you write your own. Any one can put words to paper, but the true power of a spell is in the energy and those closest to the situation will be able to put much more energy in to the writing and casting of a spell than someone outside. Some ideas for what to include in the spell would be the color green (altar cloth, candles) for prosperity, luck, and new beginning. Herbs you could use include allspice for luck and money, cinnamon for prosperity and selling a home, and nutmeg for luck and money. Which diety you call upon will depend on your own personal path. I recommend the goddess of hearth and home from which ever pantheon you are most comfortable using. Ask her to attract qualified and interested buyers and to help your home sell quickly. Good luck!

Q: What tools do people use during a card reading, sage, white candles, cats?

A: For me personally, it varies from all of the above plus some to none at all, just depends on what kind of mood I am in and the space available. Let's throw this one out to all our readers. What tools do you use when reading tarot and why?

Send your responses to asktigerlily@pas.dragonpalm.com. I will compile all your answers for the next issue.

Gather Etiquette

By Tiger-lily

The weather is getting warmer. The earth is starting to come alive. Gathering season is upon us. After being cooped up inside most of the winter, I am as eager as the next person to get to that first gather, and all the ones that come after. Here is my list of what should be common sense tips to help your gather season go smoothly.

- Pack appropriate clothing for warm, cold, and wet.



ASK TIGER-LILY

by Tiger-Lily Dancing Dragons

- When you think you have enough food and water packed for yourself, throw in a little extra, just in case.
- If you smoke, be sure to bring plenty of cigarettes. Believe it or not, I have seen smokers show up to gathers with only 3 cigarettes (that's right, not packs) and expect to bum off everyone.
- Respect the site's rules for nudity, keeping in mind that there may be children present. You may be ok with your kids seeing naked folk, but not everyone is.
- Gathers take a lot of work. Just because you sign up for two hours of community service doesn't mean you have to stop there. Feel free to ask someone what else you can do. Help is always appreciated!
- Leave your camp site in better condition than when you got there.
- Come to workshops prepared. A notebook and writing instrument are always a good start. An open mind, closed mouth, and good attitude are also suggested.
- Be on time. I know we all struggle with running on PST (Pagan standard time), but we really, as a group, need to do a better job with respecting everyone's time, and showing up on time to workshops/events is a good place to start. I understand that sometimes being late can't be helped. In which case, please be as unobtrusive as possible so as not to interrupt.
- Respect the sacred fire. Please check with the fire holder before placing anything in the fire.
- Cigarette butts should be disposed of in butt cans, never on the ground or in the fire.
- Make a point to seek out and speak with at least one person at each gather that you don't know. You might just leave with a new friend.
- Have fun!

Joining by Cardea Hinges

I am in the wind
warmed by pure sunshine in my crown
the song pours through my core
sensations of the trickling water run my spine
roots run out my toes and caress the green earth
stroking and arousing the soil beneath
before penetrating deep into Her sacred space
touching Her vast, molten heart
She cries out in joy and welcome
We are one



Hearthside Handmade

If you are looking for unique, hand-crafted gifts of jewelry, décor, altar tools, and more, come visit our website or find us at a gathering or festival. We have a wide variety of items to choose from and we are happy to create a custom piece if you need something extra special stop by today.
<http://jhearthsidehandmade.webs.com/>



Beltaine 2014

Persephone returns!

Please join us for the return of spring.

Place: Avalon Isle

5049 Mathis Branch Rd.

Cosby Tn.

Date: April 25th-27th

Prices: Adults 25\$ pre reg. or 30 at gate

Children 13-17 15\$ 12&under free

5\$military discount

Drumming, workshops, community

Don't forget to watch for us on facebook and our web site.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/194089283983682>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/739246729437634/>





A World Apart, A World Together

Explorations in IndoPaganism

by Mass Bliss

but a difference of power in everything keeps us apart

It's all about power, isn't it? The gods and we are the same, except for power. So what is power to a Wiccan? Certainly not control over others or the Universe, that's part of Ritual Magick. Quite simply, power is over ourselves.

So what does Hinduism say about power (or powers)?

The Gita points to the Supreme Power when it teaches about Brahman. Brahman designates the impersonal principle and first cause of the universe. It is beyond material forms. As eternal, infinite, and conscious being, it is believed to be the subject, rather than the object, of thought. As the Absolute of all things, it is incapable of being characterized by any one thing, or even by the totality of things. *Aum*, *Tat*, *Sat* are the threefold symbol of Brahman. *Aum* expresses His Absolute Supremacy; *Tat* Universality, and *Sat* Reality. In the Gita, Brahman is quoted as saying:

***I am the taste in the waters...I am the light in the moon and the sun. I am the syllable Aum in all the Vedas; I am the sound in ether and manhood in men.
I am the pure fragrance in earth and brightness in fire. I am the fire in all existences and the austerity in ascetics.
In beings am I the desire which is not contrary to law
Know that they are all from Me alone
I am not in them, they are in Me (Gita: 7: 8-12).***

Or are we talking about personal power, the magick we create, the gifts we possess and use? For this concept, the magick word is Siddhis.

====

From Wikipedia article on Siddhi:

Siddhis are spiritual, magical, supranormal, paranormal, or supernatural powers acquired through a sadhana (spiritual practices), such as meditation and yoga. People who have attained this state are formally known as siddhas.

In Hinduism eight siddhis (*Ashta Siddhi*) are known:

- *Aṇimā*: reducing one's body even to the size of an atom
- *Mahima*: expanding one's body to an infinitely large size
- *Garima*: becoming infinitely heavy
- *Laghima*: becoming almost weightless
- *Prāpti*: having unrestricted access to all places
- *Prākāmya*: realizing whatever one desires
- *Iṣṭva*: possessing absolute lordship
- *Vaśtva*: the power to subjugate all

But breaking it down into powers we, as Pagans, can understand, Wikipedia shows the “lesser siddhis”:

Five siddhis of yoga and meditation

In the Bhagavata Purana, the five siddhis of yoga and meditation are:

1. *tri-kāla-jñātvam*: knowing the past, present and future
2. *advandvam*: tolerance of heat, cold and other dualities
3. *para citta ādi abhijñatā*: knowing the minds of others and so on
4. *agni arka ambu viṣa ādīnām pratiṣṭambhaḥ*: checking the influence of fire, sun, water, poison, and so on
5. *aparājayah*: remaining unconquered by others

Ten secondary siddhis

In the Bhagavata Purana, Lord Krishna describes the ten secondary siddhis as:

- *anūrmi-mattvam*: Being undisturbed by hunger, thirst, and other bodily appetites
- *dūra-śravaṇa*: Hearing things far away
- *dūra-darśanam*: Seeing things far away
- *manaḥ-javah*: Moving the body wherever thought goes (teleportation/astral projection)
- *kāma-rūpam*: Assuming any form desired
- *para-kāya praveśanam*: Entering the bodies of others
- *sva-chanda mṛtyuh*: Dying when one desires
- *devānām saha krīḍā anudarśanam*: Witnessing and participating in the pastimes of the gods
- *yathā saṅkalpa saṁsiddhiḥ*: Perfect accomplishment of one's determination
- *ājñā apratihātā gatih*: Orders or commands being unimpeded

===

See anything familiar? Just about all of that falls under what we would call “psychic gifts.

Has your teacher suggested meditation as part of your studies? Mine did, and every teacher I have known has. Can you say you had a notion of what, besides peace of mind, you would achieve from these meditations? Now you know what may be had.

This does, however, point to “spiritual DNA” yet again, as few religions in the West consider meditation to be integral to your beliefs and practices. I would need to do a lot of research to determine at which point in the formation of modern Wicca the practice of meditation was added, and I’m sure people like Philip Heselton would be better equipped to approach this than I.

