

Green Egg



Starwood 2013

Review Issue

In this Issue:

Steampunk and Magic

Siberian Shamanism

Taliesins Pagan History

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Green Egg Magazine

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GREEN EGG is the official journal of the Church of All Worlds, whose mission is to evolve a network of information, mythology and experience that provides a context and stimulus for reawakening Gaea, and reuniting her children through tribal community dedicated to responsible stewardship and evolving consciousness. We publish four times per year. Visit the website at: <http://www.greeneggzine.com>
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EDITOR'S PAGE

August, 2013

Hello Green Eggsters:

We have some wonderful news!!!!

Starting this month I will be scanning all the old issues into my computer and posting them on our website for all to see. There are several reasons for this project, other than of course, the fact that I'm inundated with requests to get all these old issues up on the site.

- 1) Many early founders of Paganism have written for Green Egg in the past. I believe it's important that our younger generations, as well as anyone new to Paganism, should know our own history. One of the best ways I can think of to accomplish this goal,

is by putting up our old issues that will tell us in first person, what the founders were thinking, how they felt about Paganism and their point of view on a then newly-emerging religious paradigm.

- 2) There are now numerous universities which have Pagan, Goddess, or Wicca/witchcraft classes or even whole departments. What sources can they turn to do research of these things? Why, Green Egg, of course! When all the issues are put up, hopefully by one year from now, if not sooner, I plan to send out a mass email mailing to university departments and teachers about a wonderful resource for them and for their students. And it's free! What this means is that our own history will continue to be told and won't be lost. It also means that our founders' ideas will be remembered and their writing will still be read. I think that is important because the founders of Paganism weren't just creating or reviving a new religion - they were trying to change the dominant paradigm and return humans to a previous kind of life that was much healthier for us; one in which sex isn't deemed evil, it is instead considered sacred (except for rape and child molesting, which really have nothing to do with sex actually, but are more about "power over". I just wanted to clarify this for anyone who may not understand about this.)

The founders envisioned a world where children are loved and raised thoughtfully with a deep connection to Gaia, our beloved Mother Nature. They

also wanted to foster a paradigm that was loving and accepting of all diversity instead of the punitive one we inhabit at this point in human history.

The founders also wanted to get people to think outside of the box and this has always been Green Egg's function, one which we strive to attain with every issue we put out.

I'm so excited about this project because it means that anyone who wants to, can do research on the origins of neo-Paganism and become informed. I'll keep you posted on how this project goes.

We are also adding some new regular columnists and they are very excited about being a part of Green Egg. In this issue, we have the first installment of Taliesin Govannon's new column on Pagan History. Taliesin is also on the radio with his program, "The Pagan Pundit". I met him at Starwood last month and was impressed with his knowledge about Pagan History and also the current political scene. And he gives great hugs!! You can find Taliesin on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/taliesin.govanon?fref=ts&ref=br_tf

Another new columnist is Luna Hart, who will be writing about astrology and Tarot for us. Her first article will appear in the next issue, due out early October, 2013. I met Luna at Starwood. The first thing I noticed in talking with her is that she's amazing and extraordinary! She is very creative with unusual, original ideas. She did a Dance of the Tarot workshop which, unfortunately, I missed but heard was really great. You can find Luna's website here: <http://lunahart.com/>

What else is new?

Our esteemed web mistress, who has had surgery on both wrists, will be out for 6 months while she heals. This means that I will be learning how to post things on our website. I will be able to post things on a regular basis, at least once a week. I will also be writing more articles myself for Green Egg, so you will be able to read new content in between new issues of Green Egg.

What has prompted these changes? A lot has happened in the months since we've posted our last issue. I won't go into details here, but at the top of my list of good things that have happened this year is that I am now well from 30 yrs of low thyroid. Yep, that's all, simple hypothyroidism, yet none of the doctors I went to in all these years could tell me what was wrong or how to fix it. In fact, they never did diagnose me, I had to find out on my own what was wrong through research. I hope to be able to include my story about all this in the next issue because I think it's a story that many might want to hear and I've run across people with similar issues with mainstream medicine.

Anyway, the end result is that now I finally have enough energy on a daily basis to be able to function and live a normal life – this includes being able to get Green Egg out on a regular basis every 3 months. In the six years that I've been doing Green Egg, there have been months at a stretch where I could barely do little more than simply read and the brain fog was so bad, sometimes I couldn't even do that, let alone write, edit, etc.

Now that I'm feeling better, and can devote much more time and attention to Green Egg, the ideas that have been simmering on the backburner can now be put into action.

I hope you enjoy this new issue and as always, I love to hear comments and suggestions from our readers. I'm always open to ideas about how we can improve

our magazine, so please don't hesitate to give us feedback. Please keep in mind, though, that suggestions such as "How about you just shut down the whole thing, you really suck at this?" aren't really helpful. You need to tell us WHY you think we suck at what we're doing, OK?

Have a fun-filled summer and watch for us online at our website!

greeneeggzine.com

Our Facebook pages are updated daily and you can find us here:

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/greeneeggzine>

Facebook community page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/GreenEgg2>

Blessed Be,
Ariel Monserrat

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Chemtrails are Real



Any mention of chemtrails on-line is certain to elicit a barrage of ridicule. Typical responses include, "Those are contrails you numbskull!" or "Do you believe in fairies and witches too?"

As a matter of fact I do. Some of my best friends are fairies and witches. As for contrails, I've lived on this planet for well nigh seven decades. I **know** what contrails look like. They tend to be much shorter than chemtrails and they disappear rather quickly. Chemtrails on the other hand sometimes stretch from horizon to horizon and rather than simply dissipating, they grow wider and less dense over time until they all coalesce

into a plenum of stratus clouds which block out most of the sunlight. Since they started chemtrailing my neighbors' gardens have failed. There simply isn't enough sunlight. Some wild berries do fruit but never develop a decent sugar content. High energy substances like sugars require a lot of light. Also, the constant dampness has caused molds to proliferate, especially slime molds

Contrails never appear as multiple parallel lines or as a series of criss-crossing lines. Chem trails do!

If you "Google" chemtrails most of your initial hits, including Wikipedia, describe it as a conspiracy theory. Conspiracy theory my ass! The only thing theoretical is figuring out exactly who is spraying them and why. Living near the top of a mountain, I have an unobstructed view of the sky. I see them almost every day. Because everyone can't come to my home to see for themselves I've included a number of photographs.

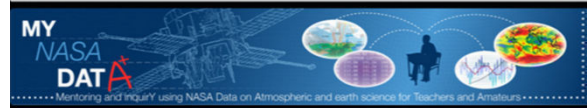


Analysis of the rain caused by chemtrails reveals high levels of aluminum, barium and strontium. Aluminum is known to be toxic and has been suggested by some researchers as a cause of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The function of the chemicals being sprayed appears to be the process of ice nucleation. In order for ice crystals (snowflakes) to form in the upper atmosphere the water molecules have to crystallize around nucleation points. The chemical structure of the compounds being sprayed, in part, determines the specific shape taken by the ice crystals. For the most comprehensive discussion of chemtrails go to:

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

The government's program of propaganda and disinformation has been so successful

that on a recent survey more people believed in extraterrestrial visitations than in the existence of chemtrails. NASA recently released a curriculum package to be used in schools to convince children that chemtrails are really just contrails. <http://www.geoengineeringwatch.org/1984-has-truly-arrived-nasa-chemtrail-propoganda-for-kids/>



The greatest proof that they are **NOT** contrails lies in the fact that those of us who are old enough remember what normal contrails look like. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the powers that be have engineered an artificial generation gap. This is partially a result of non-stop boomer bashing by the media. If the testimony of oldsters can be discounted it becomes impossible to convince young people of anything. If you perform an online image search for contrails what will come up are numerous pictures of chemtrails. In addition, contrails often are visible in the sky at the same time as chemtrails.



Tom Donohue

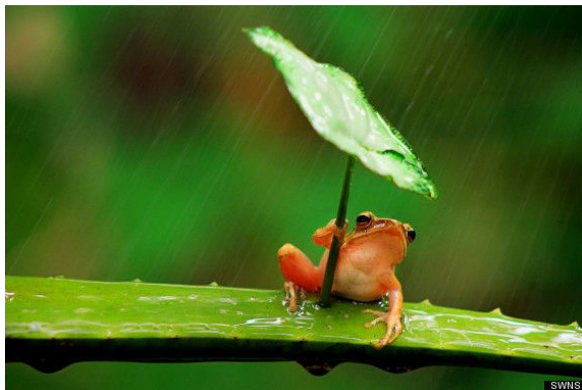


CRITTER CORNER
FROGS AND TOADS, OH MY!
By Ariel Monserrat



(Credit: Penkdix Palme / Newsteam /SWNS)

Penkdix Palme, a 27-year-old photographer from Indonesia, found this intelligent little tree frog in his neighbor's garden, SWNS reported. Palme, who took up photography just six months ago, said the [frog stayed under its leaf-umbrella for an entire 30 minutes.](#)



(Credit: Penkdix Palme/Newsteam/SWNS)

[Clever Frog Makes Leaf Umbrella](#)

For as long as I can remember, I've loved frogs. I love their singing and think they are one of the planet's cutest creatures. There are so many different kinds, too. When we moved to our land in the country 8 years ago, the first thing I noticed was how many frogs and toads we have. We are blessed to have a large frog pond on our land and, though we don't know the names of all the species, we have counted at least 7 different types of frogs and 3 kinds of toads. We have the following frogs:

- Bull frog
- Wood frog
- Leopard frog
- Green frog
- Pickerel frog
- Peeper frogs

The 3 toad species are:

- American
- Fowler's
- Hyla versicolor, a chameleon toad

The bull frog can be heard late at night and in the early morning with his song that sounds like a one-note cello. Sometimes, he calls to a neighboring female bullfrog and they have conversations. I'm assuming that it's a female because I can hear the two frogs move closer to each other as they talk. Inevitably I'll hear the frog song get faster and more intense which seems to indicate that someone is having an orgasm.

Frog love is beautiful!





Bullfrogs mating

The peeper frogs are very small, only about an inch long but they have an extremely loud song which you can hear 200 feet away at least. They have those cute little feet that are so much larger in proportion to the rest of them, complete with suction cups on the bottoms of their feet so they can attach themselves to doors, etc.



Spring peeper

We also have a toad which changes color to match whatever background he's on, the *Hyla versicolor*. I've seen quite a few of these lately, all of them very near to the house. They like to sleep during the day and will perch in weird places that make it impossible for me to figure out how they got there. One day, I went to my greenhouse and swung open the door quickly, only to notice that there was about a 3 to 4 inch long toad on the wooden crossbar on the outside of the

door. The crossbar couldn't have been more than ½ inch wide, but somehow the toad managed to jump up there and settle in for a long nap. He was in such a deep sleep that he didn't even wake up after I opened the door. I've seen them on top of our gargoyle rainspout and on top of the hummingbird feeder. They have a very deep, loud call and love to hang out in the bushes in front of our house. When we sit outside on warm evenings, we hear all these frogs and the night is alive with their songs and mating calls. The lightning bugs come out in full force as well and it makes for a very magickal scene.



Hyla versicolor

The first week we lived in our new home, we lived on the front porch much of the time because we couldn't get enough of all the amazing wildlife here. That first week, I was sitting on the porch in my rocking chair and felt something soft brush against my ankle. I thought it was one of our cats. I looked down to see which cat it was, and – surprise!- it wasn't a cat; it was a toad. He actually leaned his head on my ankle and seemed to really enjoy the closeness we had. Every night during spring, summer and fall for the next two years, he would come up on the porch and lean against my ankle for the entire evening. The third summer, we took out the ramp in front of the porch and replaced it with stairs; sadly I never saw him again and 6 years later, I still miss him. It was such an honor to have this little guy come and spend time with me.



American toad

Here are some interesting facts about frogs:

- Frogs will only eat things that move, i.e. spiders and insects. The tadpoles, however, are vegetarians.
- Frogs always return to water to breed. The male acts as a midwife, carrying around the little frogspawn on his body. When he senses the time is ripe, the male swims out into the water and the

tiny tadpoles emerge from their egg-jelly and swim away.

- Fear of frogs is called ranidaphobia, but there is no need to worry that touching the animals will give you warts, that's just one of the many myths surrounding frogs.
- Cold frogs repeat their calls at a slower rate because the muscles controlling the sounds slow down.
- Why do frogs sing? They sing to attract a mate, mark territory, when they know the weather is going to change and when they are frightened or hurt.
- Frogs don't drink water, they absorb it through their skin.
- Frog bones form a ring when the frog is hibernating, just like trees do. Scientists can use these rings to figure out the age of a frog.
- A group of frogs is called "an army".

To learn more about frogs, you can visit this website: (I highly recommend reading the funny story – just scroll down a bit until you find the subtitle "Funny story".)

[http://www.guy-sports.com/humor/pictures/picture_frogs.htm#Frogs and Crocodile](http://www.guy-sports.com/humor/pictures/picture_frogs.htm#Frogs_and_Crocodile)

Fun facts about toads:

- Toads can live up to 40 years!
- Toad defenses include the propensity of a toad being handled to produce dark brown urine. They will puff up their bodies with air to seem larger. In addition, the toxins in a toad's parotid glands just behind their eyes produce a substance that tastes bad, can irritate the mouth and cause nausea. Few predators will eat

American toads. Raccoons, skunks and snakes are among the few who prey on them. They taste so bad that a dog or other animal who picks on up in its mouth, immediately releases it. This is why toads are so complacent when faced with an enemy, they're really pretty unflappable.

- Male toads produce a special release chirp used to inform another male toad who has grabbed them that they have mistakenly latched onto another male.
- One cannot get warts from handling toads, although one may get urinated upon.

- American toads shed their skin approximately four times a year.

To hear the American toad song, click here:

http://wildlifeofct.com/websitesounds/american_toad_call.mp3

These are just a few of the fascinating facts about toads and frogs. I hope this article will encourage you to do some research on your own – frogs and toads really are fascinating and fun to watch!



Frogs in amplexus, the mating embrace of frogs. The male is fertilizing the eggs externally. He squeezes the female and massages out the eggs, which are then fertilized by him after leaving her body.

TALIESIN'S PAGAN HISTORY SERIES:

AN INTRODUCTION

Ever since I started studying Wicca and Paganism in 1987, modern Neo-Pagan history has been an interest of mine. This was only natural, as I've always been a history nut... religious history in particular. However, as I became more and more deeply committed to the study of Neo-Pagan religious magick (Witchcraft, the Wiccan variety), my interest in Neo-Pagan history has become a passion. Not only does the origins of what we do today fascinate me, but I'm firmly convinced that the study of our own history is vital to building a vibrant, sustainable Paganism for the 21st century.

