



Correllian Times

Issue 18
February

2008



Blessed Imbolc

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Flash Fiction Challenge

Greetings Dearest Readers!

Have you ever dreamed of being a writer? The Correllian Times wants to help make that dream come true with our flash fiction contest!

The flash fiction story must contain exactly 250 words, excluding the title. Not 249 - not 251. 250 words. There should be a beginning, middle, and an end. It should not just be 250 words of whatever comes to your mind. The goal here is to have some kind of twist at the end.

Our challenge to you is this:

Write your own flash fiction before January 01, 2009. The prize for the top Flash Fiction submission will be a free subscription to the Correllian Times for one year. **Please, only 1 entry per person.**

Contest begins February 1, 2008 and ends January 01, 2009. Entries become the property of The Correllian Times. We assume no responsibility for illegible, lost, late, misdirected, incomplete, or stolen entries.

ENTRY: Submit an original, flash fiction story of exactly 250 words. Include your name and e-mail address and email to either: Jessamina at Jessamina@OurLadyRhiannon.com or Azriel at azrielmoon@hotmail.com. Please include the words "FLASH FICTION CHALLENGE" in the subject detail. Entries must be original, unpublished and may not have won any prize or award.

LIMIT: Only one entry from an individual will be accepted - no group entries.

ELIGIBILITY: Everyone is eligible to enter! We do however reserve the right to withhold inappropriate materials from publication at our discretion.

Voting on flash fiction:

Each submission will be featured in The Correllian Times. A voting poll will be opened in January 2009 (details to follow). If you appreciate the storytelling in a flash fiction piece, please grant the writer the honor of your vote.

The great part for voters is that each entry shouldn't take much more than a minute. You can read dozens of them in a short period of time. Please support the writers in this challenge by reading as many as you can!

Now... get flashing!

The Tarot of Hekate

Art Work and Text
By M. rev. Donald Lewis

XI The Soul



Cosmology: The Soul is the higher self whose influence is always present in the life, regardless of whether it is understood or not. The needs and purposes of the Soul guide the life in many ways, creating the Lessons we encounter -though how we react to these and whether we in fact learn the needed lessons is a function of the lower or conscious self. The Soul, pre-existing the life, creates the spiritual contract which sets the parameters of the life, and when the life has ended

The Tarot of Hekate

XI The Soul

carries forward the persona and experiences as part of itself. The journey of life therefore cannot be considered without first considering the needs of the Soul from which the life originates.

Numerology: The Number of the Soul is Eleven. Eleven reduces to Two ($1 + 1 = 2$) but because it is a double or Master Number, it is not normally reduced as such. The Number Eleven is the Master Number of the Psychic. Eleven connects to others on a spiritual level, often unconsciously, and reacts to their ideas and desires. Because of this Eleven is also a Number of communication, and of dealing with and influencing the public. Eleven has a natural ability to work with and to sway others, based upon its spiritual rapport with them.

Announcements

The World Wide Crystal Web Club will be doing a Ritual on the 11th. of each month (Time you do the Ritual is up to you as long as it is done on the 11th.) The Ritual is for Hope, Peace, Love and Prosperity. The energy sent out through the Web is for anyone to use through out the world if they so desire. The Ritual is posted in the file section in most groups.

Order of Recovering Correllians

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ORDEROFRECOVERINGCORRELLIANS>

This is a Closed Order, members must be either an Inner or Outer Court member of the Correllian Nativist Tradition, and actively working towards recovery from addiction to alcohol and/or drugs. There is no minimum time in recovery to be a member of this order; only an honest desire to become 'clean and sober'. You can contact Rev. Windy Lajoie, HPs at windy0716@aol.com

Announcements

Spring Lustration 2008 UK

Hosted by Temple of Sedna at



THE
CARLTON MANOR
— 1858 —

The Temple of Sedna

will be hosting the

Spring 2008 Lustration of the Ancestors a
Family Event

Date: Friday 18th - Sunday 20th April 2008

The Temple of Sedna is located in Carlton
Colville, Suffolk UK

For more information please contact [Temple
of Sedna](http://Temple of Sedna) (sednatemple@btinternet.com)

or phone 07955 070924

Lustration Guests of Honour

Lord Don and Lady Krystel

First Priest and First Priestess Emerita

Correllian Tradtion

Announcements

The Order of Web Weavers Crystal Web Mapping Project

The Order of the Web Weavers has been working diligently on mapping the Crystal Web. If any of you have a crystal that you have added or removed from the Crystal Web contact us to ensure are records up to date and accurate.

The information we need in order to best catalog your crystal/s is the following. Your Craft Name and E-mail Address along with your City, State, Country, Latitude, and Longitude. Sent to the following e-mail address:

wwcw@correllianorders.info

Please include the above information, if you have removed your crystal from the Crystal Web along with 'Remove' in the subject line. If you have added several crystals then we would need a separate entry for each crystal, unless they are located together. If they are located together then please include how many crystals are at that location.

FEBRUARY

February 1, Friday

Imbolc / Candlemas (Northern Hemisphere)
Lughnassadh (Southern Hemisphere)

Eight Festival Shrine Online Imbolc Ritual

Sponsored by Sedna Temple

For more information contact Rev. Amethyst, at
rev_amethyst@hotmail.co.uk

Sedna Healing Shrine Online Healing Ritual

Weekly healing rituals 9pm GMT and 9.30pm

EST sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more

information contact, Rev. Mick Battley for UK, at
dotnmick@tiscali.co.uk or Rev. Mary Keller for

US, at mary120@sympatico.ca

Moon Shrine Online New Moon Ritual

Sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more

Announcements

information contact, Rev. Mary Keller, at at
mary120@sympatico.ca

Sedna Healing Shrine Online Healing Ritual

Weekly healing rituals 9pm GMT and 9.30pm
EST sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more
information contact, Rev. Mick Battley for UK, at
dotnmick@tiscali.co.uk or Rev. Mary Keller for
US, at mary120@sympatico.ca

February 15, Friday

Sedna Healing Shrine Online Healing Ritual

Weekly healing rituals 9pm GMT and 9.30pm
EST sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more
information contact, Rev. Mick Battley for UK, at
dotnmick@tiscali.co.uk or Rev. Mary Keller for
US, at mary120@sympatico.ca

February 11, Monday

Monthly Crystal Web Healing Ritual

Monthly healing ritual sponsored by the Order of
Web Weavers. For more information contact Rev.
Windy LaJoie, HP, at windy0716@aol.com

February 22, Friday

Full Moon - Snow Moon - Hungar Moon

Moon Shrine Online Full Moon Ritual

Sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more
information contact, Rev. Mary Keller, at at
mary120@sympatico.ca

Sedna Healing Shrine Online Healing Ritual

Weekly healing rituals 9pm GMT and 9.30pm
EST sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more
information contact, Rev. Mick Battley for UK, at
dotnmick@tiscali.co.uk or Rev. Mary Keller for
US, at mary120@sympatico.ca

February 29, Friday

Sedna Healing Shrine Online Healing Ritual

Weekly healing rituals 9pm GMT and 9.30pm
EST sponsored by Sedna Temple. For more
information contact, Rev. Mick Battley for UK, at
dotnmick@tiscali.co.uk or Rev. Mary Keller for
US, at mary120@sympatico.ca

Announcements

I Knew You When

http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/CNT_IKNEWYOUWHEN

This is a closed group for the friends, families,
partners of love ones addicted to either alcohol or
drug abuse or both, or who have been addicted but
are in recovery or thinking about going into
recovery.

If you would like to join this group and are not a
member of the Tradition you may become an
Outer Court member by going to Correllian.com
and go to applications and fill out the Outer Court
one.

If you are addicted to alcohol or drugs or both we
have a group that you may join.

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ORDEROFRECOVERINGCORRELLIANS>

For questions contact Windy at
windy0716@aol.com

Ritual Murders in Sioux City

Letter from Don Lewis HP

Greetings all,

I would like to talk briefly about a very sad subject
which has been in the news of late.

The recent murders of Kendra and Alysha Suing
by their stepfather Larry Harris, in Sioux City,
Iowa, is heart-rending and terrible to hear about.

Our hearts can only go out to all those who are
affected by this terrible act, especially the mother
of these poor children. Though nothing can take
away or ameliorate the pain caused by this terrible
tragedy, we can at least all pray for healing for
those affected.

That the murderer should describe his act as a
religious ceremony, is especially distressing. No
matter what the religious beliefs of the murderer,
there is no way that these or any murders can
justifiably be described as a "religious ceremony".
Because the murders have been described as a

Ritual Murders in Sioux City

"ritual killing" there may be those who, because of misinformation or pre-existing prejudices, may allege that this heinous act is somehow connected to or influenced by the Wiccan religion, or wider Pagan religion.

It is disturbing that anyone should think such a thing, because nothing could be further from the truth.

Those unfamiliar with the Wiccan faith, sometimes harbor very strange ideas about Wiccans. I cannot too strongly emphasize that the Wiccan religion does not condone ritual murder or human sacrifice in any circumstances. We regard such an act as an abomination. The person who perpetrated this act is very unlikely to be a Wiccan, but if he is Wiccan he has acted in total violation of the moral beliefs of our faith.

Sadly ritualistic murders of children, have been all too common in recent years. Most commonly such ritual murders turn out to have been botched exorcisms conducted by delusional persons who believed the children to be "possessed" -a concept which has nothing to do with the Wiccan religion or its teachings. Such murders are a great social evil which society should take a strong stand against.

Let us all join together in offering our condolences, prayers and support to the victims of this tragic crime.

May the Blessing Be,
Rev. Don

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are setting up Letters to the Editor so that questions, comments, suggestions, etc. can be sent in.

We will print them in the next addition each month.

You may send them to
CNT_Correllian_Times@yahoo.com
or
Windy0716@aol.com

~ IMBOLC ~

Imbolc is the time of year
to start the new and the old to clear.

We cleanse our homes and make them shine
in honor of the great Divine.

We plan our gardens with great care
and look forward to the beauty there.

The Goddess and God are young, but soon
the time will come for them to swoon.

New beginnings are what we see
in every seed and bulb and tree.

Our tools and candles we'll be refreshing
with the new Imbolc blessing.

We cleanse our bodies and our minds
and make wishes of all kinds.

Imbolc, to me, the meaning is clear.
It's hopes and dreams of the fruits of the year.

By: TwinbornKristy - 2004

History of Groundhog Day

[Online Learning Haven](#)

[This site has a lot of neat stuff for kids!!](#)

Submitted by: Windy

The traditional festival, Groundhog Day is commemorated in the United States and Canada on February 2. The history of Groundhog Day originated as a cross-quarter day, which falls midway between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox.

The traditional weather teachings speak of the end of winter when a ground hog fails to see its shadow as a consequence of the weather being cloudy. On the other hand, it is believed

History of Groundhog Day

it is believed that winter will be staying on for another six weeks, if a ground hog is able to see its shadow because of a bright and clear day and is compelled to run back into its hole out of fear.

History of Groundhog Day

The 5th century had European Celts believing that on certain days, falling half-way between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, animals had special supernatural powers. Legends from Germany and France reveal that when bears and marmots came out of their winter burrows too early, they got scared of their own shadows and went back to their dens for another four to six weeks.

The first known American reference to the Groundhog's Day is found at the Historical Society of Berks County in Reading, Pennsylvania.

The history of Groundhog Day was an outcome of the Native American rituals. The ancient tribes sacrificed the most well-fed member of the tribe for the blessing of a short winter. They thought it was the best way to please the ancient nature gods. This is similar to the biblical reference to the sacrifice of oxen or a fat lamb.

The ancient tribal people cut the chosen member's neck and asked if the person could see his own shadow. If he could, then the winter would be short and if he could not, it meant that the gods were not pleased with the victim and the winter would stretch for a period of another three moons. A short winter facilitated a long hunting and planting season.

Gradually, with many tribes converting to Christianity, the procedure of human sacrifice was frowned upon. This is when a fat groundhog replaced the human in being sacrificed. Here, the Shamam had to use his skills to denote if the groundhog could see its own shadow. The late 19th century, started the Victorian animal cruelty

History of Groundhog Day

movement and from that time onwards, groundhogs were not allowed to be sacrificed.

Assuming that in the medieval cultures, the equinox fell on the first day of the spring as it is now in the Western countries, Groundhogs Day occurred exactly six weeks before the spring. It is funny to note that it was obvious that if the groundhog could see its shadow, there would be six more weeks of the winter season and if it could not there would be an added 42 days of winter. The result would be same in both the cases.

How is Groundhog Day celebrated?

This day is all about fun and frolic. There are no rules or rituals for celebrating Groundhog Day. Some of the most common things that are done include partying and enjoying indoor games like passing a stuffed toy groundhog with the music or trying to toss the toy into a basket. Some even make groundhog shaped cookies and you would also get groundhog shaped candies nowadays.

Though the history of Groundhog Day is a modern adaptation of an ancient Celtic celebration called Imbolc, it has its own flavor and enthusiasts.

Imbolc Rituals

[Online Online Learning Haven](#)

[This site has a lot of neat stuff for kids!!](#)

Submitted by: Windy

Imbolc meaning "in the belly" is one of the four principal festivals of the Irish calendar. It is celebrated either at the beginning of February or at the first local signs of Spring. Several Christians term the day as "the feast of the Purification of the Virgin" or "Candlemas". This festival is basically dedicated to the goddess Brigid, subsequently in the Christian period it was adopted as St Brigid's Day.

In the recent times, you would see the modern

Imbolc Rituals

Pagans celebrating Imbolc rituals on 1st or 2nd February. Though some Neopagans share this celebration to the midpoint between the winter solstice and spring equinox. It actually falls later in the first week of the month. Now, as the Celtic year was based on both solar and lunar cycles, the holiday is most likely to be celebrated on the full moon day.

Wiccans perform Imbolc rituals as one of four "fire festivals", which formulate half of the eight holidays (or "sabbats"), of the wheel of the year. They define Imbolc as a cross-quarter day or midway between the winter solstice (called Yule) and the spring equinox (called Ostara).

The significant aspect of this festival is fire and purification. Brigid (also referred as Brighid, Bríde, Brigit, Bríd) is recognized as the Celtic Goddess of poetry, smithcraft and healing for whom the day is sacred. The lighting of candles signifies the return of warmth and the growing power of the Sun in the coming months.

A brief study of the origin of Imbolc Rituals

You can have an idea of how Imbolc used to be celebrated in Ireland, from ancient Celtic manuscripts collected in the 19th and early 20th century. It elaborately describes the festival, and folklore in rural Ireland and Scotland. These materials can also be compared with studies of similar customs in Scandinavia along with the customs maintained till the present date in the Celtic nations and Scottish Diasporas.

Imbolc Rituals performed during the festival

Rituals performed on this day include hearth fires, divination, special foods, or simply watching for omens (performed either seriously or as children's game). A lot of candles are lit up and an outdoor bonfire is also enjoyed, if the weather lets it. Imbolc is principally a festival of the hearth and home. This celebration marks the early signs of spring and lengthening of days.

Imbolc Rituals

You find an exciting folk tradition called the Brigid's Bed that still persists both in Christian and Pagan homes on Imbolc day (St. Brigid's Day). The girls and young, unmarried women of the household or village craft a 'corn dolly' that represents Brigid or the Brideog (also known as "young Brigid" or "little Brigid"). They adorn it with ornaments like shells or stones and tie beautiful ribbons on it. A bed is prepared for the Brideog to lie down.

On 31st January, which is on the St. Brigid's Eve, the girls and young women get together in a house to keep on whole night with the Brideog. Later on all the young men of the community visit this house, but should take permission to enter the abode. Once they are in the room they have to treat them and the corn dolly with respect.

It is believed that Brigid walks on the earth on the eve of Imbolc. Each member of the household usually keeps a piece of clothing or strip of cloth outside before going to bed, for Brigid to bless. In the morning, the head of the household smothers the fire and scrape the ashes smooth. Then they look for a mark on the ashes as a sign of Brigid's appearance on that night or morning.

Imbolc is a festival of honoring the Goddess Brighid. People celebrate this day by welcoming the spring and lengthening of days.

Moonlit River Gallery Presents

The Goddess Brighid

by Amber Luna Brighid

Submitted by Windy with permission

A Level 1 Final Project

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Moonlit River Gallery Presents
The Goddess Brighid

"It might be said that Brigit is the nearest thing we have to a Great Mother of the Celts" -Kindling the Celtic Spirit p. 45 Mara Freeman

Brighid is a Goddess of many names. In Ireland She is called Brigid, Brigit, Brighid, Brid. In Scotland She is called Bhrighde, Bride Breo-Saighit, Brede. The Welsh call Her Ffraid and the French call her Brigandu. She is called Brigantia by the Northern English and Bridget in Sweden. Her name is pronounced Brighid or Bree-id. Some have said that Her name may have come from the word Brihati, which means "high" or "exalted one" in Sanskrit. Her name in Gaelic means "fire tipped, exalted one, high one."

Brighid is a Triple Goddess and also a Fire Goddess. She is said to have two sisters, each with the same name. She is the daughter of the Dagda, the Celtic Lord of knowledge, and father to all. Her mother might have been the Goddess Boann. She seems to be one of the most well known Goddesses in The British Isles. Brighid is a Goddess of many things: Survival, Healing, Creativity, Divination, Herbology, Poetry, Fertility, Agriculture, Smithcraft, The Hearth, Music, Physicians, Midwifery, Witchcraft & Magick.

Other Goddesses that she has been associated with are Minerva, Kuan Yin and Mary. She is a mother, She loves Her children, Her followers, and Her Priestesses. She is compassionate and kind like Mary and Kuan Yin. She is compared to Minerva because of Her Wisdom.

She was worshipped in Her time all over the British Isles. Brighid's most Sacred Well was in Kildare Ireland. Kildare's original name was Cille Daire, which meant "Church of the Oak." Legend says that there was an Oak Tree that grew there, and Brighid loved it so much, she considered it so sacred that no one dared harm it. She built Her church

Moonlit River Gallery Presents
The Goddess Brighid

under it's shade. She tricked the land owner into giving Her the land to build Her church upon. He said that She could have as much as Her mantle (cloak) could cover. She laid down her mantle, and She used magick to make it spread and spread for miles. The land owner then gave Her all of that land. Brighid's well was tended by an exclusive Female Priesthood. There were 19 Priestesses. Each one took a turn to tend Her Sacred Flame on a 20 night rotation. Brighid tended Her own Flame on the 20th night. The Priestesses would leave wood by the fire and say to Brighid "Tonight is your night" and Brighid would come and tend Her Flame.

Brighid is also known as a Muse. She brings Inspiration to Poets and Artists. She is the Goddess of Creativity, and She blesses those who ask for Her guidance and inspiration.

Another way Brighid is known is as a Banshee: Brighid's son Ruadhan died in battle. Brighid grieved over him. She was on the battlefield, holding him in her arms, and She was crying so hard and so loud. She was screaming and wailing. This was keening. It was the first time the Celts ever heard it. Some say that Brighid might be the origin of the faery ghost. She might also be the first Banshee or Beansidhe ("woman faery").

The festival associated with Her is Imbolc or Imbolg (in the belly) or Oimele (ewe's milk). This holiday is one of the Eight Sabbats. Imbolc is the day to welcome the coming of Spring. It is Brighid's promise to us that the Spring is coming again soon. The animals start lactating again, daffodils and crocuses start poking through the dirt, the days start getting a little longer...On this day we light candles in Brighid's honor. We burn Her Flame. We clean our homes, get rid of old stuff, sage away stale energy... and look forward to the Spring.