But a difference of power... and that power can be worked on, developed, augmented, by known practices which involve none of the Hebrew/Egyptian magicks, just the power of our own brains. No need to call entities, other than that which dwells within.

Om tat sat. I am THAT.

And so are you.

Hugs,
Moss

copyright 2014 by Gerald L. “Moss” Bliss
originally written for Peppermint and Sage ezine

Basil

Latin: *Ocimum basilicum*

Also Known As: Arahaca, American Dittany, Witch's Herb, Nijilka, Balanchi, Saint Joseph's Wort. Native to India and Asia. Belongs to mint. The basil derives from the Greek *basileus* which means king. The French call it *Herbe royale*.

Gender: Masculine Element: Fire

Planet: Mars Powers: love, emotion, wealth, flying, protection

Deity Connection: Mars, Krishna, Vishnu, Ares, Sekhmet, Hestia, Hecate, Erzulie, Lakshmi

Parts Used: leaves, spikes, flowers

Description: Grows in a bush-like shape from 1-3+ feet. It has light green to dark green leaves and grows spikes with white, pale pink, or purple flowers that produce brown seeds. They self-sow in temperate climates. It has a rich, spicy aroma.



Felsien,
name

Growing:

Can be grown from seed or transplanted in late spring. It is very sensitive in low moisture stress. It is also vulnerable to slugs, whiteflies, and spider mites.

Plant with tomatoes and asparagus to repel aphids, mites, tomato horn worms, and asparagus beetles.

Harvest by pinching off leaves as needed. If you are taking a large harvest, leave at least two shoots intact.

To Preserve:

Freeze - mince, pack in ice cube tray, cover with a bit of water or olive oil and freeze

Dry - Heat oven to 180 for 20 minutes. Place washed and dried leaves on a layer of paper towels on a cookie sheet (you can stack up to 5 layers on the same sheet). Turn off the oven, put cookie sheet in the oven, and leave overnight.

Repeat if necessary. Crumble, and store in a jar.

Use to make pesto, herbal butters, and vinegars. It can also be placed in jars of olive oil.

Contains high levels of (E)-beta-caryophyllene (BCP) which may be useful in treating arthritis and inflammatory bowel diseases.

Can help prevent harmful effects of aging. Rich in antioxidants. Calms the stomach, soothes indigestion, and alleviates feelings of fullness. Basil has antibiotic properties.

Chew fresh leaves to calm coughing or make a calming tea of dried basil to soothe illness.

Can help expel placenta. Steep 2 1/2 teaspoons per cup of water for 20 minutes. Take up to 1 1/2 cups.

Make a hair rinse to bring luster to hair.

Basil Green Tea Acne Tonic

Steep 2-3 tsp dried basil leaves in 1 cup of boiling water. Cool. Apply to face with a cotton ball. Store in a tightly closed jar for 1 week.



Jewish folklore says it gives strength if used while fasting

Magickal Uses:

Basil is used to mend lovers' quarrels and in love spells. It attracts money and brings in good luck to a new home.

Use it in rites of exorcism or in a ritual bath.

Sprinkle the powder over heart to promote fidelity.

Sprinkle in a room to repel evil.

The scent of basil brings happiness to home and will protect you in crowds.

Strew basil on the floors of a house to purify it. It will bring luck to a new home.

Drink basil tea to help commune with dragons and basilisks.

Carry basil in your pocket to attract wealth or put in a cash register to

attract customers.

Scott Cunningham in Encyclopedia of Magickal Herbs

says that 2 basil leaves on a live coal

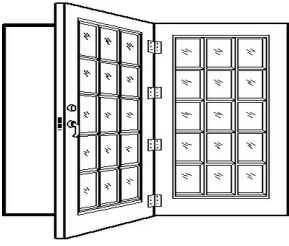
is an indicator about the state of a relationship.

If it burns to ash quickly, the relationship will be

harmonious. If it crackles and hisses, the relationship will

be disruptive.





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

Part IV

Come with me in our fourth walk through the Door.

Look up the words, "paganism", "ritual" and "mental illness" (or "mental health"), and you will find a vast number of websites and articles. Look them up **together**, however, and you will start seeing stuff about "satanic ritual abuse", "obsessive-compulsive rituals", and a number of other dark issues.

Let me state categorically that there either is no such thing as "satanic ritual abuse" -- or it is so rare that the police cannot find any concrete evidence. The people who are running workshops on the subject are simply in it for the money, whether they call themselves "seminar presenters", "ministers", or whatever. (If you doubt this, you can contact Kerr Cuhulain of "Officers of Avalon" for details. Kerr can be found on Facebook, or the organization can be reached through <http://witchvox.com>.)

Other "rituals" regarding "mental illness" seem to be in the area of frequent washing of hands, eating so many bites at each meal, talking to your "voices" (a feature which current study seems to show is promising in helping the problem), and so on.

But we're Pagans. Whether you call yourself Wiccan, Dianic, eclectic, or whatever, we still mostly come from the same Western culture, but often act as though we are from a different culture (or time or place). As Pagans, we feel we have a connection to God/Goddess that involves more than simple lip service. We know that we are responsible for our actions, which is often in conflict with what our doctors tell us. We talk about our healing to Goddess, to ourselves, to our Guides, to our Inner Child. And we expect results, as we enjoy the love of our Deity(ies) and guide(s).

We do rituals. Simple, complex, poetic, plain, wordy... rituals. This time we will discuss and create rituals to deal with our mental health issues.

Why rituals? Because we are Pagans, because our Inner Child controls our emotions along with the rest of our Magick, because it gives us a frame for our day that is easier to catalog the rest of our day with... because we celebrate Life in all its aspects, including the parts of ourselves we may yet to become comfortable with.

Why write simple rituals? Because we don't need to spend 2 hours (or 20) each day doing ritual. Because if it's too difficult, you will read it and say, "That's nice, I don't have time for that." Or because you will dismiss it as not being part of your Tradition. Or maybe you are just looking for a reason to not do ritual, or to not take care of yourself. We all do these things. Many of us with mental health issues, **especially Pagans**, are still building our self-esteem from near-zero levels. Do something simple, see how much it helps, and you can choose to keep doing the same thing or come up with your own personal modifications.

"A ritual is a set of actions, performed mainly for their symbolic value, which is prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community. ... In any case, an essential feature of a ritual is that the actions and their symbolism are not arbitrarily chosen by the performers, nor dictated by logic or necessity, but are, at least in part, prescribed and imposed upon the performers by some external source."
(from Wikipedia)

Some external source. Or, in the case of obsessive-compulsives or schizophrenics, perhaps some internal source which is not connected to their own reason. The best way to end a useless, thoughtless, uncontrollable ritual is to construct a useful, thoughtful, controlled one. Let's do that.

Morning and Evening Rituals

In the morning walk outside and stand facing East. Call the Watchtowers, invite God and Goddess to be with you. Let your arms hang at your sides. This starts to let your mind feel the Earth. Let your fingers feel the power of the Earth come up through them. When you feel the power start to enter your hands gently rotate them. Let the power flow into your whole body. To finish raise your hands above your head to release any extra energy. Thank the God and Goddess.

In the evening just before bed walk outside. Face the moon. Invite God and Goddess to be with you. Raise your arms up to the Moon (if the Moon is not evident, face West). Relax your mind until you feel the light of the Moon come into your heart. Lower your arms and let the excess energy fall back to the earth. Thank the Goddess and the God. Dismiss the Watchtowers.

You have now put a simple, effective beginning and ending to your day, which will frame all your actions between those two events. It will keep you mindful of your own choice to allow yourself the full range of human emotions and actions. You will be mindful throughout the day of the love of Goddess and God, Earth and Moon, and Guardians throughout the day, which in turn will inform your actions and choices. Any time you find yourself leaving this position of balance, you can do a simple grounding ritual and work your way back to center. Be mindful of the fact that this ritual keeps the Guardians with you throughout the day.