I've seen the lack of knowledge of Neo-Pagan history come back to haunt individuals, groups, and even whole communities. Mistakes that early pioneers made have been needlessly repeated, with drama and heartbreak being the tragic consequence. We should be learning from the errors of our predecessors, not reincarnating their worst moments. As the character of Sammi said in a (deleted) scene from my film *Dark of Moon*, "...we're Pagans in the 21st century. We can make new, bold mistakes all on our own."

Aside from learning from the mistakes of our elders, there's also a lot to be inspired by: the history of modern Neo-Paganism is not that of the "beautiful people", sitting atop of the social order and allowing the "little people" to bask in their glory. No, our history is that of the average Jane and Joe, looking for more out of life than following our grandparents to the grave, and finding the beauty of nature, the divine, and our own spirits lighting the way. We are the imperfect, finding an alchemical transformation of our spirits, transcending the base materials of our faults and turning them into pure spiritual gold.

When I first spoke to Ariel Monserrat about writing a series of articles for *Green Egg* on modern Pagan history, I knew in my heart that I wanted to make these articles

different. I wanted to look beyond a mere recitation of names and dates and look at the *meaning* behind events, both for those involved and for those of us who have inherited what they discovered and co-created. Yes, I'll be giving you plenty of names and dates... the "who", "what", and "when" of history. But I'll also be giving you the "why", and "what did it mean?"

Kicking things off is a piece I originally wrote for an inter-faith blog (which is now defunct) on the rise of Eclectic Wicca in the 1970's and 80's. I've had to re-work it a bit... I originally wrote it entirely for non-Pagans. Because of that, it's a bit skimpy on the whole "names and dates" thing... I was trying to get across just how vital and important the "Eclectic Reformation" really was to the Neo-Pagan community as a whole. Rest assured, I'll be returning to this era in future articles, where I'll go into everything in more depth. For now, allow me to present "Paganism: Rise of the Eclectics"!

Paganism: The Rise of the Eclectics

Paganism B.E. (Before Eclecticism)

Yes Virginia, there was a time when the whole notion of "Eclectic" Wicca or Paganism was unheard of. When Wicca first stepped into public view, there was one form available: what would later be called "Gardnerian" Witchcraft, so named because of the Father of modern Wicca, Gerald Gardner, was largely responsible for its popularity (however, when there was only one kind, labels as such were unimportant...it was just Witchcraft). Even the use of the term "Wicca" was almost unheard of. Gardner himself used it only a few times in his writings, and even then spelled it "Wica". It was considered an archaic term, and "Witch" and "Witchcraft" were the common names used by everyone familiar with the movement.

Over time, other styles of Witchcraft came out into the open. Though unknown at the time, these were basically just Gardnerian Witchcraft with a few minor, cosmetic changes. The first of these that gained wide acceptance was Alexandrian Witchcraft, named after its founder Alex Sanders. Though he told a fanciful tale about being

"initiated by his Grandmother when he was twelve", we now know that he was instead trained in the Gardnerian manner either by Pat Kopanski (initiated 3rd degree Priestess in the Patricia/Arnold Crowther line, who were themselves initiated by Gardner himself, along with his High Priestess Monique Wilson), or one of her daughter covens. The so-called "16th century Book of Shadows" he claimed to have a copy of was 95% Gardnerian, with a few changes and copying mistakes by Sanders.

Once the Craft came to America, others started to take the Witchcraft they had gained in early Gardnerian covens, and put their own "spin" on the material, thus creating new "traditions". Many were ethnic derivatives, mixing Gardnerian Witchcraft with different cultures to come up with new flavours of Wicca. Ed Buczynski combined Gardnerian Wicca with Welsh Deities (and a good amount of wonderful poetry) to create the Welsh Tradition. Dr. Leo Martello combined Gardnerianism with his Sicilian background to create the Strega Tradition. This sort of thing was quite common, and the oaths of secrecy taken by initiates in those days kept non-initiates "in the dark" as to the origin of different Traditions.

But it was still not what we'd call "Eclectic", because they were still 90% Gardnerian in orientation. No, other forces would come into play in the creation of modern Eclecticism.

The Driving Forces

Really, two things drove coming popularity of Eclecticism: scarcity and diversity.

Scarcity: In the early days, Wicca spread slowly. This wasn't because people weren't interested, it was the way one **became** a Witch. The (now-common) concepts of self-dedication and solitary practice were unheard of in those days. In fact, person-to-person initiation was considered so vital that the dictum "only a Witch can make a Witch" was taken as a matter of accepted fact. Thus, the only way to become a Witch (and remember, non-Wiccan Paganism was practically unheard of outside of a few tiny circles... like the Church of All Worlds) was to find another Wiccan to train and initiate you.

Ray and Rosemary Buckland had been sent by Gardner in the early 1960's to bring Gardnerian Wicca to the United States. They settled in Long Island N.Y., and proceeded to find people interested, train them, initiate them, and eventually elevate them to the third degree, where they could then "hive off" and form a new coven. Even with the Bucklands working overtime to train, initiate, and elevate as many people as they could, one can see how this would still result in an agonizingly slow spread of Wiccan Paganism. No matter how hard the Bucklands worked, they still had many more people interested in Wicca than they could accommodate.

Also, distance was a problem. While Gardnerian Witchcraft spread, it was still localized on the east coast. The books being written, however, went nationwide. And the media (which was, in those days, centred in New York City) started noticing and giving publicity as well. People all across the country were interested, but there just weren't enough covens to go around.

Diversity: Americans are a varied lot. We tend towards rugged individualism, and have a distinct problem agreeing on anything. Our land is so big, and our culture so diverse, that in some regions only a common language reminds us we're in the same country.

British Traditional Witchcraft is a product of the British Isles, a culture with more "glue" than ours. While there are some in the U.S. (like me) who get along well with an Anglo-Wiccan practice, many in this land just don't like to be tied down to such a strongly British methodology. In other words, we like to do things **our** way.

Some early applicants to Gardnerian covens loved the ideals behind Witchcraft, but found the British stylings not to their liking. It was the only game in town, however, so they ploughed ahead. High Priests and Priestesses, though they might have felt a not-so-perfect fit with some people, knew that denying someone entry to the coven could be denying them the wonders of Paganism, and thus tried to make the best of things.

This situation was a time-bomb waiting to go

off.

Other Forces At Play

Traditional Wicca itself was having problems in the 70's. The rapid growth that was such a necessity in the early days had resulted in some Priests and Priestesses being elevated and hived before they were ready, and some who should have never had their own coven to begin with. Thus, poor leadership, power-plays, and ego-trips led to the breakdown of training standards in some covens. Degrees were handed out like candy to "loyal" lackeys of a particular Priestess, who then would lord her large number of daughter covens over more patient, competent priestesses as if they were some sign of her superiority. The desire to be the "biggest priestess in town" resulted in some bitter Witch Wars.

The ones who had gotten into Trad covens because they were the "only game in town" were causing dissension as well. Many chafed at what they saw as overly rigid structures within Traditional covens, and began to agitate for change and experimentation. Some covens gave in, with disastrous results. Others resisted, and the agitators often tried to split the coven over it, taking some sympathetic coveners with them. The new groups were bitter towards their old covens, and the enmity between them greatly added to the Witch Wars in progress. Something had to give.

The Rise Of The Eclectics

Even though scarcity and diversity would wind up being the engines that drove the spread of Eclecticism once it came to be, they don't account so much for the beginnings of the Eclectic movement.

For example, some non-Trad groups formed because people wanted to practice Wicca, but couldn't find a coven to train and initiate them. So, they took what they could find from published sources and cobbled together their own basic system of practice. These groups didn't have anything against Trad Craft, however, they just couldn't find an already-formed coven. The sources they "borrowed" from were almost always Trad sources, though, and after Lady Sheba

published her garbled, fractured versions of Gardnerian rites they had a lot of stuff to go on. Many of these groups were 70-90% Trad in style and practice, even if they weren't in lineage. Some, mindful of the "only a Witch can make a Witch" dictum they had read, even took the Alexandrian route and invented Wiccan grandmothers to give themselves an air of legitimacy. Diversity wouldn't come into play until later.

No, the two things that drove the formation of the earliest Eclectic methods were Paganism's popularity in the post-Hippie 70's subculture, and the mixing of Wicca with feminist ideology. Not surprisingly, both happened in California.

After The Party

The late 60's were a time of experimentation and trail-blazing in a great many areas of American life, and religion was definitely one of them. While many experimented with Eastern Religions (like Buddhism, Taoism, Krishna Consciousness, and others), others delved into Witchcraft and the occult. Famed occultist Aleister Crowley, largely ignored outside of occult circles since his death, found such favour again that he was one of the people pictured on The Beatles' **Sgt. pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** album cover. Uncle Aleister aside, many people gravitated towards the Earth-friendly, Goddess- embracing Wiccan religion.

Wicca and Paganism's growing popularity in the post-Hippie culture on the west coast would lead to the earliest Eclectic systems in the nation. Not only were there no established Trad covens for people to join (well, we now know there were, but they were **so** secretive that nobody knew they were there), but, thanks to the post-60's environment, "do your own thing" had become a basic way of life for many. And so, some started to experiment.

Because of the more libertine environment, very few would feel compelled to stick to Traditional dictums, or invent a grandmother to justify their new Wiccan methods. Their styles varied widely...Aiden Kelly's "New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn (NROOGD)" started as a class

assignment in ritual construction, and evolved into one of the longest-standing American systems around. It, however, stayed close to traditional structure and methodology. Victor and Cora Anderson, however, would start the Faery Tradition, a system that holds freely-flowing and changing structures to be a virtue. This one would play a big part in American Eclecticism later on.

Some people would even leave Wicca entirely, forging a new spirituality they would classify as "Pagan" (though often having a name of its own). The Church of All Worlds, founded in the early 60's from a sci-fi discussion group, found greater interest in the 70's (thanks in large part to the popularity of the *Green Egg* magazine).

Eclectic systems had the virtue of not being tied to a strict lineage system (person-to-person initiatory lines), so they could spread more quickly. And since there was no degree system to speak of, someone who, say, got involved with an Eclectic group at college could take their system back with them after graduation. And so some Eclectic groups started.

Other groups that were in the mix in post 60's California were feminist groups. The 70's would be a big time for the Women's Liberation movement, as many anti-war activists shifted their efforts. One women's activist was Hungarian-born Z. Budapest, who saw the Goddess Spirituality she found in Wicca as a natural partner for advocates of women's rights. She would eventually form the Susan B. Anthony Coven #1 (named after the Women's Suffrage Hero) as the first Dianic (a term that has had many permutations, here as an all-Woman, male exclusionary system) coven in the early 70's. Many more women, though few of them as anti-male as Z, would come to see both the parallels between the subjugation of women in the church and in society, and in the liberation of women both politically and in the spirit.

The Eclectics Emerge

The Eclectic movement within Wicca would simmer underground for much of the 70's.

While many people experimented with Eclectic Wicca, and the newer Eclectic Pagan systems, most of the books and publicity were still being done by the old-line Trad-types. When this changed, the entire face of Wicca, and indeed Neo-Paganism, would change.

It changed on October 31st, 1979. On that day, two books would be published that would change the way many people approached the Craft and Paganism forever. One book was **Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America** by Margot Adler, an NPR reporter and Gardnerian Witch. The other was **The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess** by Starhawk, who had founded Paganism through Z Budapest and then moved on to Victor and Cora Anderson's faery tradition. These two books together would take an underground movement and begin what I call "The Eclectic Reformation" in Paganism.

Drawing Down the Moon showed that interested people were indeed doing things radically different from what they had read in books thus far. Spiral Dance showed them how to do it. Now there was a book that gave basic "how to be a Witch" instructions where you could "do it yourself", and another book that told you that a lot of people thought that was OK.

This led to a rapid expansion of Eclectic practice in the 80's. Groups sprung up everywhere. The older Trads were weary...they were afraid of people "playing" at being Witches, and that training standards would suffer. The Eclectics said that the Trads were in a rut and afraid of change. The arguments of both sides, ironically, had merit. This didn't stop the Trad vs. Eclectic wars from being bitterly fought, however.

The war was over in 1987. When Scott Cunningham's *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* was published, it signalled the beginning of Eclecticism's dominance of the Wiccan scene. Whereas older Eclectic systems were still dependent largely on group practice, the rise of solitary Eclecticism meant that Wicca could grow with no constraints whatsoever. And in the 90's, the numbers of Wiccans exploded.

The Impact

The Eclectic Reformation changed both Wicca and Paganism radically. It made solitary Eclecticism the dominant paradigm in Wicca, and cleared the path for Paganism to become the elastic, adaptable umbrella for countless spiritualities that it is today. And ultimately, it's proven to be a good thing, both for Eclectics (obviously), and for the older Traditions.

Yes, I said it's been good for the older Trads too. For one thing, the spread of Eclectics in Wicca and Paganism has taken the pressure off of Traditional covens. Early on, when the old Trads were the "only game in town" (so to speak), there was enormous pressure for covens to initiate, train, and hive as many people as possible, so that as many people as possible who were interested in Wicca could take part. This led to numerous problems.

But with the rapid growth in Eclectic covens, that was no longer an issue. If someone couldn't find a Trad coven to circle with, they could at least find **somebody**. Thus, the "Priestess mills" could wind down, and covens could be more selective about who they admitted, and even more selective as to who they elevated and hived. This meant that mediocre coven leaders could be avoided more often. It also meant that those mediocre (or just incompetent) coven leaders who had already established groups soon found their supply of new students drying up, because people could pass them up without being left high and dry.

The shift in emphasis from quantity to quality also meant that Traditional covens could concentrate more on having strict standards and training regimens, and the breakdown in training standards observed in the 70's could be rectified. Whereas the first Gardnerian coven in America would get to know you (somewhat), initiate you, and then have you learn "on the job", Trad covens in the post-Starhawk era could concentrate on training every single Witch to the best of their ability, often having someone spend time in an

"outer-court" to study before ever approaching initiation (though the outer court system sprung up for other reasons, ones to be covered in another article).

Finally, the rise of Eclecticism cured Trad covens of having people complaining about the lack of and/or agitating for more experimentation with ritual and coven structures. Since Eclectic groups were the perfect place for people who felt the need to relentlessly tinker with things, they could then leave the Trad covens alone. People who seek out a Trad coven these days genuinely want to be there, and to gain what the coven has to offer. This has led to much more peace and stability within the groups themselves. For the Eclectics, as I said, the benefits are obvious.