Moonlit River Gallery Presents
The Goddess Brighid

There are so many things that are sacred to this Goddess. The Animals that are sacred to Brighid are: the boar, the cow, the fish, the sheep, the snake, the swan, the wolf, the bear, and the badger. The Plants that are sacred to Brighid are: Blackberry, Snowdrops, Crocuses, Primrose, Grain & Hops, Hazel, Rosemary, Dill, Chamomile, Red Clover, The Oak, Rowan, and the Willow. Some of Brighid's Sacred Symbols are: Brighid's Cross, The Flame, Iron, The Milky Way, The Moon, Nine White Stones, The Number 8, The Trinity, Two Crescents and Water. ***this information was taken from "Candlemas" p. 82-87 by Amber K. and Azrael Aryn K. Some other things that are Sacred to Brighid: Fire, the Sun, Rubies, Garnets, Citrines, Aquamarines, Sacred Wells & Rivers, Sheep, Shields, Shamrocks, the Triskele, Milk... Eyes are a symbol; some say that her solar cross resembles the ojo de dios ("eye of god").

Brighid Ritual

This is one of my favourite rituals for Brighid. It's taken out of the book "The Witch in Every Woman" by Laurie Cabot with Jean Mills.

Brighid's Circle

This is a ritual to draw in Brighid's Light to keep you healthy, protected & empowered. You will need black, red, and white candles. Enough to make a circle around you while you're seated on the floor. You will also need a red stone, usually a Ruby or a Garnet. The candle circle represents the Goddess Brighid, and the stone represents Her Psychic Flame. Get comfortable. Sit in a relaxed position in the center of your circle. Light the candles and hold the red stone against your Solar Plexus. Envision flame in the center of the stone transferring inside your body. Feel it's heat. Say aloud.

This is my psychic flame within.

This will spur the fire of my psychic abilities.

I carry this stone as a symbol of your strength within me.

Moonlit River Gallery Presents
The Goddess Brighid

I am the Keeper of Flame.

Every time I relight a candle I rekindle my psychic ability.

I know my psychic sense guides me, protects me, heals me, and showers me with love and self esteem.

I always use my psychic ability for the good of all people.

As a Witch I never do harm or return harm. I neutralize and bind all evil thoughts, actions and deeds,

And let the outcome be the force of the Great Goddess Brighid.

Carry the stone close to you in your purse. Keep it near your skin or body. You may even want to carry the stone in your bra. Hold it, handle it, touch the stone to feel the strength of your psychic sense.

References:

[The Witch In Every Woman by Laurie Cabot and Jean Mills, Delta Publications 1997](#)

[The Witches' Goddess by Janet and Stewart Farrar, Phoenix Publishing Co. 1987](#)

[The Goddess Path by Patricia Monaghan, Llewellyn Publications 1999](#)

[Kindling the Celtic Spirit by Mara Freeman, Harper SanFrancisco 2001](#)

[Celtic Women's Spirituality by Edain McCoy, Llewellyn Publications 1998](#)

[Celtic Magick by D.J. Conway, Llewellyn Publications 1990](#)

[Celtic Goddesses by Miranda Green, British Museum Press 1995](#)

[Candlemas by Amber K & Azrael Aryn K, Llewellyn Publications 2001](#)

[Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom by John O'Donohue, HarperPerennial 1997](#)

Rune of the Month

Submitted by: Meegan/Nightwind

Rune of the month: Fehu ƒ /

ƒ
I

The runes that we know today have been used by people for at least a thousand years. They were the alphabet of the people of northern Europe, called the futhark after the letters represented by the first seven runes. What we know about their meanings comes from two sources - the ancient rune poems of Norway, Iceland, and England and the modern interpretations of those who have dedicated their lives to studying them. They are divided into three groups of eight, called aetts, and were used as an alphabet, as a form of divination, and in magic. We will be exploring the runes one each month looking at their meanings and at ways to more fully understand them and connect with their unique energies.

The first rune of the first aett is called Fehu, or Feoh, and it is equivalent to the letter F in English. In the Anglo-Saxon poem it is equated to having wealth and being generous. In both the Norwegian and Icelandic poems it is compared to the envy that wealth can cause among family members. Most modern runesters find its strongest connection is to domestic cattle, keeping in mind that a thousand years ago cattle in many cases were the measure of a person's wealth, much like cash is today. In terms of wealth it is the kind that requires care and nourishment to maintain, and so also represents hard work earning rewards. Fehu is the kind of wealth that must be overseen and nurtured to thrive. Since it is connected to domestic cattle which must be cared for in order to be productive, it can be both fragile and transitory. It speaks of enjoying things while you have them, as well as good husbandry of wealth, and the reward of hard work.

When the runes are used for divination it can represent wealth, generosity, investment, finances, money, and honor through giving. On the negative side it can represent the jealousy of the lazy for

Rune of the Month

the industrious, the envy of those who do not want to work for things but want them handed over, and family infighting over money and strife due to money. When used in magic it would symbolize prosperity.

A good way to learn what the rune means for you is to meditate on the image. Find a quiet place to sit or lay down comfortably. Close your eyes and picture the shape of the rune glowing ahead of you in the darkness. See the shape expanding until it dissolves into a wide grassy field full of grazing cattle. The sun is warm on your skin and the grass is green beneath you. Watch the cows as they graze. Think about what this scene means to you. See the image slowly shifting into other things that define wealth for you. Meditate on these images as well. How do they connect together? When you are done with meditation write down all the things you thought of.

Fehu can be drawn on your purse or wallet to help draw wealth to you, and on bank statements to help keep your wealth growing. It can be inscribed on candles in money spells, as well as spells to get a promotion at work. Meditating on the image can help you see what matters most to you in the material world, and can also help you see how you can better handle your finances. For divination I recommend buying or making a rune stone and carrying it with you for a week. You will find yourself attuning to the rune's energy the more time you spend opening up to it.

Next months rune: Uruz.

Working with Oil Lamps

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Submitted by: Windy with permission

[Oil Lamp History](#)

Working Magick with Oil Lamps.

Working with Oil Lamps

Magical Oil Lamps

At the Mystic, we sometimes prescribe the use of oil lamps as a means to perform spiritual work. Often our clients give us a shocked or surprised look when we tell them to *set a lamp* on a situation



Ancient Hathor Lamp circa 300 AD - Egypt

The creation of Magical Oil Lamps is a lost art form. A very few, select rootworkers who shop at the store for supplies still use oil lamps for **all** of their spiritual undertakings. Many folks within the Afro-Caribbean Diaspora however are quite aware of the power of magickal lamps. Old timers know that that the Spirit seems to respond better and work manifests more quickly and thoroughly when using a lamp over candles.

There are several reasons oil lamps produce better results and are therefore one of the most powerful means of performing magic:

- An Oil Lamp is an 100% natural creation. It does not carry the vibrations of candle factory employees, truck drivers, shop keepers and other customers who have touched on the candle you are burning. When you focus on your intentions during oil lamp creation, the only energy present is yours!

Working with Oil Lamps

- You can add larger amounts of ingredients to an oil lamp. Especially in the case of glass encased candles, you can only add a few drops of each oil to the candle. Adding too much oil will make it difficult to keep the wick lit. Adding too many herbs or powders in the top of the candle can be a fire hazard! With oil lamps, you may add entire bottles of oil to the lamp and the wick actually uses these magical blends as fuel! The more herbal material you can add, the more of their vibration they lend to the work.
- Lamps can be mounted by Spirits. When you recite a Saint's novena or utter the secret words of a Spirit over the lit lamp, you draw that Spirit down onto the work. This process is called *mounting* the lamp. Yes, candles may also be mounted by Spirits, however lamp flame is much **hotter** than that produced by candles.
- Remember, even Spirit is composed of Molecular energy. So scientific law does apply to the Spirit. The **Laws of Physical Science** state when you provide extra energy to an object, you cause its molecules to speed up. Those molecules, in turn, can cause other molecules to speed up. The sum effect of the speed or energy of these molecules is called **heat**. The **Molecular Theory of Matter** shows when molecules are heated, they move faster. Metaphysically, because the mounted lamp is hotter than the mounted candle it will cause more rapid movement of molecular energy or Spirit energy.
- Oil Lamps have been used in Ritual since antiquity. The Spirit is familiar with the lamp and immediately recognizes the call when you light it.

Working with Oil Lamps

The History of Oil Lamps

- Oil lamps have been used as a source of illumination since the discovery of fire. A metaphor for joy and prosperity, for hope, for life itself, lamps have illuminated the path of civilization for centuries; they have guided great passions and stood vigil through the night with lonely thoughts.

The earliest oil lamps were seashells, used in prehistoric Mesopotamia (A common method of lamp making to this day). As humans progressed, so did lamp construction - from simply formed pieces of clay to Victorian-era crystal hurricane lamps. Naturally, the use of oil lamps as lighting became unnecessary with the invention of the light bulb.



Magically speaking, we know oil lamps were widely used throughout the world for centuries. In above pictured Egyptian lamp, the God Hathor is present on the actual lamp casing. Such decoration, logically denotes that lamps were dedicated to the Spirit.

Many great historical texts document the use of lamps in early cultures. Herodotus detailed the use of lamps by Egyptians numerous in his writings. He confirmed that all over Egypt, *"people fastened rows of oil-lamps to the outside of their houses, and the lamps burned all night."* This was done at the time of the Winter Solstice to illuminate

Working with Oil Lamps

a path for the Dead but also to provide individual protection of the home from Spirits.

Sacred Tantric texts from India also suggested the use of lamps in ritual

On a Friday, Rishi Vashishth placed a Lakshmi Yantra before himself and made it consecrated with Shreerodaya Mantra. Then he lit four lamps representing Riddhi (wealth), Siddhi (spiritual powers), Shubh (luck) and Laabh (gains). Then with a Sfatik rosary he started to chant the Mantra.

As a tool of magic and ritual, oil lamps have many Biblical references.

Exodus 25:37 *"Then you shall make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it.*

Ancient Pagans used oil lamps in religious observances, a practice which the Roman Christian theologian Tertullian vehemently protested as "the useless lighting of lamps at noonday." Regardless of such protests, by the fourth century, lamps became an integral part of Christian rituals.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. ~Leviticus 24:1

Today, oil lamps are used within a ritual context especially within the African Diaspora, Ceremonial Magick and Jewish Mysticism.

In Judaism, oil lamps are still used in a religious context. Go to any Synagogue and you will see the *Ner Tamid* , an oil lamp representing the Eternal Flame hanging above the *Aron Ha-Kodesh* or Holy Ark.

Working with Oil Lamps

In Haiti, candles are a hard to procure commodity. Vodouisiant use oil lamps as their primary source of illumination and for most spiritual undertakings.

While magical oil lamps may be more difficult to create and maintain than modern day candles, their power and effectiveness is undeniable. In the presence of a simple lamp, we are in touch directly with a vanished world, and the ancestors once warmed by its glow. Oil lamps remain as an enduring symbol of man's desire to conquer darkness.

Not Just Cards and Candy: A Historical View of Valentine's Day

Crow Dragontree

I have to admit that Valentine's Day was one of my least favorite holidays for a very long time. While this may sound heretical to many romantically-inclined ears, I felt that this holiday was fraught with a classic double-bind. When you're romantically involved with someone, tremendous pressure is placed upon you by the commercial empire to provide just the right gifts or atmosphere. If not currently entangled, the card, candy, flower, and jewelry industries merely serve to convince you that you were probably the last unattached person currently living on the planet.

Indeed, it was the heavy commercialization of this particular holiday with little apparent attention to any historical traditions that led me to believe that Valentine's Day was a construct created by capitalism in order to stimulate business at a level on par with Christmas. That is, I was convinced that Valentine's Day was invented by the card companies. Not being satisfied with coming to that conclusion simply because I despised the holiday, I decided to do a bit of research. Much to my disappointment, I discovered that I was probably mistaken.

While very little historical data actually exists regarding this holiday of elusive origin, several long-standing legends seem to support

Not Just Cards and Candy: A Historical View of Valentine's Day

its existence well before the greeting card industry. Preprinted cards expressing affection didn't make the scene until the end of the 1700s, while Valentine's Day seemed to have truly blossomed in the mid 1600s. Considering that Valentine's Day was officially declared by Pope Gelasius some 1200 years earlier (c. 500 CE), it seems that the industry that I had previously reviled not only failed to invent the holiday, but actually seemed a bit slow to cash in on it.

The Original Valentine

The historical figure upon which this day is based, however, remains something of an enigma. Various legends circulate around this individual with relatively little historical record to support them. These vary from Valentine as a lovestruck inmate sending letters to his betrothed, a renegade Christian priest performing marriages that were distasteful to the Pagan empire, to a slain rescuer of imprisoned lovers. The most common and possibly most likely legend, however, begins with the Roman Emperor Claudius Gothicus (Claudius II).

Claudius II ruled for a very brief and tumultuous time in Rome (roughly 268-270 CE). Though many of his mottos envisioned peace for his empire, the frequent attacks upon the homeland required that the Emperor be quite warlike. His defeat of the Goth invaders earned him the war name Claudius Gothicus and his ability to turn back the German invaders was commemorated on coins and statues throughout Rome. To keep these attackers at bay, Claudius likely experienced an ever-pressing need for well-trained, focused soldiers who had nothing to lose; lots of them.

The legend holds that in order to meet this copious need, Claudius temporarily outlawed marriages. This, of course, was in order to increase the number of young single men for potential service in the Roman Army who had little or no ties back home. Valentine,

Not Just Cards and Candy: A Historical View of Valentine's Day

apparently believing this law to be rather repugnant, defied Claudius and performed marriages illegally. Eventually, he was imprisoned for his matrimonial crimes, thus becoming a martyr for romance.

The story continues, however, with less clarity during Valentine's incarceration. While some legends state that Valentine sent love letters from prison to his own romantic interest, most stories hold that Valentine received considerable support from those whom he married and frequently sent notes of encouragement in return. In either case, legend holds that each of these messages were signed "*Your Valentine.*"

Bloody Strips of Goat Skin

Having established the probable validity of the day, one may wonder regarding the *date* of Valentine's Day. As is typical of this holiday, recorded history remains unclear. The argument that the day is set for Valentine's death or imprisonment are often repeated, but rarely substantiated. Considering that the Pope established the date for Valentine's Day more than 200 years after Claudius Gothicus' rule, it could be argued that at the time, the anniversary of Valentine's demise was probably little known.

Another widely held theory is that the February 14th date of Valentine's Day was set to correspond with the Roman festival of Lupercalia. This practice, of course, is not uncommon in Papal decisions. The examples of Christmas and Easter illustrate clearly the effective tradition of syncretically adopting dates and certain traditions in order to overshadow non-Christian holidays or encourage celebrants to adopt Christian traditions.

Lupercalia, generally observed around mid-February as the beginning of Spring, was quite naturally a celebration of fertility. This holiday was partly dedicated to the lupine-raised founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus—hence the title of the day. Also recognized was Faunus, a goatlike fertility deity. A primary part of this celebration involved a

Not Just Cards and Candy: A Historical View of Valentine's Day

sort of parade in which the young men of the city would move through the streets wielding strips of flesh cut from a sacrificial goat and dipped in its blood. During this procession, they would strike any young women available with these bloody strips, marking them and ensuring their fertility.

While fertility rites certainly seem to be in the realm of a romantic holiday such as Valentine's Day, another reported Lupercalian tradition seems to be more directly related to romantic endeavors. According to some reports, young, unattached women of Rome would submit their names to a lottery. Similarly unattached young men would then draw names, thus establishing a temporary year-long marriage. At the end of the year, the arrangement may be made permanent or dissolved. Students of Celtic lore would undoubtedly notice a similar springtime tradition dedicated to Taillte.

No Fraud!

The romantically inclined win the day, it seems. Valentine's Day does not seem to have been invented by mercenary marketers. Even if the questionable legends of the imprisoned Saint do not hold true, love has been in the air in mid-February since well before his conception. Our expressions of affection for one another on this day, however, need not be limited to cards, candy, or jewelry. Valentine himself, renegade that he was, would likely suggest that you express yourself freely and imaginatively.

*...though I'd hesitate before beating my beloved
with a bit of bloody goat flesh.*

Your Valentine,
Crow

Faery of the month: Pixies

Submitted by: Meegan/Nightwind

Pixies, also called Pispies, Piskies, or Pigseys, are native to the British Isles although they followed people emigrating out of the country and can now be found almost anywhere. Because of this all the old tales and stories about them are from England, Scotland and Ireland and most modern stories are from British settled countries like the U.S.. To this day they remain the type of faery that you are most likely to encounter since they are quite fond of playing jokes on people and, unlike many other Fey who prefer to stay out in nature away from human habitation, pixies are just as likely to be found in human cities, towns, and homes, as out in the wild.

While all Faeries can take on different appearances, Pixies are generally short and slim, looking somewhat like ten year old children in miniature. In one account from the 1800's two Pixies found near a village were described as childlike with a green tint to their skin and dark hair, clothed in pale green. They can appear anywhere from a few inches to a few feet tall. They are known to shape-shift into hedgehogs, and will sometimes appear in the shape of children wearing hedgehog coats and hats.

One of the most well known of faeries, pixies are also the most mischievous. They delight in playing tricks on humans and domestic animals, but are generally harmless. Pixies were known to tangle the manes of horses at night - as well as peoples hair while they slept! - and also delight in getting cats to chase them around. Have you ever seen your cat running around, jumping in the air as if chasing an invisible bug? Chances are the cat was actually trying to catch a pixie. Although they never manage to catch the wily faeries, they love to try.

Another well known pixie trick is leading travelers astray in familiar territory. Referred to as being pixy-led, it is an extremely disconcerting feeling. You could be walking along a section of woodland you've walked a hundred times before, but find yourself totally lost despite being surrounded by well known landmarks. The effect can last for minutes or hours, but usually acknowledging out

Faery of the month: Pixies

out loud that you're aware of the Pixies presence is enough to break the charm, especially if done in a complimentary manner. They love a good laugh, but generally cause us no real harm, only aggravation.

A lot of our experience with Pixies revolve around our entertainment value to them, as they like nothing better than to see us running around in annoyed circles. Pixies are fond of loud noises and love to knock things over, and they also enjoy watching us jump at the resulting sound! A favorite trick for them in the modern world is to steal car keys - usually when we are already late or in a hurry. They will take the keys which were left out in plain sight, then watch as we tear our houses apart looking for the missing item. Often as soon as we give up looking the keys will reappear sitting out in the open on a table where we would have easily seen them before. They will also borrow or temporarily move other small items, such as jewelry. As strange as it sounds the only way I've found to get them to relinquish the item is to chant "Please St. Anthony look around, there's something lost that needs to be found, my <name item>". If you're not comfortable calling on St. Anthony you could substitute a goddess or god name, but I've found the original charm to be the most effective.

In conclusion, always remember that dealing with faeries is not for the faint of heart. As you can see from learning about Pixies, the Fey have a strong sense of humor, but one that is very different from our own. It is best to be very cautious when dealing with them until you have more experience. Next month we will learn about Brownies and how to construct and maintain faery altars.

13 Ways to Celebrate Imbolc

by: Heather Evenstar Osterman

submitted by: CeCe

article

Regardless of what religion we grew up with, most of us have favorite memories of things we did every year for specific holidays. These traditions were what made our celebrations special. So what do you do when the holidays you celebrate now aren't the same ones you grew up with? How do you share the joys of Imbolc with your family?