You will find that taking a few simple actions like these will make the rest of the day go more smoothly, and your actions and choices will reduce the amount and time of the work you have to do.

The two rituals above were written by Caamora, a dear friend of mine who lives in the Western US. (In fact, this entire article was written as a result of my calling her and saying, "I have no idea what I'm going to write about this month; do you?" with her response, "Why not write about rituals for mental health?") Feel free to modify them for your own needs.

Comments are welcomed (understatement): Write me at zaivalananda@gmail.com.

I'll join you next month for another stroll.

Hugs,
Moss

(Moss Bliss is an initiated Wiccan living in Knoxville, TN. He has written on the Craft and on many other topics since the mid-1980s, often under pseudonyms, much of which may be found preserved on various Internet sites including Sacred Texts Internet Archive. Moss' personal website is Hauen Ypotame (Hippo Haven), <http://mosshippohaven.info> (soon changing in 2014 to <http://peacefulhippo.info>). He is a fallible human being, and is diagnosed and receiving Disability payments for his "mental illness", with current diagnoses being Asperger's and bipolar 2. He has parlayed these experiences into a life of mental health activism, counseling, and leading self-help groups, and hosts and writes many websites, groups, forums, blogs, etc. He spent 5 terms as President of Asheville Homeless Network, the nation's only membership organization for the homeless, and has served on many local non-profit boards. He is a known Pagan musician and filker. He has also knit over 1000 hats for homeless and poor people.)

Written August 2006, revised February 2014.

Some Thoughts on: Ostara



by Namaste

*Author's note: I just want to point out that this is more of a reflection on my own thoughts and feelings at this time of the year, rather than a how-to guide to the Sabbat. Thanks!

Okay, I acknowledge this is coming a wee bit early in the Wheel, but I just couldn't wait another three weeks to say "Welcome Spring!", so I figured I would go ahead and get a jump on it now, while it's in my mind, so to speak. I know this will cause many of you to break down into a drooling, apoplectic catatonia of shock and disbelief that I didn't procrastinate about something, while others will, I'm sure, consult the stars and confer in guarded whispers that the alignments are in order and R'yeh shall indeed rise from the depths in a spectacularly non-Euclidian fashion, thus disgorging a waking Cthulhu unto a shell-shocked and ill-prepared world.

Meh, stranger things have happened.

Perhaps it's the time spent unemployed and cooped up with nothing but my own brain to keep me company (and don't think it hasn't been pointed out to me that my personal weirdness meter isn't crossing into the red; like Sherlock Holmes, my brain craves stimulus and new data, or it begins to feed on itself, and I soon find myself firing bullets into the wall in a "VR" formation, all the while nattering on about this wonderful thing I've invented that will silence the report of a gun, ignoring the highly audible gunshots that disprove my claims); perhaps it's simply the fact that I'm over this Winter business and I'm ready to turn off the heaters and throw open the windows and let some actual air into the house. Whatever the cause, I'm happy that Spring is just around the corner.

Now, as most of my readers are either Pagan or Pagan-friendly (I would hope, by now, anyway), you know that I refer to is Ostara ("This! Is! OSATARAAAAAAAAAAAA!" he shrieked, as he kicked Winter down the well), or, as other peeps call it, the Vernal Equinox, which is really just a fancy way of saying "First Day o' Spring".

I like Ostara, personally. I mean, yes, I know there's still a few chilly mornings ahead of us; there's redbud winter and dogwood winter and blackberry winter and Edgar Winter and whatnot to get through before the nicer weather is here to stay. But to me, Ostara says "It's here!" in a way that nothing else does. It's snugged right in between Imbolc and Beltane, but it's its own little celebration. After all, Beltane is, well, Beltane (a wink's as good as a nod to a blind bat), and Imbolc is just sort of, well, there.

Y'know, as a side note, it may sound like I'm bashing Imbolc, but I'm not, honestly. I think it kind of gets lost in the shuffle at times, due simply to the fact that it falls in the middle of winter. You can't really celebrate it outside without severe frostbite; everyone's in that mid-winter funk and they just don't feel like doing anything but staying warm and snuggling and stuff that, I dunno, you humans seem to find so pleasurable. Imbold really is welcoming light back to the world. The days are getting longer (granted, it's hard to tell with all the snow clouds to hide it, but they are) and the earth is beginning to stir in her blanket of frost and snow. But often it's hard to get pumped about that, especially when you read that it was originally marked by when the sheep began lactating. Me, I always picture a tiny farm in northern Scotland, farmer's out getting his feel on:

"Och, aye lassie, tha's wha' we like, innit?"

"Fergus! Wot're ye doon!"

“Shut yer face, wommin! D’ye no’ ken Ah’m lukin fer Spring!”

“Yer no’! Yer playin wi’ ship tets agin! Git in ‘ere afore ye catcher dith o’ cold!”

Or something. Actually, I’ll acknowledge that’s probably the least likely scenario. In fact, it’s highly unlikely that actual history plays out anything like what goes on in my head, but, hey, if it gets a larf... Anyway, I don’t want to pick on Imbolc or belittle it; I’m just saying that it tends to get overlooked, or maybe downplayed would be a better way of saying it, just because of its place in the Wheel of the Year.

But Ostara now, with its bunnies and eggweggs, and its lovely balance of day and night, it has just that right promise of the coming Spring to make it all the more neautiful. And this year, I think, we need that little boost.

It’s been a rough winter. I don’t believe I can overstate that in any way; this winter has sucked badgers. Not just because of the crappy weather, although we’ve certainly had our share of it this year. But this winter has been a bastard on a variety of personal levels. For me, it’s been stuck in unemployment hell, dependent on my folks to help (and let me tell you, I HATE that shit); but a lot of people have had it worse. They’ve lost folks close to them, often very suddenly, and have had to cope with that loss during one of the worst seasons to go through it (not that any season is a good one for that, but winter just seems to grind it in), and it has not been an easy time.

But Spring, with its flowers and new leaves and new life, brings with it that promise that after all the bad stuff, all the pain and suffering, after it’s all gone, there’s still something to make it all okay; there’s still something to look forward to. Spring is your reward for staying strong through the hard shit.

I think it’s that sense of renewal that does it for me, that feeling of life and growth returning to the world around me with a whispered promise that it only gets better from here. It tells that it’s okay to try something new, to let go of what’s been keeping you stagnant, spreading your wings and taking off like those baby birds in the nest in the branch outside your window. You know there’ll be rain, but it’s a pure, clean rain that washes off the sludge and salty crap that built up in the preceding months, a rain that awakens life within you. It’s that fresh green smell of forests coming to life with new leaves, its creeks and streams bubbling with winter melt-off. It’s that first sunset where you realize you don’t need to put your jacket on because it’s still warm out.

Every season has its own beauty, its own special touch that makes it stand out. Summer has those long nights where you can just sit back and chill and listen to the cicadas in the woods and drum with your peeps and maybe knock back a coupla brewskis. Autumn has its reds, oranges, and yellows as the leaves change and fall, and you get the first cool nights where you can still sleep with the windows open but you need an extra blanket or two. Even Winter has its stark beauty, for all that I rant and rave about how much we hates it, Precious. Give you an example: several years ago, it had snowed, a good deep snow, but the roads were clear. Something I like to do is drive up on the Foot-hills Parkway and just lay back on the hood (when I had a car I could lay back on) and look at the stars or whatnot. Well, this particular night, the road up there was (unbelievably) still open, so I drove on up and parked in my usual spot. There was a full moon that night, and it was shining down at just the perfect angle to carve subtle shadows into the hills around, and there was a fog, I remember, that was pretty thick maybe fifty feet below where I was parked, with the hilltops poking up out of it like islands in the sea. And that moon touched everything with this pure silver-and-blue light. I spent probably an hour and a half up there, lost in this vision, and completely unaware that I was freezing my cajones off. The problem with Winter, I think, is that it has moments of breathtaking beauty, but it’s too damn cold to really enjoy them.