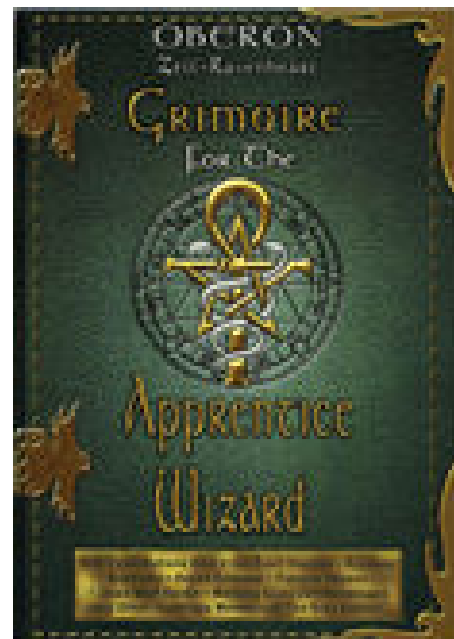
Taliesin Govannon

You can find Taliesin here:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaganPundit>

You can listen to his most recent show here:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/desperatehouseswitches/2013/08/03/pagan-pundit-9?ie8c=0>



Chicken Shit for the Teacher's Soul

Recently I reconnected with one of my former students who shall remain nameless in this article. She is now in a high ranking position with the state department of education. She asked me the following question:

"What do Science teachers need, to grow into creative, empowered, thoughtful teachers who prioritize what's really important about science?" The rest of this article is my reply.



Looking back over 19 years of teaching in one of the top rated public high schools in America, I don't think I grew much in any of those ways. I started out creative, empowered and thoughtful with an absolutely religious fervor about what I thought was important about Science. In

Biology it was the interconnectedness of all living things laterally via the water, atmospheric gases and even the great lithic cycles, and vertically through our phylogeny back through layers of common ancestry.

Also of paramount importance were scientific method and critical thinking.

We share something like 70% of our genome with the roundworm, *C. elegans*. I would bet that 99% of our protein-encoding genes can be found in the world of the monera. (The kingdom that is primarily bacteria.)



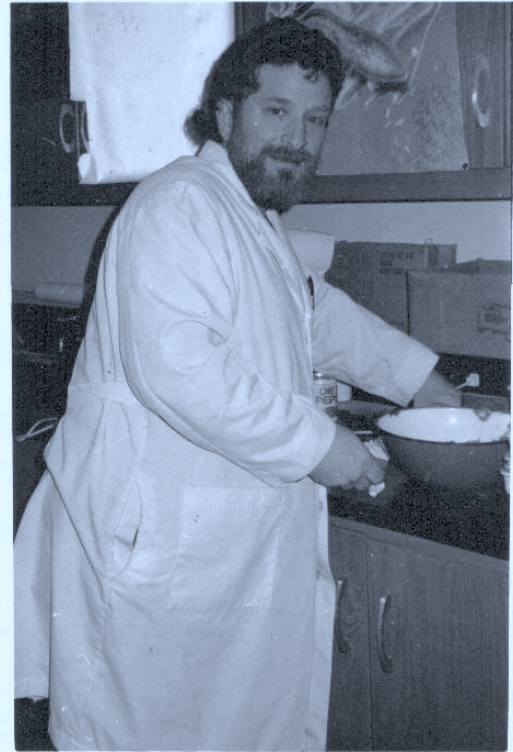
The most important lessons in Biology are in the opening units, "What is Science?" "What is Biology?" "What is Life?" The content of a course in phylogenetic Biology, or at least the framework of such a course, while not all that important itself, serves as a vehicle for concepts which are VERY important like homeostasis, symbiosis or ecological balance.

Through all of my years of teaching, "down town" did their worst to disempower, demoralize and undermine teachers at every opportunity. In the meantime, **I** did a variety of things to regenerate my creativity and to increase

my **sense** of empowerment. I'm not sure what you mean by "thoughtful".

I started my teaching career on Valentine's day 1986, and was an instant success. I ended every day thinking, "And they just PAID me to do this!"

At the first open house, about seventy five per cent of the students' parents showed up and told me I was wonderful; or at least that's what their sons and daughters had told them. One father opened with, "My son tells me you walk on water." Another asked me, "How did you do it? My son never got an A until he had you. Now he's acing every course." One mother noted that her daughter had never shown any previous interest in science but was now out in her back yard every evening turning over rocks in a search for living organisms. I continued the semester with renewed fervor. One thing I recall is that I brought in living examples of every kind of organism we studied including a friend's boa constrictor. (I got my own snake, Naga, soon thereafter, primarily to bring him to school with me one day each year.) In June, "downtown" sent me a memo saying I would be transferred to the district's "Continuation" school, a school for "at risk" students. It's also where "creative" teachers are sent. It seems to be a punitive move for teachers who dare to think outside the box.



I freaked. The continued reassurance from the Principal, that he would pull some strings and get me back, didn't help much. How well I had taught that semester meant nothing to those at the district office. Why should I bother? Sometime in August I was notified that I would be back at my former post that fall. Nonetheless, it was the first brick in the wall.

The 86-87 school year was idyllic. I know that it was in the fall of 86 that I had my students singing, "phospho glycer aldehyde. Doo dah! Doo dah! etc.

In May, downtown announced that they would be doing some "consolidation". (I.E. their current buzz word for random transfers.)

MOST teachers received notices telling them to expect to be transferred. I was, of course, among them.

That September I started at a Middle School. It was my nightmare. Prior to getting my first full time teaching position, I "subbed around" at several nearby school districts. At every High School I was successful to the point where teachers would tell their department heads that they should try to hire me if a position became available. In every middle school my performance was dismal. I had absolutely no ability to control a classroom full of students of that age group. Middle school students were like alien life forms to me, or like clones of Daffy Duck. The school to which I was assigned that fall, was utterly unprepared. There were NO Science classrooms or text books and ZERO teaching materials. We were expected to do rubber band, paper clip and soda straw science off the cuff, and, of course, buy our own soda straws. I was saved at the last minute by the untimely death of Carl , a Physics teacher at my old school.

The only way my principal could get me back was to tell downtown that he needed someone who could teach Biology, Human Physiology and Physical Science as well as coach the Academic Decathlon team. Since we were three days into the semester he also needed someone who could step right in and start. I came back to triple prep and a team; it was worth it to be home again.

Because I had a three day delay in beginning the semester, when I went to the book room I found that they were out of Biology textbooks. Since I seldom use the text I decided to do without. At the first open house one father asked why we had no text books. I told him that the school had simply run out. "Well how much do they cost?" he asked.

"\$33.00" I told him.

"There seem to be thirty students in this class so would a thousand dollars cover it?"

"Yes, that should do it."

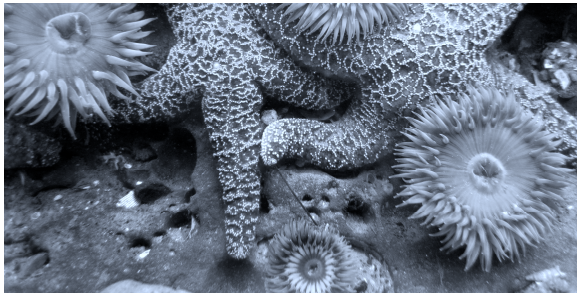
He promptly wrote a check for \$1,000.00 made out to the school. The next day, I proudly walked into the principal's office and showed him the check. The principal informed me that we could not accept it. Downtown had declared that no school was an independent economic entity so any donation would have to be made to the district. If the check was made out to the district THEY would decide how it was to be spent and that they would deduct a 20% service charge for "administrative costs." The parent could, however, donate the \$1,000.00 to the PTA who would then lend me the books each semester.

I didn't know that this policy also applied to grants. When I applied for a grant for video equipment, to a local foundation, I itemized the costs for the necessary items. The total was \$1,000.00. I got the grant! Then, "downtown" sent me a check for \$800.00; I'd forgotten about their carrying charge. I was left with a dilemma. I could either abandon the project or make up the difference myself. I did the latter. \$200.00 might not sound like a lot of money, but to a beginning teacher in the mid eighties it was a significant expense.

Probably the most atrocious example of the district's policy happened when Bill Hewlett, co-founder of Hewlett-Packard, offered the school (Are you ready? Hold onto your hat.) **\$800,000.00** worth of computers and related technology. He considered our school to be the most significant source of his success and

wanted to give something back. Downtown informed him of their policy that no school was an independent economic entity so if he wanted to donate computers he would have to donate them to the district. The district office would then decide which school got the equipment. The would-be philanthropist, of course, rescinded his offer. "Downtown" turned down nearly a million dollars worth of technology in order to assert their authority. As always, the students were the real losers.

That school year was fun, albeit grueling, and certainly had its rewards. The only bad thing I remember was when I was informed (from d. t. of course.) that I would no longer be allowed to do any of the body fluid labs in Human Physiology class. There went Blood typing, urinalysis and the salivary amylase lab. That was 87-88. In the ensuing years downtown continued their dirty work. They passed rules against camping trips, and made any field trip a nightmare of paperwork. Then they said that the annual tide pool trip which we had been doing for decades, was too dangerous. *Oooh goodness gracious, someone might fall into the water.* When some teacher proved that it was statistically no more dangerous than taking students across the street to study aquatic organisms in the pond in a nearby city park, they forbade that too. (taking students across the street.)



I always prided myself about the fact that I spent about \$1,000.00 per year of my own money on teaching materials. When I mentioned this at a department meeting I learned that many of my colleagues contributed even more. I also learned that they deducted their expenditures from their income tax so I decided to do the same. Throughout 1988 I spent over \$2,000.00 of my meager income on various teaching materials believing that I would be able to deduct it. That was the year that George H. W. Bush famously stated, "Read my lips, no new taxes." When questioned as to how he planned to accomplish this he said he would be "closing the loopholes." This sounded good to me. The "loophole" that he closed was the right of teachers to deduct their personal expenditures on teaching materials because they were not a **necessary** business expense. After all, we would still keep our jobs if we did not

contribute at all. Thanks George. Soon afterwards the governor announced that he had created a program to reimburse teachers for any money they spent on classroom materials. It seemed rather generous. He claimed he would grant us as much as fifteen thousand dollars. As it turned out, the money was not paid directly to us but rather was in the form of a deduction from our state income taxes. It also carried the stipulation that it was only applicable to our income from our primary teaching job. It could not be applied to earnings from the part time jobs that most of us held in order to support our teaching habit. Because of the specifics of the state's tax structure, a teacher would have to earn over \$300,000.00 per year to qualify for a fifteen thousand dollar rebate. The average teacher earned about 10% of that. Certainly no teacher earned 300K.

Sometimes the use of our own money was actually necessary. For example, the semester when downtown told us that we had overused the copier during the first semester so that for the spring semester they would provide us with either toner or paper, not both. We opted for toner. Paper was at least available retail. Another year we had to buy our own chalk. One of the more creative ways that we obtained lab materials was to carry out dumpster diving expeditions to the science buildings of the nearby colleges.

One of the most cruel things that occurred in our district was the total destruction of a beginning teachers career. At a nearby middle school, a young female beginning teacher was assigned the task of acting as liaison to the city's gay community. She was also told to schedule a panel discussion which included local lesbian activists. At that panel discussion, one

female student asked the question, "What is a dildo?"

A member of the panel answered her honestly.

That evening another student told her Christian fundamentalist parents about it. They were incensed! At that time, the local religious right had developed a new tactic. Instead of confronting the school or the district directly, they notified the state teacher credentialing board. The hapless teacher had her credential revoked. The district refused to go to bat for her. They said they didn't want the negative publicity. This happened in San Francisco, one of the most progressive cities in the nation, not some small town in Idaho.

Another move of the local religionists was to attack the sex education curricula in the high schools. They insisted that the students be told that the only effective way to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases was sexual abstinence. While the district office refused to accept this limitation, many individual teachers were afraid to inform their students about other means of birth control, knowing that, in the event of a fundamentalist attack, the district would not defend them. In my Human Physiology class I made a reference to the placenta and learned that most of the students had no idea what I was talking about. I questioned further and learned that they had never even been taught the basics of human reproduction. Their sex ed. class was a joke. Lest anyone think this is not problematic, I would like to tell you about the young woman who visited me a few years after her graduation, with a child she had never wanted. Her mother had been too uptight to teach her anything about sex so she was vulnerable to a young man's claim that she didn't

have to worry about pregnancy because she was exactly midway between menstrual periods.

Another travesty of sex education was the district's program of AIDS instruction. They sent a stack of flyers to every school, instructing us to pass them out, have the students read them, and then give a short quiz to see if they had learned anything. The flyer was aimed at the least common denominator; I was teaching in a school for the gifted, a school that at one time was rated as the best public school in the entire USA. Moreover they forbade us from any additional AIDS education, assuming that we were all incompetent. I had been a virologist for nine years prior to becoming a teacher. I knew most members of the CDC team who initially investigated the outbreak personally. At a science department meeting I told my colleagues that I planned to teach my own AIDS unit regardless of the district's proscription. They all not only agreed but asked me to teach their students as well and let the chips fall where they may.

88-89 included the district office's stunt around the Academic Decathlon. When my team won the city competition, which was pretty much inevitable, some administrators telephoned me at the school site to tell me what they planned to do about the state championship in Bakersfield. They said that they were planning to give us the money for bus tickets and the rent for only two hotel rooms....one for all of the male team members and myself, one for all of the female students and my assistant coach. Meanwhile several central office administrators planned to **charter a jet** and get themselves **private** rooms, all with district funds of course. I hit the ceiling! I was outraged! My team

members had studied non-stop for about five months; the downtown parasites had done nothing! I stormed downstairs to the principal's office ranting that if they didn't change this immediately I was going to call every newspaper in the state and subject them to public ridicule. Laughing, my principal called some downtown office and relayed my threat. "I know this guy; he'll really do it." He said.

Ultimately they bought us train tickets instead of bus tickets, booked an appropriate number of hotel rooms and provided us with a budget for food.

Somewhere around that time I took a course in the teaching of Conceptual Physics which helped to revitalize my enthusiasm for a while. In fact, many of the special programs available to teachers had that effect and most summers found me at some university or other. Having a constant input of new learning provided me with ever new content for my courses. The best of these experiences was the summer I had the rare privilege of doing research at UCSF with Liz Blackburn as my Principal Investigator. (Oh, I just LOVE being on a first name basis with a Nobel laureate.)

In about 1989 we combined the two unions to form UESF which promptly bargained away our cost of living allowance for about ten years, resulting in ten years without a raise. During this time, the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay area increased 42%.....very demoralizing.

Sometime around 1992 I was diagnosed with type II diabetes. I was also told that I'd been diabetic for about two

years...they had been 2 years of seriously waning energy which exacerbated my depression. I'd always been a bit depressive but the high blood sugar always triggered it. It was a colleague who first noticed that something was amiss in me when he noticed that I blew out after every time I spoke. He knew it was a symptom of acidosis. Blowing is a reflex which raises our systemic pH by excreting carbon dioxide. I had some urine test strips in my classroom, from an earlier Human Physiology lab so I dipped one in a urine sample. It lit up like a Christmas tree. Extreme acidity, maxed-out on sugar and ketones, a lot of occult blood and intact RBC's, everything but bacteria. I did more kidney damage during my two undiagnosed years than in the entire twenty years since. It took a couple more years to get the diabetes under control...the depression continued. My erratic behavior during those two undiagnosed diabetic years led many colleagues to the assumption that I'd developed a drinking problem.