Imbolc (or Candlemas/Brigid/whatever you choose to call this celebration) falls on February 2nd and is a time to honor the quickening of the earth and the first manifestations of spring emerging from winter. This Sabbat is sacred to the goddess Brigid in particular, and is a wonderful time to acknowledge your own creativity, expand your knowledge, and practice the healing arts. Here are my suggestions to get you started developing your own family traditions!

1. Help your kids go through all their clothes, toys, and books to find the unwanted and outgrown items. Donate everything to a charity that will give the items to children who need them.
2. Collect canned goods from family and friends to give to a food bank. Yule isn't the only time people are in need.
3. Go for a walk! Search for signs of spring. Take off your shoes and socks and squish your toes in the mud.
4. Open all the doors and windows and turn on every light in the house for a few minutes. Let the kids sweep all the old energies out the doors.
5. Lead the family on a parade around the outside of your home, banging on pots

13 Ways to Celebrate Imbolc

and pans or playing musical instruments to awaken the spirits of the land.

6. Make corn dollies and a cradle for them to sleep in.
7. Create a sun wheel out of stalks of grain and hang it on your front door.
8. Meditate as a family. Have everyone explore what it would feel like to be a seed deep in the earth, feeling the first stirrings of life. Lie on the floor and put out tendrils. Stretch and bloom.
9. Have your children hold some herb seeds in their hands. Talk to the seeds. Bless them with growth and happiness. Fill them with love. Plant an in-door herb garden.
10. Decorate candles with stickers, metallic markers, paint and anything else you can think of! Light your candles and give thanks to Brigid for her inspiration.
11. Help your kids make a special feast! Spicy foods and dairy dishes are traditional. Try Mexican or Indian cuisine. Top it off with poppy seed cake. Drink milk or spiced cider.
12. Set a fabulous dinner table with your candles, evergreen boughs spring flowers, dragons, sun symbols, or whatever says Imbolc to you. Use the good china.
13. Let your children make their beds in a special way to represent Brigid's bed. Go camp style with sleeping bags or build a makeshift canopy! Have sweet dreams...

The Magic in Birthstones

February

By: Rev. John Snodgrass, HP

The Amethyst



Chakra: the 7th Chakra, or Crown Chakra

Basic Color: a pale lilac to deep purple shades

Folklore and Magickal Uses

Amethyst is the recognized birthstone for February and the accepted anniversary stone often given during the sixth year of a marriage.

Because of its abundance around the world, it is readily available in all sizes and shapes, and it is durable and may be worn every day.

Among the folk legends of the ancient Grecians it is said that it will prevent intoxication when carried or worn on the person. Also according to same folklore, the amethyst is said to preserve chastity, dissolve negativity, and increase clairvoyance and intuitive wisdom.

The amethyst, through out other ancient mythologies, was used as the symbol for peace, personal protection and tranquility of the soul. Sleeping near a amethyst stone will engender good dreams and restful sleep patterns. While many other sources speak to us of its ability to prevent baldness – I'll have to let you know about this one in say 20 years or so - and as well as giving protection from treason and deceit, hence its use of it throughout history in royal crowns, headdresses, and jewelry.

The Magic in Birthstones

Other Stones useful for Aquarians

Modern Birthstone:	Amethyst
Traditional Birthstone:	Amethyst
Mystical Birthstone:	Bloodstone
Ayurvedic Birthstone:	Amethyst
Others:	Onyx, Moonstone

A listing of Star Stones of the whole Month

Aquarius (January 20 to February 18)

Birthstones: Amethyst, Opal, Moss Agate, and Garnet

Planetary Stone: Turquoise

Lucky Charms: Garnet

Talismanic Birthstone: Jasper

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Birthstones: Clear Quartz Crystal, Sapphire, Amethyst, and Bloodstone

Planetary Stone: Aquamarine

Lucky Charm: Amethyst

Talismanic Birthstone: Ruby

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The Crafty Witch-Imbolc Craft Ideas

Submitted by: CeCe

Candied Violets for a Springtime Cake

Violets are edible and very high in Vitamin A. A good way to serve violets is to make them into candy and serve them on white cake.

What you will need:

- violets (about twenty per cake)
- a cake
- white icing
- egg whites
- paint brush
- fine granulated sugar

Bake a cake and put white icing on the cake. Make sure that the violets have been rinsed and let sit to dry a few minutes on paper towels. Beat the egg whites until they are light and fluffy. Using the paintbrush, CAREFULLY paint egg white on each of the flowers. Sprinkle fine granulated sugar over the flowers until they are covered. Decorate the cake with the flowers, serve, and enjoy!

Pressed Flowers

Gather flowers from outside on a nice day. If the flowers are wet, you will have to let them air dry just a little before you press them. Press the flowers by placing them between the pages of heavy books. Old phone books are perfect for this. Make sure you place paper markers in the pages that have flowers so you will not have to go looking for them when you are done. Be sure not to use nice books or books that you are fond of as the flowers will often stain the pages. Once the flowers are in the books, stack the books on top of each other and place in an out-of-the-way spot. Check the flowers in one week. If they are not completely dry, leave them for another week. Flowers usually take about two weeks to dry. When the flowers are done you can make things with them such as bookmarks, stationery and cards.

The Crafty Witch-Imbolc Craft Ideas

To glue the flowers down, use a mixture of 1/2 glue and 1/2 water. Paint the backs of the flowers and glue them down. Then use some of the glue mixture to coat the flowers. You can make clear bookmarks by pressing the flowers between two pieces of laminate paper.

Candle Cans

Imbolc is a time to light many candles in celebration of the lighting of the world and the new warmth. Candle cans are a wonderful and safe way to decorate for this holiday.

You will need:

- tin can
- water
- hammer
- nail
- paper
- scissors
- pencil or crayon

Save tin soup cans or other tall metal cans to use as candle holders. Fill the cans almost to the top with water and freeze them in the freezer. Cut a piece of paper to fit exactly around the tin can so that it covers the entire can. Have the child draw a picture on the paper the way that they want it to look on the can using dots as if it you were making a dot-to-dot picture.. (example: stars, flowers, suns, moons, etc.) Once the picture is finished, wrap the paper around the frozen can. Take a nail (adults will need to do this for smaller children) and hammer it lightly over each dot on the picture, so that it will be transferred to the can. When finished, remove the paper and let the ice melt. Put tea lites inside of the tin can through the opening in the top so that they sit on the bottom of the can. The pictures drawn in dots on the can will glow with the light of the flame and will be projected onto the walls of a dark room.

The Crafty Witch-Imbolc Craft Ideas

Pine Cone Candle Holder

A very simple pine cone wreath can be made by gluing pine cones onto a wreath form cut from heavy corrugated cardboard. Use a small wreath form and small pine cones with a pillar candle placed in the middle for an attractive table decoration. Stick a little evergreen or holly in between the pine cones.

Winter Treats for Birds

If your yard has that dreary winter look, cheer it up with a tree decorated for the birds! String popcorn and cranberries. Hang scooped out orange halves filled with peanut butter and birdseed. Make suet balls and hang them in the mesh bags in which oranges and onions are packaged. Cut attractive shapes from paper plates, spread them with peanut butter and bird seed and hang them on your tree. Don't forget to put out some fresh water for the birds, also. Or put together a feeding station for the squirrels so that you can watch their antics through a window.

Color and Their Meanings

Submitted by: CeCe

A balance of all colors; Spiritual enlightenment, cleansing, clairvoyance, healing, truth seeking; Rituals involving lunar energy' May be substituted for any color candle.

~~**Yellow:** Activity, Creativity, unity; brings power of concentration and imagination to a ritual; use in rituals where you wish to gain another's confidence or persuade someone, or in rituals that require solar energy.

~~**Gold:** Fosters understanding and attracts the powers of cosmic influences; beneficial in rituals intended to bring about fast luck or money, or in rituals needing solar energy.

~~**Orange:** Creativity, ability to speak one's,

Color and Their Meanings

mind ambition, career matters and the Law, self-confidence. Solar color and also stands for Leo.

~~**Pink:** Promotes romance, friendship; standard color for rituals to draw affections; a color of femininity, honor, service, brings friendly, lively conversation to the dinner table.

~~**Red:** Health, passion, love, fertility, strength, courage, will power; increases magnetism in rituals; draws Aries and Scorpio energy.

~~**Silver:** Removes negativity and encourages stability; helps develop psychic abilities; attracts the influence of the Mother Goddess.

~~**Purple:** Power, success, idealism, psychic manifestations; ideals for rituals to secure ambitions, independence, financial rewards, or to make contact with the spiritual other world; increases Neptune energy.

~~**Magenta:** Combination of red and violet that oscillates on a high frequency; energizes rituals where immediate action and high levels of power or spiritual healing are required.

~~**Indigo:** Color of inertia; stops situations or people; use in rituals that require a deep meditational state; or in rituals that demand Saturn energy.

~~**Royal Blue:** Promotes laughter and joviality; color or loyalty; use to attract Jupiter energy, or whenever an influence needs to be increased.

~~**Light Blue:** Spiritual color; helpful in devotional or inspirational meditations; brings peace and tranquillity to the home; radiates Aquarius energy; employ where a situation must be synthesized.

~~**Blue:** Primary spiritual color; for rituals to obtain wisdom, harmony, inner light, or peace; confers truth and guidance.

Color and Their Meanings

~*~**Emerald Green:** Important component in Venusian rituals; attracts love, social delights, and fertility.

~*~**Dark Green:** Color of ambition, greed, and jealousy; counteracts these influences in a ritual.

~*~**Green:** Promotes prosperity, fertility, success; stimulates rituals for good luck, money, harmony, and rejuvenation.

~*~**Grey:** Neutral color useful when pondering complex issues during meditation; in magic, this color often sparks confusion; it also negates or neutralizes a negative influence.

~*~**Black:** Opens up the deeper levels of the unconscious; use in rituals to induce a deep meditational state, or to banish evil or negativity as in uncrossing rituals; attracts Saturn energy.

~*~**Brown:** Earthly, balanced color; for rituals of material increase; eliminates indecisiveness; improves powers of concentration, study, telepathy; increases financial success; locates objects that have been lost.

Daily Filler

Submitted by: CeCe

February 1 Candlemas Eve

Brigit, the Celtic Earth-Mother and goddess of fire, wisdom, poetry, and sacred wells, is honored on this day. In Ireland, offering of yellow flowers are made to the goddess at sacred wells dedicated to her. In ancient Greece, the three-day Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries began each year on this day in honor of the goddesses Ceres, Demeter, Persephone, and Proserpine.

Daily Filler

February 2

On this day, the Candlemas Sabbat is celebrated by Wiccans and Witches throughout the world.

Candlemas (which is also known as Imolc, Oimeic, and Lady Day) is a fire festival that celebrates the coming of Spring. New beginnings and spiritual growth are represented by the "sweeping out of the old," symbolized by the sweeping of the circle with a besom (a Witch's broom). This is traditionally done by the High Priestess of the coven, who wears a brilliant crown of thirteen candles on top of her head. In ancient Europe, the Candlemas Sabbat was celebrated with a torch-light procession to purify and fertilize the fields before the seed-planting season, and to honor and give thanks to the various deities and spirits associated with agriculture.

February 3

On this date, an annual ceremony called the Blessing of the Throats takes place to honor the healing powers of Saint Blaise and to magickally ward off throat ailments brought on by the winter's cold.

February 4

Throughout Japan the evil demons of winter are exorcised annually on this day with a festival called the Setsu-bun. Beans are placed in every corner of a family's house, and pointed branches and sardine heads are mounted over the doors. Centuries-old purification rites are performed by priests in all temples and shrines. Prayers are written on slips of paper and then cast from bridges into the rivers below.

February 5

On this date in the year 1962, the Great conjunction of the Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn occurred in the sign of Aquarius.

Daily Filler

On this day, the annual Feast of Ia is celebrated in honor of, and to invoke the power of, the Sacred Maiden of the Pagan mythos.

February 6

Throughout northern Japan, a centuries-old winter snow festival takes place each year around this time of the month. The ancient and beneficial spirits that bring life-sustaining water are honored at special shrines erected in huts resembling Eskimo igloos.

A festival in honor of the love goddess Aphrodite was held each year on this date in ancient Greece.

February 7

On this date (approximately), the annual spring fertility festival known as Li Chum is celebrated in China. Bamboo and paper effigies of a water buffalo (an animal which symbolizes "new life") are carried through the streets by a temple-bound procession. After reaching the temple, the effigies are set on fire in the belief that prayers for prosperity will be taken up to heaven by the rising smoke.

February 8

The annual nighttime ritual known as the Star Festival is celebrated on this date (approximately) in China. The stars that influence the fate of mankind are honored by the lighting of 108 small lanterns on a special altar, and prayers are offered to the sacred stars that governed one's birth.

February 9

In northern Norway, the Narvik Sun Pageant is held annually on this date in honor of the ancient Pagan goddess who rules over the Sun. The festival, which has been celebrated since **pre-Christian** times, begins at sunrise and continues throughout the day until the shadows of evening darken the sky.

Daily Filler

February 10

An ancient African festival marking the beginning of the fishing season and the New Year is celebrated annually on this day by members of the Kebbawa tribe of Nigeria. The ancient gods of their religion are honored and invoked, and traditional fish iverinations are performed. In pre-Christian times, the goddess Anaitis was honored on this day in the country of Persia (now Iran). She was a deity who was said to have possessed great powers over the Moon and the seas.

February 11

Each year on this date, millions of faithful men, women, and children make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady in Lourdes. A spring in the village of Lourdes, France, is believed by many to possess curative powers. The pilgrims bathe in the water in the hope that it will heal their illnesses and disabilities.

February 12

On this date in the year 1663, the infamous clergyman Cotton Mather was born in Boston, Massachusetts. (This is certainly one birthday no Witch would ever celebrate!) His writings and sermons condemning the practice of the Old Religion contributed greatly to the hysteria of the 1692 Salem Witch-hunt. Cotton Mather died in Boston, one day after his birthday, in the year 1728.

February 13

On this date, an annual holiday called the Parentalia was observed in ancient Rome. It lasted until the twenty-first of February and was a day for families to honor and commemorate their deceased loved ones, particularly their parents. During the week of Parentalia, all temples in Rome were closed and all wedding ceremonies forbidden.
Ancestral tombs

Daily Filler

were visited and offerings of wine and flowers were made to family ghosts.

February 14

Saint Valentine's Day. This is a day dedicated to all lovers, and the traditional time for Witches around the world to practice all forms of love magick and love divination.

This day is sacred to Juno-Lupa, the she-wolf goddess of the ancient Roman religion. In early times, she was honored annually on this day by a women's fertility festival and the sacrifice of a female wolf.

February 15

On this date in ancient Rome, a festival known as the Lupercalia (Feast of the Wolf) was celebrated to honor the god Lupercus and to mark the beginning of Spring. The festival which was a rustic ritual of both purification and fertility magick, also included the sacrifice of goats and dogs to the god Faunus (identified by classical writers as the horned goat-god Pan). During the orgiastic festival, young men would choose their sexual partners by drawing the names of young women out of a bowl.

February 16

In the distant past, a rite called the Devil's Dance was performed annually on this date (approximately) as part of the Tibetan New Year festival. Monks wearing grotesque masks would dance for hours as a village sorcerer exorcised demons and the evil influences of the past year with various magickal incantations.

February 17

On this day, according to Hindu religion and mythology, the fearsome goddess known as Kali was born and the world entered into

Daily Filler

the Kali Yuga (the "Evil Age"). Kali, the destroyer-goddess, was depicted with black skin, a hideous face, and four arms. In ancient times, human sacrifices were made to appease her and to satisfy her thirst for blood.

February 18

On this day, a festival of women known as the Spenta Armaiti was held annually throughout the country of Persia. Ancient fertility rites were performed by temple priestesses in honor of the goddess Spandarmat, and the goddess who dwells within all women was honored and invoked with special prayers and meditations.

February 19

On this date (approximately), the Sun enters the astrological sign of Pisces. Persons born under the sign of the Two Fishes are said to be telepathic, tolerant, sensitive, artistic, and often prone to daydreaming. Pisces is a water sign and is ruled by the planet Neptune. According to mythology, the goddess Minerva was born on this day (which is sacred to the Pagan deities Nammu and Nina).

February 20

On this date in the year 1882, the Society for Psychical Research was founded in London, England, by a group of prominent philosophers and physicists. It became Britain's leading organization for research into the world of supernatural phenomena and the paranormal.

February 21

In ancient Rome, an All Soul's Day ceremony known as the Feralia was held annually on this date at the close of the Parentalia festival. Family reunions were held and Lares (ancestral guardian spirits) were honored with prayers and offerings.

Daily Filler

February 22

On this day in the year 1917, Sybil Leek was born in Stoke-on-Trent, England. She achieved fame and success as a modern Witch, astrologer, and occult author. Her psychic predictions of the Kennedy assassinations and the election of Richard M. Nixon as president of the United States are documented. She passed away on October 26, 1982 in Melbourne, Florida.

February 23

On this date, the last festival of the ancient Roman year (the Terminalia) was celebrated annually in honor of the god Terminus, a deity who ruled over boundaries and frontiers. During the Terminalia, neighbors whose lands were divided and protected by Terminus would gather together and pour libations of wine, honey, and the blood of sacrificed pigs on their stone boundary-markers.

February 24

Shiva, the multifaceted Hindu god of destruction and renewal, is honored annually on this date (approximately) by a day of fasting, followed by an oil-lamp vigil known as the Shivaratri (Shiva's Night) which takes place at shrines dedicated to him.

February 25

In many parts of the Christian world, a joyous pre-Lenten celebration known as Carnival takes place annually on or around this date. In ancient days, orgiastic fertility rites and sacrifices of humans and animals to herald the arrival of Spring were common at this time of the year in many parts of the world.

February 26

Pentagram Night. As a symbolic gesture to reaffirm your dedication to the Craft of the Wise, dip your fingertip into a small cauldron pot filled with Yule-log ashes and then use it to draw the sacred symbol of the Witches' Pentagram (five

Daily Filler

pointed star within a circle) over your heart at the first stroke of midnight.

February 27

On this day in the year 1861, famous psychic and spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner was born in Kraljevic (which was part of Hungary at that time).

He possessed clairvoyant powers and communicated often with nonphysical entities. In 1902, he was appointed general secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, and in 1913, he established his own school for esoteric research. He died on March 30, 1925.

February 28

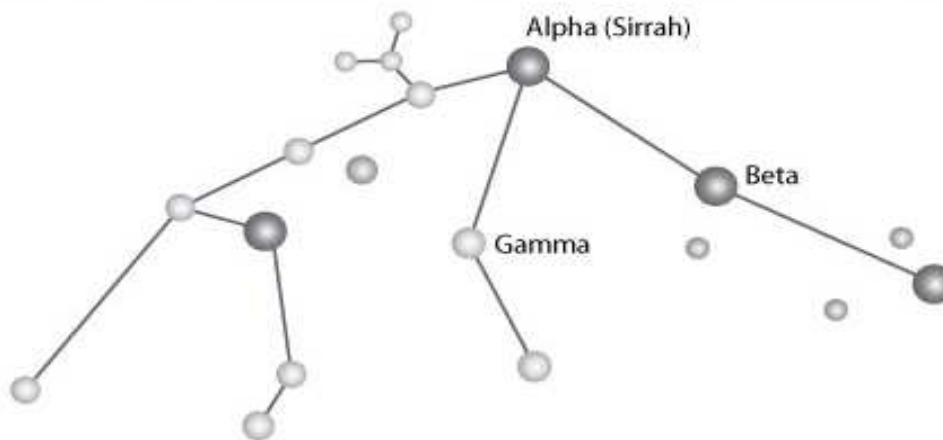
In ancient times, a Chaldean Sabbat known as the Sabbatu was celebrated each year on this date.

