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PANEGYRIA

Connecting the Pagan communities through news, voice, and fellowship!

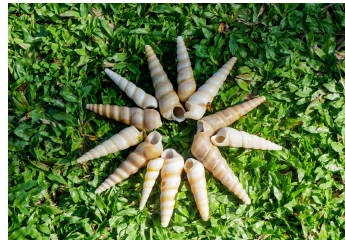


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Happy Birthday Belladonna!

Lady Belladonna LaVeau is the Archpriestess and Matriarch of the Aquarian Tabernacle Church, Intl and the Hierophant of the Great Mother Demeter. Bella is also Dean-Regent of WiccanSeminary.EDU, the only formal Wiccan sponsored college.

Bella's book series, "The ABC's of Witchcraft" are part of the Freshman core curriculum in the Seminary.

A Navy Veteran, Mother of three, and professional Spiritual Counselor; Bella is a full-time Wiccan Priestess. Join us as we honor her! The celebration begins on page 2!

Menhir News

With Kara D. Williams



I have known Bella since 2006, when I met her at a local Atlanta Belly Dance event because she wanted to take belly dance classes. Here we are, in 2026, celebrating her birthday 20 years later!

Bella is an amazing person who works constantly to be better. It's part of what I love about her, and it inspires me to do the same. "When you know better, do better" sums up one of the most amazing things about her.

She guided me through my own training as my personal teacher, but she is also one of my closest friends. We danced together, worked together, cried together, and laughed together over the years. Her kindness and support when my life has dealt me some serious challenges is one of the reasons why I am where I am today.

I count her among my gratitudes, and I hope we are one day two wizened old witches sitting in the shade kibitzing about the young clergy coming up behind us. Oh yes, and we have awesome witchy hats to wear, of course!

Happy Birthday, Bella!

Kara D Williams (She/Her)

Dean of Seminary

Woolston-Steen Theological Seminary

Index, WA

Happy Birthday!



Finching Bella

With V. Rev. Dusty Dionne



One night at a Pagan festival, I found myself freshly 21, standing in the center of a crossroads, drunk, and with a bone to pick with Goddess. I had been Pagan since I was 6, looking for a teacher since I was 15, and was pretty fed up with the wait in a drunken state at 21.

"You know what, Goddess?!?!" I railed into the night, fists raised and feet stomping in frustration. "I have been on this path for almost 20 years, and if you don't give me a teacher, I'm becoming a Taoist Monk!"

My head cannon for this moment cuts to a shot of the Horned God sitting on a couch, reading the paper. He nonchalantly flips the pages as Hekate walks back and forth in and out of frame, behind the couch, mumbling to herself.

"... little brat thinks he can ju...."

She walks back by trying to put on a shoe. "... ould talk to me, ME like that! Who doe..."

The Horned God flips a page of the paper, seeming to pay no mind while She walks back through putting on a coat. "...nd with all that I've done for that little shi..."

And from behind the paper, you hear "Was it the Dionne Boy?" to which Goddess runs back in and leans over the couch, a maddened look in her eye, and she blurts out "IT WAS THE DIONNE BOY!" before she pulls back from the couch to continue walking back and forth. She walks back through, grabs her keys, continuing to talk to herself as she walks out the door, "And we'll see how cute he is when I stick my foot up hi..."

The Horned God sits reading through the whole thing, and says to an empty room as He turns a page, "You tell 'em dear." Finger lick, page flip.

Back at the Crossroads, the Dionne Boy didn't know he had just started the Fool's Journey. All he knew was that he was going to go get some food at the Pavilion at the festival. It was 150ft away, and when I got there, I saw her: a woman with 3 ft long braids and cowrie shells, and she looked like she was going to kill and bury one of my friends who haplessly sat down sloppily drunk next to her.



I knew I had to save my friend. I didn't know I was walking into my destiny.

"Wow, bud! You're drunk!" I sat down between them and turned to the woman. "Hi, I'm Dusty"

"Belladonna," she said dryly, shook my hand curtly, and sat back with her arms crossed.

"Belladonna?" I asked, "Like the plant? Are you deadly?" I smiled.

Her head snapped back around to me, and the look on her face was aghast. "If you mess with me, I am!" But something happened in that moment. She stopped and her head cocked. She looked at me and said, "I didn't know you were cute... Let me scoot my chair closer to yours!"