2000-2001 was my best teaching year since the eighties. It was also the year that the student council sent every teacher a token of their appreciation on teacher appreciation day. It was a Xeroxed picture of an apple. Not a real apple not a color Xerox either; it was plain black and white. It wasn't even a full page; it was a quarter page. They had set up the copier to print four images per sheet.

I'll jump ahead to the very last day of school in June of 2002. Three science teachers received word from downtown that they were to completely empty any cabinets in a certain part of their classroom because the district was putting

in new doors. Apparently there is a city fire regulation that says any room with more than 35 people has to have two exits. Instead of keeping class size down to somewhere near the contract they were going to install additional doors. At about that same time we were told we were getting a new science building. They were not interested in any teacher's input and left it all up to the contractor. (allegedly a relative of some district administrator.) One teacher, looking at the blueprints, asked, "So where is my gas?" "You don't need gas." said the district administrator.

"Says who?"

"THE CONTRACTOR!"

When we returned to school in September everything had been removed from all of the cabinets in the rooms which got the doors, THROWN randomly into boxes, all of which were stacked in MY room. MANY items were broken. In one box chemicals combined to cause an explosion. Oh, I forgot to mention, they confiscated almost all of our chemicals because they didn't have the proper OSHA labels. They then refused to replace them. A few other teachers and I were told that OUR classrooms were going to be remodeled the next summer. When June came we asked that our stuff be packed correctly; downtown got mad and told us that since we complained about the way they handled things we had to pack it ourselves. That basically meant four days work without pay.

Can you say, "demoralize?"

Sometime during that summer, our computer lab was burglarized. No one seemed to know how the thieves had gained access but they got away with 35 computers. In their usual infinite wisdom downtown didn't bother to increase security; they simply replaced the computers. The newly installed computers were also stolen. So they replaced them **again** and they were stolen **again**. Finally they decided to investigate the security breach and discovered that the agency that monitored the silent alarm system had stopped monitoring because they hadn't been paid in over a year. The money had been allocated but someone had pocketed it.

For some reason, the remodeling and the construction on the new building didn't start until September and for the entire school year, there was jack hammering and other loud construction noise that shook the walls so hard that it was impossible to use a microscope. When we complained, downtown basically gave us a "tough shit!" attitude. The faculty also lost our parking lot to the construction workers so we had to park on the street which had a two hour time limit except for residents of the neighborhood so it was a case of move one's car every two hours or get a ticket. The residents of the neighborhood constantly complained to the police at every opportunity so a ticket wasn't a risk, it was inevitable. For that entire year I had to teach without any of my props or demo models, lab stuff etc. and taught in 3 different classrooms.

Somehow the new science building turned into a new CLASSROOM building with SOME science facilities. The windows frequently fell out, pipes leaked and there was no cabinet which was more than 36"

in its largest dimension. Where were we supposed to keep our meter sticks? One of the Physics rooms in the old building originally had a very high ceiling and cabinets that went up about 16' with a rolling ladder that slid on a brass rail like in a library in an aristocrat's mansion. All of the cabinetry was solid oak. The remodelers tore out the oak, probably sold it, and replaced it with single tier (about 8') particle board cabinetry.

Another of downtown's nefarious moves was the student morality questionnaire. We were given a number of lengthy questionnaires, each of which had a student's name printed on a tear-off tab at the top of the first page. This was ostensibly for the purpose of making sure that each student actually received a copy. They were instructed to tear off their names to assure that their answers were strictly confidential. The questions included very personal information about their sexual orientation, sexual behavior and drug related habits. One of my students noticed that every copy had a printed bar code. He compared it to the code on his school I.D. card and, lo and behold, it was the same. He told other students seated near him about this, and observed that the codes on their student identification cards also matched those on their questionnaires. I dismissed my homeroom and asked them to go around the school and inform everyone about this deceit. No student filled out the form. I waited for repercussions but none ever came. I'm certain that I must have ended up on SOMEONE'S shit list.

My last year of teaching was 04-05. I finally had a room of my own again and all of my stuff back. They had removed the chalkboards and replaced them with dry erase marker boards. (cheaper to install)

I raised hell and got my chalkboards reinstalled. (I had, after all, over 400 colors of chalk, many of which cost two dollars of my own money per stick.) Unfortunately we were assigned a new assistant principal that year named Holly. She was a moron who decided to rule with an iron fist. When a few science teachers were a day late with our MRD's (grades) she sent us nasty shaming letters. We complained to the principal. He apparently talked to her and told her she needed to take a more positive approach. The next grading period, every teacher who got our grades in on time received a sarcastic thank you note and.....are you ready?.....a lollipop.

In the spring semester I had a little bout with melanoma...I'm obviously still alive but I DID have surgery four times. Holly gave me so much shit about my attendance during that time that I realized that I'd better retire before I committed mayhem.

There are many other little tales of atrocity I could tell you, all of which reflect the fact that district administrators hold students and teachers in utter and absolute contempt. Not very empowering. Don't get me started on "the standards" or the constant mass testing which was contracted out to private companies at MUCH greater expense than it would have been to pay teachers. The money spent, per student, on the equipment for their lab practical far exceeded our entire lab budget for the entire year.

Then there was the time that the governor announced that he was giving every teacher in California an extra hundred dollars to attend a mandatory "in-service" on a weekend. This was widely publicized.

The district was paid \$100.00 for each teacher who attended. We, the teachers, got \$27.00.

I guess I could say that what teachers need is freedom from crap like this.

I had myself videotaped doing about 25 Conceptual Physics "lectures/demos" one school year. Actually, what I had videotaped was a repeat performance of all of the classroom demos from the previous three days. I had hoped to tape myself in some other classes the following year but "Video Lowell" disappeared when Bob, the teacher who created the club and taught a video course... ..retired early. Why? A teacher in the fine arts department said that Bob didn't have the right to teach video because he was an English teacher and video production had been classified as a creative art. She got the union to espouse her cause and ended up being the one assigned to teach the video course. Video was an elective. The teacher was very unpopular. No one signed up. Bob retired.

I mentioned "the standards". Some years ago someone noticed the deplorable state of science education in America. Recent High School graduates from eighty-some developed nations, were tested. The US came in dead last. Some people said the test was skewed because it only included industrialized nations so the test was repeated. That time we did beat New Guinea and Uganda.

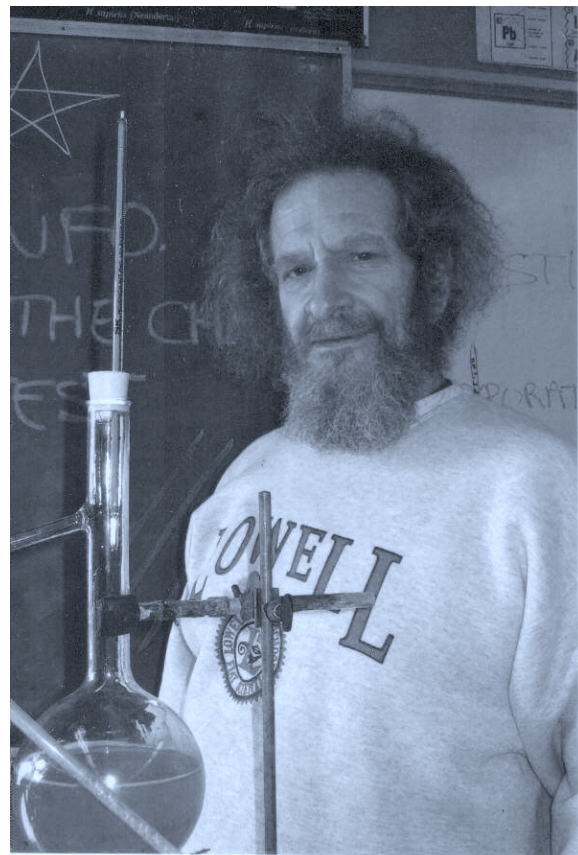
Of course, teachers were blamed. We must be teaching the wrong things, spending too much time off-topic. We were accused of peddling liberal propaganda as opposed to doing our jobs.

The state decided to produce an outline of exactly what a (Biology) teacher was to teach. We were called upon to PROVE that we had covered ALL of the content standards. It would take over a month to simply read the whole damn thing in the classroom...reading all period(s) every day. The standards were written up by a team of Biology teachers who all contributed whatever they thought was most important to teach. Basically, it's the whole damn Bio book. Most bio textbooks have similar content, intro to science, basic chemistry, cell theory, cell chemistry, genetics, evolution, human origins, classification, botany, zoo, human anatomy and physiology and ecology. Most teachers cover about half of it. There is **no** part that most teachers consider unimportant. To cover the entire book requires a level of teaching so shallow as to be meaningless. Biology should be a two year course.

In Europe, students have an hour of science every day in every grade from K to 12. In California only two years of science are required to graduate high school. Some clown from Sacramento went to Europe to see their teaching system and noticed that every year it was general science rather than Bio, Chem. Physics. I.E. Sci. 1 in first grade, through Sci. 12 for seniors. So he decided that European students were learning more because they learned integrated science, and he created a course which he named SS&C which stood for Scope, Sequence and Coordination, a name as ponderous as it is pompous. He claimed that three years of Science education could be squeezed into two years if we didn't waste time on repetition each year. Repetition can be key to learning. You

can't put ten pounds of science in a five pound bag.

The man who created the course had a very interesting way of drumming up support. He organized meetings which all science teachers were invited to attend. Any teacher who questioned his idea was scathingly ridiculed and denigrated including my friend Ray who not only has a PhD but was formerly a professor at an Ivy League college. Those who supported the SS&C idea were granted an all expense paid trip to Colorado Springs for the follow-up meeting. (Hmmm, Colorado Springs eh? What else do we know about Colorado Springs?)



Teachers will never be respected until their income increases dramatically. In American culture wealth is the only attribute most people honor. Parents tell

their children, "Teachers must be losers; they're poor." We'd constantly hear allegations like, "They're really just baby sitters." Nope! Baby sitters are much better paid. The going rate around the city was \$5.00 per hour per child. That would come to \$800.00 per day for the average teacher.

Once I was confronted by a delegation from downtown about my classroom not being clean enough. A committee of five people actually. As part of budget cuts the district laid off our only janitor. Many teachers couldn't tolerate the dirt so they stayed after school and cleaned. I didn't! When the junta told me that I must keep my room clean I told them that I'd push a broom when they paid me as much as they paid the janitors.

Money for teaching materials, classrooms, clean, safe environments should also increase. The condition of many schools gives clear testimony to how little our society values education. Whenever it rained we had to put buckets throughout the building. Roof repairs were declared part of the "deferred maintenance program."

Most students regard teachers with a contempt they learn from their parents and from television. Images of teachers on kids' TV are generally negative... especially in commercials.

Course content is only half of a teacher's job. The other half is more like parenthood and cannot be regulated. It's things like helping the girl who was pregnant and in a panic, or the one who had a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) in the ladies room into a paper cup

because she didn't have the heart to flush it, or supporting gay and lesbian students in accepting themselves. It's entrusting my tarantula to a student for the summer because he needs to learn about caring and responsibility. It's taking an extreme nerd under my wing to support him emotionally since he was a social zero. (Many highly intelligent kids are very late bloomers socially.)

One of the worst things done to teachers was sending some supposed expert from downtown to come to our faculty meetings and talk down to us every month. They usually knew far less about what they were lecturing than most of us. Some were lawyers; some were graduate students from U. C. Berkeley.

But far beyond all of the teacher abuse, what I found most discouraging was the great American dumb down. In my last year of teaching I was running a lab that included instruction about how to determine the actual size of items we were observing under a microscope. This included using a small transparent ruler. I learned that most of the students in this class had no idea of how to use a ruler. This was among fourteen year olds in a magnet school for gifted students. Further questioning revealed that most of them had no idea how to use a measuring cup either. These are skills that most students learned in shop or home economics, two courses that had been dropped from the middle school curriculum due to lack of funding. In my Conceptual Physics class I learned that most of them didn't know the primary colors. Art had also been deleted from middle school.

At one faculty meeting a retiring math teacher ran an informal survey. He asked, "Is there anyone here who has been teaching more than ten years who has not

had to dumb down their courses? If so, please stand up.”

No one stood up.

To say that American literacy is in decline is a gross understatement. Most of today’s high school graduates have difficulty constructing a coherent sentence. A few minutes on a social networking site reveals how badly spelling and grammar have deteriorated. Don’t try to point out any of their errors. You’ll just be called a grammar or spelling Nazi. Fewer and fewer young Americans are going to college because it has become so expensive that it is a luxury available only to the economic elite. Most high school students have nothing to strive for. Even if they could afford college there are no jobs for the educated that haven’t been outsourced.

The causes of the dumbing down are not just educational. Today’s mass produced, genetically modified foods are seriously deficient in many nutrients which has not only led to intellectual consequences but also to an increase in diabetes. Commercial fishing is in serious decline resulting in a paucity of omega 3 fatty acids and iodine, both necessary for brain development. In fact, the World Health Organization recently released the statement that Iodine deficiency was the number one cause of mental retardation among children worldwide. Environmental toxins and electronic pollution are also contributing factors.

George W. Bush BRAGGED that he had only been a C student! He famously said, “The real question is, is our children learning?” Dan Quayle couldn’t spell potato. I don’t know if the apparent stupidity of our more conservative politicians is real or just an act to attract

the intellectual least common denominator.

There is no such thing as faith based science.

This is one of those problems that is very difficult to address. How does one tell people that they’ve been deliberately dumbed down. How can one start with the premise, “You are relatively stupid?” If people cannot bear the knowledge, how can they begin to do anything about it. Education is the most revolutionary thing a person can do. Unintelligent and uninformed people are the most easily manipulated by the powers that be. The man for whom I was a student teacher insists that the problem is no accident. He believes that behind it lies a genuine malevolence. I’m inclined to agree.

The events that I’ve described herein are by no means a few isolated incidents. I could continue for another ten or twenty pages. These are just the ones I recall off the top of my head, just the tip of the iceberg. They are certainly not limited to one school district or even just one state. Since retiring I’ve spoken with teachers from all over America. Their experiences are generally similar, often even worse.