On this day of the year, the Earth-Goddesses Ceres, Demeter, Gaia, Ge, and Mauri are honored by many Pagans and Wiccans around the world. Also honored annually on this day is the ancient Pagan deity Zamyaz, who was worshipped and offered sacrifices by the ancient Chaldeans and Persians.

February 29

On this date in the year 1692, Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam, two young girls from Salem Village, Massachusetts, accused three local women of using the black arts of Witchcraft to torment and bewitch them. On the following day, Sarah Good, Sarah Osburne, and a West African slave named Tituba were arrested, marking the beginning of the infamous Salem Witch Trials of 1692. By the end of the year, when the trials were finally brought to a close, over 200 women and men had been arrested and jailed, 19 had been hanged at Gallows Hill, and one man had been pressed to death. According to folklore, this is a very unlucky day to have a love letter postmarked. It will lead to the breakup of your love affair or engagement.

Night Skies for February



Night Skies for February

Aquarius

Aquarius is another of the dim constellations in the night sky. Some of the names stars in this group are Sadalmelik (Alpha), Sadalsuud (Beta), Sadalachbia (Gamma), Skat, Albali, Ancha, and Situla. Sadalmelik means “lucky star of the king,” Sadalsuud means “luck of lucks.” The Arabians considered this a lucky constellation and the names of the prominent stars reflect this.

The constellation is known as The Water Bearer and was known this way in many cultures. Not surprising really as its arrival in the night sky came with the dawning of the New Year. Spring was on the way and hopefully with it, lots of rain to water the growing crops.

In Greek myth Aquarius was said to have poured out water from the heavens long enough that it drowned the earth. The two survivors of this great flood were Deucalion and Pyrrha. They walked the earth as the waters receded and finally appealed to an oracle for guidance. They were told to throw the bones of their mother over their shoulders.

They figured that this must be the bones of mother

Night Skies for February

earth. They picked up stones and threw them over their shoulders. As they did, people were created. Males by the stones from Deucalion and females from Pyrrha.

Astologically

Aquarians have a birth date between January 20th and February 18th. This is a Masculine sign. Their characteristics are assertive, independent, progressive, analytical, original and inventive, and they have strong dislikes and form firm opinions.

Their ruling planet is Uranus and their symbol is the waterbearer. Their lucky day is Wednesday and their lucky numbers are 1 and 7. Their stone is Amethyst and their color is electric blue.

Below is a general horoscope reading for Capricorn in January done by a friend of mine from The Grey School of Wizardry.

February Horoscope for Aquarius, by Matt Vossler

Night Skies for February

February belongs to change and that means Aquarius! With any change, timing is important, and Astrology deals with timing more than the other "soft" sciences. Interestingly, Aquarius is also the sign of Astrology. February is the time of year when winter has its last stand here in the Northern Hemisphere, and Mother Earth readies herself for new life in the spring.

February always has important dates that come along with it, namely Imbolc, Mardi Gras, and Valentine's Day and this year the 29th is Leap Day! February this year is also a special one, because it has a New Moon, Solar Eclipse on the 6th and then a Full Moon, Lunar Eclipse on the 20th. But more on all of this later.

February Highlights:

This February begins on a positive note. On Friday the 1st, when the things we enjoy seem to be increasing, it might be a good day to buy a lottery ticket, or at least perform a prosperity spell. Today's energies of increase are strong enough to work against the subduing effects of the waning Moon.

On the 2nd, the conclusion of Imbolc brings astrological configurations supporting this day's traditional themes of light or fire, and inspiration. This year, it is an especially good day to light a candle and make peace with our past as we look to the future.

On the 5th, the day of Mardi Gras or "Fat Tuesday," if we *have* made peace, more or less, with the past, actions we take now can bridge our past with a better tomorrow. It is also a good day for divination according to some folklore. Relationships with the opposite sex can be a little strained this afternoon. Self-improvement spells are called for this day.

The 6th brings a New Moon in Aquarius, and is also a powerful Solar Eclipse. At the personal level, especially for Aquarians, this day can

Night Skies for February

spark brilliant new ideas for projects that are close to your heart. Hang on to your hats! Couples, who were at odds with each other yesterday, should find common ground again this evening. Today is a good day for casting spells and holding ritual to promote new projects or to grow anything and everything, from money to creativity.

Moving on to the 10th of February. Here is a Sunday that was tailor made for dreaming and the perfect day to get away to be with yourself to meditate or read a good book. It is another good day for divination, especially when the intention is to help others.

The 13th is another day which might bring arguments or irritations between couples, but this will likely be softened by a peaceful Taurus Moon, unless you have young children, in which case, all bets are off!

Valentine's Day, the 14th, 2008, should be a very positive day that erases any ill feelings of the day before. Making up is oh so sweet! Cast a spell for romance today. Active thoughts bring positive action, and today, Women everywhere will take the prize!

On the 19th, in the middle of the Moon's two and a half day cycle through Leo, Aquarians may find themselves enamored with a Leo of the opposite persuasion. Leo is your opposite sign, and while opposites of the same sex often compete with each other, opposite signs of different sexes can find each other irresistible! This day also heralds the Sun's change into the sign of Pisces when the ideals of Aquarius become manifest through humanitarian deeds. This year, the 19th is truly a day to clean up any messy situations in your life, for the day lends energies for transformation, with an eye towards selflessness.

The 20th brings a "Quickening" Full Moon, Lunar Eclipse in the Earth sign of Virgo.

Night Skies for February

It is a dynamic day that requires cooperation and compromise. Any projects or ideas that you started around the New Moon of the 6th will likely now bear some of its first fruits. Count your blessings this day, and give thanks to the Universe or Deity for all the good things in your life.

The next day, on the 21st, you might be asking yourself, why was I being so grateful yesterday? For on this day, the stars may just remind you of something you want but cannot yet have to the full extent. But today is a mixed bag. You can make positive changes involving your home or family during the evening hours.

February 24th, is a Sunday when relationships are put to the test. Something or someone may be frustrating you, but if you can hold your temper during the day, this evening could have all the ingredients for love and romance. A spell of love and understanding is called for in the morning hours.

The 26th may find us dwelling on what we really love. By the evening, you may find the good feelings abound, with just a touch of intensity. Divination in the form of insight may be a side effect of this day when the moon travels through the sign of Scorpio.

The 29th of February 2008 is another Leap Day, the day that reconciles our yearly calendar with the actual timing of the Earth's transit around the sun. The last one was in 2004. Today is an Aquarian day, where rituals and spells for tolerance and unity are called for. On this Leap Day stay optimistic and kick off a weekend for doing something different or unusual with your family.

If timing isn't everything, certainly it is true that everything has its time! Belenus

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Thank you for reading my column this month! Look forward to seeing you next month and happy viewing!

Talin

The Norse Deities

Odin and Frigga, The All-Parents

By: Rev. John Snodgrass, HP

Odin, the All Father

Odin, the chief deity among the Norse pantheon, is the foremost of the Aesir. Odin, born the eldest of three sons of Bor and Bestla, is called the All-Father, for he is indeed Father of the Northern Gods. With Frigga, his wife, he is the father of Balder, Hod, and Hermod. He fathered Thor on the Goddess Jord; and the giantess Grid became the mother of Vidar.

Odin, although known as a God of War and Death, is also the God of Poetry and Wisdom. He hung for nine days, head downwards, pierced by his own spear, on Yggdrasil, the World Tree. Here he learned the nine powerful songs of magic, and won the Elder Futharc runes. Odin possesses the power to make the dead speak to question the wisest amongst them. His mead hall in Asgard is called Valaskjalf ("the shelf of the slain") where his throne Hlidskjalf is located. From this throne he observes all that happens in the nine worlds. Tidings from the world of men are also brought to him daily by his two ravens named Huginn ("Thought") and Muninn ("Memory"). He resides at times in Valhalla, where the slain warriors are taken and reside to feast with Odin and fight daily with each other to hone their battle skills, to await the final battle - Ragnarok.

Odin's magical possessions include the spear Gungnir, which never misses its target when thrown by him, the ring Draupnir, from which every ninth night eight new rings appear, and his eight-footed war horse Sleipnir. He is accompanied by two wolves Freki and Geri, to whom he gives his food because he only consumes nothing but mead. Odin has only one eye, which blazes like the sun. His other eye he traded for a drink from the Well of Wisdom, and gained immense knowledge. On the day of the final battle, Odin will be killed by the wolf Fenrir.

The Norse Deities

Frigga, the Queen of the Gods

Frigga (also called Frigg, "The Beloved"), wife of the powerful Norse God Odin, The All-Father and is thus the Mother of the Gods, is best known in her roles as the Goddess of Love, Marriage, and Destiny. She is the Sky Goddess, responsible for weaving the clouds (and therefore for sunshine and rain and the fertility of the crops). Frigga is also responsible for weaving the Fates of Gods and Mortals, It is she who sits daily and weaves the destiny of the Gods and Mortals alike with the threads given by the Norns to her. It is Frigga, often known to be a 'seer', ("one who can see and know the future"), who is credited with the development of Odin's runes into a tool for divination.

The Norse New Year's eve, the longest night of the year, is called "Mother Night" for it was on that night that the Goddess Frigga labored to give birth to Balder, the young Sun God. Thus the blessing of Frigga is still invoked for birthing women using a white candle that last burned during the Winter Solstice as a charm to ensure a safe delivery.

In addition to being called upon as the protector of women in labor, Frigga may also be called upon in all matters of fertility and when one is seeking answers to questions dealing with topics of love and marriage. She may also be called upon by those who were dying, to help ease their transition into the Summer Lands.

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Solitaire Imbolc Ritual

Submitted by: CeCe

On your altar should be placed a circle of 13 stones and, within the circle of stones, a circle of 13 candles. Within the circle of candles should be spread some maize - i.e. corn meal - and in that a waxen female candle to symbolize the Goddess on your altar. On the eastern side of the altar should be placed a small sheaf of grain with a candle inserted inside it.

You should dress in your usual ceremonial garb for Magickal rites or skyclad, as you prefer.

Retire to bathe in salt-water (use sea salt) before the ritual. As you do so picture the water cleansing the soul and spirit, just as it cleanses the body. When you have dressed, anoint yourself with a holy oil. When you have prepared yourself, sit in a dim quiet place and light a candle - ONE THAT IS NOT BEING USED IN THE RITES - and meditate on how at this time of year the Goddess in her fiery aspect AS LIGHT was welcomed back into the Temples and the Homes of the land.

Take this candle and walk slowly to your altar. Place it in the circle of the 13 candles. Then light the two altar candles, which are separate from the circle of lights also, and the incense. (Incense should be stick or powdered incense on charcoal in a swinging burner.) Then light all the quarter candles in the 4 directions, starting in the east and going clockwise.

Cast your circle in the usual manner, but Invoke the Goddess with the following:

"Sacred womb, giver of the secrets of Life, Mother of all that exists in the Universe, I ask your guardianship of this gathering and your assistance in my work. I am

Solitaire Imbolc Ritual

gathered in celebration of your gifts
and my work is most holy. SO MOTE
IT BE"

And Invoke the God in the following manner:

"Fire of the sky, guardian of all that
exists in the Universe, I ask your
guardianship of this gathering and
your assistance in my work. I am
gathered in celebration of your gifts
and my work is most holy. SO MOTE
IT BE"

(Continue with the circle casting if it is not already
finished)

Light the 13 candles and then the Goddess candle in
the center and say:

"Warm and quickening Light awaken
and bring forth beauty for thou art my
pleasure and my bounty LORD and
LADY OSIRIS AND ISIS" (or you
may substitute whatever names your
circle uses for the God and the
Goddess - or those you personally
prefer)

Reflect a moment on the coming of the light and
offer up the incense.

Say:

"O ancient Ones Timeless Goddess
and Sacred King who art the heralds
of springtime and it's bounties be with
me now in celebration

Hail to Osiris and Isis

Harvest giver and blessed Lady

Let this be a time and a place sacred
to your power and your beauty

SO MOTE IT BE"

Solitaire Imbolc Ritual

Light the candle in the sheaf of grain and hold it
up with the loaf of bread in the other hand and
say (or the cakes - whatever you or your tradition
uses for the cakes and wine/juice ceremony)

"My Lord and Lady, as the seed
becomes the grain, so the grain
becomes the bread, Mark the
everlasting value of our seasons
and their changes. "

Break a piece of the bread or cakes off and burn
it as an offering in the central candle.

Then say:

"In the deepest Icy Winter the
seed of the Earth lies deep within
the womb of the Great Mother.
The Spring brings the heat of the
Father and with their joining
comes new life. The completion
of the cycle brings food to the
children of the world. As I taste
the food I shall know the wisdom
of the cycles and be blessed with
the food of wisdom throughout
my life"

Consecrate cakes and wine/juice in the usual
manner and partake of them, but first raise your
chalice or drinking horn and say:

"Hail to thee ISIS

Hail to thee Osiris

For thou art blessed"

After this commune in meditation with the Lord
and lady for a while, then close the circle in your
usual manner.

Altars for Children

Submitted by: CeCe

Altars serve as physical anchors for our deities and spirit allies as well as focal points for worship and magic. We often go to our altars to meditate, to pray, and to make offerings to our Gods. Many Pagans couldn't imagine their homes without at least one altar. Some Pagans have altars in all the main rooms of the house. Others have one large family altar and smaller personal altars. And many Pagans don't like others to touch their personal altars. Altars are, after all, personal sacred space. So what about our children? Do they need altars as well?

Although children may not need a personal altar, they deserve one. As they grow older, they should have a concrete means of working with and honoring deities. The creation and maintenance of a personal altar provides a child with the opportunity to fully experience personal communication with the Divine.

The altar can be a very beneficial part of a Pagan child's upbringing. Allowing children their own sacred space teaches them that they need not go through another person to access the Divine. They can communicate directly, functioning, in a way, as their own priests and priestess.

An altar also allows for the development of responsibility and self-confidence. The objects a child places on his/her altar are special. The child will respect and take care of these things and, in turn, respect the special objects that belong to others. As they grow older and the altars become more complex, there is a gradual increase in trust and responsibility. A five year old may have a special feather or stone on his/her altar. A ten year old might have a breakable statue. A teen might be trusted with candles and incense.

You can approach your child with the idea of an altar, but if altars have been a natural part of your spirituality and religious practice, your child might eventually request one. The altar becomes another way for children to assert their independence. Although your child may request to set up

Altars for Children

a personal altar, he/she may not want you to do it for him/her, just help.

When setting up an altar for a child, help him/her pick a good spot in the bedroom or playroom. It should be easily accessible yet out of the way. A corner table or half of the dresser top is suitable. Clean the area and perform a cleansing and purification. You can do this together or provide some simple tools and encourage your child to do it alone. Give your child a compass to help determine the directions. Give him/her a little bit of dirt to sprinkle in the North, some loose feathers for the East, a flashlight he/she can turn on and off towards the South, and a little water to sprinkle at the West. Imagine how proud your child will be at performing this little rite all by him/herself.

When creating an altar for your child, try to be flexible. Children view the world differently than most adults. While a statue of Cernunnos might evoke the masculine energies you require, a child might choose a Spiderman action figure instead. A favorite Barbie doll might end up representing the Goddess. A special rock may go in the North point. A stuffed whale toy may go in the West. It may seem silly to a parent, but these objects are dear to children and they may embody the positive energies that children need. Your child might also change his/her altar frequently, depending on what feels right at the moment.

When it comes to the altar, allow your child's creativity to flow naturally. After all, this is his/her sacred space. If your altar can provide a tremendous sense of comfort for you, imagine what it can do for your child. By allowing your children personal altars, you are providing them with a healthy outlet with which to work through difficulties and offering them the ability to trust in themselves.

We deserve to feel fulfilled and joyful in our rites. So do our children. Allowing them to set

Altars for Children

up their own personal altars will allow them to express their spirituality. It also encourages learning and strengthens the spiritual path of the family.

Frequently Used Wiccan Words

Submitted by: CeCe

Athame (ATH-ah-may or Ah-THAM-ee) - Small double edged (usually dull) knife with a dark colored handle used to store and direct a witch's energy. Often used to cast the circle and bless the wine. Never used for cutting anything.

Balefire- A fire laid and lit during rituals for magickal and religious purposes.

Bane or Baneful- That which destroys life; poisonous, destructive, useless, evil , etc.

B.C.E- Before common era, non-religious equivalent of B.C.

Bell- Used to invoke the Goddess or the elements.

Beltane- Wiccan religious festival on April 30th that celebrates the fertility of the Earth and, to some Wiccans, the wedding of the God & the Goddess.

Besom - A broom used to clean the place where you worship and rid it of bad energies (not used for flying, we are not at Hogwarts here!).

Blessing- Act of putting energy upon some place, someone or something; it is a religious practice.

Boline (bolin) - A small one edge knife used to cut herbs only. Mostly used by herbalists. Usually has a white handle.

Book of Shadows or BOS- A blank bound book used to write rituals , spells , invocations, ect. you composed or that you found and would like to preserve.

Frequently Used Wiccan Words

Cauldron- A big cast iron pot used to cook , hold things such as tarot cards or flowers and even burn things in , such as peices of paper.

C.E- Equivalent of A.D.

Censer- A ritual tool which holds the incense used in almost every Wiccan rituals. Represents the air element.

Chalice- A sacred cup that holds the wine drunk during the ritual.

Charging- The act of moving energy into an object.

Circle (or magick circle)-A sphere constructed with personal power in which a Wiccan holds his ritual or conducts magick. The area inside of the circle is a place in which Wiccans can meet with their deities.

Circle casting- Process of moving positive energy into a large, non-physical sphere of power in which Wiccan rituals usually occur. Circle casting begins all Wiccan rituals.

Consecration- Act of conferring sanctity. In Wicca, tools used in magickal or religious rites are consecrated with energy during a specific ritual.

Coven- A group of Wiccans led by 1 or 2 leaders, that gather together for religous or magickal works; covens will often follow only one Wiccan tradition!

Craft, The- Wicca

Desosil- Clockwise

Divination- The magickal art of discovering the unknown by interpreting random patterns and symbols. Also incorrectly referred to as "fortune-telling".

Earth Power- Energy that exists within stones, herbs, flames, wind,

Frequently Used Wiccan Words

water and other natural objects.

Elements- The four (also can be considered five) building blocks to the universe, also an ancient magickal source of energy. (Air, Fire, Water, Earth sometimes Spirit)

Empowering- Act of moving energy into an object.

Esbats- Wiccan term to designate any other ritual than the Sabbats. Esbats are often held on full moons.

God- In Wicca the God is the male principle; the perfect complement to the Goddess. He is often identified with the sun; deserts and forests, and wild animals.

Goddess- Generally, she is seen as creatress of the universe; the ultimate source of fertility, wisdom, love, compassion, healing and power. Often associated with the Moon, seas and the Earth. The Goddess has been worshiped in many regions across the globe and throughout time.

Handfasting- Wiccan ritual of joining two human beings in a bond of love. (Similar to Christian marriage).

Herb- Virtually any plant used in magic.

Imbolc- Wiccan religious festival celebrated on February 1st or 2nd that marks the first stirring of spring.

Intent- In magick, the goal of the working.

Initiation- A ritual in which a person is introduced or admitted into a group, interest, skill or religion.