We spent the whole week together, and after the festival, she went home. I didn't think I would ever see her again. I gave her the only thing I had to give her: A cup that I had been given for being land staff at the event. I didn't know cups were a symbol of the heart, but she did. She looked at me and gave me her pentacle off her neck.

I spent the next week at the festival grounds with Bella's image silk-screened onto the back of my eyes. I saw her in every single moment, and the thought of never seeing her again was too big a thought for me. It was like drowning.

It was a week later, and I was at the farmhouse owned by the festival grounds, and for the first time in half a decade of me volunteering there, and literally working in that farmhouse to feed 100+ people three times a day, the door to the office was not only unlocked, but open. And when I got to the farmhouse, which is a mile from the campsite on foot, the house was empty, and the phone was ringing in that room.

I walked in hesitantly, because I was not supposed to be in that room, and answered the phone. "Wisteria campground, this is Dusty"

"Dusty? This is Bella! Hi!"

I pulled the phone from my ear and stared at it like I was in a cartoon. The statistical odds of this moment happening were so minute it was blowing what was left of my mind. "Bella? How many times have you called this number?"

"Just this once. I am glad I caught you. I'm coming to Starwood, and I thought you might want to see if you might want to move to GA and learn magic and work on my house? If you decide you want to go home after, I will give you a Minibus as payment."



I literally just stared at the phone. I was standing in a dark room that I had been denied access to 1000 times in 5 years, talking to a woman I was madly preoccupied with and who had absolutely no way to get a hold of me directly. I looked up at the ceiling and thanked Goddess.

"I can't wait to see you," I replied.

I know Goddess had her finger on the scales, and be it for divine grace at my sincerity of heart, or retribution at my impudence for cussing her out, I do not know. But what I do know is that I have been with the love of my life for 22 years now, and I help run the world's largest church Matroned by The Goddess of the Crossroads.

And somewhere there is a Horned God sitting on a couch, smirking as He reads His paper, knowing that his wife is absolutely the best.



V. Rev. Dusty Dionne, AP
dusty@atcwicca.org
1-(360)-793-1945

www.ATCWicca.org
ATC World Headquarters
PO Box 409,
Index, WA 98256

Bella Spezia



With V. Rev. Dusty Dionne

When you speak of my love, speak of her in tones of awe at she who is the spice that warms the meals that sustain my very being.

Speak of her in the same sultry way that one speaks of the allspice that brings life to sweet, mulled wine.

Whisper her name with respect like cayenne, knowing that the heat of her could bring you to your knees.

Let her envelope your senses as only saffron can do. Her cultivation is worth more than a thousand ships.

She is the salt needed to bring forth the deepest of flavors that life has to offer. She is the rosemary that fills the air with character.

And only then, after every sensation she brings to you, may you form an opinion.

After you allow her complexity to roll across your tongue, bringing every sense alight by the marriage of her time and taste;

Only then shall you open your mouth for naught but another bite.



Bella's Favorite Recipe

With V. Rev. Dusty Dianne



Garlic Soup Recipe

This soup is perfect when you are sick. It will kick the illness right out of you, and It's delicious!

Ingredients for 1 batch:

- 1/4 a stick of butter
- 1 bulb worth of fresh peeled whole garlic
- 1 large can of Broth (Chicken, or Vegetable)
- Greek Yogurt or Sour Cream
- Parmesan Cheese
- Tortellini (Or some sort of gluten-free rotini or penne, as well as chopped mozzarella if you are gluten-free)

Optional Ingredients

- Chicken breast cut into strips
- Mushrooms
- Chives
- Fresh Ginger
- Bitter Gourd Tea



Put a pot of water on to boil for noodles. Once boiling, cook pasta to package directions to finish in time with the soup.

Melt butter in pot.

Add peeled garlic whole, or with cloves cut in half. Saute until tender. (Also add ginger at this point if using)

Add chicken at this point and cook till done if using chicken.

Add Broth and bring to a boil

This is the stage where you add Mushrooms (or else it will turn your soup brown) as well as any chives, or Bitter Gourd Tea. Just allow the bags to steep in the soup. (If you can't find Bitter Gourd Tea, don't fret; it's just an add-on to try when you can find it.)