But Spring, ahh! Now we’re talking! It’s like a visit from an old friend, right? No matter how old you get, Spring is that time that makes us all feel young again. It’s when you can hear the rain falling on the roof and you close your eyes and see yourself out playing in the puddles. It’s when you hear the frogs singing to you in the evening. It’s when the world is young and free again.

So yeah, maybe I just couldn’t wait to get this typed out and posted. Maybe I was just looking for a cheap excuse to pick on Scotsmen and sheep (and don’t think you won’t be hearing something

different whenever Sean Connery says, "Sho, how're ewe?". You're welcome). Or maybe, just maybe, I want that first day of Spring to be here, with the promise of more to come.

That to me is the best way to celebrate Ostara, by the way. When that rain comes, go play in the puddles.

Namasté.



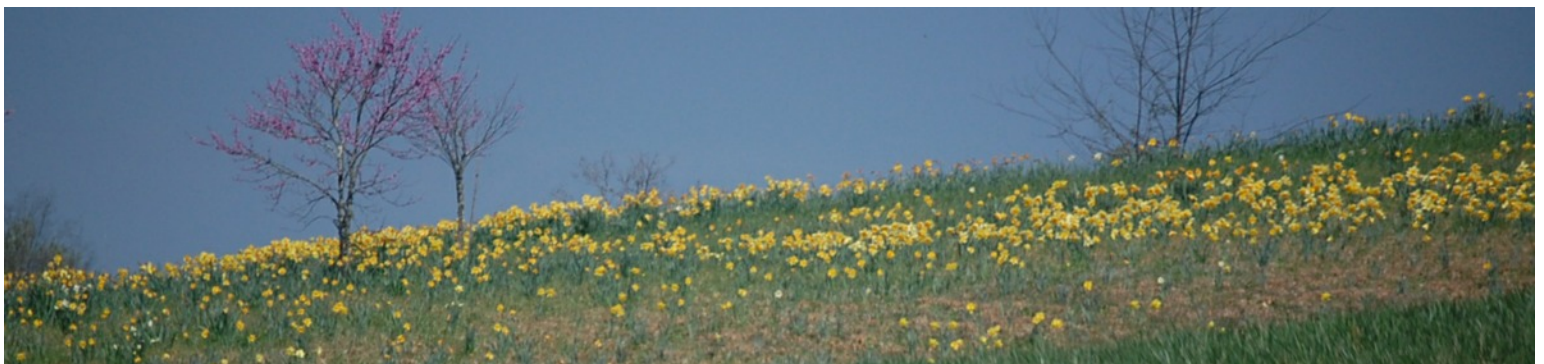
Visiting Dogs

by Tiger-lily Dancing Dragons

Spring and summer are coming. The weather is getting warmer and we are all starting to venture out more and visit friends. Some of these friends will undoubtedly have dogs. I myself have five large dogs. To complicate matters more,

we also have five cats and a hedgehog. One of the dogs is old and diabetic. One is old, sore, and grumpy. One is afraid of everything. One has separation anxiety and will eat the house if left alone. And the last one is a puppy that at six months old already weighs 56 pounds. Our smallest dog is about 40 pounds and the largest is 105. There is a lot of dog in my house. It has been my experience that not everyone knows how to behave around dogs. Here are some quick tips to make visiting dogs more pleasant for everyone involved (including the dogs):

- the more calm you are, the more calm the dogs will be.
- if you run, the dogs will follow. They are dogs, it is what they do.
- if you talk to them in a high pitched happy voice, they will get excited (and if in my house, will climb in your lap)
- don't hug a dog. They see it as a threat and an act of dominance.
- remember the dogs live there, you don't. Asking for the dogs to be locked up or put outside is the equivalent of asking someone to do the same with their children.
- if in doubt, remember what the dog whisperer said. "No touch, no talk, no eye contact".
- don't leave plates or cups where the dogs can easily get them. Some human food is deadly for dogs.
- if you see a dog on a leash, always ask the human if it is ok to pet the dog before approaching.



Tempest Smith Foundation passes the torch to Michigan Pagan Scholarship

By Mistress Belladonna

Bright Blessings.

This year at [ConVocation 2014](#), the [Tempest Smith Foundation](#) held its last raffle and passed the torch of the tradition to [Michigan Pagan Scholarship Fund](#). Since 2010, TSF has been providing six 500 dollar scholarships for Pagan students. This was in accord with the hopes of Tempest Smith's Mother Denessa Smith. A memorial page with thoughts on her can be found at <http://canisfidelis.50megs.com/tsmith.html>.

One of the largest public fundraising events for this goal was the annual raffle held by the [Magical Education Council](#) each year at the Midwest's largest Pagan gathering. But it is a new day. And though the body and heart are willing, it is time for Denessa's widow, Executive Director Annette Crossman, to move on to another phase of her life.

Witches of Michigan and the [Michigan-Midwest Witches Ball](#) answered the call, and took up the mantle of responsibility and founded the Michigan Pagan Scholarship. They began accepting scholarships from Pagan high school seniors this January 1st. Their parameters are clear, and are available on their Facebook page stating:

"All applicants must live in State of Michigan. Applicants must be 17 years of age or older, have a current GPA of 2.5 or higher, be Pagan, and currently accepted in a full time course of study in any accredited four-year college or university. Applicants must provide their most recent school transcript to establish state of residency, and GPA requirements, and any other scholarships or grants they expect to receive. In addition they must also state the reason for applying for this scholarship in 100 words or less and submit a 500 word essay about what being a Pagan means to them."

To contact them, you can also visit the Universal Society of Ancient Ministry's page regarding the fund. There, interested applicants can download appropriate forms and find out more about the fund. The direct web address is <http://pagancollegescholarship.org/>.

In a pure and shining testament to the commitment of the Michigan Pagan Community, the new scholarship has been given the support of the Pagan Pride Detroit, Magical Education Council, Universal Society of Ancient Ministry, Witches of Michigan, Michigan Pagan Fest, Michigan-Midwest Witches Ball, and many of the individuals and groups that give us our identity. When all stand together, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.

Have questions or wish to help? Contact Gordon Ireland, Fund Administrator, at admin@pagancollegescholarship.org. They also accept donations starting as low as \$5.00. Every little bit lends its energy to the whole. What price the education of our youth would be too great? Blessed Be.



Some Thoughts on: Where I'm at Now

by Namaste

Okay, well... I thought I had written more on this one already, but apparently... yeah, no. Ah well, that'll work too. Anyways.

So, I know a lot of you have been following this whole unemployment-looking-for-job dramatic roller coaster thing I've been on lately (admit it, all y'all have been keeping up with it, I am JUST that important to y'all), and I continue to be grateful beyond words for the support and encouragement everyone's shown. It means a ton to me, for reals, and I appreciate it bunches. With a bit of luck, this whole thing will be coming to an end shortly, and I can start the process of playing catch-up and learning from it all. And I'm here to tell you right now man, if you've never been through something like this, I hope you never do. The frustration, depression, humiliation, all of it, it's something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. And if you know someone who is, dude, be there for them; you not giving up on them may be all that's keeping them from giving up themselves. Pay it forward, man, pay it forward. You never know when you could find yourself in a similar situation.

And in that vein, I'd like to point out once again that I am grateful and blessed to have a fantastic Phamily, a beautiful mate, awesome kids, my health, and all the other little things that a person takes for granted all too often. Even waking up each morning is a gift, especially knowing that someday it's not gonna happen, and that counts for all of us.