Invocation - An appeal or petition to a higher power.

Law of Three- A Wiccan belief that our actions, both positive and negative, will be returned to us three-fold.

Frequently Used Wiccan Words

Litha- The Summer Solstice, a wiccan festival and a traditional time for magick.

Lughnasadh- A Wiccan religious festival celebrated on August 1st that makes the first harvest.

Magick- The movement of natural (yet subtle) Energies to manifest positive, needed changes.

Maybon- wiccan religious festival celebrated on the autumn equinox that marks the second harvest.

Ostara- wiccan festival celebrated on the spring solstice that marks the beginning of the return of evident fertility of the Earth.

Pentacle- a ritual object (usually a circular piece of wood, metal or clay) upon which a five-pointed star is inscribed, painted or engraved.

Pentagram- An interlaced five-pointed star (one point at it's top) that has long been used as a protective device.

Personal Power- The energy which sustains our body.

Reincarnation- The doctrine of rebirth.

Runes- Stick-like figures, some of which are remnants of old Teutonic alphabets; others are pictographs.

Sabbat- Wiccan religious festival.

Samhain- Wiccan religious festival celebrated on October 31st which marks the last harvest and the preparations for winter.

Scrying- the process of gazing at or into a shiny object, flame, or water for the purpose of contacting the psychic mind.

Solitary Wicca- Wicca practiced, due to either choice or circumstances, by individual without group support.

Frequently Used Wiccan Words

Spell- Simple magickal rites (non-religious).

Tools- This term includes both physical objects used to facilitate Wiccan Rituals (athame, wand, pentacle, chalice..) as well as internal processes (meditation, visualization...)

Visualization- The process of forming mental images.

Wand- Usually you chose a piece of wood and arrange it the way you want and call it your wand. Used for invoking the Gods, casting the circle or blessing other tools.

Widdershins- Counter-clockwise ritual motion.

Wicca- A contemporary Pagan religions with spiritual roots in the earliest expressions of reverence of nature as a manifestation of the divine.

Wiccan- Of or related to Wicca.

Witch- One who practices witchcraft. (Some Wiccans also use this word to describe themselves.)

Witchcraft- The Craft of the witch.

Yule- Wiccan religious festival celebrated on winter solstice that marks the rebirth of the Sun.

Spell of the Month February

The “Bless This House” Spell

as found in Cal Garrison’s and *The Old Girls’ Book of Spells*

brought to you by Rev. Boudicca

February is a great time to cleanse and bless your home. You can use the following spell to bless a new home or to re-bless the home you have been living in. According to Cal Garrison:

Spell of the Month

If you’re moving into a new home, it’s a good idea to formally bless the space you’re in. You can do this on your own or turn it into a party. House blessings are in vogue right now. It’s a really nice custom, particularly because any move is a big psychological milestone, and the moving we do (especially we crones) is usually attended by major revelations about who we are and what we would like to become. Many of us are closing the door of the past, for one reason or another. The idea here is to set your intentions for your new life and honor the fact that this new place will be the “womb” that those intentions take root in.

What you will need for this Spell is:

- a small table to use as an altar
- your favorite colored tablecloth
- 2 cups of sea salt
- one white candle to represent each person in your home
- Rose oil
- Rose incense
- a bottle of red wine and glasses for each person present
- a big pot filled with:
 - 3 onions (peeled and chopped)
 - 3 lemons (peeled and chopped)
 - 3 garlic heads (peeled and chopped)
 - 3 cinnamon sticks
- a penny enough water to cover
- a piece of parchment or paper cut from a brown paper bag
- a pen
- a nail

The New Moon is great for a house blessing because it’s rays enhance any new beginning.

Before you do this spell, boil the pot full of water and all of the ingredients on the stove. Once it’s going, turn down the flame and let it simmer.

When you’re ready to start your house

Spell of the Month

blessing, gather all the other ingredients on the table. Take the two cups of sea salt and sprinkle a little into every corner of the house. Start at the North and move through the house in a clockwise motion going into every room. Light your incense and with the nail, inscribe each candle with the name of each person who will be sharing the house with you.

Starting with your own, anoint the candles wick to base with the rose oil and roll them in the cinnamon powder. Set them up in a circle on the table and light them from the same match if you can. Give yourself a minute, and as you soak up the candlelight and the aromas filling the atmosphere, say these words out loud:

*My search for harmony has brought me here,
After years of wandering I no longer fear,
What it might be like to live free and clear.
These walls will bear witness to my new start,
In my new home, in my new heart,
Nothing can destroy or take away,
The blessings being born in this house today.*

Now, crack open the wine and raise your glass to your new life. If you are alone, write down on the parchment whatever your spirit feels called to write. If you have company, pass the paper around and have everyone offer a word or a blessing. Anoint the paper with the rose oil, kiss it once, tear it into small pieces and put it into the pot on the stove. Stir everything well and when it feels “cooked” go outside with this “stew” and pour it around the front doorstep or around the perimeter of the house.

Go back inside and have a party and dance or just hang out by yourself, soaking up all the good vibes. When the flames are gone, take the candles and bury them outside the house.

When you feel that the herbs have absorbed all

Spell of the Month

the energies you can give them you can stop mixing. Return the unused energy to the Mother and withdraw your energy tendrils and close your Heart Chakra.

Now, grab your broom, sweep up all the salt and sprinkle it around the outside of the house.

Whatever intentions you gave birth to on this day have entered every nook and cranny of your new space. Get ready for your new life and be happy knowing that everything you wish for will probably come true.

If you try this spell, I would love to hear from you as to how it worked for you. Was it effective? Was it too complicated? How practical was the spell? Were you able to get all the supplies you needed? Is there any other information you would have liked to have had to help you with the spell?

If you have any questions or you would like more information, you may contact me at revboudicca@yahoo.com

The Full Moon of February

The Full Snow Moon

by Rev. Boudicca



February's moon comes this year, between Imbolc

The Full Moon of February

(Candlemas) and Ostara. Therefore, it is influenced only in a minor capacity by each of these Sabbats. What is a major influence on this month's Full Moon is the fact that there is a lunar eclipse occurring at the time it goes full. The Moon will go full at 10:30 pm EST, while the lunar eclipse will occur about three minute prior to that. In addition to the eclipse, the moon will also be void of course starting at 12:52 pm EST but will enter Virgo at 7:06 pm EST. Needless to say, any magickal workings done before 7 pm may have unwanted results.

Given the energies afoot during this moon, it is a wonderful time to work on your meditation skills and to meditate on changing those things within you that you see need changing. Divination may be employed at this time, but it should be done within a protective circle as the energies of this moon may cause things to go askew.

According to Magenta Griffith in *Llewellyn's Witches' Datebook 2008*, "this Moon is not good for most ritual work—the final aspect of Moon square Mars could bring conflict—but the energy of the eclipse during this Full Moon makes it good for a quiet meditative ritual to bring out your hidden depths. With the Moon in Virgo helping put your mental and emotional house in order, a ritual for self-examination and self-expression is appropriate, as is work to break bad habits."

There are many forms of divination that one may use at this time. I offer some suggestion here from Azrael Aryn K and Amber K's book *Candlemas* (ISBN 0-7387-0079-7). Pyromancy, the art of divination with fire. This would be especially appropriate as the month of February and Candlemas are fire festivals. Water divination using melted wax in water. Bibliomancy which uses the bible as a divination tool. Tarot reading with the Goddess Brigit. Casting of stones or lithomancy. And, of course divination with either a crystal orb or a magickal black mirror.

Since the heaviest snow usually falls during

The Full Moon of February

this month, native tribes of the north and east most often called February's Full Moon, the Full Snow Moon. Some tribes also referred to this Moon as the Full Hunger Moon, since harsh weather conditions in their areas made hunting very difficult. It is often called the Storm Moon or the Ice Moon as well.

Folklore tells that February's Full Moon is sometimes called the Hunter's Moon because early hunters would track game during the light of this moon. It was important to be able to gather as much game as possible to keep the tribe well fed during the long winter months. Fields have been harvested and animals are coming out of the forest to feed upon the leavings in the cleared fields, making it easier for the hunter to see them in the light of the moon.

In Rome, the festival of the Day of Tacita (the silent goddess), is celebrated on the 20th. This is a good time to meditate with Tacita as she is the goddess who can help you to avert harmful gossip. In China (Taiwan), they honor Kuan Yin on the Full Moon on the 21st.

The Disting-tid is celebrated at this time as well. This is the Norse "charming of the plows". It is a time when the farmers cleanse and bless their tools. It is also a good time in which to cleanse and re-consecrate your magickal tools. But. . .as the Moon is in flux on the 20th, you should perform this ritual cleansing and consecrating on the 19th or wait for the eclipse to pass instead.

During the month of February, it is also advantageous to cleanse your home. . .both physically and spiritually. You may want to call in someone who has had experience in exorcizing and cleansing homes of unwanted energies. Or you may want to do this yourself.

Not only do you want to cleanse and bless your home at this time, but you want to take this time to re-dedicate yourself to your patron Deity. February is a time for re-dedications and initiations.

The Full Moon of February

Some correspondences you can use are:

Nature Spirits: house faeries, both of the home itself and of house plants

Herbs: balm of Gilead, hyssop, myrrh, sage, spikenard

Colors: light blue, violet

Flowers: primrose

Scents: wisteria, heliotrope

Stones: amethyst, jasper, rock crystal

Trees: rowan, laurel, cedar

Animals: otter, unicorn

Birds: eagle, chickadee

Deities: Brigit, Juno, Kuan Yin, Diana, Demeter, Persephone, Aphrodite

Power Flow: energy working toward the surface; purification, growth, healing. Loving the self. Accepting responsibility for past errors, forgiving yourself, and making future plans.

Many thanks to Dorothy Morrison and her wonderful book "Moon magic" as well as D.J. Conway's book "Moon Magick."

February 08 Horoscopes

By Rev Aziel



Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18)

Expect a general improvement in your circumstances this month! A faithful friend, someone proven to be a thoughtful and helpful person, has your best interests at heart. This is a time for true friendship - you will need to forget old wounds. You will receive a welcome gift, most possibly a peace offering or gesture of affection, but keep in mind that affection is a two way street. You will also experience joy and a sense of relief that something painful has ended. To continue on this upward trend though, don't allow your standards to slip and don't overindulge.

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Have patience and your anxieties will eventually fade.

Key Words: Clover

Lucky Numbers: 2, 32, 22, 20, 11



Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)

All matters of love and romance play a key role for you this month. A fickle lover or seducer, someone who is a charmer with knack of getting away with it, is on your horizon. Be wary, for this person shows only one side of their character. They could be a wonderful ally but dangerous enemy. Time is an important factor this month. You will need patience to resolve your difficulties. Take a break from routine or much needed holiday to gain personal satisfaction and new self-knowledge. Don't allow confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty to overwhelm you.

Key Words: Heart

Lucky Numbers: 24, 13, 20, 17, 22



Aries (Mar 21-Apr 19)

February is a month for wishes come true! However, you need to be on guard for not is all as it seems... Be wary of deceiving yourself into believing what you want to believe and disregarding the facts. You have a reliable and helpful friend, but you will need to let past emotional wounds heal. This is a delicate

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situation, but your problems are temporary. Handled well, the situation will enhance your reputation and open new doors. Will you create a feud or rise above the situation and prove to be the better person? Now is a time for change – resistance will only cause feelings of disillusionment and pointlessness.

Key Words: Coffin

Lucky Numbers: 8, 6, 3, 5, 34



Taurus (Apr 20-May 20)

A time of forced learning awaits you. Overly entertaining feelings of being trapped, unloved and restricted could lead to a heated argument between friends and separation from loved ones. There is a warning of danger ahead, so seek professional advice before moving ahead with business plans. Tighten your belt, be thrifty, work hard, pay attention to use of cash and make slow and steady effort towards your specific goals. You do have reliable friends that can assist you, so don't be boastful or pompous which could reopen old wounds of envy and resentment.

Key Words: Mouse

Lucky Numbers: 33, 23, 27, 6, 44



Gemini (May 21-Jun 21)

When financial worries come knocking this month, don't panic – stay calm – look for advice.

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While February does hold a warning for your personal and domestic life, finances, and career, there is a glimmer of light at end of tunnel. Don't become complacent and your anxieties will eventually fade. Avoid get rich quick schemes and shady characters. Thoughtless words and actions can have serious and far-reaching consequences so refrain from making promises that you won't be able to keep. Have patience and you will receive some unexpected good news and a general improvement in your circumstances.

Key Words: Tower

Lucky Numbers: 19, 18, 2, 5, 1



Cancer (Jun 22-Jul 22)

This month, your problems are in the passing phase. You could be the victim of malicious gossip intended to ruin your reputation and spoil your prospects. Don't entertain self-questioning doubts, regrets, and grief. Stay calm, make necessary sacrifices, employ greater efforts, and maintain a shrewder outlook and the danger should pass. Concentrate on creativity for good fortune in love, affectionate friends, and a happy family life. Make use of your intuitive, understanding, and sympathetic nature. Don't forget that you love social life, fun, laughter, and are adept at making small talk.

Key Words: Tears

Lucky Numbers: 6, 12, 27, 19, 17

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Leo (Jul 22-Aug 22)

Now is the time to ditch the past and make fresh start. The wind of change is blowing and cannot be resisted. Discard outworn and useless ideas. Your leadership abilities have influence over others in a profound way. Help is available whether assistance is needed or not – don't refuse it because of being too independent. A difference of opinion about moving forward and both points of view will be inflexible to extreme although a period of stalemate is reached and may require intervention by outsider for resolution. Don't forget that you are respected by friends and colleagues although you might be unaware of esteem in which you are held.

Key Words: Assistance

Lucky Numbers: 29, 4, 22, 28, 27



Virgo (Aug 23-Sept 23)

February is the month for solving existing problems and resolving old enmities. Good news comes from friends or family – it may be the return of a prodigal relation or someone who has been out of contact for a long period of time. Happiness and a congenial atmosphere are shared with special people. This is the month for passion and romance. Avoid making unrealistic promises. Be more self-reliant than you have been in the past as leaning on friends or family for assistance could cost close relationships which suffer under the strain. Opportunities and invitations are on

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the way as this is a time of promise and wisdom.

Key Words: Lady

Lucky Numbers: 37, 1, 28, 30, 46



Libra (Sept 24-Oct 22)

A respite from the trials and tribulations of life is on your horizon. You will find a breathing space, a chance to slow down where you can reassess your position and recover depleted energies after experiencing a turbulent and overly emotional situation. The best thing to do is keep cool against odds and provocations. Avoid feelings of being powerless by convincing others of rightness of your actions. Caution against making far-reaching business deals as your judgment is likely to be faulty when heated imagination takes place of solid facts. There is the promise of great success in the future after a period of persistence.

Key Word: Friction

Lucky Numbers: 33, 49, 27, 6, 26



Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21)

February holds the ending of a dispute and the readiness to forgive and forget for Scorpio. Abandon unrealistic expectations and bring things back to basics. Something that was once precious might be drawing to a close – the end of love affair or the time to let go of long held ambition that once meant a lot to you. There is a temporary setback after a period of mourning and self-doubt, however good news comes from friends or

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family. Take care in business dealings and have patience in speculative ventures. You gain a new enthusiasm for hobbies or creative enterprises.

Key Word: Man

Lucky Numbers: 28, 6, 46, 2, 34



Sagittarius (Nov 22- Dec 21)

Financial good fortune awaits you. Practicality is your key to success. Approach all problems with a firm grip on the realities of life. Get plenty of rest and recuperation after strenuous efforts and don't allow your success to go to your head. There is a warning not to take risks with financial matters - knuckle down to practicalities and trouble will be short lived. You will meet new people who will have positive influences in the future - could be indicative of the coming together of two people in romantic sense or formation of business partnership or opportunity for good job. You will experience improvements in friendships, romance and career prospects.

Key Word: Key

Lucky Numbers: 33, 12, 4, 7, 36



Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19)

February holds good fortune in love, affectionate friends, and happy family life for Capricorn. A frustrating situation that has gone on for long time urges thought before action. You could experience troubling news or the uncertainty how to respond to a certain situation. When in doubt – do nothing – wait and see what happens next. A

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thoughtful and helpful friend has your best interests at heart. Concentrate on creativity this month. Be wary of a fickle lover or seducer. Take a break from routine or a much needed holiday.

Key Word: Birch

Lucky Numbers: 11, 17, 10, 2, 24

Imbolc Recipes

Submitted by: Umbramyst

Magickal kitchen recipes for Groundhogs day or Imbolc/Candlemas should include red, yellow and orange foods visualizing the colors reaching to the heavens. Also spicy and hot foods in honor of the Sun. Utilizing herbs like garlic and chili peppers are suitable, as are curried dishes.

Honey-Apple Chicken (Game Hen or Rabbit)

Until the twelfth century, the Gauls, and probably the Britons, roasted their meat on a spit rather than baking or broiling it in an oven. This recipe would have been used for spit roasting, with a pot of lard next to the spit for basting. It can be made in many different ways for a great versatility for a basic recipe.

1 Apple - peel, core, and dice (dried for authenticity)

1 Onion – chopped coarsely

1 tblsp. Salt – sea salt adds a nice touch

1 tsp. Pepper (not essential, but adds flavor)

1 Chicken, 4 to 6 Game Hens (can be put in roasting pan around pheasant, rabbit, beef, etc.)

4 tblsp. Butter – split into two parts

4 tblsp honey – split into two parts

Toss apple and onion with the salt and pepper until well mixed. Stuff the mixture into the meat (fowl or rabbit) or place around the meat (beef or pork) in the roasting pan. Melt half the butter and honey together to baste the meat with when cooking.

Imbolc Recipes

Roast about 1-1/2 hours (depending on quantity and kind of meat) at about 325 degrees, basting halfway through cooking. Cover for moist meat and uncover for the last 15 minutes to brown. Baste again when you take it out and let it sit for a few minutes to rest. You can use the other half of the honey butter to put on bread.

Main part of recipe from “Candlemas – Festival of Flames” by Amber K & Azrael Arynn K

Sunshine in Winter

To some, the turnips by themselves have a slightly bitter aftertaste. Add a little something sweeter like apples, pears, carrots, or honey to decrease the bitterness.

1/2 lb carrots
1-1/2 lb turnips or parsnips

Peel and slice the carrots and nips. Boil separately in lightly salted water. Strain each, mash or puree together. Add butter, salt and pepper to taste.

From “Candlemas – Festival of Flames” by Amber K & Azrael Arynn K

Potato Bread

1 c. Potatoes (mashed)
1 tsp. Salt
2 tblsp Butter (melted)
1/2 c flour
small pieces of cranberry or other fruit (optional)

Put potatoes, salt and butter in a bowl and mix well. Add flour to make into workable dough, adding more flour if needed. You can add some small pieces of dried cranberries or another fruit if you like, the amount depends on your tastes.

Imbolc Recipes

Roll out into a 1/2 inch thick circle, transfer to a baking sheet, and cut into 6 to 8 wedges, but don't separate. Bake at 450 degrees until golden brown. Or cook on a griddle, turning once so they are golden brown on both sides. Serve with butter. 1- 8 servings depending on your appetite.

Snow Oranges

When properly prepared this dish should look like the sun rising off the snow. To give a more dramatic effect make a pattern of some type with the orange slices. The kids love doing this one too.

2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
1/2 c. cold water
1 (12 oz) can mandarin oranges, (drained - reserve the syrup)
2-1/2 c. Sugar
3 c. Whipped Cream

In a medium-sized bowl, dissolve the gelatin in the cold water. Add water to the syrup to make 2 cups. Combine the syrup and sugar in a medium-sized saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add to the gelatin and stir until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Cool to lukewarm.