When the noodles are done, serve in bowls with a dollop of Greek Yogurt/Sour Cream in the center of the bowl, and Parmesan Cheese sprinkled on top. If you have gone with the gluten-free noodles, this is when you put your cubed mozzarella in, as well.

ENJOY!

Notes from the Garden

The Greenman Weekend: Creating a Grape Arbor

With Cassandee

It is so magical watching a garden evolve week over week in the summer. The changes are just dramatic enough to be thrilling, offering a beautiful glimpse into the future productivity of the garden space. But the change is slow enough to feel peaceful and leisurely in the summer sun. Currently, some of our absolute favorite summer flowers are beginning to steal the show—the showy milkweed is opening up, and the deep, dramatic blooms of the black hollyhocks are coming on strong.

The real highlight of our recent "Greenman weekend" was clearing the ground for a brand-new project: a dedicated grape arbor. I see it now as a Lammas offering for the legacy of Demeter's Garden and a way of showing our gratitude by building something lasting.

The inspiration for this project reaches back across the years, rooted in a memory of a grape arbor and bench swing that my dad built for us in our backyard. Its still standing today and it is still as safe as when I was a kid.

True to the inspiration, this structure is completely over-engineered. We built it to be exceptionally strong and long-lasting, capable of standing up to decades of unpredictable weather and the heavy, powerful weight of mature grapevines.

Using a few clever, sustainable 8 resources, the build came together beautifully:



The Structure: We utilized four donated 8-foot fence posts, arranging them into a sturdy half-hexagram shape. It accentuates the space where our round table sits along the top of the garden.

The Cross Beams: For the top support, we were able to upcycle spare pieces of scrap lumber that happened to be perfect lengths for the design idea.

The Vines: We planted four grape plants that we have nurtured in grow bag pots for the last 4 years. We put them in, one at the base of each post, to climb upward covering the structure. One of the smallest starts already has tiny, promising baby grape buds on it!

To give the new space a proper identity, the front cross beam will eventually feature a custom, hand-painted sign reading *Demeter's Garden*. So watch for that to be created and added soon!

Greenman day turned into a weekend of hard work, fond memories, sweating in the sun and calloused hands. My dad would have relished as it was also spent in friendship and community working together. Watching the framework of the future take shape in the dirt makes every single bit of the effort worth it.



Wavebound Whispers

With Silas Mimir

Sea Shell of the Month — August The Auger Shell

The Auger Shell is slender, elegant, and often overlooked among the sea's more dramatic treasures. Yet beneath its graceful form lies a powerful lesson: true progress is made through steady intention, not hurried movement. Like the shell's long, tapering spiral, our spiritual journeys unfold one purposeful step at a time.

August is a month of ripening. The seeds planted earlier in the year begin to reveal their results, and we are called to refine our focus before the harvest season arrives. The Auger Shell teaches that success is rarely born from scattered energy. Instead, it reminds us to direct our thoughts, actions, and magic toward what truly matters.

Its spiral represents concentration, persistence, and the ability to move through obstacles with patience rather than force. Sea witches may work with the Auger Shell when seeking clarity, strengthening intentions, or staying committed to long-term goals. It encourages us to trust that even slow progress is still progress, especially when guided by purpose.

The Auger also reflects discernment. Just as ocean currents do not travel in a straight line but always reach their destination, we are reminded that detours often become part of the wisdom we are meant to gather. Rather than resisting life's twists, the Auger invites us to remain aligned with our deepest intentions and allow the tides to shape the journey.

Place an Auger Shell upon your altar this month as a symbol of focused manifestation. Before beginning a spell, creative project, or important decision, hold the shell in your hands and ask yourself, "Where should I place my energy so it creates the greatest ripple?"



August Tide Blessing

May your intentions remain true through every changing tide.
May patience become your quiet strength.
May each small step carry you closer to your purpose.
And may the ocean remind you that every great journey begins with a single current.