If I may, let me share with you some other things that this situation has thrown into perspective (and please, by all means, feel free to take away any and all of these pointers for your own private stash, that's why I'm putting them out there):

Free wi-fi at McDonalds is my friend, not to mention the large drink cup that goes in with me. I've been milking that whole "free refills for dine-in guests only" thing way more than I prolly ought to, and as soon as I'm working again, I'll happily buy a large Coke every day just to make up for it. But by the same token, I've been mooching the interwebz there so much because of the no-phone situation. I've come to realize that, while I might like to go a day or two on strictly "me time", the whole cut off from everyone thing... yeah, not so much. I'd totally suck at being a hermit, I realize this now. Despite my rampant anti-social attitude and lone wolf façade, I like to know what's going on with everyone. Even if I don't reply to your postings, don't think that it has gone unread!

Speaking of reading, books are my friends. All those brutally cold nights the last few weeks, when the snow has been piled up and the temperatures were sub-zero, and the dogs were stuck to the fire hydrants? Reading is what got me through those nights. It's nice to have something to take your mind off all the other shit. And, to that end, it's made me realize how much I just enjoy writing, telling stories and whatnot. Well, maybe not realize; more like remember. I know I've said it before, and will likely say it again: I may not be very good at it, but I do enjoy doing it.

Self-pity is an indulgence you don't need. I'm gonna bite the bullet and embrace my inner Klingon here, and say that self-pity is for the weak. And yes, I know, at some point, nearly everyone has hit that point where they say "Woe is me!" and wring their hands and rend their garments and cover their faces with sackcloth and ashes. It's human nature to get overwhelmed from time to time, and just feel like there's no way out. That's normal, and it's perfectly okay to feel like that from time to time. It's when you just indulge that helplessness, when you feed into it and let it take over; yeah, that's not your friend. And yes, I know some of my own posts of late were born of frustration and anger. Not the same thing. A lot of my attitude comes from the fact that I really suck at sitting still and waiting, as my beautiful Lady can tell you. And, I have a tendency to attach too much to something; I get my hopes

all up over something (especially something that relates very strongly to a situation I may find myself in), and when it doesn't work out like I expected, it gets annoying (especially when it happens two or three times in a row). But that's my own attachment, and as the Buddha points out, attachment leads to suffering. That's called *dhukha*, by the way.

No, I mean when you just let yourself wallow in that "Gloom, despair, and agony on me" mentality. That will get you nowhere. Instead, when you feel it coming on, just recognize it for what it is, watch it as it arrives and as it departs, and let it go when it's gone. Don't hang on to it. It's like mooning over the girl who cheated on you in high school. It sucks if you're a senior; it's just lame if you're a senior citizen.

Always have a Plan B. In fact, have Plans B through about Q, just in case. Most of my present situation comes from the fact that I had no Plan B. After Dollywood and I parted company (and despite the people there that I DO miss, there's a lot there that I'm happy to no longer be a part of), you may remember that I announced my intention to go back to school. "A worthy enterprise," many of you proclaimed. "Indeed, most honorable, wise, all-knowing, and humble of scholarly wise persons, to return to higher education and obtain thine degree is, forsooth, thy greatest endeavor!" most of you proclaimed. (Okay, I may have embellished a bit and sprinkled on some irony to taste.) I was so sure that the financial aid was going to come through that I ended up turning down a position that would likely have interfered with a potential school schedule. And, in the end, the financial aid was a no-go, and the position ended up being filled when I checked back on it. That left me in the unenviable spot of trying to find a job in the middle of the worst possible season for job-finding. All that because I didn't have a Plan B.

I admit, it's kind of a harsh way to drive that point home to me, but (again) as my beautiful Lady will point out (most likely with a smirk and none-too-subtle shake of her head) (maybe some eye-rolling and a low groan, too) (and some giggling and finger-pointing), I really kind of suck at subtlety. I dunno if it's that my brain scoots off on tangents or it picks out certain things without contemplating a bigger picture, or what, but it's a fact: I often don't see the pole dances for the strippers (just because I'm sick of that stupid "forest-trees" metaphor. You're welcome). It often takes beating me over the head with several clue-by-fours before it dawns on me that I'm missing something. So, thank you, Universe, for gently striking me about the head with a gold brick wrapped in a twist of lemon, I think I got it now.

A lot of it comes down to self-image; what you believe about yourself, and why you believe that. For example: a few days ago, I was tempted to sign off for the day by stating that I wish I could be the person you all think I am. Mercifully, I called myself out over that one, and refrained from posting it, most likely replacing it with either a Matrix reference or some vague nonsense about strippers. It's a bullshit sentiment, really, and one that, once again, smacks of self-pity. The fact is, what everyone thinks of me isn't my business (don't stone me!); it's what I think of me. And if I think I'm somehow lacking, somehow not living up to this supposed image of myself that I believe you all have, then I'm not only fairly damned narcissistic, but delusional, to boot. I'm narcissistic to think that everyone else puts that much effort into building up any image of myself whatsoever, and I'm delusional if I believe I can't live up to any image of myself, period.

See, it's a given that you don't see me the way I see myself, and it's a given that the same holds true for you. At best, it could be said that the two versions of self-identity don't match up because you see something about myself that I either don't see or am unwilling to see, and the same holds true for you. And yes, I can tell it's late, I keep derailing my own train of thought.

Also, get comfortable with the idea of heavy introspection. Winter is the prime season for looking inside yourself, doing inner work and whatnot, whether you want to or not. And not working a job in the meantime... yeah, you're going to be doing A LOT of self-examination, and I don't mean in the "downloaded some porn" sense of the word.

Don't get me wrong here; a lot of folks are uncomfortable with the thought of working with the negative part of their personalities. They don't want to look at it; they don't want to acknowledge that it's even a part of them. But it is, and it's not a bad thing, really. It's just a thing, just another part of what

makes you you. But you better be ready to come face to face with it if you're jobless at this time of the year, because the one thing you can't run from is yourself.

Find outlets for your frustrations. Me, I found bitstrips. Yes, I know, it sounds lame, but sometimes finding a little something to laugh at in the middle of a serious depression can work wonders. It's like looking at that part of your brain that's dragging you around by your happy sack and telling it "You're not the boss of me." I've always been of the mindset that there is nothing, NOTHING, in the world that should be taken so seriously you can't have a little (or not so little) jab at it now and again. It's okay to laugh, it's okay to make something asinine (much as I suspect the person who came up with the word "asinine" did). Seriously, you hafta either nut up or shut up and give credit to a man who looks like Yosemite Sam: You have to enjoy the little things. Plus (at least for me), I find bitstripping to be a good exercise in short storytelling, so that's another check in the "Oh yeah" column.

Stay active. I'll admit, this is a tough one for me. I have a natural hibernation instinct that starts to kick in around the first of December. I can fool into believing it's just me trying to avoid the hell out of

Christmas, but that'll only last as long as the 25th; anything after, I just need to accept it. Face it, it's cold, it's uncomfortable, a lot of us are getting old(er) and start to get those aches and pains when the weather goes to suck. My hip hurts royally when it's cold. You just can't get motivated, or at least stay motivated, in the winter. And having no job doesn't help at all; it just multiplies the "sit around under the blankets and do nothing" urge until all you're able to do is, well, sit around under the blankets and do nothing. Gotta fight it somehow. Play some Wii Sports or something, ANYTHING, to keep moving. I'm striving to get back to that myself, but it's a ways to go for me. Ugh...

Come to terms with insomnia. It blows badgers, yes, but if you can find a way to use the time, it'll only help you in the long run. Unless you have a psychotic break, then it might not be such a good thing...