Slowly add the whipped cream to the gelatin. Pour into a chilled 9 X 9 pan. Garnish with orange slices, pushing them down so that they are just visible through the surface. Chill. Makes 8 servings

Curried Rice

3 tblsp Oil
1 Onion (chopped fine)
1 c. long-grain Rice
2 tsp. Curry Powder
1/2 tsp. Salt
2 tblsp Butter
1/2 c. Raisins
2 c. Chicken Broth

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Butter a 1-1/2 quart casserole dish. Heat the oil in a skillet, add the

Imbolc Recipes

onion and cook until soft. Stir in the rice and cook stirring for 3 minutes. Add the curry powder, salt, butter, and raisins and cook 1 minute more. Transfer to casserole, pour in the chicken broth, stir, cover, and bake for 1 hour.

Tomato Salad

6 Tomatoes (diced)
3 stalks Celery (chopped)
2 Red Peppers, sweet (sliced)
2 Cucumbers (sliced)
2 med. Onions, purple (sliced)
1 c. Italian dressing
1/4 tsp. Garlic (minced)
1/4 tsp. Basil (dried)
1/4 tsp. Oregano (dried)

Combine the tomatoes, celery, pepper, cucumbers, and onions in a medium sized bowl. Mix the Italian dressing, garlic, basil, and oregano in a small bowl. Pour over vegetables; toss. Cover; refrigerate at least 12 hrs before serving. Makes 4 servings.

Purification Mead (nonalcoholic)

1 qt. Water
1 c. Honey
1 Lemon (cut into slices)
1/2 tsp. Nutmeg
Juice of 1/2 Lemon
Salt (just a pinch)

As you slice the lemon, smell its purifying fragrance. Visualize it. Place the water, honey, lemon slices, and nutmeg into a stainless steel or glass pot. Scum will begin to form on the surface of the water. Skim this off with a wooden spoon as it rises. When the liquid is clear, add the salt and the juice. Strain and cool. Drink at room temperature or cold. This is a replacement for Mead (Honey Wine) that little kids can drink too, but still get the purifying qualities like Mead.

(Most of these recipes I have had for a long time and if I got them out of a book, I don't remember what book I got them out of. Only the newer ones have it noted where they came from.)

Imbolc Ritual

Submitted by: CeCe

Imbolc is the holiday that honors the Goddess slowly turning the Wheel of the Year back to spring. It marks the Sun's growing strength. The days grow longer and in many places we begin to see the first signs of spring. In fact, Imbolc is a Celtic term for spring. In the Irish language, it means "in the belly" (i mbolg), referring to the pregnancy of ewes. Another name is Oimelc, meaning "ewe's milk."

Like many Celtic festivals, Imbolc celebrations centered on the lighting of fires. Fire was perhaps more important for this festival than others as it was also the holy day of Brigid ("the exalted one"), the Celtic goddess of the fires of inspiration, the hearth, and the forge. She is celebrated at Imbolc because it is she who brought spring to the land and the lighting of fires celebrated the increasing power of the Sun over the coming months. Imbolc is a Sabbat of fertility, inspiration, healing, and purification.

Winter was a harsh time for our pagan ancestors, often marked with disease and malnutrition. For them the success of the new farming season was of great importance. Imbolc rituals were performed to harness divine energy that would ensure a steady supply of food until the harvest six months later. It's no wonder then that Imbolc customs are designed as acts of sympathetic magic to lure back the Sun and speed up the coming of the warm spring. With this in mind, here are some ideas to help you celebrate Imbolc with your family.

Create an altar

Imbolc is a festival of light, reflecting the lengthening of the day and the hope of spring. White, the color of light and milk, appears predominantly. Use a white altar cloth, add white and yellow flowers and candles. Make candles using an easy candle making kit from your local craft store. Use votives or tea lights in glass jars that the kids can decorate. Be absolutely out of the question, use strings of holiday lights or make candles out construction paper.

Imbolc Ritual

Have a bardic night

Remember that Brigid is the goddess of the fires of inspiration and patroness of poets. Plan an evening of family fun full of storytelling, music, and dance. Play drums and other musical instruments. Let your children read you their favorite poems. Share your favorites with them. Take the opportunity to teach your kids about Brigid.

Purify

Many feel that human actions are best when they reflect those of nature, so as the world slowly springs back into action it is time for the small tasks that are neglected through the busy year. The concept of spring-cleaning comes from Imbolc. This is the time of year to go through the closets, attics, basements, and so forth. Give away clothes and toys that have been outgrown. Cleanse and consecrate the house from top to bottom. Get the kids involved by encouraging them to donate, letting them ritually sweep with child-size brooms, and sprinkle areas with salt or herbal if you haven't already, it's a great time to teach the kids about charity.

Turn on the Lights

Turn on every single light in your home, from the bright kitchen lights to the closet lights and the smallest nightlights. Make it a game for the kids. Challenge them to find all the lights.

Wake up the land

Lead the family on a parade around the outside of your home, banging on pots and pans or playing musical instruments to awaken the spirits of the land.

Get cooking

Have a special meal featuring traditional foods or ingredients like milk and grains. Try lamb stew,

Imbolc Ritual

honey cakes, poppy seed bread, scones, muffins, and custard. Decorate your table with white flowers and candles. Remember, it doesn't have to be dinner. Have a special breakfast or brunch.

Imbolc is the cross-quarter festival that heralds the start of the spring quarter of the year and the end of the winter quarter. May Brigid inspire you as you herald the potential of spring together with your children.

Imbolc

Submitted by: CeCe

Pronounced: (Im-bulk)

Greater Sabbat

"Candlemans" "Imbolg (Im-bulg)" "Feast of the Virgin"

History/Meaning: This is the festival of lights and most of all it celebrates the rebirth of the Lord. Imbolc is the festival of the lactating sheep. Herd animals have either given birth to the first offspring of the year, or their wombs are swollen with the new births to come. This is a time of new beginnings. It is the time of blessing of the seeds and consecration of agricultural tools.

Symbolism: It is a time of growth and renewal

Honors: The Maiden and the Virgin Goddesses

Decor: White flowers, Besoms, Sunflowers and Candles

Foods: Pumpkin seeds, Sunflower seeds, Poppyseed Cakes, Muffins, Scones, Breads, all Dairy Products, Peppers, Onions, Garlic, Raisins, Spiced Wines and Herbal Teas.

Herbs: Angelica, Basil, Bay Laurel, Blackberry,

Imbolc

Wisteria, Celandine, Coltsfoot, Heather, Iris, Myrrh, Tansy, Violets, and all white or yellow flowers.

Colors: White, Pink, Green, Red, Yellow and Brown

Incense: Basil, Bay, Wisteria, Cinnamon, Violet, Vanilla, Myrrh.

Stones: Amethyst, Bloodstone, Garnet, Ruby, Onyx, Turquoise.

~*~* *How can a modern witch celebrate Imbolc?*
~*~*

Lighting candles around your home

This is a wonderful time to search out new additions to your ritual tools and altar, just be sure to bless each item and cleanse it before using it... you dont know what kind of magick it has been used for if it has been in the hands of someone else...

Making of Brideo'gas and Bride's Beds (see below)

Take a walk outside, listening to the new sounds of spring, and basking in the warm sunlight. Take careful caution not to disturb the new sprouting plants and young animals .

Fertility rituals are very common to be preformed during the times of Imbolc.

~*~**What is a Brideo'gas?*~*~*

Straw Brideo'gas (corn dollies) are created from oat or wheat straw and placed in baskets with white flower bedding. Traditionally young girls then carry the Brideo'gas door to door, and gifts are bestowed upon the image from each household. Afterwards at the traditional feast, the older women make special acorn wands for the dollies to hold, and in the morning the ashes in the hearth are examined to see if the magic wands left marks

Imbolc

as a good omen. Brighid's Crosses are fashioned from wheat stalks and exchanged as symbols of protection and prosperity in the coming year. Home hearth fires are put out and re-lit, and a besom is place by the front door to symbolize sweeping out the old and welcoming the new. Candles are lit and placed in each room of the house to honor the re-birth of the Sun.

~*~***How do you make a Brideo'gas?**~*~*

Materials: 1-peice Wooden Clothespin, Red, Yellow, or Brown Yarn, 1 White Pipe Cleaner, Several Scraps of White Material, Black and Red Markers, Scissors, Glue, Gold Glitter.

Take a scrap of white material, (silk, satin, cotton, etc.), and cut out a 6" circle. In the center of the circle cut a hole large enough to poke the "head" of the clothespin through. Fold the circle in half and cut along the fold from both perimeters to the center hole, leaving approx. 1/8 inch between each slit and center hole. Dab "neck" of clothespin with a very small amount of glue, and push clothespin "head" up through the center hole in the material. Cut appropriate length of pipe cleaner to make arms and slide up through the slit in the clothespin until it is pushed up to the end of the slits on both sides of the material. Gather the material tight around the clothespin just under the arms, and tie off with a small piece of string or yarn. Glue a couple of short pieces of yarn to the clothespin head and make eyes and mouth with markers. Finish with dabs of glue and gold glitter around the white wedding dress. A bridal veil glued to the yarn hair is optional. Explain to the children how the Goddess is a sacred bride, pure and renewed, waiting to be re-united with her consort the God.

~*~* **What is a Bride's Bed?**~*~*

The Bride's Bed appears to be a popular in some

Imbolc

modern celebrations of Imbolc. This is basically a small basket, adorned with flowers and objects representative of the Goddess. The Corn Dolly is placed into the "bed", and given a wand, tipped with an acorn or other large seed, and this phallic imagery is intended to represent the aspect of the ritual. Candles are lit to each side of the "bed", and the symbolic "God" and "Goddess" can then be further enchanted.

Tips For Wiccan Teens

Submitted by: CeCe

Here will be posted various aproches to make Wiccan teens' life easier than it is these days. I swear all you teens out there, I actually know what I'm talking about y'all !!!!

- * Meditate before doing your homeworks; it helps you concentrate while doing it.
- * Drink peppermint tea before doing homework, it calms me down from all the stress of the previous hours.
- * Listen to relaxing music while working on your homework, not too loudly! I know when I do mine I pop my cd in and adjust the volume until i can barely hear it and it helps me concentrate a bit better.
- * Listen to music to while trying to fall asleep. I know I pop in Ozzy's The ozzman cometh and I swear that I sleep ten times better! (My mother laughed at me when I told her that Ozzy's songs made me go to sleep faster. :P)
- * Go to your local public library and check out some of Scott Cunningham's work. Read about 20 minutes before going to sleep; it tires your eyes out and makes you fall asleep faster. :P)

Tools in a Magical Kitchen

Submitted by: Umbramyst

Cups, Bowls, and Pots

The earliest form of food container was cupped hands or whatever was handy that held the food without burning the fingers. A pieced of wood or maybe a flat rock, I would guess whatever worked at the time. Later leather was shaped into holders for liquids and solid foods. Animal stomachs and intestines were used also if nothing else was around. In some parts of the world baskets were tightly woven into bowls and storage units. Clay was also shaped into bowls, but needed heat to firm it up and prolong its life. Gourds and wooden bowls were also good. Eventually metal vessels were starting to be made which varied from steel and copper, to bronze, silver and gold.

Earlier cultures identified pots as a symbol of the Great Mother. This is almost a universal concept around the world. Any type of cup or bowl can be used in magic. Some people feel that you cannot use plastic and aluminum. Earth colors (brown, beige, and white, etc) are the most appropriate. If intent is suppose to be most of what our work, then it shouldn't really make a lot of difference as to what you use. As long as it works and feels right for you.

The Oven

The oven is another symbol of the divine, it encloses and performs the act of the transformation process (cooking), and it is warm and bright. Many different cultures have used many different types of ovens over the centuries. In the Middle East, mud-brick ovens were used, North America and in Polynesia, earthen ovens were used. Some cultures honor the Goddess as the oven, like the Goddess Fornacalia of ancient Rome. The male God has also been honored in different cultures. The Chinese see the male aspect of Deity within its sun-like warmth for the oven. In Europe it wasn't until the eighteenth century that the oven was commonly used. Before that the cauldron was used, kind of like a

Tools in a Magical Kitchen

portable oven. Since the oven's purpose is to retain heat from burning fuel and to supply an even temperature, a gas or electric oven can also be used. Microwave ovens work on a different principle for heating so it would not really be appropriate for intense Magickal food working to cook with.

The Cauldron

The cauldron goes in step with Witches in Hollywood and in popular imagination. In truth cauldrons were once common cooking pots used throughout Europe by everyone. They were made of iron and marked with ribs used for measuring and stood on three long legs. The stockpot that we all love to use got its beginning as a cauldron. The cauldron's association with Witches derives from the infamous "three Witches" scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Brewing things like teas in smaller cauldrons was not unusual in the sixteenth century. It was the type of cooking that the three Witches were doing in *Macbeth* that attracted the public's attention.

Today the cauldron is honored as a symbol of the Mother Goddess, just like bowls, jars, and pots have been. You can still buy the three-legged cast-iron cauldron for decoration and to use for other purposes, it can be difficult to find one that is safe to use for cooking though. I'm not too sure I would really want to try to use one for cooking in this day unless you have lots of time. It's takes a long time to boil water in a large cauldron.

Plates and Patters

Plates in the forms of flat pieces of wood and stiff leaves were probably used before bowls. It is easier on the fingers and can hold more food in one place than your hand can and it can leave both hands free to use. Plates are ruled by the sun and element of earth and represent the physical world, money and abundance. Any plate made of natural materials can be used for Magick.

Tools in a Magical Kitchen

Spoons

The spoon is essentially a bowl with a handle. Spoons have been used for thousands of years. It is ruled by the moon and the element of water.

Forks

The first forks were probably nothing more than forked sticks. Forks used to be used solely for noneating purposes like spearing fish, working with hay, and digging. It was introduced into Europe in the eleventh century and it took five hundred years for it to gain much widespread use. Not until late in the seventeenth century did most Western peoples use forks, before that they ate with their fingers. The fork is ruled by Mars and the element of fire. Bent forks have been used in Europe in protective rituals and buried in gardens and in garden walls to ward off negativity.

Knives

Knives used to be made by flaking flint making them out of certain stones like jasper and obsidian and into finely edged tools. The knife can be used for a large range of uses from life threatening (stabbing) to life affirming (cooking). It was probably the first implement used for eating because of its dual purposes, cutting and feeding ones self. The knife is also ruled by Mars and the element of fire.

Mortar and Pestle

These are the blender and food processor of earlier times. They can be used to crush and grind things like herbs and nuts. Mortar and Pestles have been used all over the world and dating back to Neolithic times. Today food processors are much easier to use, but in using one, you don't put all the personal power into the food and the concentration on its eventual use. It much easier to grind two cups of nuts in a food processor though.

Tools in a Magical Kitchen

Pantry

Pantries were once common to every home and used to store basic foodstuffs like salt, sugar, flour, herbs, spices, etc. Our cupboards are the modern day equivalent of the pantry. The moon and the element of earth rule the pantry and because it is a container that houses food it is intimately linked with the Mother Goddess. As a place where food is stored the pantry should be protected by something like a rope of braided garlic or chili peppers hung in the pantry or on/above the door. While hanging the rope, visualize the vegetables forceful energies protecting the space and not allowing the food inside to be contaminated.

Basic Magickal Cooking guidelines

- When preparing foods for a specific magickal purpose, cook with purpose and care. Keep your mind focused and know that the food contains the energies that you want to use like healing or something general.
- Always stir clockwise. Clockwise motion is thought to be in harmony with the apparent movement of the sun in the sky and has been linked with life, health and success.
- Cut foods into shapes symbolic of your magical like hearts, stars, circles, etc. If you are cooking food that will be consumed by others as well as yourself, don't get carried away with too much energy. Prepare the food like you normally would and then just before you eat you can charge your own portion with visualization. Be careful that when you use your energy intent to cook that you are not manipulating others or trying to with your energy intent. Always cook with love, positive energy and intent.

(This information was gathered from many places over the years, most recently from "Cunningham's encyclopedia of Wicca in the Kitchen")

Who Am I?

By Rev Azriel

I am the Cretan Universal Mother or Great Goddess; The Supreme Queen of Heaven; Goddess of plant life and fertility; Inventor of the arts and magick; Wife, and sister, of Cronus; Mother of Zeus. I can assist in ease of childbirth, and soothe the pain and difficulties of menstruation.

I am of the Olympian pantheon. My element is Earth, my associated symbol is the Earth, and the planet I am associated with is the Earth. My sphere of influence is fertility and menstruation. My preferred colors are brown, green, and blue. I am associated with the Lion. My magickal day is Saturday. A suitable offering for me is The Great Rite.

Answer to appear in the March issue...

Paranormal project

Willard Library

By Rev Azriel



Louise Carpenter

Paranormal project



Willard Library Exterior



Willard Library Dark

At more than 120 years old, Willard Library is the oldest public library in the state of Indiana. Housed within a grand Victorian Gothic building in Evansville, Willard is located in close proximity to the downtown area. The library provides a refreshing variance from the stately apartment complexes and expressways.

Constructed by local humanitarian Willard

Paranormal project

Carpenter, the library was built to be a public library for the use of the people of all classes, races, and sexes, free of charge forever. The beautiful Victorian Gothic building was designed by James and Merritt Reid for this southwestern Indiana city of 130,000 people. Willard Library was initiated into the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Legends of a haunting impel large numbers of people to explore the library in search of proof of specters. Willard has been investigated by different paranormal research societies such as TAPS (Trans-Atlantic Paranormal Society), MESA (Multi-Energy Sensor Array), and other teams looking to prove or debunk the haunting. Additionally, ghost web-cams have been placed around the library for online viewing and ghost hunting. Libraryghost.com offers three cams for your ghost hunting pleasure. The Children's Room camera, Research Room camera, and the Basement camera automatically refresh every 20 seconds.

Reports of the haunting began on a frigid, snow-blanketed night during the winter of 1937. Willard's custodian reported to work at 3 a.m. to shovel coal into the heating furnace to guarantee the building would be warm for the coming day. Carrying his flashlight, the custodian found his way to the darkened basement to stoke up the fire. As he came near to the furnace, the custodian halted abruptly and pitched his flashlight to the floor. Hovering before him in that dusty basement was the ghostly form of a veiled lady attired in glowing grey garments. Prior to the custodian regaining his composure, the specter vanished and he was once again completely alone. Terrified and disoriented, the custodian entirely neglected his duty to add coal to the furnace, but wildly bounded from the building, never to return.

Since then, numerous staff and visitors alike have reported encountering the elusive Lady in Grey. Other reports detail cold spots and the haunting scent of perfume.

Paranormal project

Other paranormal reports include a former librarian alone in the library after closing time. Suddenly she heard water running somewhere on the second floor. Upon investigation, she found that the faucet in the second floor bathroom had been inexplicably turned on. Additionally, in yet another account, the faucet in the second floor restroom turned itself on while one of the librarians was actually present to bear witness in the spring of 1983.

Doing research on cemetery records alone in the library one day, two members of the Tri-State Genealogy Society were overwhelmed by the mysterious scent of strong perfume.

One Willard employee reported that the Lady in Grey accompanied her home after work one evening during the renovation of the Children's Room. The employee and her sister detailed experiencing a draft of cold air, the eerie sensation of an invisible presence, and smelling heavy perfume.