Magical Correspondences

- **Keywords:** Focus, intention, perseverance, manifestation, discipline, clarity, purpose
- **Magical Uses:**
 - Strengthening long-term goals
 - Manifestation and attraction work
 - Improving concentration during spellcraft
 - Career and business success
 - Decision-making and life direction
 - Building consistent spiritual practices
- **Colors:** Deep teal, navy blue, bronze, sea green, sandy gold
- **Herbs & Plants:** Rosemary, bay laurel, sage, cedar, thyme
- **Crystals:** Fluorite, tiger's eye, clear quartz, smoky quartz, pyrite
- **Ocean Allies:** Sea turtle, octopus, horseshoe crab, sea urchin
- **Best Spellwork:** Goal-setting rituals, prosperity magic, success spells, commitment workings, manifestation journals

Elemental Associations

- **Primary Element:** Water
- **Secondary Element:** Earth

The Auger Shell combines Water's intuitive flow with Earth's patience and stability. Together they teach that lasting success comes from balancing inspiration with consistent action.

Tide & Moon Connections

Best Tide

Incoming Mid-Tide

As the tide steadily rises, it mirrors the Auger Shell's lesson that growth often happens gradually. This is an ideal time for building momentum toward long-term intentions.

Moon Phases

- **Waxing Crescent:** Setting focused intentions
- **First Quarter Moon:** Overcoming obstacles through action
- **Waxing Gibbous:** Refining plans before manifestation reaches its peak

Lunar Energy

The Auger Shell resonates with moons that encourage growth, preparation, and steady progress. Its energy is less about dramatic breakthroughs and more about creating lasting change through patience and persistence.



Journal Prompts

1. What goal deserves more of my focused energy?
2. Where am I spreading myself too thin?
3. What small daily practice could create meaningful change over time?
4. How has patience served me in the past?
5. What distractions am I ready to release?
6. How can I trust the journey even when I cannot yet see the destination?
7. What intention do I want to carry into the coming harvest season?



Tarot Pairing for the Auger Shell

The Chariot

The Auger Shell pairs naturally with The Chariot, a card of determination, discipline, and purposeful movement. The Chariot teaches that success comes not from speed, but from maintaining direction despite distractions and opposing forces.



Together, the Auger Shell and The Chariot remind us:

The tides may twist and turn, but purpose keeps us on course.

With patience, focus, and steady resolve, every small step becomes part of a greater journey.

Bendiciones/Blessings,

Silas Mimir

*Tu poder está en tus viajes en el mar, dentro de ti.
Your power is in your travels at sea, inside of you.*



Magical Names

With M. Rex Belladonna LaVeau, Archpriestess

A gentle note on magical names.

When you're choosing a magical name, it's worth pausing for a moment before you pick the one that simply sounds the coolest. Names carry meaning, symbolism, and energy, and they can shape how you feel about yourself, what you call toward you, and how others perceive you.

I'll give a simple example. I recently saw a drink that's become popular called Liquid Death. Apparently it's just water. I joked that I wouldn't drink something with "death" printed on the can. Dusty pointed out that, yes, it's water, and the name can be seen as magically solid in certain mystery traditions, and it's also a clever brand. All of that may be true, and still, I personally don't want to put my lips to a can that says "Liquid Death." The words matter.

Your name is a spell you live inside.

The same idea applies to magical names. Ask yourself, what am I calling to myself by choosing this name? What themes might it invite into your life, your focus, your relationships, your health, your spiritual lessons, and your reputation?

My name is Belladonna. Yes, it's a poisonous plant, and it's also been used in healing. It also means "beautiful lady." I took this name because the Goddess called me by it, and it has held layers of meaning for me over time.

LaVeau means "of the calf," a baby cow. I am a priestess of the Cow Goddess, so that resonates deeply. It's also a name I've carried in other lifetimes. For me, it became a spiritual sign, a thread that connected me to things I didn't fully understand until the name arrived.

Your name is a spell
you live inside.



Before you settle on a magical name, consider:

What are the connotations, historically and culturally? What does it literally mean?

What mythology or spirit current does it connect to? Are those lessons ones you truly want to live with?

What images will people form when they hear it, and will that help or hinder you in the spaces you serve?

Will it be taken seriously in community, in leadership, or in public-facing work?

Sometimes what feels mysterious and romantic to you may land very differently for others. And yes, magical names can become the subject of jokes, because people will be people. The "Lady Silverbritches" type of story comes up often in these conversations, and so do crude jokes. If folks want to share their "I've heard this one before" stories, keep it light, and keep it kind.