I saved one of the best for last: try to look at your life in more spiritual terms; live a more meaningful life instead of just scratching out an existence. If it wasn't for all that I've learned and experienced just in the last five years since meeting Chas and becoming a part of this ever-growing bunch of wicked awesome maniacs, brainiacs, tic-tacs, nic-nacks, padiwacks, give your dog a boneiacs, I would most likely have eaten a bullet by now out of sheer desolation. But I've learned a good deal in the last little bit: I've picked up Buddhist philosophy, I've learned to adopt Taoist teachings, I'm integrating Wiccan beliefs with the teachings of Jesus... in short, I've become an eclectic spiritualist (I'll pay you rent on the term later, DeerHawke), and it's helped me see the world in a much wider sense. I see connections, I see opportunities, I see the Universe in terms of an atom in a cell seeing the whole body: I can't fathom it all, but I know there's a place for everything in it, as long as we choose to accept that place and live the best lives that we can. It'll make the body healthier if we do, y'dig?

So, yeah, I've had my share of depression, demoralization, humiliation, frustration, and conjunction junction, what's your function, and there may be a bit more yet to come before I'm back on track. But I'm not even close to giving up yet; one thing I do know, just cause it's raining now doesn't mean it will be later. After all, the sun'll come out... tomorrow...

Gods, shoot me now...

Passage

The smell of skin burning rises to me more slowly than the pain
Fire burns, but not so hotly as the hate around me
Smokes come to me, and I inhale as if it were Truth
Flames embrace my ankles, my calves, my thighs
I scream the Pure Names. They will hear but not understand.

My soul is my own, and will not burst into flame,
Gifted from my Lady, and always given back to me whole.

The pain stops, the sounds blur, the smells mute,

The fools and demons below can hurt me no more.

My heart cries, "Io Evoe!" and the Lord comes forward to welcome me...

date unknown, but I'm guessing around 1996-1997

inspired by the painting of the same title by R. J. Johnson

Copyright and published at the time I wrote it, but I can't find online copies; renewed 2004 by Gerald L. "Moss" Bliss



On The Pagan Fridge

The Art of Our Children

This is a new feature of Peppermint and Sage. It will feature the artwork of Pagan Children. Today more and more us are raising our children within the craft and their art reflect much of what they pick up being exposed to the Craft. The pictures we have this issue are by StarStruck. She likes sweeping circle before rit.





For Ellie

You're still here, it's like you never left at all
I can hear each thunderous footstep fall
Ducking into shadows when I think to look
Padding up behind me when I'm lost inside a book
I almost feel your pressure on the floor
Filling up the room just like before.

I feel you here, it's like you never left at all
Walking beside me down the hall
I smell you everywhere, especially in my mind
A thousand memories cannot be left behind
You watched my children grow, you watched them
change
For seven years, you were our furry angel.

You weren't a dog, you were my closest friend
It is so hard to let you go
But the age and pain in your eyes echoed my concern
And I couldn't hold you back
My angel was called elsewhere.

So good morning, little moonlight, it's the day you have
to die
Good morning, little moonlight, and goodbye.

In honor of Elliephant, beloved companion of my
friend, Jill Willmott
©2004 by Gerald L. "Moss" Bliss; I don't remember the
date this was written.

Shadows

What I hate
is my shadow projected onto you

What I fear
is your shadow projected onto me

What I love
is a projection of the Boundless' Shadow

©2006 by Gerald L. "Moss" Bliss, D.D. (written 6/15)

Spring Storm by Lady Sky

Lightning flashes in the night, sending the
dark scattering for the shadows.
The cat roaming the mountainside looking for
a slow moving morsel.
He hides in the shadows stalking his prey
while the storm brews around him.
Rain is on the horizon but the thunder and
lightning are announcing its arrival.
Storms are rare in this area of the mountain-
side but when they hit the Earth shudders
with the power of the elements bombarding
her,
The moon is hiding behind the gathering
clouds as if she was a silent observer of the
powerful turbulence to come.
She knows without her this storm would not
be possible so she gathers her forces and
sends the Earth into a maelstrom of rain and
hail and energy.
Finally the storm plays itself out. Spending all
the moisture it had been building up.
Welcoming a new fresh washed day to a land
waiting for Spring!

Migraine by Lady Sky

Silence so loud
Screams in my brain
Thoughts under stress
Never voiced
Decisions not made
Roads not traveled
Trips not taken
Trapped in my mind
Can not escape
Injuries and pain
Madness and sadness
Depression unchecked
Wishes lost
Changing to dread
Dreams into nightmares
Pain in my head

Peppermint and Sage



Issues of peppermint and sage can be downloaded in PDF format from www.dragonpalm.com/PAS or from www.martview.com. At Martview just put Peppermint and sage in the their search. If you want to print out pages like the crossword and wordsearch the PDF version would be the best, but if you just want to read it like a magazine the martview is good for that.

Want to become part of Peppermint and Sage just go to our site at dragonpalm.com/PAS or to our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/peppermintandsage/> We can always use more writers and artist.

We would like to hear from you. Send letters to pas@dragonpalm.com. Let us know what you think of the articles, pictures, games. Also let us know what you would like to see. We really need feedback to help make the magazine better.

Peppermint and Sage comes out eight times a year: Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lughnasadh, Mabon, Samhain, and Yule.

Peppermint and Sage is put out by Dragon Palm Circle and is free of charge. You do not need to be part of Dragon Palm Circle to be part of Peppermint and Sage.





This is the drawing that we made this month cover from. It was done by Moonchylde, who in the mundane world is a professional photographer. This drawing she did is based on one of her photos. We would like to thank her for this great piece of artwork for us to use this issue.

We need covers for each issue - both a front and back cover. The front we will have to add the name and issue to either by framing or by inserting it into the piece or you can add it yourself as part of the artwork or photo. The back cover will just be the artwork or photo.

Covers artwork or photos can be sent to pas@dragonpalm.com

Pagan Fun Time



X	E	H	A	V	S	T	H	G	U	O	H	T	W	Z
D	T	J	M	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	R	G	T	F
N	A	G	R	F	Q	Z	P	J	F	B	E	N	C	E
O	L	Z	Q	C	D	K	F	S	Q	X	D	I	E	I
I	P	P	Y	W	L	A	T	N	E	M	I	S	P	R
T	M	R	O	T	S	N	I	A	R	B	S	U	S	E
A	E	O	A	N	A	L	Y	Z	E	J	N	M	U	V
T	T	C	B	Y	Z	B	T	Q	M	I	O	Z	S	E
I	N	E	Z	D	F	H	L	A	M	A	C	I	J	R
D	O	S	O	B	I	X	E	A	E	C	N	A	R	T
E	C	S	V	N	V	R	G	N	Q	R	P	U	C	L
M	B	Y	K	C	D	I	I	D	C	L	F	A	B	U
U	E	I	F	Y	N	A	O	F	A	J	E	P	G	K
Q	N	J	A	E	R	G	C	N	U	D	O	W	N	R
G	C	D	U	T	X	T	M	Q	I	L	I	K	B	C

Magick of the Mind

JOKES

Word search by Cardea

analyze
believe
brainstorm
consider
contemplate
daydream
idea
imagine
meditation
mental
musing
plan
process
reverie
suspect
thinking
thoughts
train
trance

What's the best thing about Pagan friends? They worship the ground you walk on...

What do you get when you cross a Zen Buddhist and a Druid?

Someone who worships the tree that is not there.

Did you hear about the dyslexic devil worshipper? He sold his soul to Santa!

What do ya' call 13 Witches in a hot tub?

Self-Cleaning Coven

Q: Why did the Wiccan novitiate give up pork?

A: She thought the Rede said, "Chew what you will, but ham?--none."

The definition of "SAINT": "A dead liberal who is worshipped by living conservatives."

If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy?

- A skeptic goes in to see a fortune teller. "You are the father of 2 children," the fortune teller says. "That's what you think! I'm the father of 3 children!," says the man. "That's what you think," says the fortune teller.

-Q: What do you call a dating club for unattached Wiccans?

A: Craft singles!