Numerous theories abound about who the notorious Lady in Grey really is. Some say that the ghost migrated from a neighboring cemetery. Others believe that a woman lost her life in the library in its early days. She apparently liked the library so much that she never left.

Even so, the most popular opinion is that the Lady in Grey is really the ghost of Louise Carpenter, daughter of Willard Carpenter, the library's founder. At one point in her life, Louise sued the library's Board of Trustees and claimed that her father was illogical and improperly influenced when he established Willard Library. She lost the suit and any claim she would have had to the library's property. After her death, her spirit is reported to have returned to the place that caused her so much distress during her life. It is believed that she will not cease to haunt the library until such time as the property and its holdings are restored to the living heirs of Willard Carpenter.

Should you decide to visit the library, you would be able to search the Willard Card Catalog including

Paranormal project

their renowned genealogy resources and the Thrall Art Book Collection, take a tour of the library, browse their calendar of events, and perhaps acquire an introduction to the Lady in Grey herself!

Until next month, pleasant journeys!

Book Review

by Rev. Iris "Isarma" Crain

"Small Wonder" By Barbara Kingsolver (ISBN# 0-06-050408-0)

This wonderful collection of thoughtful essays on life and our perspectives of it is warm and thought provoking. Written after the 9-11 crisis, they are one woman's written introspection on life in the United States, and understanding, appreciating and respecting nature, both the world's and our own. Sometimes humorous, often poignant, they cause the reader to ask themselves the same questions the author asks herself.

Her use of verbal imagery takes the reader to exotic places and times: "The Pyramid of the Magician is round-shouldered and delicate – if the later word can reasonably be used of a pyramid. Also the plaza at Uxmal is less grandly paved, more mossy underfoot than Chichen Itza's. The soft ground swallowed the sounds of our steps as we walked through the enormous, silent city. Everywhere we looked, the façades were etched with turtles, monkeys, and jaguars, and the staircases guarded by feather-headed serpents. Living iguanas the size of small alligators perched on the cornerstones, glaring at us in a good imitation of the glowering stone heads above them."

In her essay titled "Saying Grace" she reflects on America's hubris in the aftermath of the Twin Towers Disaster, and reflects how a simple life

Book Review

focused on appreciating the essence of humanity and the divinity of Nature is truly the most patriotic thing we can do, as well and the most compassionate for the world. In “letter to a daughter at thirteen” she talks about the awkwardness of adolescence while basking in the wonder that life is less dependant on control than process. Twenty-Three essays in all, this is an enlightening menagerie of stories that give the reader hope and perspective.

Cherokee Cultural Behaviors

By: Thora

1. When an elder is in the room, they are allowed to talk first.
2. Offer your chair to an elder
3. You bring water to an elder.
4. When adults are talking, you leave them alone to talk.
5. You do not interrupt the older people that are talking.
6. When an adult talk to you listen
7. When you enter a room you shake hands with everyone.
8. You share with others that have less than you.
9. You help others when you can.
10. You speak Cherokee to anyone who speaks Cherokee
11. Use your language as often as you can.
12. You help your family and friends speak the language with you.
13. You are responsible for the younger ones.
14. You don't talk bad about elders.
15. You don't talk bad about people when younger people are in the room.
- 16 You put your family community and culture first.
- 17 When people visit you feed them.
- 18 Your Cherokee culture will continue wherever you are at.
19. You will greet all Cherokees as brothers and sisters.
- 20.Treat all with respect in all situations.

Transcribed from a handwritten document.
Source: www.cherokee.org

Spiritual Settings Volume III – County Meath, Ireland

By: T. Jessamina Chayphoree



Once home to the High Kings of Ireland, the County Meath is a site rich with myth and legend. Within the borders of this county several sites of archaeoastronomical and historical significance can be found.



Wandering back through time doesn't seem so hard while visiting the remains of the old Norman castles and abbeys of County Meath. In ancient medieval times, Trim castle (pictured to the right) served as a primary defense of the eastern coast of Ireland and because of its imposing visage this structure was chosen for the filming of the movie Braveheart. Sitting above the River Boyne, two facades, the last surviving echoes of Dunmoe Castle, can be seen. Nearby, one can view the Athlumney Castle from a distance but this old relic is privately owned and access is only with permission. Founded in 1147, much of the Bective Abbey (pictured below and right), is also still in tact.

Spiritual Settings Volume III – County Meath, Ireland



However, for a little more spirituality, mystery and intrigue, the ancient burial sites of Brú na Bóinne, the Mound of the Hostages, and the passage tomb at Loughcrew are an excellent choice.

The Brú na Bóinne complex, which predates both the Egyptian Pyramids and Stonehenge (c 3,200 B.C.), houses the neolithic passage tombs of

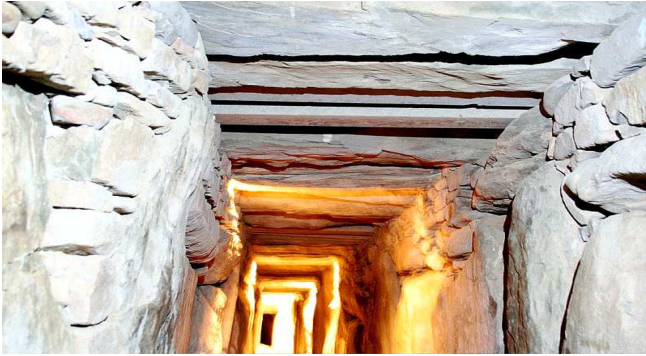
Spiritual Settings Volume III – County Meath, Ireland

Newgrange, Knowth (pictured above left and bottom left) and Dowth, as well as many standing stones, henges and other prehistoric enclosures. In the tombs, the cremated remains of the dead were laid on large stone basins and often were accompanied by grave goods such as decorative pottery and urns, stone beads and bone pins. To the amazement of many, scientists have discovered that the builders of these ancient sites incorporated solar alignments in the Newgrange and Dowth sites, which were aligned with the winter solstice. Some have also speculated that the Knowth tomb is aligned with the equinoxes. One illustration of how the architects of these tombs incorporated the importance of the solar alignments is seen at dawn on the winter solstice as sunlight fills the inner chamber of Newgrange through a specifically designed opening over the doorway.



Additionally, at the passage tomb at Loughcrew and at the Mound of Hostages, the inner chambers are perfectly aligned with the rising sun of both Imbolc and Samhain (the spring and fall equinoxes). The rising Imbolc sun shines down the long passageways and illuminates the inner chambers of these tombs.

Spiritual Settings Volume III – County Meath, Ireland



The County Meath is also home to the legendary Hill of Tara. A low ridge, mostly comprised of limestone, encompasses the Hill of Tara. Amongst the many ancient monuments found at the Hill of Tara, according to tradition the seat of Árd Rí na hÉireann, the High King of Ireland is there. Also of interest is the touchstone, the Lia Fáil, or Stone of Destiny which is said to be where the High Kings were crowned. The myths of this stone say that if the potential king met a series of challenges set before him that the stone would scream and that if the king were to touch the stone that it would scream so loud that all of Ireland could hear it.

The local River Boyne is said to be responsible for the lush and abundant farm lands found in County Meath. Locals prize the river for the plethora of fish to be had from this river, which are reputed to be the best in the country. The River Boyne, however, flows not only with fish and water, but also with the ages old legend of Fionn

Spiritual Settings Volume III – County Meath, Ireland

MacCumhall and the Salmon of Knowledge.



According to the myth, nine hazel trees grew around the Well of Wisdom and nine hazelnuts (pictured right) fell into the water where a salmon was swimming. The salmon ate the nine hazelnuts and, in so doing, gained all the knowledge of the world. Rumor was that the person who could catch and eat this enlightened salmon would also gain the knowledge of the world. A poet, by the name of Finn Eces (also known as Finegas), spent seven long years fishing for the enlightened salmon and finally at long last caught the fish and had his apprentice Fionn prepare the fish for him over the fire. Fionn set about preparing the fish and did a fine job too. However, during the process the hot fat of the salmon popped up out of the pan and burned the poor apprentice's thumb – which he readily cooled in his mouth. In that instant the boy tasted the wisdom of the enlightened salmon and gained the knowledge of the world. Through this wisdom and knowledge, Fionn became the leader of the Warrior Heroes of Ireland who were known as the Fianna.

The list of myths, mysteries, tales and histories found in this month's Spiritual Setting is long indeed and should you ever have a chance to visit Ireland, I highly suggest spending some time in this wonder of the Emerald Isle, County Meath.

Tarot of the Month February's Reading

By: Thora

February's Reading

This month features the exquisitely done Romani Tarot : The Gypsy Book of Wisdom by Raymond Buckland, art by Lissanne Lake.

This is without a doubt one of my favorite decks. Following the Romani or Gypsy culture, this deck takes us on a wonderful journey into the mysterious and divine.

The Major arcana (Called the Boro Lil) are the same as in a standard deck. However, the Minor arcana are similar in that the cards have the same meanings, but are done under different names. The Romani names and equivalents for the minor arcana (Tarno Lil) are as follows:

Cups=koro
Wands=kosh
Swords=chivs
Pentacles=bolo

Feb 1-8 =death
11-15=hermit
18-25=emperor
26-29=4 of chivs
Summary card=justice

February 1-8. What an appropriate card for this week. Death as we all know, does not mean one's physical demise, but rather a transformation or change. Here on Imbolc week, we are reminded that the coldness and fallowness of winter is soon to come to an end. Lambs and calves are born at this time. Jonquils push their yellow blossoms from the cold earth and turn their faces to the warming sun. Death reminds us that all things are impermanent, even death itself. And soon light and warmth will return to the world once again.

Spiritually, winter is the time of involution, of looking inward, and regarding your self, your beliefs and evaluating your soul. Now that death has arrived, the time for inward contemplation has passed and now points toward a great spiritual journey.

Feb 11-14 Hermit the hermit symbolizes personal spiritual evolution and change. Here the hermit symbolizes personal spiritual evolution and

change. Here the hermit stands, with his lamp aloft, beckoning us to come and learn at his feet. This is the second step onto the path of spiritual change and growth. Now is the time to listen closely to what your spirit, your mentors and advisors have to say.

Feb18-25 The emperor a strong male influence—a mentor or father figure, perhaps—will exert a positive life affirming influence upon the student or child. The Emperor will offer wise advice and counsel to all who will listen. Further one's personal revelations can bring about strong spiritual growth and advancement.

Feb 26-29 4 of Chivs The end of February offers us a chance to rest and relax after all the spiritual and physical growth we have done since the beginning of the month. The light increases, giving us a more restive and favorable outlook. We look forward to the end of the ordeal of winter and looks forward to embracing the warm and generous arms of spring.

Summary card: Justice. This card doesn't necessary render a judgment, but for this month especially, reminds us that despite the cold wind whipping through the eaves, and the car's frost bound windshields, that harmony and balance will soon be restored. While the post yuletide holidays have left us in a bit of a drag, our souls—whether we realize it or not—have undergone a powerful state of involution. Now that the vernal milestone of Imbolc approaches, we find ourselves blossoming into a period of active spiritual activity, a spiritual revolution you might say. The four of chivs tells us that after this burst of activity will come a period of rest. It is advised by this card to actually rest during this time because soon spring will come and we must be ready for the burst of activity that will probably last until Lammas.

~ A Witch ~

A witch is a maiden, fair and sweet.
Knowledge of life is what she seeks.

A witch is a mother, caregiver to all.
She loves everything in nature, big or small.

~ A Witch ~

A witch is a crone and a teacher as such.
She learns a great deal and will share so much.

A witch is a healer and (if you ask)
she will treat your ills as a personal task.

A witch is a gardener, tending plants and trees
and, in her magick, she uses these.

A witch is a student throughout her life,
learning from good and learning from strife.

A witch is a psychic with a keen sense of "feel".
She speaks with the spirits and knows what is real.

A witch worships her Goddess and shows nature
her love
with Esbats and Sabbats to Lady Moon and Lord
Sun above.

A witch is a Goddess in her own right
and while "harming none" she uses her might.

A witch is many things, you see,
and I'm proud to say "A Witch is Me"

By: TwinbornKristy - 2004

HERB OF THE MONTH



ROSE

(Rosa Damascena) (Rosa Centifolia)

Associated Dieties: Venus, Hulda, Demeter, Isis,
Eros, Cupid, Adonis

Parts used: Fresh flowers, essential oil (otto),

HERB OF THE MONTH

absolute.

Planet: Venus **Element:** Water **Gender:** Cold

Magical Properties/Influences: Love, Fertility,
Clairvoyance, Healing, Beauty and Sex.

Use Rose Water to cleanse yourself and ritual
tools before performing a love spell.
Most of us associate the Rose with love. Inhale
the heady scent to instill feelings of peace,
happiness, and love . To spread this loving
essence throughout your home, place fresh roses
in every room. Combine with Rose Quartz to
ensure a peaceful, loving environment. This is
especially useful to do before company arrives to
ensure a happy gathering.

Drink tisane of rose petals to induce prophetic
dreaming.

Roses as an aphrodisiac causes the brain to send
passion impulses to the sexual centers of our
bodies.

MEDICINAL AND COSMETIC USES OF THE ROSE

Rose oil has a chemical composition of over 400
known ingredients, making it a very versatile
addition to many preparations. It's active
ingredients have wound healing, therapeutic,
antispasmodic, germicidal, and anti-
inflammatory properties. Rose oil promotes
well-being due to its calming effect. It affects the
entire nervous system, making it a good choice
in the treatment of depression, nervousness,
grief, headaches, fever, insomnia, and skin
inflammations. It is even safe to use on babies.

Historically, roses were used in Mediterranean
Europe and the Orient to help prevent
miscarriages. The essential oil of red roses, or a
conserve of red rose petals were used as a tonic
for the uterus and ovaries. Rose-Otto oil assists
in the regulation of several female hormones,
making it a very valuable herb to fight menstrual
complaints and irregularities. It is also believed

HERB OF THE MONTH

to improve muscle tone in the uterus.

Rose hips are used medicinally for their high content of vitamin C.

Father, Kunzel, the Swiss herbalist recommends the use of rose hips to expel kidney stones.

To combat anemia, brew a tea using 2 tsp. rose hips with 1 full cup of water.

Dog Rose hips have a woolly down which aids in the expulsion of round worms.

Rose water is an excellent eye wash.

SORE LEG OINTMENT

Mix a handful of chickweed, a handful of red rose leaves and a pint of oil of your choice. Cook the ingredients on top of the stove or in the oven. After a few hours strain the liquid from the herbs and use the oil as an application on the legs.

MAKE YOUR OWN ROSE WATER.

Rose water clears the skin and may aid in treating and preventing acne. Rose water can be made by adding a small amount of rose oil to distilled water.

ROSE OIL FROM YOUR GARDEN

If you have roses in your garden, you can make your own rare and very expensive rose oil. Prepare rose oil by adding 1 cup almond oil 2-4 tbsp. rose petals. Extract the fragrance of the petals into the oil with the use of the Sun.

Fill a pint size jar with the rose petals and drizzle the oil over them to fill to within an inch of the top. Put a lid on the jar and place in the sun for 5 days (summer), 3 days (extremely hot climate), 15 days in the winter sun. During the warmest part of the day press the herb petals with a fine mesh to extract all of the oil.

LIP BALM

To prepare the balm use a double-boiler or an

HERB OF THE MONTH

or an improvised one. The ingredients you need are:

Warm Rose oil extracted above
1 tbsp beeswax
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp vitamin E oil
1 teaspoon aloe vera gel
1 teaspoon honey

Warm the oil in the double-boiler. While stirring continuously add in this order – beeswax, honey, vitamin E oil, Aloe Vera gel, and honey. Stir while hot into an ointment jar with a wide mouth. Close lid tightly and let harden. This is an excellent, nourishing balm for the lips.

FACE & HAND CREME

Use equal parts of rose oil and glycerine to create a luxurious face and hand creme. Use less Glycerine for a thinner creme. **Glycerine** is a very effective preservative for oils, tinctures, ointments and many other herbal preparations. You can now purchase glycerine derived from vegetables.

DRIED ROSE PETALS

The method you harvest and dry your roses makes a huge difference in their effectiveness. You should wait until the dew has dried from the flowers. You should not pick them during the peak heat of the day though. Use a wire screen to spread the petals out and make sure air reaches all of the petals. Do not place in direct sun. When the petals are completely dry you can grind them up and put in an air-tight container.

In the past, roses were dried in sand by placing in alternating layers of sand and roses in a shoe box. Leave uncovered for about a week, then gently retrieve the petals.

ROSE VINEGAR

Used to treat headaches, and to cool and refresh the skin. Women of the French Nobility

HERB OF THE MONTH

used this.

Use a jar of high quality white wine vinegar. Add rose petals to fill to the lip of the jar. Let this mixture steep in the sun for at least 24 hours. Strain off the vinegar into a bottle and use as a toner. Place a cloth saturated with the vinegar to relieve headaches.

ROSE PERFUME

1 quart Vodka

Handful of each of the following: Rose Petals, Marjoram, rosemary, and lavender.

1 ½ oz. of each of the following: Cloves, Cinnamon, Mace, Nutmeg,

HERB OF THE MONTH

Mix all of the above and shake thoroughly. Leave in sunlight for 10 days. Strain liquid into bottle(s).

So, everyone who gets beautiful roses for Valentine Day can try their luck at preserving their gift by turning the dried flowers into a special creme, rinse, or scent. Or just keep the beautiful dried flowers in a basket.

Hope you have a very Rosy Valentine Day!

Blessed Be,
Porschalyn

JANUARY SUDOKU ANSWERS

2	6	1	8	4	7	9	3	5
5	7	9	6	3	1	2	4	8
4	3	8	9	5	2	6	7	1
6	1	4	3	9	8	7	5	2
8	9	5	2	7	4	3	1	6
3	2	7	1	6	5	8	9	4
9	8	3	4	1	6	5	2	7
7	4	2	5	8	3	1	6	9
1	5	6	7	2	9	4	8	3

Who was Saint Valentine?

Written by: Armand A. Gagnon

Submitted with permission by Windy



**Wilt thou be mine? dear love, reply
Sweetly consent, or else deny;
Whisper softly, none shall know,
Wilt thou be mine, love? aye or no?**

From Duke Charles of Orléans, Tower of London, England, 1415 A.D.

What is the origin of our *Saint Valentine's Day* or the *Día de San Valentín* (also known as the *Día de los enamorados*) in Spanish? Just who was Saint Valentine, the patron saint of lovers? Historians and comparative linguists are not entirely sure among which candidate (or candidates) throughout antiquity really was the true *Cupid* among ancient peoples. From the late Latin *februarius* and then via the Old French *février* comes the name of our month of *February* in modern English, or the "month of expiation or purification". This was in honor of the Roman festival of purification *februa* held on February 15th, their *Lupercalia*, commemorating young men's rite of passage to their God of fertility *Lupercus*, who watched over the shepherds of Rome against predatory *lupus* or wolves.

SAINT VALENTINE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The legendary Saint Valentine out of ancient times takes us back to the 3rd Century after

Who was Saint Valentine?

Christ, around 270 A.D. He was a Roman priest or bishop who empathized much with young Roman centurions-to-be who were about to be drafted into military service. When the Roman Empire and legions needed soldiers to protect their ever-expanding territories beyond the Rubicon, Emperor Claudius the Second decreed that nobody could become engaged to be married! The domestic limelight and felicity of the hearth for young and able-bodied Roman boys was not to Claudius the Second's liking. The Holy Emperor had determined that married men made poor soldiers, so he banned marriage altogether from his Roman Empire.