Tom Donohue



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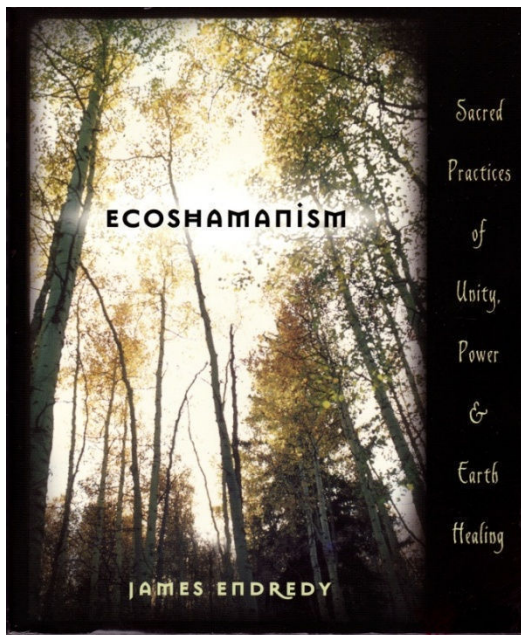
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Muse Reviews



Ecoshamanism is the result of a quarter century of deep research and intensive training in the principles and processes of shamanism.

If I was planning to teach a class or run a workshop in earth-centered spirituality I

would use this as my textbook. Like many modern American shamans, Endredy's true initiation was from Nature herself. As some Native Americans say, "He learned from the trees." He then researched and experienced numerous shamanic and spiritual traditions and has synthesized them into a coherent whole. His primary shamanic training was with the Wirrarika people of Mexico, but he also learned from the Hopi, Navaho and Lenape among others.

When I first began reading *Ecoshamanism*, I noted that it was virtually identical to my own Pagan practice and much the same as the spiritual practices of many of my friends. I seriously wondered if there was anything Mr. Endredy could teach me. There was!

For one thing, his suggestion that one use a hunters tree stand to immerse oneself in the life of the forest is something I've decided to try.

The book also details a number of shamanic rites of passage which are absolutely priceless processes for personal transformation. One of these is called the "Embrace of the Earth", and includes spending a night embraced by the earth in a gravelike tomb that is dug by hand into the living soil.

Mr. Endredy has not only produced a "how-to" book but has created a system by which people can transform their consciousness into a true spiritual connection to the natural world and the sentience which creates and maintains it. He has provided a portal to the immanent divinity of Nature.

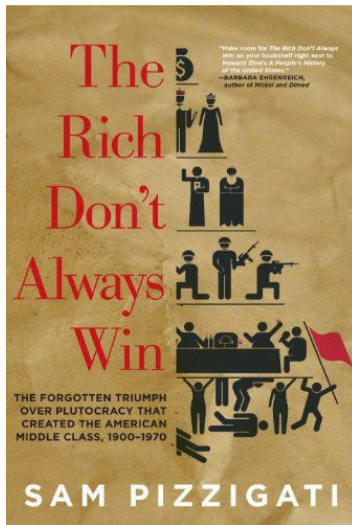
Tom Donohue

The Rich Don't Always Win

By Sam Pizzigati ISBN-13 97816

09804343 Seven Stories Press

Available from Amazon in paperback or on Kindle.



This book provided the answers to a number of questions that have plagued me most of my life. Anyone old enough to remember knows that America experienced a golden age during the fifties and sixties, a time when almost everyone was middle class and very few people lived below the poverty line. One wage-earner's income was sufficient to support a family of five, six or even more. Higher education was available to anyone who qualified. Most families owned their own home. It was possible for a person to work their way through college with only a summer job. Low interest mortgages were available to almost everyone and the maximum allowable credit card interest was about 12%. Food was still nutritious.

This econotopia was made possible by, among other things, a 91% tax rate on all income over \$100,000 per annum. (Roughly equivalent to 969,000.00 in

today's dollars.) As a youngster I used to wonder why the rate was so high. It was specifically for the purpose of curtailing the ever increasing power of the super rich. It also provided funding for roads, higher education and affordable housing. By the time that Ronald Reagan was president the rate had dropped to 28%

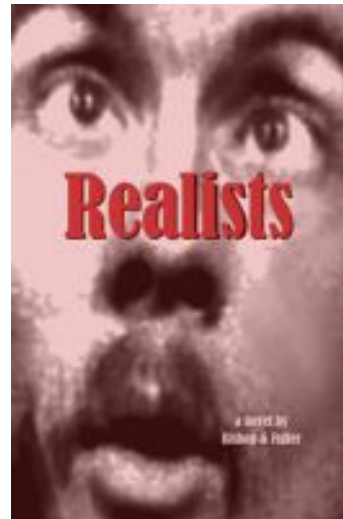
My two big questions were, "How is it that we were able to do this?", and "What the hell happened?"

Another big question was "Why are corporate CEO's paid salaries in the millions since they don't actually do very much, and why are they given enormous bonuses even if they run a company into the ground?"

In brief, American activists managed to triumph over the plutocracy in the late forties and the government has whittled away at their achievements ever since. McCarthyism and other forms of red-baiting scared the shit out of the most vocal and articulate of our political activists. Some were imprisoned; others had their careers destroyed. Unionism had America's aristocracy running scared and had pressured the government to make the wealthy pay their fair share.

Ultimately, young Americans never learned of these victories let alone how they accomplished them. We thought that the middle class paradise had always existed, and had no idea that it would only survive through constant vigilance. The answers to these and many other big questions are discussed in detail in *The Rich Don't Always Win*.

Tom Donohue



"REALISTS"

by Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller

*Published by WordWorkers Press on
Smashwords
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Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller are known throughout the Pagan community in America for their amazing theatre productions. These two brilliantly creative individuals are never at a loss for a creative project. I've been fortunate enough to see them perform several short pieces on the stage at the Starwood Festival in 1999. The pieces were written and performed by them, as are all of their productions. After a long life-time of performing arts onstage in their theatre in Philadelphia, Conrad and Elizabeth left and moved to California, where they now produce and write plays that they perform on the road in their friends' homes.

They are fascinating individuals who keep reinventing themselves in extraordinary ways. What I didn't know is that they are also brilliant writers. Their fertile imaginations are always rife with ideas and their new effort comes in the form of a serial story which can be bought for \$4.99.

"Realists" is not just a fun, interesting read; it is also an adventure. The setting

is in the near future and the hero, Eddie Grabowski is an ordinary guy in his mid-thirties, who is just trying to make ends meet and keep his sanity in a world gone entirely mad. (You know, like most of us alive now). The United States has passed a law making it mandatory to take a drug which keeps a person from having dreams. The result is major psychosis in every element of society.

The descriptions are brilliant and funny and the premise is not unlike what is happening in America right now – the end of the American Dream and the resulting insanity that an unhinged society becomes. All of the characters are ordinary people just trying to survive the psychosis that is a result of not having dreams. The government watches everyone closely to ensure they take their drug. Every citizen is issued a Unicard to use in place of money and if someone does something the government doesn't like, their card is made invalid and unusable. All citizens are subject to urine tests to ensure they take the drug to keep them from dreaming. In school, children learn that dreams are scary things.

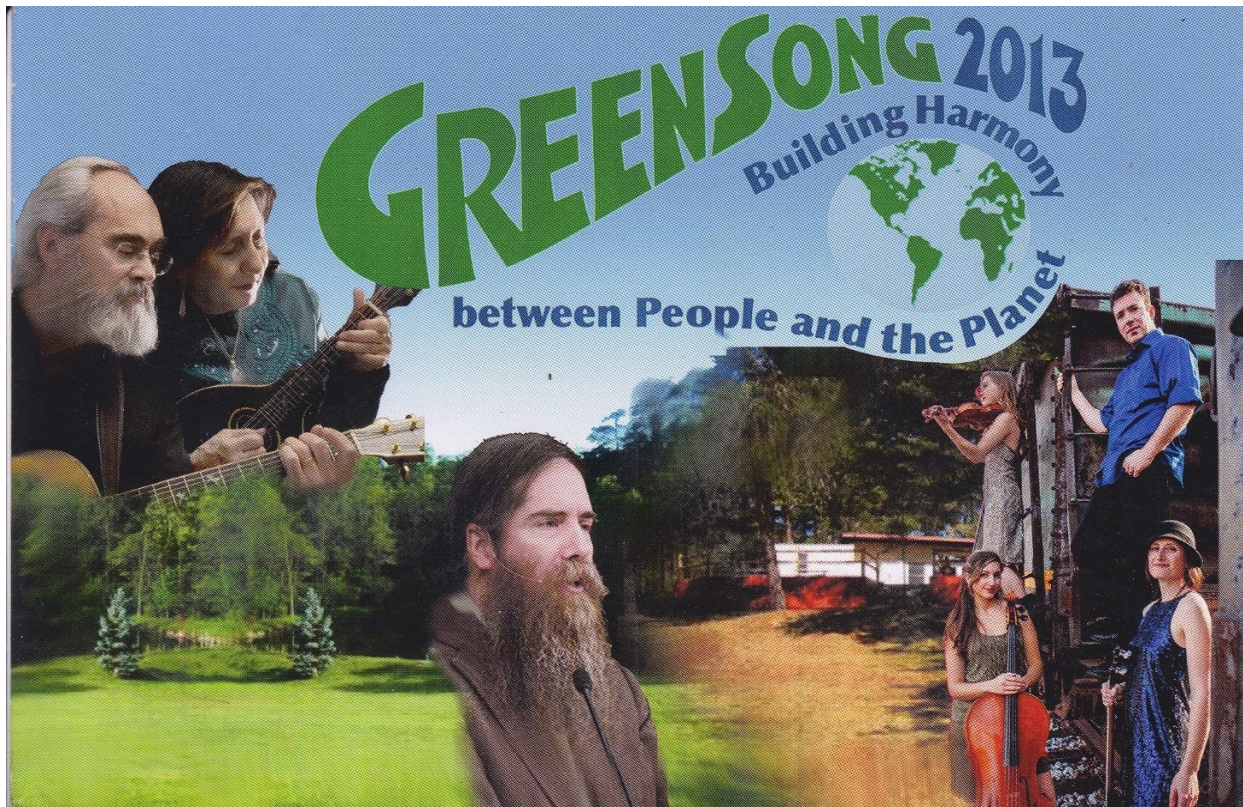
The suicide rate is so high it's off the charts and there are times when the madness becomes similar to what many Americans have felt in post-9/11 America. But just when the craziness reaches a crescendo and threatens to become all too serious, the authors inject a note of dark humor at just the right time. Bishop and Fuller have a terrific wit and they use it in every paragraph in the book. It's a brilliant portrayal of Joe Ordinary simply trying to survive daily life in a world gone mad. This book shows us that one of the things we can do to survive the present times is to try to find the humor in the lunacy, even if it is dark humor. -

Ariel Monserrat

You can purchase an eBook version of the full text of REALISTS for \$4.99 at <<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/272051>>, formatted for any reader except the Kindle, or for reading on the computer screen.

For Kindle, it's <http://www.amazon.com/Realists-ebook/dp/B00BILRBRK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1366774409&sr=8-1&keywords=realists+bishop+%26+fuller>

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STARWOOD 2013 REVIEW

By Ariel Monserrat



OVERVIEW

This year's Starwood was probably the best festival I've ever attended anywhere in the U.S. Starwood 2013 is best described as a mobile, week-long party. Everywhere I went, every time I turned around, I kept bumping into old friends and meeting new ones. There was a wide array of wonderful Pagan folk this year and no end of top-notch presentations, more vendors than ever before at Wisteria, and no end of fun events in which to participate.



In my opinion, this year was the year that Starwood really came together in their new festival site and became very much like the old Starwood at Brushwood. There were the usual skyclad, fantastically-costumed, eccentric, wonderfully weird and diverse festival-goers that make up the traditional Starwood festival. I've attended all but one of the Wisteria Starwoods and some of that element has been missing until this year; this is understandable given the new

location, staff, etc. Also, it seems that a cohesive Starwood community is forming and the same people are coming year after year. This kind of cohesive community was always to be found at Starwood but it took awhile, naturally, to develop a solid core of people to come to Wisteria. I saw old friends and made new friends and in the years to come, it will be even better, I'm sure.



Also, I'd like to commend the Wisteria staff for creating, yet again, a wonderful environment of warmth, friendliness, helpfulness and hospitality. The staff was always cheerful, hard-working, helpful and friendly. It isn't easy to host a week-long festival at a retreat center such as Wisteria. Nor is it easy to get things to flow smoothly when you have such a disparate group of assorted oddballs, weirdos, anarchists and geniuses that make up our wonderfully diverse Pagan community. The staff's attitude went a long way to help create the loving, accepting atmosphere that I've seen every year at Starwood since they moved to Wisteria.

Because I've seen the Wisteria staff work so hard, I like to make sure to compliment them when I see them. One thing I very much appreciated were the frequent rounds made by the drivers of the golf cart shuttles. On one such shuttle trip towards the end

of the festival, I complimented the driver and asked her to tell the rest of the staff that everyone was very impressed with the staff and truly appreciated all their hard work. I received a rather odd look from the driver and then she told me that she didn't actually work at Wisteria and wasn't even connected with Wisteria in any way. Then she confided that she just showed up, took a golf cart and started shuttling people around. She was basically someone who just showed up and started joyriding around at Wisteria; just another one of the many wonderful weirdos and whackos that inhabit Starwood!

THE PALACE

As always, one of the great highlights of Starwood, besides the bonfire, was the Palace, a series of tents with cathedral ceilings, put together to form an enormous closed-in structure that was beautifully adorned with all manner of sparkles, sequins and weird odds and ends that together created a wonderfully magickal space. When you enter, there is a vestibule with an altar to Bast, including a large 3 foot tall statue of Bast with flowers.



The main hall lies just after that and includes a long table of about 20 feet for people to sit around and talk. There is also an enormous bar with all manner of liquid refreshments, mostly alcoholic, but juice, iced tea, etc. was also served, as well as snacks – all of which are provided for free by the hosts. The number of hosts each year varies but this year there were 5 people: Pete, the apparent ringleader; Curtis, his partner; Leo, Morningstar and Helena. I can't imagine the work involved in putting up such a space, furnishing it and taking it down.



Pete and the others are mostly interior designers who have been quite successful and enjoy creating beautiful spaces for people to enjoy. I had a chance to talk with Pete and he told me how it all started. At the last Starwood at Brushwood, people were

stuck inside their tents with nothing to do except maybe have good conversation. Pete, who had resisted attempts by friends for several years to attend, finally went in 2009, only to be rained out. (Hence the nickname of Squishwood). He doesn't consider himself Pagan but even so he had a grand time...until it rained so hard that no one could really get around very much and everyone was stuck in their tents. Pete and his friends decided to decorate their tent with whatever they had on hand: handkerchiefs, scarves, candles, lights, etc. So began a wonderful tradition that has everyone at Starwood talking about it in glowing terms.