*WHY M&M'S ARE WICCAN:

* MM = Merry Meet*

Round shape for wheel of the year, cycle of seasons*

Skins are different colors, but the inside is the same chocolate, because we are all related.*

Associations with the colors: Red = South, Green = West, Dark Brown = North, Yellow = East, Orange = For the Solar God, Light Brown = For the Earth Mother (Copper Woman)

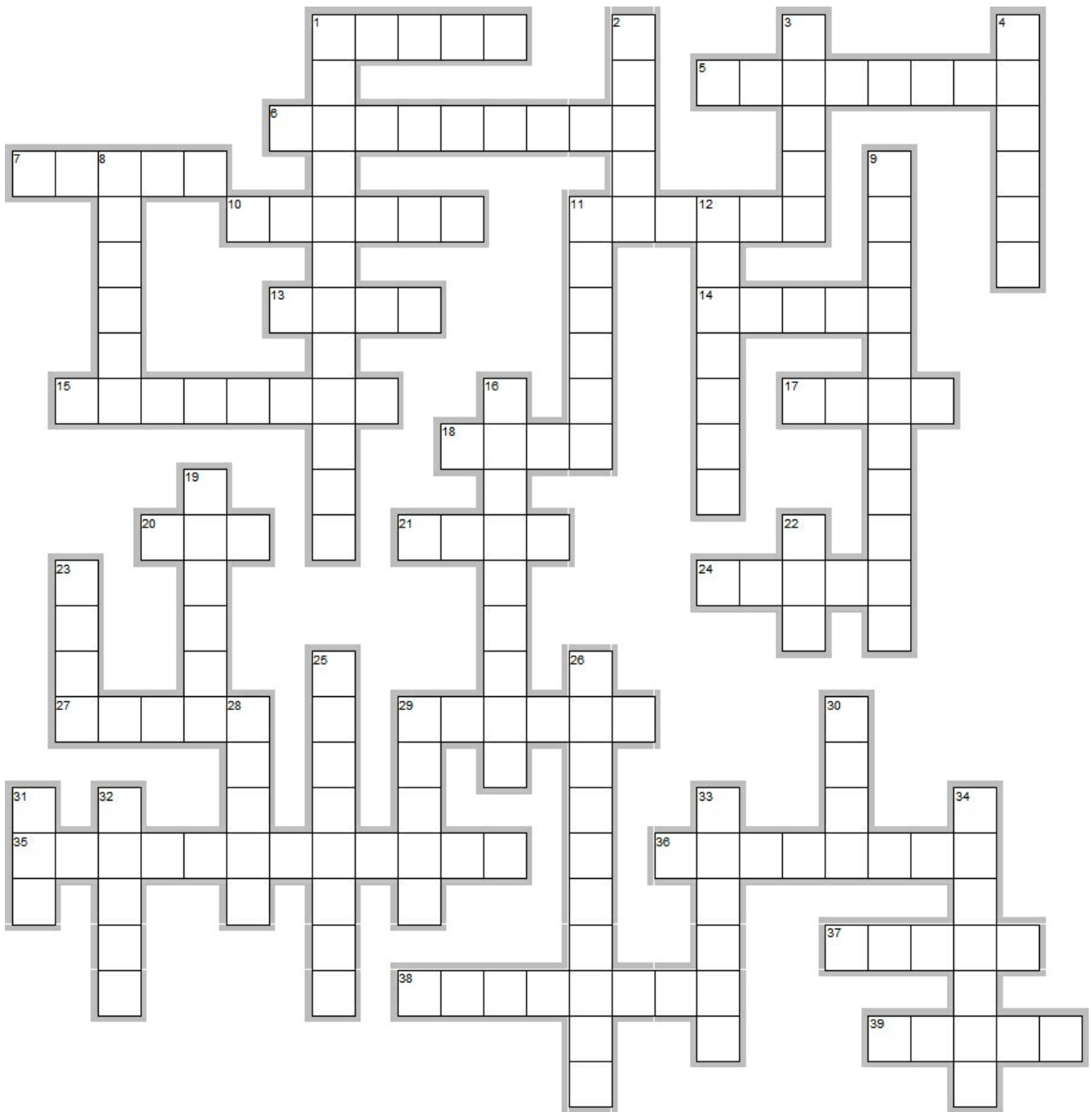
* Rotate the M & M: M = 13th letter of alphabet, and there are 13 witches in a coven

3 = Triple Goddess, three phases of moon W = Witchcraft, Wiccan E = Enlightenment, Enchantment of chocolate*

"Melt in your mouth, not in your hand"--God/dess's love must be experienced directly to appreciate. Also, God/dess will take care of you.*

Sweetness to remind us of how sweet the love of the God and Goddess is!





EclipseCrossword.com

Across

1. device for measuring and indicating time
5. A huge stone monument or structure. Stonehenge is the best-known example .
6. used for vinyl-coated fabrics
7. something put aside for future use
10. season following winter
11. ritual blade with a black handle.
13. hood of a monk's habit
14. large number of people

15. supernatural being that helps and support a witch or magician.
17. Ritual knife of the Scottish tradition
18. a red variety of corundum
20. fully grown female animal of the ox family
21. Animal of Ostara (Easter bunny)
24. color of the Earth Mother in Spring
27. a person in a community who is respected for his/her experience. The title is earned, though not always officially given in an ritual setting.
29. A heat-proof container in which incense is burned. It is associated with the element air.
35. A technique of psychic healing involving the picking up of a patient's pain and/or illness by the healer, who experiences it personally for a short time, after which it is supposed to vanish in both patient and healer; may also be done accidentally.
36. Can be a blue variety of corundum
37. Fossilized resin form ancient pine trees.
38. A magickal workbook containing ritual information, formulae, magickal properties of natural objects and preparation of ritual equipment
39. - a witch's broom