But, the loving and kind-hearted Valentine openly defied the Emperor's demand and married off many a young couple clandestinely by quiet candlelight in castle basements and wine cellars. Pope Gelasius also disapproved of Claudius' custom and decreed that a change be made, but to no avail. Since Roman Emperors were considered to be demi-Gods, Valentine's action was considered to be an act of outright treason against *il Imperio Romano* and defiance of heavenly law. But Valentine continued to marry young couples secretly just the same. When Claudius the Second discovered Valentine's illicit activities, he first tried to convert him to Roman paganism. Ultimately, so the legend goes, Valentine was imprisoned and put to death by beheading on the vespers of the *Feast of Lupercalia*, on February 14, 270 A.D.

Yet early church records indicate that a number of "Saint Valentines" during such a *febrile* season were beheaded and martyred on or around February the 14th. Another tale tells us of a different Valentine who was seized by authorities for having helped Christians escape the wrath of the tyrannical Claudius the Second. During his imprisonment, many Christians (who were being persecuted for their new faith at the time) came to visit him. They tried to convince the jailor of his sincerity with helping young people in love, as well as his sentiments

Who was Saint Valentine?

against the senseless killing of young men. The jailor happened to have a beautiful, yet totally blind daughter. Upon hearing of this, it is said that Valentine performed a miraculous Divine healing and restored her sight! Though the pretty young lady's father, the jailor, insisted on Valentine's release from the confines of prison walls for his otherworldly deed, the upcoming saint was sent to the gallows for execution anyway by the cold, hard-hearted Claudius the Second. Valentine, before he was executed, wrote and passed a short note on to the jailor's lovely daughter, the first written *Valentine*, so the story goes, to be written in the world. It read:

"With love, from your Valentine".

Valentine was beheaded on February 14th, on the eve of the all important Roman festival of the *Lupercalia*. It is indeed possible that Valentine's execution formed part of a series of entertainment activities for the Romans along with the persecuting of Christians and their being thrown into lion-filled pits for their having drawn the Roman youths away from their gods of *Janus*, *Saturnus*, and *Solarus* in favor of their newly discovered Savior. It is said, too, that on the evening of February 15, 270 A.D. during the *Lupercalia* celebrations, Roman youths drew names of young ladies who were to be their romantic partners or "dates" not only for that evening, but the girl thus chosen would become the sexual partner for that young man for the remainder of the year. This served a double purpose, for to draw the name of a saint would require that the boy or girl would have to emulate that saint's qualities for at least one year. This was dutifully performed in honor of their lovely goddess *Juno Februata*. And instead of a "pagan" God to be chosen, the Church searched for a suitable substitute saint to patronize the day. So, *Saint Valentine* was to become their chosen saint. Just how such a "romantic fusion" between Valentine's having saved loved ones from Claudius the Second's mighty military machine and the *Lupercalia*'s choosing of sexual partners custom came about is a bit of a mystery. The *Lupercalia* festival was a surviving echo from former times when Rome (from the twin

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founders of the township *Rómulus* and *Remus*) was a more pastoral and bucolic Mediterranean principality.

Modern historians are somewhat in the dark regarding the origins of this festival. Even scholars out of the last century *before* the time of Christ had little historical facts and written records upon which to draw. Yet it is known for certain that Mark Antony (in love with Cleopatra?) was the headmaster of the *Lupercali College of Priests* and that he deliberately chose the *Lupercalia* festival of 44 B.C. to offer the crown to Julius Caesar, precisely one month before his assassination during the Ides of mid-March. Although the lottery for women had been banned by the church as "heathen", the mid-February holiday celebration in commemoration of St. Valentine was still practiced by many Roman men who sought the tender affections of willing young ladies. Thus, it became a tradition for a suitor to give a beloved or admired one a handwritten message of enamored, romantic intent with the name of *Saint Valentine* inscribed within.



CUPID IN GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

Another personality associated with *Saint Valentine's Day* is *Cupid*, a smiling mischievous child armed with his bow and arrow ready to pierce lovers' hearts with romantic love. From the Latin verb *cupere* meaning "to desire" comes this Roman god of love. Originally from the ancient Sanskrit prefix *kup-* signifying "to become agitated", it passed through Old Church Slavonic's *kypeti* meaning "to boil", as in emotions. Also, from the Latvian *kupet* (to boil or steam) is suggested the notion of 'agitation' as well. From these intertwining linguistic sources has derived the noun form of *cúpido* meaning "desire" or "yearning", eventually becoming

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the Roman god *Cúpidus*, an adjectival form meaning "desirous of". Then the name *Cupid* spilled over into our modern English. This in turn produced the noun form of *cupiditus*, perhaps via Old French's *couvert* (covered or hidden) and ultimately the English verbal offshoot *to covet*. The English noun form of *cupidity* is a rarely used descendant. An even less likely term to be heard orally (but is occasionally read in literary works) is the Latin *concupiscense*, meaning "coveting".

Long before the time of Saint Valentine, *Cupid* played a central rôle in the ancient Greek and Roman celebrations of love and mating, dedicated to lovers and lovemaking. The Greek version of *Cupid* was *Eros*: hence our term *erotic*. *Eros* was the son and constant companion of *Aphrodite*, goddess of love and beauty: thus our word *aphrodisia*. Yet another goddess of love existed among the ancient Romans, and she was *Venus* (from whence early astronomers named our second planet from the Sun). *Venus*, like *Aphrodite*, had a son and his name was *Cupid*, the impish archer and *celestine* "go-between" we know of today. *Cupid* came to represent the many aspects of love: playful, tender, sexual, and passionate. His invisible arrows of sweet destiny would pierce the hearts of both mortals and gods alike, making them fall hopelessly and helplessly in love, oftentimes beyond all hope or reason! A lovely myth has arisen out of Roman antiquity pertaining to *Cupid* and the mortal maiden *Psyche*. Green with envy and overly jealous of *Psyche*'s eternal beauty, *Venus* ordered her son *Cupid* to reprimand and punish the fair maiden. Instead, *Cupid* fell madly, deeply, and passionately in love with her at first sight. He then carried *Psyche* away to a mystical castle in the clouds where he made her his bride, though she was still a mere earth-soul who was forever forbidden to look upon him since he was invisible to her mortal eyes. When her sisters paid her a visit in the castle of indolence while inquiring about her husband *Cupid*, *Psyche* eventually broke her promise and looked directly upon her lover. *Cupid* punished her by leaving and hence the mystical castle of love vanished into thin air.

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Determined beyond all measure to find and recapture her love once again, *Psyche* wandered and traveled far and wide in search of *Cupid* until she reached the temple of *Venus*. The angry and jealous goddess of beauty gave her a box containing the beauty of *Prosperine*, wife of *Pluto* of the underworld, not to be opened at all. Bewildered and 'agitated' beyond all hope, *Psyche* climbed a tall tower to throw herself off when she realized her submission to temptation: she opened the box against *Venus*' wishes. Instead of finding beauty inside the box, she found a deathly, ghastly slumber within! Falling high from the tower, *Psyche* was found lifeless by *Cupid*, who reawakened her with his loving arrow piercing her heart, reviving the young beauty to Life once again. *Cupid* then caressed and explained lovingly to *Psyche* that to discover the secret of the beauty of the Goddess of Love *Venus* was not for mortal human eyes to behold.

Here is a Valentine's Day poem written by Joy Belle Burgess entitled The Valentine which captures the true flavor of this amorous holiday, encompassing the entire calendar year:

**The valentine you gave to me
Is like a summer rose,
Aglow with all the warmth of love
And sweetness in each fold.
The treasured gift you gave to me
Is like a winter fire,
With words of love and thought and rhyme
That breathe of sweet desire.
The token fair you gave to me
Is like a spring bouquet,
Adorned with blue forget-me-nots
And ribbons bright and gay.
The valentine of frills and lace
Throughout the year will be
A most endearing gift because
You gave your love to me.**

VALENTINES THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND AMERICA

Historically, St. Valentine's Day has spread

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around the globe while taking many interesting twists and turns. During the Middle Ages in Italy, a spring festival took place wherein youths met in gardens and exchanged flowers as a polite gesture in courtship. The French troubadours, who pranced the narrow cobble stoned streets of Medieval Europe with lute and flute in hand, often accompanied young couples to music while lovers called out each other's names from across open windows, atop high balconies. The oldest known Valentine in letter form was dated 1477 from a Margery Brews, written to her beloved John Paston. It read:

"Right worshipful and well beloved Valentine."

Throughout most of Europe in the 1500s, much of the romantic holiday observance remained forgotten. Little supporting historical data has survived from that epoch. But by the early 1600s, on the date of February 14th of the calendar year, it was becoming customary for marriageable young ladies to place their names on paper in an urn in a public square. Eager young men and possibly future beaux then drew his "Valentine's" name from the urn in hopes of establishing a permanent romance. Somewhere along the line, however, the idea of allowing Fate to rule in matters of the heart turned unpopular, and many of these amorous lotteries were becoming "fixed". By 1610, the drawing of names from the urn soon became a light-hearted festivity, where both children and adults joined in. Come 1640, a fascinating little book appeared entitled Cupid's Messenger. It was filled with poetic verses and romantic sonnets in elegant language to help out the otherwise inarticulate suitor. By 1645, many of these erotic and amorous verses came to be published, thus instigating a new trend wherein Valentine's poems were shared more in publicly read articles, periodicals, and magazines. Robert Herrick of England wrote in 1648:

Choose me your Valentine, next let us marry.

On St. Valentine's Day in 1667, Samuel Pepys described in his famous Diary a surprise Valentine he had received from his wife. It was handwritten, cut out with scissors, and had a love message inscribed on it in gold lettering against a

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a soft blue pastel paper in a young child's script. This had paved the way and become the forerunner to our modern Valentines. By the 18th Century, Valentine's messages had found a home in both France and Germany. The Germans and Prussians had begun making fancy white lace borders and adding red hearts to be cut out and pasted onto the Valentine "card". By the late 1700s, *Cupid* had somehow begun to appear, with his peevish grin and bow and arrow close at hand, on Valentine love letters and verses in England. It wasn't too very long after that when flowers, more hearts, love birds, smiling couples and more *cupids* were added to the agenda. During the last quarter of the 18th Century, the Germans contributed their *Freundeschaftskarten*, which were handmade friendship or lover's cards closely resembling the forthcoming Valentines of the upcoming 19th Century. Germans who were settling in the United States at this time introduced this particular form of greeting with its Baroque ornamental style ultimately spreading to other parts of the country, thus paving the way for our modern Valentines of embellished adornment.

By 1815, most of the rural towns and big cities throughout England had a Penny Post as their "postal service". February 14th was rapidly becoming a busy delivery day for the postmen all over the county. If the postman had passed by your house without having left a Valentine greeting of some kind, disappointed indeed remained the young expectant *gallant* or fair maiden. But during a brief period from 1820 to 1829, insulting Valentines were being circulated, but this custom quickly died out, most likely due to its unloving nature. These were the particularly popular *Penny Dreadfuls* which featured insulting rhymes and unflattering sketches, meant only for those platonic pals with more than simply a casual familiarity and, one would hope, with a well developed sense of humor. By 1840, a British Penny Post was set up for the entire United Kingdom, eventually lowering the cost not only of mail delivery service, but especially during Valentine's Day. This permitted a countrywide expansion

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in Valentine greetings being sent not only throughout all of the English countryside but also beyond England's immediate borders.

With the coming and subsequent reign of Queen Victoria of England around 1837, the *Golden Age of the English Valentine* was ushered in. Specially handmade delicate and intricate paper designed specifically for Valentine greetings with space for handwritten, personalized messages came into vogue. White and pink lace, pasted cupids, doves, hand painted motifs, hearts pierced with darts (a favorite Victorian English pub pastime), silk on satin, chiffon, and netted designs were beginning to become more common, reflecting the polished and refined qualities indicative of an ever more increasingly class conscious Victorian society at the time. Lacy styled Valentines reached their peak in popularity between 1840 and 1860 throughout the British Isles. Creativity and spontaneity painted a new dimension onto the Victorian Valentines. Cutouts, pinpricks, envelopes with hearts contained within (sometimes with the loved one's lock of hair inside), anagrams, puzzle purses, and even Valentine *cheques* to be drawn against the Bank of True Love with real five-pound notes were hidden inside. Though it was somewhat costly, Valentines greeting and love notes finally began to cross the Atlantic Ocean, with the United States and Canada becoming their ultimate destination.

THE CIVIL WAR ERA

During the Civil War in the States between the North and the South, many a lonely, crestfallen soldier had Valentines made with a heart split in two, reflecting their loved one's absence and their longing for home. For troops encamped in tents, flaps were made onto the Valentine to reveal a soldier inside (the tent) awaiting his sweetheart with open arms. This became the *window Valentine*. During times of peace, the *window* opened instead into a church with a smiling bride and groom within! Another Civil War novelty Valentine, circa 1862, included a real lock of hair from the distant girlfriend, which the military man proudly treasured and shared with his fellow soldiers. Other Valentines to have survived the

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Civil War were the *paper doll* variety and elaborate white lace embroideries.

Then, *Puzzle Purses* appeared on the Valentine's Day scene: They were square envelopes, the four flaps of which were folded one inside the other. Each flap was doubled over and oftentimes artistically decorated on both sides. Many times the *puzzle* contained a ring, a piece of jewelry, or even a lock of the lover's hair within. When the contented receiver opened this type of Valentine, the trick was not only to be able to read the messages in their correct order, but also to fold all of the flaps back up correctly too!

Then, late during Queen Victoria's reign, an Englishwoman named Kate Greenway began to design beautifully artistic Valentines, eventually evolving into a career in writing children's books for her. Yet it was to be another fellow countryman named Walter Crane who would rival her in design and uniqueness as well with his colorfully outstanding Valentines. Kate Greenway had sold her first Valentine design for U.S. \$15.00 when she was only twenty-two years of age by selling over 25,000 copies within the first month of their distribution! Yet the cost of British postage remained high, thus preventing trans-Atlantic Valentines from becoming a yearly ritual. But today, both Greenway and Crane's Valentines are true collector's items that carry hefty investment price tags.

Then in 1848, precisely on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, an Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts, while working in her father's stationery store, became intrigued with some beautifully laced white and pink English Valentines that her father had imported from overseas. Esther, having fallen 'in love' with them, cut out some red paper and pasted some lacy designs onto the sheets thus creating a kind of envelope. She then attached some pictures, penciled in her own artwork, and before too very long she had developed some rather handsome Valentines. She then finished them off with yellow flowers adorned in crêpe paper. Her father was so taken aback with his daughter's artistic skill that he deliberately ordered more pink, red, and white lace paper, some more crêpe paper, more ink

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bottles and fountain pens, and some specially designed paper flowers for further ideas. Esther continued on with her Valentine-inspired endeavors and, as Fate would have it, her brother who traveled in his horse and buggy advertising and selling for his father's stationery business requested of her if he could take along with him any extra Valentines she had made that she wouldn't mind parting with. Thinking along the lines of maybe earning U.S. \$100-\$250, Esther was stunned beyond belief when her brother returned with orders of up to U.S. \$5,000-\$6,000! Once the supply of paper her father had ordered finally arrived from England, Esther hired some of her girlfriends to assist her with the drawing and copying of Valentine designs that she would drum up. She set up an assembly line wherein one young lady would paste the background, another would glue the lace, and yet another would cut out the pictures, thus completing an amply full Valentine by the end of the "line". As orders increased with alacrity, Esther hired more women and, before too very long, her "factory of Valentines" grew so much that she had to move out to larger and more profitable quarters. By 1862, one New York card company bought over U.S. \$30,000 worth of her lacy Valentines, insuring Esther Howland for all time to come a place in America's history in Valentine making and production.

By 1875, with more modern methods in printing becoming commonplace, Valentines were becoming more available throughout the entire continent of Europe. Sadly, much of the Victorian ornate delicacy had lost its original sparkle once Valentines had become more mass produced. Factories employing women making Valentines during long and hard laborious workdays had produced thousands of them. By the turn-of-the-century, sending individualized Valentine greetings had lost some of its zeal, and the classic English Valentine had fallen into disuse. By 1915, with the coming of World War I and the ugly *dance macabre* of death and destruction it had left in its wake, Valentine-giving had become a relic of bygone days.

Ten years later however, in 1925, an astute and

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wise English lady named Jeanetta Tuck inspired her beloved husband Sir Aldolph Tuck, who owned and operated a greeting card shop, to print up some Valentine greeting cards just for the month of February of that year. The advent of her proposition couldn't have been any more timely, for her Valentine cards were immediately relished and well accepted among English society once again. Soon the Tucks found competition with other card companies following closely behind them with the same 'romantic' notions. Hence, the former custom of sending Valentines to dear ones was once again revived! So the rest, one must conclude, is history. A curious postscript could include the fact that in modern Japan, young ladies receive Valentines on February the 14th, yet they reciprocate the kindness by giving young boys their due Valentines on March the 14th.

COLORS AND THE SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

The three principal colors associated with Valentine's Day are *red* (passion and deep affection, the color of the human heart), *pink* (warmth and loving kindness) and *white* (purity, faith, and devotion: the absence of passion and emotion). Yet the color red came to symbolize blood on February 14, 1929 when the *St. Valentine's Day Massacre* occurred in Chicago, Illinois. For on that fateful snowy day, gangland mobster and leader Al Capone (1899-1947) of Chicago's South Side Gang, along with his ruthless criminal consorts carried out the most spectacular mob hit massacre in the gangland history of that city. Their target was George "Bugs" Moran of the Chicago's North Side Gang and his men. While Capone was lolling lavishly away "on vacation" out-of-state in Florida, his men had staged a set-up operation wherein seven of Moran's men were led to 2122 North Clark Street, a warehouse where a mechanic was to work on their automobile. A large shipment of bootlegged Canadian Whiskey supposedly awaited them there too. Instead of receiving their expected illicit spirits, Moran's gang members were greeted with a hail of

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bullets from Capone's henchmen (disguised in police uniforms) and left for dead in a pool of cold blood, turning not only the tide of public opinion against Chicago's two largest and most influential organized crime rings in bootlegged liquor history, but also against Al Capone himself. Ironically, Moran wasn't present nor killed in the carnage. He had smelled something fishy, perhaps, thus departing the scene when he spotted a parked cop car outside of his warehouse store "front". Many Chicagoans, and Hollywood too, still associate this incident with Valentine's Day today.

Like all holidays born of ancient world traditions, *St. Valentine's Day* is come to represent a day of sharing, of giving, of loving, and of thinking about dear ones, romantically or platonically. With springtime just around the corner come Februarytide, the mating season between hundreds of thousands of species, among birds, amidst mammals and amphibians, as well as amongst us humans who continue to fall in and out of love, will once again be in full bloom. May *St. Valentine's Day* truly continue to be a day of Love and Light for us all.



"Love is the affinity which links and draws together the elements of the world..."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)



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"Every time you see a rainbow, it's God's way of saying *I love you*".

Tristan Gagnon (*at age four*)

"For this was Seynt Valentine's Day when every foul cometh ther to choose his mate".

from *Parlement of Foules*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400)

"For this was Seynt Valentine's Day when every foul cometh ther to choose his mate".

from *Parlement of Foules*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400)

"Men are drawn to sex appeal, women to success appeal."

Rosemary Dorgan (1919-1991)

"O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on."

from William Shakespeare's *Othello*

"We all must follow our Bliss".

Joseph Campbell (1904-1987)

from his renowned work *The Power of*

Myth