Pete and company showed up at the second Starwood to be held at Wisteria and that was when he introduced the Palace to festival

attendees. He told me that every few months he and his friends erect the Palace in their backyard in Ohio and invite the neighbors in for drinks, food and good company. Apparently, the neighbors are pretty conservative and this was Pete's way of engendering goodwill towards he and his friends, many of whom are gay, as are Pete and Curtis, his partner of many years. Pete and Curtis have to be 2 of the kindest, most generous and open-hearted souls I've ever met and they take great pleasure in creating the lovely space now known as the Palace. In fact, Pete told me that they get more pleasure out of creating the Palace than the attendees do.



On Friday evening, the Palace hosted a High Tea Fairy Party. The hosts call themselves "The Church of the Burning Robe", which are best described as a "coven of solitaires". The Lingerie Parade danced and pranced its way down the main road

and ended up at the Palace, just in time for the High Tea, where everyone was dressed in their finest costumes, glad rags and assorted amazing ensembles. The Lingerie Parade, consisting of both men and women, included the ubiquitous cross-dressers, a Pan complete with fur leggings, some fancy lingerie, corsets, etc. Pete himself was dressed in a marvelous fairy costume, complete with wings and lots of fairy netting and sparkles. Pete was a bit concerned that no one would show for the High Tea but he need not have worried – there were at least 100 people at any given time in the tent during the event. The costumes, combined with the setting, made for quite a magickal and wondrous scene that is not to be missed. There was a large expanse of butcher paper that covered part of a wall which was for people to write on, put down comments and artwork. The kids especially liked this and Pete loves to look at it all year to remember all the people he met at Starwood.



The Palace was a huge hit with festival attendees, as it has been every year that the Palace has been there. The group says that they plan on being at the festival every year. Kudos to Pete, Curtis, Helena, Leo, and Morningstar for their beautiful work that took a lot of work to create.

GLEND A OF OZ

I've been going to Starwood since 1999, when it was still held at Brushwood in upstate New York. And every year that I've been there, Glenda, the Good Witch of Oz has been there. "Glenda" studied theatre in college and also studied method-acting, a school of acting created by Konstantin Stanislavsky which was the major ideology of Hollywood back in the heyday of the film studios. Actors such as Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando and many other famous stars from the 1950's studied The Method. Method acting involves actually becoming the character.

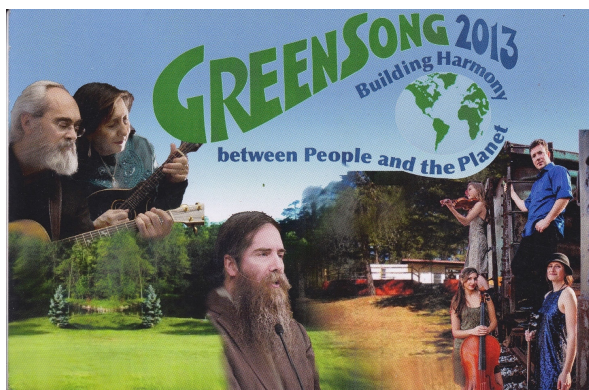


I had a chance to talk with Glenda on Sunday, when the festival was winding down and she told me a bit about her character of Glenda. "Glenda" studied the movie the Wizard of Oz for

months, watching all the movements, phrases and facial expressions of Billie Burke, the actress who famously played Glenda the Good Witch in the well-known movie of 1939. "Glenda" channels Billie Burke, his acting coach and of course Glenda the Good Witch, which explains why so often, when you watch Glenda, it really does seem to be Glenda, not just someone who dressed up like her. She says that whenever she channels these spirits, they like it and are happy to help out. I remember seeing Glenda leading a children's parade at one Starwood and thinking "This really IS Glenda!". The kids looked like they were having a great time, too. The costume is amazing, with all the details being accurate and the headpiece and dress are straight out of the film.

I love that "Glenda" appears at Starwood; I think we need more loving, gentle souls in this world and to look at Glenda and watch her interact with people is to see that goodness embodied in a beloved archetype.

ELSPETH AND GREENSONG 2013



It was quite a pleasant surprise to see our beloved Pagan elder, Elspeth, wife of Nybor, the famed artist and brilliant Tarot reader (and creator of many

Green Egg covers). Elspeth has long been known at Starwood/Brushwood for her storytelling; sadly, she won't be telling stories any more, as the new folks at Brushwood haven't invited her to do her workshops. At 83 y.o., Elspeth looks vibrant, tanned and very much alive. She says she doesn't get around as well as she used to, even though she has been planning a large event called "Greensong 2013". While it is billed as a conference it is actually a festival but for bureaucratic reasons it has to be called a conference. I had a chance to visit extensively with Elspeth, which was a rare treat. Nybor and Elspeth haven't been seen at the new Starwood location, and many of us have missed them very much, including myself. It was great to see this celebrated elder of the Pagan community still going strong and vibrantly.

Greensong 2013 features guest speakers, musicians and other entertainment centered around the dire need to create a healthier environment with new sources of energy, Permaculture, group dynamics, town planning, the need for community and all the things that contribute to a healthy planet. Featured guest speaker is John Michael Greer, author of "The Long Descent", "The Ecotechnic Future" and the "Wealth of Nature". The festival/conference is aimed at including everyone, not just the Pagan community, who is interested in creating a sustainable future and will be educational, as well as being fun-filled. The purpose is to "build harmony between people and the planet." The event will also have workshops, vendors, and various performers.

Elsbeth told me that she believes in creating a gift economy and thinks we need to “take our energy out of the machine” and create alternative cultures and communities. It was so inspirational to see her still going strong, and at 83, to be starting new projects and enjoying life. What a treat to see her with sparkling eyes and a clear mind, with a strong sense of purpose.

Greensong 2013 will be held August 9 through 11 in Winchester, Virginia. More information here: [Green SongFestival.org](http://GreenSongFestival.org)

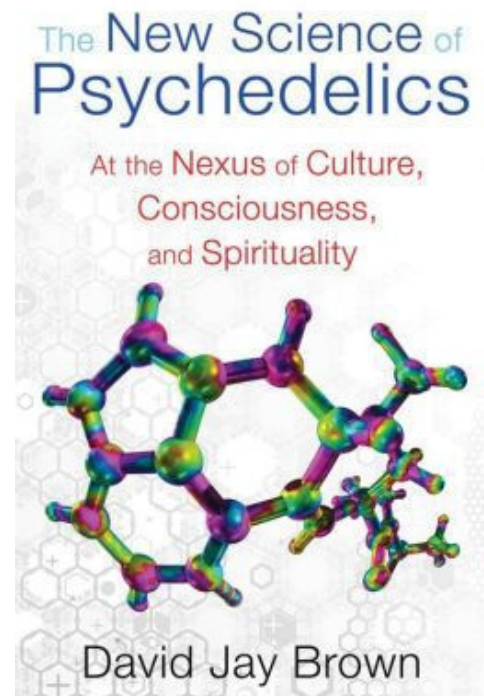
WORKSHOPS AND RITUALS

Starwood has always been known for their amazing workshops on a variety of topics with excellent speakers but I haven't seen such a variety and quantity at Starwood for awhile. Here's just a sampling:

- Ian Corrigan led a beautiful ritual called, “An Audience With the Lord of Wisdom”, a midnight ritual involving poetry, a large fire and blessings, which centered on the Irish god Dagda Mor, Ruad Rofessa, the Lord of Wisdom. It was a beautiful and moving ceremony. Because the ritual participants know the ceremony so well, the ritual wasn't scripted, which meant it was centered more on magick and experience, rather than a scripted performance. I've never seen Ian lead a ritual before and now I know why he is the master of Celtic ritual. With his large stature and deep, booming voice, Ian led a seamless ritual full of magick

and beauty in the quiet woods under the moonlight.

Also, there were no less than 2 top notch presenters on the topic of entheogens. They gave several presentations, but I wasn't able to attend all of them. The two I went to were excellent:



-
- David J. Brown on “New Science of Psychedelics: At the Nexus of Culture, Consciousness, and Spirituality” which addressed the latest scientific findings on entheogens. Dan is the author of numerous books and has kept company with the likes of Terence McKenna, Robert Anton Wilson, Timothy Leary and many other stars of the entheogen community. Dan is a lively speaker and has dedicated his life to exploring consciousness through entheogens, focusing on laying to rest the many myths of

mind-expanding drugs and disseminating information about this valuable resource for conscious evolution.



- Matthew Stewart spoke on "Shamanic/Ethnobotanical Herbs", an excellent and informative talk on various entheogens and on "ways to open pathways within the mind and spirit." Matthew has spent more than 20 years studying and learning about herbs and entheogens. He owns and manages Spirit Apothecary shop in Ohio.

Other workshops/presentations include:

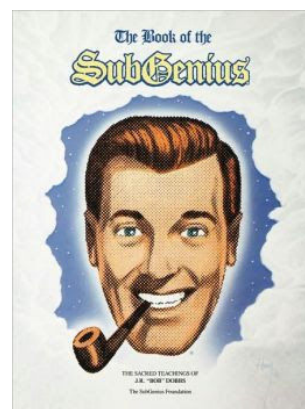
- The Dance of the Tarot
- Pan-Psychism, which explored the concept that all matter has consciousness, even down to the simplest subatomic particles. My husband, Tom, (Science Editor and author of many scientific articles for Green Egg) went to this presentation and said everyone loved it. Tom's only complaint is that it was only 2 hours and he

would have been happy to see it go to 4 or 6 hours.

- The Sacred Whore and the Red Wound
- Evidence of Consciousness in the Universe
- Fire Dancing



- The Pagan Pundit by Taliesin Govannon, host of the popular Blog Talk Radio show, The Pagan Pundit. Taliesin takes a humorous but incisive look at politics in America. Taliesin will also be a regular columnist for Green Egg, starting with this current issue and will be writing about the History of Neo-Paganism. We are very honored and proud to welcome Taliesin on board the Green Egg team.
- Ivan Stang, The Church of the Subgenius





And numerous other high-quality workshops, too numerous to mention.

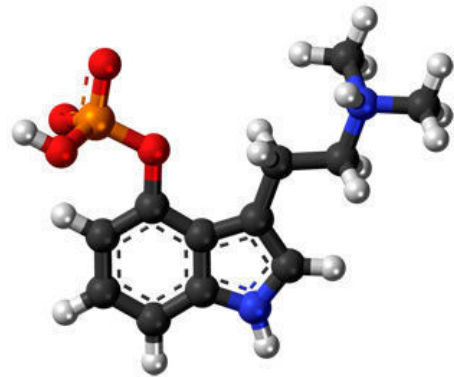
THE TAKEAWAY

If I had to sum up the most important things about Starwood, I would say two things:

- Everyone that I talked to at the festival agreed that the people who come here are full of love, warmth and joy. There is so much comraderie, respect for others, acceptance of all forms of eccentricity and sharing, that everyone I ran into talked about this. We all agreed that our work now is to spread all of this happiness and love to the rest of the world, in whatever way we can. If what happens at Starwood every year could be created in the world at large, we'd be well on our way to evolving into a species of creative, brilliant, self-realized beings who consciously work to honor the planet and Gaia and all life on Her planet. It would

be a planet full of happiness and love. Imagine that.

•



- Mind-expanding substances are very important in bringing about conscious evolution. They open our minds, help us to explore our own and others' darkness and divinity and in general help to remove the "Braces on our Brains" that are thrust upon us from cradle to grave in what we call "civilization."

So mote it be.



Ariel Monserrat has been a Pagan for almost 20 years and is editor and publisher of Green Egg since 2007.

STEAMPUNK AND MAGIC

By Gypsey

What is Steampunk? When K. W. Jeter coined the phrase in the late 1970s, he never realized that he would be starting a genre that would span not only literature but fashion, music, technology, and a myriad of other aspects that retro futurists would have an interest in. No, Jeter was just trying to put a name to a type of fiction that he, Michael Morcock, and other writers of that time were presenting into the mainstream.

Steampunk has since become a hot item everywhere. Almost every television series has had a Steampunk episode to include Castle, NCIS, and we can't ignore Warehouse 13. There are bits and pieces of brass, copper, a few gears, and some steam in each to keep up the interest. But what exactly is Steampunk and why is it applicable to magic?

Steampunk is the application of almost all things Victorian to a time period either current to her Reign or carried on after her death. Anything is possible if you don't include electricity, other than free range such as Tesla used, gasoline, or nuclear. If you want to fly you take a lighter than air ship lifted by gas or hot air; or if you are a strict follower of the classics, Cavorite. If you need a cab it's either a Hansom cab or an automobile run on steam. Even your computations are performed on Babbage Engines of brass and bronze. The gears are bigger, the steam thicker, the future brighter, the men more muscular, carry guns and wear top hats with goggles and vests with their morning coats, and the women are more lovely in their corsets, their parasols, and their goggles about their necks.

You can find clothing companies that deal exclusively in Steampunk and Victorian fashion, computer rebuilds that will make your computer look as though it belongs on the Nautilus, and gun makers who will

make huge rifles and pistols that, while not functional in the conventional sense, look as though they can bring down a T Rex. All these things are adorned in Brass and Bronze and have the same motif: Steam fittings.

So how do we get from Steampunk literature to Steampunk magic? Arthur C. Clarke said in his Profiles of the Future that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. In 1961 that didn't include Steampunk but the sentiment holds true. I like to think of magic as applied mathematics. You do the same thing over and over and if they keep working you repeat them. It's a sort of $A + B = C$ process that makes sense. So is it with any system of magic and eventually that system becomes a tradition and maybe even a path. At the moment Steampunk Magic is a system.

Steampunk Magic began a few years ago with a conversation between my spouse and me on a road trip to Oklahoma. When driving 17 hours you can get some pretty long and interesting talks going and we were just west of Atlanta when I asked her what she thought of a system built around the Victorian Arts and Sciences. A little background is probably in order at this point. I am an Elder in the Georgian tradition and in the Norse path. I have been teaching and practicing magic for 40 years and hold the tenets of magic as solidly as any other holds their religion. My spouse is a Georgian Elder and has been a witch for 20 years. She is a teacher and educator who has students across much of the southeastern and south central states. She is probably the smartest person I know when it comes to magic and I am thankful that she is married to me.

So when I proposed Steampunk Magic she did the only thing she could think of: she rolled her eyes and kept driving. By Mississippi, though, we had talked through a number of rituals, some of the officers of the airship, since the coven was being rewritten, and how our tools were

different than standard magical ones. The next day when we drove around the outskirts of Dallas we had the main tenets and principles of the system down and were fine tuning them.

I talk about Steampunk Magic as a system specifically because we have no deity. The practitioner brings into the circle their own Gods and Goddesses. We have prominent people such as Victoria, Wells, Verne, Shelly, and Tesla, but we have no Gods. Our rituals center on the day to day activities that are important to all of us; birth, death, leaving the airship, coming aboard the airship, weddings, that sort of thing.