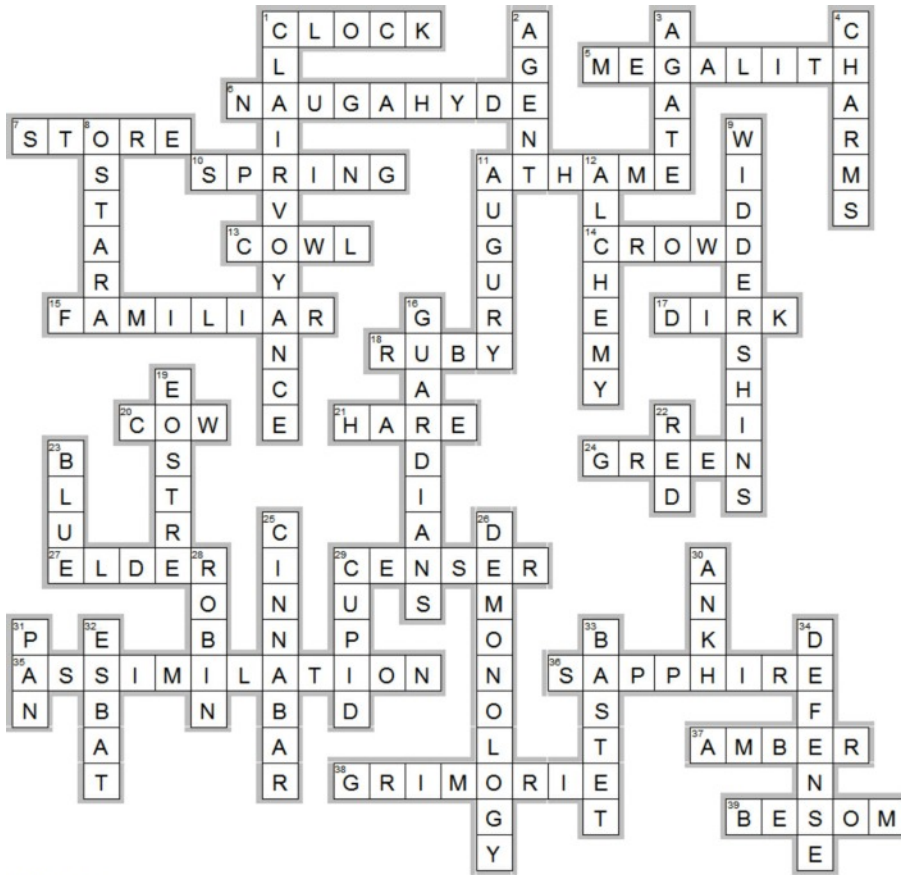
Down

1. Psychic ability to see events occurring at a distance in space or time
2. The person or animal exercising a psychic talent
3. stone made up of microscopic crystals of quartz laid down in bands
4. Either an amulet or talisman that has been charmed by saying an incantation over it and instilling it with energy for a specific task.
8. Sabbat celebrated at the vernal equinox
9. circular movement for the reverse or undoing
11. Divination by means of whatever is most handy at the time
12. The occult science of matter and its transformations
16. entities corresponding to the four elements
19. Anglo Saxon Goddess of Spring
22. color of blood
23. color of Robin egg
25. a mercury sulfide mineral - principle form of mercury ore
26. Medieval science of studying demons
28. red breasted bird of spring
29. god of romantic love
30. Egyptian symbol for life
31. goat-footed god of lust
32. A ritual usually occurring on the Full Moon and dedicated to the Goddess in her lunar aspect.
33. The Egyptian cat-headed goddess
34. to protect yourself

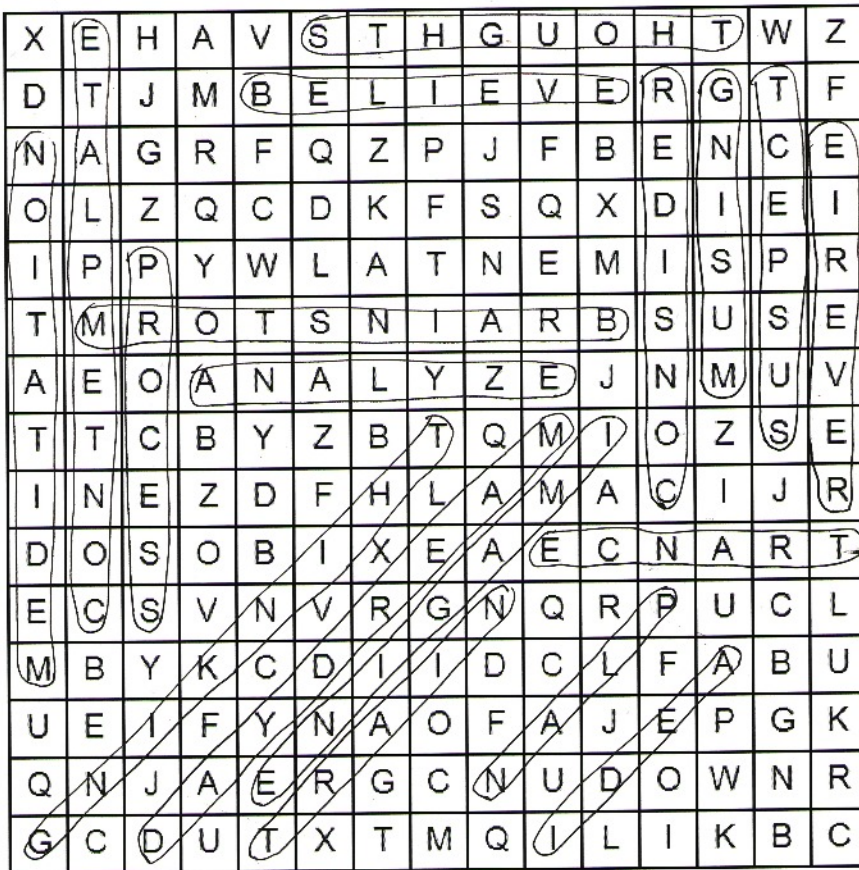
Flying Spell

Upon 40 days of Prayre and Fasting, with Purest Faithe and Calling unto the Gods..

- .I. Clasp near thy rod of power (a.k.a. a telephone)
- II. Call forth for ye Spirits of Travelle and their nefarious Agents
- III. Yea, state and visualize thy destination --thrice, for the Agents of Travel to Comprhende Thee...
- IV. Yea, Task them and overcome them in Ye Test of Wills V. SPEAKE THE WORDS OF POWER:
VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX
- VI. Two weeks hence, take ye under New Moon to Clearing of the Travel
- VII. Present Thyself in Trembling and Loathing to the Guardians of the Towers of the North, East, South and West and Present to them the holy scroll of the High Priestess: TICKET
- VIII. Pass ye surely through the Elemental Detector and its "Ever Alert" guardians of Thy Safety (But not Thy Rights)
- IX. Wait Until the Stars show, the wind blows and the new grass grows
- X. When your Gryphon of Metal arriveth (and, ha, craven fool, it arriveth not when ye expect but only upon the winged beast's good and fickle pleasure), board it and fly away



EclipseCrossword.com



Hard Boiled Eggs and What To Do With Them by Cardea Hinges

I really dislike the way an egg yolk turns green when it's been boiled too long. I used to think that's just how they are, but then my mom taught me how to cook nice, golden yolks, every time. For Large eggs, anyway.

You always start with cold water and cold eggs. Place your eggs in the pan and add cold water until it covers the eggs. Place the pan on the stove and bring it to a boil. When it reaches boil, put the lid on, turn the stove down to low, and simmer the eggs for 13 minutes.

At that time, take the pan off the stove and get it right over to the sink. You're gonna pour off the hot water and fill up with cold. Do that one more time and the water should be cool enough to handle, but not cold enough to cool the eggs too quickly. I find it best to go ahead and peel your eggs before they get cool.

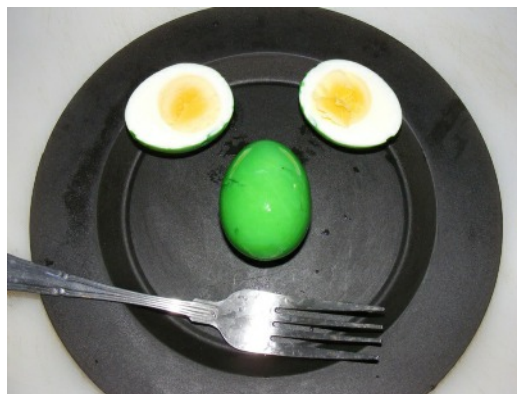
Tip: The shell comes off easier if you get water under the membrane.

And that, m'dear, is how I make the hard boiled eggs. Below is a suggestion for what to do with them.

Picked Ostara Eggs

This is my pickled egg recipe. There are many like it, but this one is mine.

1 cup white vinegar
1 cup water
1 cup sugar
1 TB salt
6 cloves
1 stick cinnamon
6 allspice
food color of choice
6 hard boiled eggs, peeled
1 Pint jar with lid.



In your pan, combine your vinegar, water, sugar, and salt. Heat this until it's steamy and everything is dissolved, then add your food color (just for fun).

Into the jar, put the cloves, cinnamon, allspice, and hard boiled eggs, which you hopefully just cooked using my tried and true method as described above.

Pour the brine into the jar, leaving a 1 inch headspace, and lightly put the lid on. Let cool at room temperature, then tighten the lid and refrigerate.

Safety tip: We are pouring a hot liquid into a glass container. Please make sure your jar is not cold when you pour the brine, as the quick temperature change may stress the glass to break. I take this precaution even with jars made for canning.

Let the eggs sit for at least 4 days before serving. A week is better.

Done in green, these could easily be part of a St. Patrick's Celebration or a Doctor Seuss Party. Or make multiple batches each with different colors for Ostara or Easter. Yes, the kids will like them if you don't make a big deal about it.

So, that's it! I hope you make them and like them. Thanks for reading!