After a time I realized that this system was what many people were looking for. A techno system that incorporated all the highlights of the Steampunk initiative while using the applied and accepted tenets of practical magic. As I wrote more and practiced more I saw that the 'book' was being written. I sent the manuscript to Weiser publications as a cold call and never expected to hear from them. Fortunately they found the book not only readable but sellable and Steampunk Magic: Magic Aboard the Airship has been out since February and experiencing good sales numbers. So by now you are wondering, or at least should be, what is different from Steampunk Magic and everything else out there.

The Magic in Steampunk

I will start with what is similar to conventional magical traditions and then go from there. Our rituals observe the four quarters; north, south, east, and west. We respect the same elements, although in somewhat different forms, and our group of practitioners roughly number thirteen in a good year. However we are as different as we are similar.

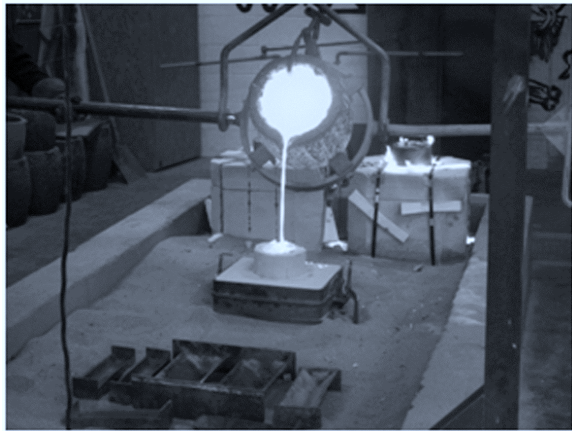
The airship, which is how we refer to our 'coven' is made up of 8 officers and 5 enlisted. None of these are carved in stone and unless the individual wants to

remain in that position indefinitely they may move about the ship easily. There is the Captain who is similar to the High Priest(ess). The Captain is the most knowledgeable person on the ship and is also the one who casts circle. While the ship Captain may not change often it is possible to have a new Captain each time a circle is cast because the one who chooses to lead circle is always referred to as the Captain. The Commander is the second in command. The Commander acts in the stead of the Captain should the Captain be called away from a ritual or circle. Next in no specific order of importance is the Adjutant who handles the publications about the rituals and serves as the keeper of the ship's log which is the ship's book of shadows. The Navigator handles the Political Information of the ship and determines which way the ship should set sail depending on the political climate around it. The Artificer maintains the tools and instruments of the ship and makes repairs to whatever is in need at the time. The Shipwright is the keeper of the physical space of the ship and sets up the space for the altar, quarters, etc., during ritual. The Mess Officer is responsible for foods within the airship. This member sets out the feast before or after the rituals and procures the cakes and wines for circle. The final officer is the Purser who pays the bills. This Officer is responsible for any monies the airship may collect and distributes them accordingly. The other five members of the crew are considered enlisted and are of equal rank with exception of time served on the ship. As I said above they may move up and down in rank as the needs arise. There is no fixed seniority with the exception of the Ship's Captain.

Finally the differences from our circle and those of more traditional paths are few but significant. When we first set up our circle we have a Directional Gear.



It is a large nonmagnetic gear with the four cardinal directions on it.



Our gear was specially poured at Clemson University in their foundry and is 14 pounds of red bronze. The Shipwright will align the gear with the compass that sits at north. Then with the gear aligned he or she will set up the rest of the altar and the quarters.

In Steampunk Magic we don't use an athame. Instead we use a spike which is either brass or bronze and may be knife shaped or shaped like a spiked ended wrench. The important part is that the tool is non-ferrous. Sparks on an airship may be deadly if you are using hydrogen so we honor that safety tradition. The next major difference is our boline is called a Rigging Knife and is a very sharp

one sided blade with a saw on the reverse. We use this for cutting of everything from herbs to ropes and dig with it during certain rituals and spells. It is our do everything blade and is made of steel with a comfortable and usually black handle. Some might say it's the knife that you would take to a gun fight.

The final difference is although we use three different sized wands in Steampunk Magic,



and all made of copper, when the Captain opens circle he uses a key, which has a crystal at one end and a skeleton key head at the other attached by a short piece of brass tubing.



The Captain takes the key from his vest pocket once the Shipwright has declared the ship ready to lift off and he calls circle with it. The philosophy behind the key is that even though a wand moves energy for most circles a key starts the engines of the ship and with the engines running the ship is able to lift off and circle may begin in whatever direction the Captain sets.

[The Secrets of Siberian Shamanism](#)

June 4, 2013 | By [Dylan Charles](#) | [Reply](#)



Michael Howard, [New Dawn Waking Times](#)

Today, especially in New Age circles, the term 'shamanism' is often used in a generalised way to describe all kinds of indigenous magical practices in a wide range of cultures worldwide. It has also been projected back into a past that it never had, so we can find modern books on so-called 'Celtic shamanism' and even 'Ancient Egyptian shamanism'. Modern writers on the subject such as [Dr. Michael Harner](#) have also created what is called 'core shamanism' or 'urban shamanism'.

This takes the essence of shamanic beliefs and practices and repackages them in a safe, sanitised and often diluted form that is acceptable for Western seekers of alternative spirituality. In this article, however, we examine and describe the real 'core shamanism' as it has been practised for hundreds of years in its homeland of Siberia and the Turkic-speaking areas of Mongolia, and where it is now being revived.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries the area known as Siberia was colonised by the Russians. They were led there by its abundance of wild animals that created a flourishing trade in animal skins and furs. The Tsars used the income from this enterprise to boost their economy and access the foreign currency that helped

create the Russian empire. The influx of Russian hunters, fur traders and merchants drastically affected the local population, which consisted of many different tribes. By the 1900s the native population had dwindled to about 10% of the total people living in Siberia. Along with the fur traders there also came missionaries and, in later times, anthropologists. The former were interested in converting the [indigenous population](#) to Orthodox Christianity, while the latter wanted to study their tribal culture, spiritual beliefs and ritual practices. Both these groups of outsiders contacted the tribal shamans of Siberia and, for totally different reasons, recorded and commented upon their religious observances.

The earliest references to magical practitioners that could be described as shamans in fact date back to the 13th century. It was then that the first Western travellers penetrated Central Asia and visited the court of the Mongol rulers. The explorer Marco Polo, for instance, met magicians who were healers and could diagnosis diseases by the use of divination. Polo says they became possessed by what he described as "a devil," who then used their vocal chords to speak through them.

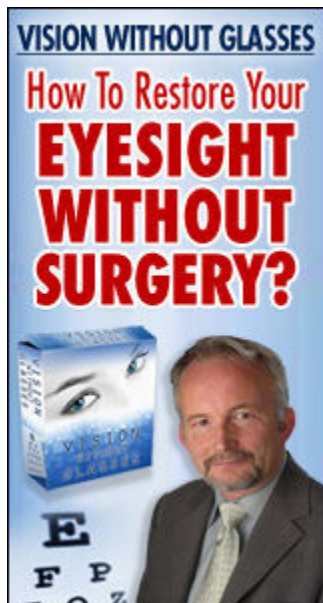
However, it was an English explorer called Richard Johnston in the 16th century who first described what sounds very like the activities of shamans proper. He reported witnessing a tribal priest wearing animal skins and playing a drum "shaped like a great sieve" in "devilish rites." During the ritual the drummer fell into a trance and was possessed by "evil spirits."

In 1692 another Western explorer, Nicholas Witsen, described seeing a "shaman" or "priest of the Devil." He was clad in ritual regalia, consisting of an antlered head-dress and a richly decorated robe, and chanted and beat on a drum to attract the spirits. Generally, reflecting the Catholic culture they came

from, these Westerners regarded the shamans as fanatical "devil worshippers" who forced their ignorant and uneducated followers to serve evil spirits and demons.

What is Siberian Shamanism?

The [meaning of the word 'shaman'](#) is shrouded in linguistic mystery and various explanations have been put forward for its origin. One theory is that it is possibly derived from an ancient Chinese term for a Buddhist priest or monk. The Oxford English Dictionary defines its meaning as "a priest or witch-doctor [sic] of (a) class claiming to have sole contact with gods etc." It says the word comes from the Russian "shaman" and is a translation of the Tungusion word "saman." In Siberia and Mongolia, shamanism was known as Tengerism, meaning a reverence for sky spirits. It reflected an animistic belief system where everything in the natural world was alive, permeated by spirit force or, in simple terms, inhabited by spirits.



These spirits had to be respected and appeased or else the land would become infertile and barren, the animals relied upon for food would disappear and eventually the world would come to an end. To achieve this essential and vital balance between humans, nature and the spirit world, a magical specialist was required and the shaman took that

role. He or she acted as an intermediary or middle person between humanity and the Other, and a caretaker of cultural and magical tradition. Their job involved conducting blessings, especially on newborn babies, performing rituals of protection, divining the future, healing the sick, exorcising ghosts and demons, overseeing the burial of the dead, and generally communicating on behalf of the tribe with the spirit world and its denizens.

Initiation into the shamanic cult could be achieved in several different ways. The easiest was the hereditary route where magical knowledge, power and skill were passed down from grandfather or father to son or, more rarely, from grandmother or mother to daughter. Sometimes children were chosen at a very early age or even at birth by the spirits and instructed by them through the medium of visions and dreams. Young people who suffered a serious illness or disease or from epileptic fits, were introverted and dreamy, or had any form of mental condition or disability, were regarded as natural shamans who had been specially chosen by the spirits.

In later life those who felt a strong calling to become a magical practitioner would retreat from society, usually to a remote place in the wilderness, and undergo a vigil during which they invited the spirits to contact them and teach them the shamanic ways. When a person was actually taken on by another shaman as his assistant or sorcerer's apprentice, a formal initiation rite was often carried out. The candidate offered an animal sacrifice, called on the spirits to aid them in their task, took an oath of loyalty to their shamanic master or spiritual clan, and accepted the special ritual regalia of a shaman's office.

Often these initiations by either another shaman or the spirits involved a traumatic visionary death and rebirth experience. Sometimes this included a journey to the underworld, meetings with deities and the would-be shaman's body being

dismembered and then put together again.

The ritual regalia given to the new shaman reflected the fact that he or she was a special person who was separate and different from other members of the tribe. Siberian shamans wore robes made from animal hide and fur and decorated with embroidery, bird's feathers, silk tassels, ribbons, bells, small mirrors, jewellery representing symbolic motifs such as the World Tree, and assorted metalwork such as copper discs. Headwear consisted of a conical or pointed cap made from felt or fur or the antlers of a reindeer. Some shamans wore iron-shod fur boots so when they stamped their feet they could drive away evil spirits.

The majority of shamans carried a ritual drum similar in shape to the traditional Irish bodhran. These were made from an animal skin stretched over a wooden frame and decorated with feathers and magical symbols representing spirit journeys to the Otherworld or the shamanic cosmology. The drum was very important and represented the symbolic and magical steed that enabled the practitioner to travel from Middle Earth to the realm of the spirits. It was also a magical object in its own right that contained and focused spirit force or energy. By playing it the shaman could both attract spirits and exorcise them. In addition to the drum a magical staff was often carried. This was made of either wood or metal and was decorated with feathers, bells, ribbons and the pelts of small woodland animals.

Different Types of Shaman

Although Westerners used the generic term 'shaman' to describe all the tribal magical practitioners of Siberia and Mongolia, in practice they were divided into several different types, categories or classes with specific magical duties and responsibilities. Using English terminology, these included 'conjurers' who summoned

and controlled spirits, prophets or psychics who foresaw the future, sorcerers who practised 'black magic', trance-workers who travelled in spirit form to the Otherworld, healers who were experts in folk medicine and herbalism, and guides to the dead who laid out corpses and conducted funeral rites.



The shaman-healers were often female and they specialised in health matters connected with human and animal fertility, sexuality and children. They were recognisable by their distinctive skirts made from animal hide and brightly coloured woollen hats. Instead of the ritual drum used by the male shamans, they carried a silk fan and prayer beads. Unfortunately when Buddhism came to Siberia and Mongolia many of these female healers were ruthlessly persecuted and exterminated by the misogynist monks. As a result their extensive knowledge of herbs and plants used for natural healing was either lost completely or taken over by Buddhist healers and only practised in a debased or diluted form.

Another female practitioner was the shaman-midwife, who inherited her power from the maternal line of familial descent. As well as ensuring that babies entered this world safely in a physical sense, she was also responsible for their spiritual protection from evil influences during birth and their well-being as children. In this sense she took on the role of a human fairy godmother. Immediately after a birth the shaman-midwife cut the umbilical cord and then purified the new-born baby with salt water and fire. Any (female only)

witnesses to the birth could only be present if they had first been ritually purified by the midwife with fire and water. During the first few weeks of a baby's life it was very important that the proper rituals were performed to protect the child until its spirit was fully established in the material world. If they were not performed properly then the baby's spirit might return from whence it had come. These essential rites were the responsibility of the shaman-midwife and her assistants.

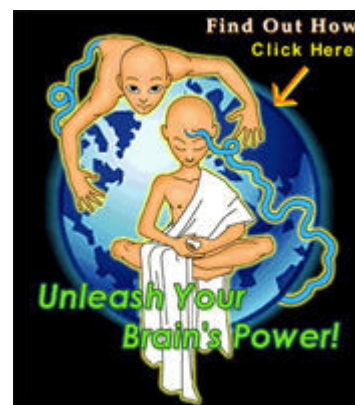
Another type of [shamanic healer](#) was a bone-setter who called upon spirit guides to help them in their healing work. They mainly repaired broken and dislocated bones and torn ligaments, healed back pain caused by spinal injuries or disease and also skin infections such as boils, rashes, psoriasis and eczema. These gifts were inherited from the paternal side of the family and, because the bones of the human body were considered to be spiritually 'masculine' in nature, these shamanic bone-setters were always male.

Most of the shamans worked with what modern New Agers call animal allies or spirit-helpers in animal form. These entities assisted them with their magical work and also taught them. For instance, the shaman-midwives described above worked with an animal spirit in the form of a mountain fox. The first bone-setter is supposed to have been taught his skills by a snake so that creature was sacred to the clan. Other shamanic practitioners were assisted by reindeer or wolves for attacking and destroying evil spirits, and ravens for getting rid of diseases. Other important animal spirit helpers included owls, wild ducks, geese, squirrels, bears, frogs and toads, dogs, seagulls and eagles.

One of the most important and respected types of magical practitioners was the shaman-smith. In all cultures all over the world from Europe to Africa the smith took a central role in tribal society and was

regarded as a powerful magician or sorcerer because of his mastery over fire and skill in working with metal. There are many legends about blacksmiths making pacts with demons, gods or the Devil or tricking and outwitting them to acquire their skills. There are also many smith gods in ancient mythology who were magicians, made weapons for the Gods or acted as cultural exemplars by inventing agricultural tools. In Siberia the shaman-smiths made and magically consecrated the ritual metal objects used by other shamans. They were only chosen by the spirits and instead of a drum they used their anvils to communicate with the spiritual realm.

'Black' & 'White' Shamans



As well as the different types of magical practitioner, the shamans were also divided into two separate, but sometimes overlapping, categories - 'black' or 'white' shamans. The former were regarded as the most powerful of the two and were sometimes known as 'warrior-shamans' because they battled evil forces and were consulted as military advisors. They obtained their power from the north (possibly the North Pole or the North Star) and could be easily identified as they always wore black robes with very little, if any, decoration. The primary function of the black shaman was to deal with demons and the dark gods on behalf of their clients. In this role they were hired to curse their enemies and blight their crops and livestock.

In wartime the black shamans attached themselves to the army rather like the modern padres and helped to win battles using their occult powers. In peacetime they took a more positive role as diplomats, political advisors and emissaries and they oversaw the preparation and signing of treaties with the appropriate magical rites. Black shamans were greatly feared, even after their deaths. In the 19th century when a famous one died she was placed in a coffin made from the 'unclean' wood of an aspen. Her corpse was then nailed down with aspen stakes so she could not become a 'night walker' and haunt the living.

In contrast, the so-called 'white' shamans obtained their magical power from a westerly direction, the home of the benevolent deities and spirits. They operated at a tribal level almost exclusively as healers and diviners and they only had dealings with beneficent entities. It was their role to pacify angry or evil spirits, exorcise them if they possessed human beings and help the tribe live in harmony with their natural environment and the spirit world. To this end on a physical level they were often employed in an administrative role to oversee tribal affairs.

The Yurt, the World Tree & Spirit Flight

In Siberian and especially Mongolian shamanism the yurt, a traditional dwelling constructed from a framework of wooden poles covered with animal skins and with a central smoke-hole in the roof, was a microcosmic symbol or representation of the universe. For this reason all movement inside the yurt was conducted, if at all possible, in a deosil or sunways direction. This also reflected the traditional direction of movement used in shamanic rituals and dances. The centre of the yurt, where a fire burnt in a hearth and was seldom extinguished, was symbolic of the actual centre of the world

or universe. The column of smoke that drifted up from the fire and left the yurt through the central smoke-hole in the roof was symbolic of the *axis mundi* – the World Mountain, World Pillar or World Tree. This links the underworld below with the heavens above and ends at the North and Pole Star around which all the other stars revolve in the night sky.

The shamans believed in three worlds of existence connected together by the World Tree or Tree of Life. They were the lower world or underworld inhabited by the dead who are awaiting reincarnation, the middle world or Middle Earth, the material plane of existence in which human spirits are incarnated, and the upper world or Heaven, the dwelling place of the Gods. Numerous non-human spirits also inhabit each of these three worlds. The shaman can [access these other worlds in trance](#) by means of spirit travel. His soul body ascends the column of smoke from the fire and passes through the aperture in the roof of the yurt. It is interesting to note that in medieval times European witches were supposed to fly to their Sabbats by ascending the chimney on their broomsticks. It is obvious that this was not done physically so they also were practising a shamanic type of spirit flight.

Shamans can also fly through the air when they spirit travel, either by shapeshifting into the form of birds (such as geese) or by riding on the back of a flying deer, horse or some other large animal. Again, there are many woodcuts dating from the Middle Ages depicting witches riding through the night sky on the backs of goats and rams. Sometimes the shaman visited the spirit world by ascending the World Tree itself or by travelling along a rainbow. This is another symbol that is found in Northern European paganism where a rainbow bridge connects Midgard (Middle Earth) with Asgard, the realm of the Gods.



One of the methods used by the Siberian shamans to achieve trance and spirit travel was the hallucinogenic fungi *amanita muscaria* or fly agaric. This red capped white-spotted toadstool has a symbiotic relationship with both birch and fir trees, which grow profusely in northern and arctic climes. It is so closely associated with magical properties in myth and fairy tales that it is frequently depicted in illustrations to modern children's stories about woodland elves, faeries and goblins. Fly agaric is reputed to be able to open up the 'crack between the worlds' and experiments in the 20th century by the two well-known ethnomycologists Gordon and Valentina Wasson revealed the ethenogenic qualities of this most famous of 'sacred mushrooms'.

In Siberia fly agaric was sometimes fed to reindeer and then the animal's toxic urine is drunk. The shamans said that taking it put them in touch with the spirit of the plant, who appeared as small mushrooms with eyes and arms and legs attached. Needless to say that in large quantities fly agaric is highly poisonous and can be deadly. It must, as with all hallucinogenic plants used in magical practice, be used in small quantities, treated with respect and only taken after the proper spiritual preparation and then only under expert supervision. It should also be noted that in many countries fly agaric and other psychedelic fungi are classified as dangerous drugs and the possession or partaking of them is illegal.

In common with indigenous folk beliefs in the West, it was accepted in shamanism that the spirit world was not entirely separated from the material one. There are special places in the natural environment –*sacra loci* – where the two realms meet and touch and interconnect. These can be a sacred mountain or hill, a stone, a river, a lake, a forest or any natural landmark in the countryside. While the shaman may be able to access such 'gateways' or 'portals' between here and there easily, lesser mortals may be unaware of them or, if they are sensitive, they may feel they are 'different' or 'other'. Spooky places, whether natural sites in the landscape or buildings, associated with folklore, paranormal phenomena and hauntings are usually spirit gateways.

In shamanistic belief [all inanimate objects were inhabited or possessed by spirit energy](#) or force who controlled their environs. Some shamans taught that living beings, especially human ones, could have more than one spirit inhabiting their physical body. Many accepted that humans had an etheric, astral or spirit double and this could be projected in trance or spirit travel to roam over the Earth and also enter the Otherworld. The shamans believed that the soul of a human being resided in a spherical or ovoid energy field that surrounds each of us. It is probably what Western occultists would refer to as the auric field or aura. It was this energy field that was attacked by demons or black shamans when they psychically attacked their victims and in that way they could cause illness or death. It was the task of the white shaman to redress the balance by healing the damaged aura and if possible bring the victim back to full health.

Earlier we saw how animals were important clan totems and spirit guides to the shaman. Before the 20th century and the rise of industrial scale food production, hunting was widespread on the Siberian steppes and in the forests. Unlike Christian belief, it was accepted without

question that animals had souls and when hunting them down and killing them it was essential that their spirits were respected and appeased. If they were not, disaster and misfortune could befall the hunter, his family and tribe. When a hunter killed his prey it was always dispatched quickly, cleanly and without cruelty. Before it was killed the hunter apologised for having to do so and after death its remains were treated with care and respect. The same rule applied to domestic animals. A master animal spirit ruled each species and prayers and sacrificial offerings of incense and fire were made to them before the hunt began. Hunting purely for pleasure, as practised in the West, was an unknown concept.

Buddhism & the Stamping Out of Shamanism



Despite the early arrival of the fur traders and merchants in Siberia and Mongolia, shamanism survived. In the 16th century, however, a Mongolian ruler called Altan Khan invited a Tibetan Buddhist mission to the country. His motives were political as he wanted to consolidate his own position as the supreme tribal leader by claiming to be the reincarnation of the great Kubla Khan. The Buddhists agreed to recognise his claim and in return the Khan gave the head of the Buddhist Order the spiritual title of Dalai Lama, which of course exists today even though the present holder is in exile in India. As a result of the Khan's one conversion, he passed laws banning shamanic rituals and granted the Buddhist priesthood a special status in society and

privileges that were not granted to the shamans.

In the 17th century attempts were made by the Mongolian rulers to eradicate shamanic survival entirely. The black shaman brotherhood refused to submit to the new religion and many were killed. Some of the white shamans came to an accommodation with it. This led to the creation of a third way called 'yellow shamanism' that submitted to the control of the lamas and combined shamanic beliefs and practices with [Tibetan Buddhism](#).

During the 18th century in Siberia, Buddhist, Orthodox Christian and Muslim missionaries attempted to convert the native population and opposed the practice of all rival religions. Considering their modern peaceful and pacifist image, the Buddhist monks were the most severe in this respect and they hunted down shamans, beat them and destroyed their sacred sites, replacing them with their own image-filled shrines. The Russian Orthodox Church also forced the pagan tribes to accept baptism at the point of a sword and they flogged or imprisoned anyone who dared to practice shamanic rites such as divination and animal sacrifice.

Despite this religious persecution, shamanism survived the forced conversions and it continued underground in remote rural areas. Sometimes shamanic elements were incorporated into an unorthodox form of folk Christianity that flourished despite the censure of the priests. This movement produced hybrid sects who coincided their sacrifices with Church festivals and made offerings to saints. Some shamans accepted the patron saints of Russia, SS George and Michael, as their deities. St Michael was even given the honorary title of 'Master of the Shamans' and blood sacrifices were made to his icons.

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, shamanism had a brief revival as the power and influence of the Orthodox Russian Church and Buddhism in Siberia faded away. However, with the beginning of the bloody Stalinist regime in the 1920s, the new policy of agricultural collectivism caused drastic changes in Siberian society. The Soviet communists regarded the shamans as an example of primitive superstition and social inequality and they were condemned as enemies of the state. There are horrific stories of KGB agents throwing shamans out of helicopters to prove to their followers that they could not fly and also randomly executing them by firing squad. In 1980 the central government in Moscow claimed that shamanism was extinct in Siberia.

When Professor [Ronald Hutton](#) of Bristol University visited Siberia in the early 1980s he was told by experts in the field that there were no more shamans alive and shamanism had died out. At the time he accepted this, but later he came to believe that a number of former shamans had managed to survive the pogroms. With the collapse of Soviet communism in the later 1980s and early 1990s there was a revival of traditional culture among the ethnic peoples of the former USSR. Professor Hutton has described an encounter by some British musicians visiting Siberia in 1997 with a person who claimed to be a hereditary shaman. He said he had inherited his powers and knowledge from his grandfather, who had been a blacksmith, and he used his skills for healing and exorcising evil spirits.

Tengrism



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In the 1990s a neo-shamanic movement known as Tengrism arose in Central Asia and the new Russian Federation. It quickly organised itself and now claims a rather inflated membership of 500,000. One of its prominent leaders is a Kyrgyzstan Member of Parliament called Dastan Sarygulov, who also runs an international scientific centre for Tengrist studies. Its members have a political agenda and attempt to spread their beliefs and ideology in government circles. Apparently they have had some success as a former Kyrgyz president and the present President of Kazakhstan have both declared that Tengrism is the natural and national religion of the Turkic population.

Unlike the shamanism of former times, Tengrism is a monotheistic form of religion with a cosmology that is suitable for the modern world. It is firmly based on trendy 'green' or environmental concerns and believes that humanity should live in harmony with the natural world. Forgetting or ignoring the persecution of the past, it also preaches tolerance towards other religions and seeks to co-exist with them in the spirit of interfaith. Strangely it is also a religion without dogma, prayers or a priesthood. The American academic Marlene Laruelle, who has studied Tengrism, claims that it has been influenced by the atheism of the Soviet years and contemporary ideas about modernity. Its political agenda calls for a recognition of Turkic national ideals and the ultimate unification of all Turkic-speaking peoples.

The revival of shamanism in its modern Tengrist form would seem to hearken back to a romantic past that probably never existed in reality. Its increasing popularity among urban Russians is based on an idyllic image of yurts on the steppes, a nomadic lifestyle and living in harmony with nature. This is in direct contrast to the struggle of daily existence in a modern neo-capitalist and corrupt society governed by autocratic rulers.

An inner desire to reconnect with the natural world and follow spiritual [values in a technocratic consumer society](#), a romantic view of the past and an urge to 'save the planet' is also the driving force behind so-called 'urban shamanism' in the West. However, the Siberian shaman and his Mongolian counterpart were not so much interested in preserving the environment than surviving day by day appeasing the spirits they believed inhabited it. In that sense the shamanism of the past was an essential part of daily life.

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The above article appeared in [New Dawn No. 110 \(September-October 2008\)](#).

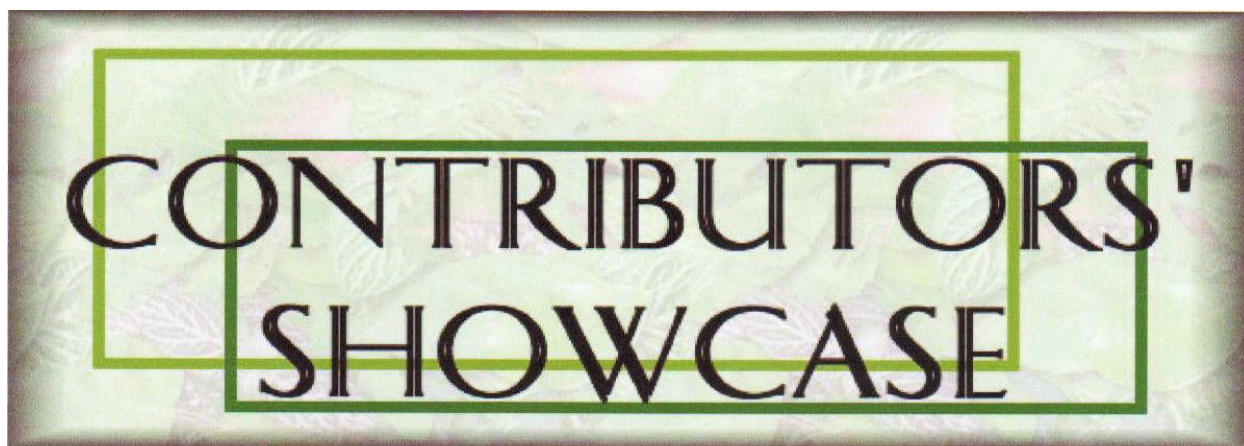
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Gypsey is published in fields as wide as Women's Studies, Gender, Popular Culture, Steampunk, Information Formation, and popular fiction. She is the author of *Steampunk Magic: Working Magic Aboard the Airship* from Weiser publications and the forthcoming title *A Witches Guide to Wands* which is due out in fall of 2014. Her other books revolve around vampyres, cannibals, Steampunk alternate history, and mystery.

Gypsey spends her free time building custom made hardwood boxes for special occasions and makes wands in her small shop in South Carolina. She sells her works at craft shows and Pagan shows throughout the country.

Gypsey also teaches and lectures at Pagan events throughout the Southeast and will be a headliner this fall at Florida Pagan Gathering. You may read her motivational blog at <http://gypseyteague.wordpress.com> or view her wood and leather work at www.gypseyteague.com.