Practical steps that really help:

If you're choosing a name, do a little due diligence first: Look up the meaning and history, check multiple sources. Explore the myths and symbolism, not just the aesthetic. Say it out loud, and imagine introducing yourself with it in different settings. Ask trusted friends for honest feedback, and be willing to hear critique. If numerology matters in your tradition, check the numerological value too.

A little care now can save you years of awkwardness later, or worse, years of carrying a name that calls in a story you never meant to live.

Choose a magical name that supports your path, your integrity, and your spirit, not just your vibe. Because when people hear your name, you don't want them looking at each other thinking, "I wonder what they were thinking when they named themselves 'Forever Cursed'."



M Rev Belladonna LaVeau

Archpriestess

bella@atewicca.org

1 360-793-1945

www.atewicca.org

World Headquarters,
PO Box 409, Index, WA 98256



Pan in the Modern World

With Edward O'Toole

Pan, Humanity and Nature in the Modern World

Many people today feel that something is missing from their lives. We are surrounded by technology, and we spend hours looking at screens, yet, beneath all of this, many of us feel a longing for something older, deeper, and more real.

We miss nature. We miss the feeling of being connected to the living world.

This is where the ancient Greek god Pan re-emerges once more.

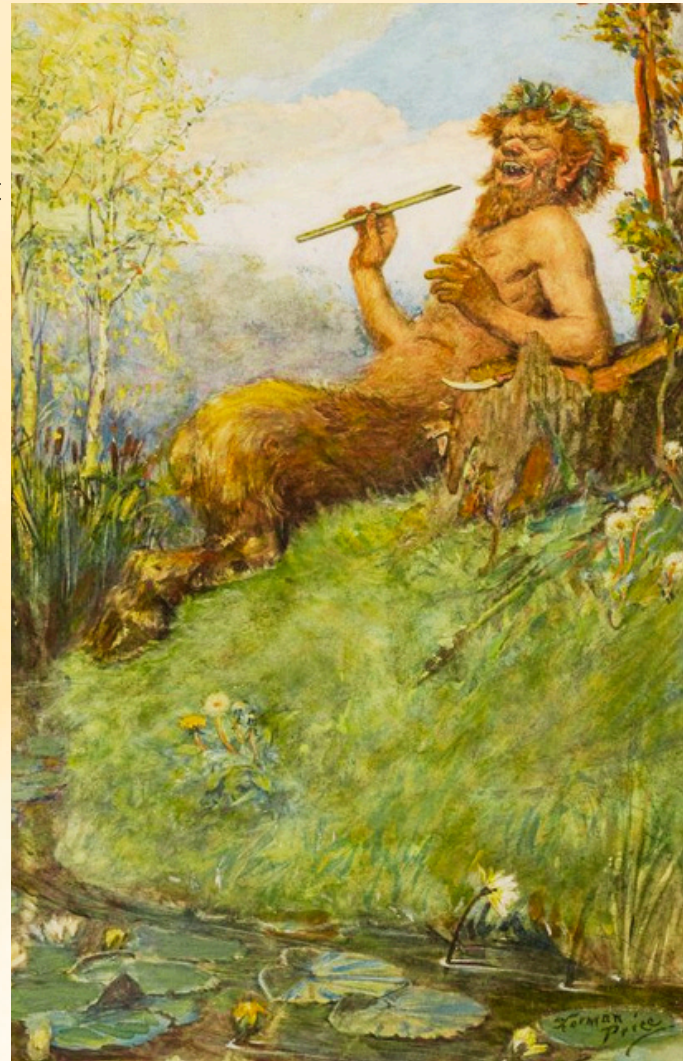
Pan is one of the oldest and wildest gods of the ancient world. He is the god of forests, mountains, caves, rivers, animals, music, and untamed places. He is often shown with the horns and legs of a goat, reflecting his deep connection to the natural world. To many modern people, Pan may seem like a figure from a forgotten past. Yet his message feels more important now.

Pan reminds us that human beings are part of nature.

That may sound obvious, yet modern life often encourages us to forget it. We spend our days inside buildings and boxes, moving from house to car to office, and back again. We experience nature as something separate from everyday life.

Pan offers a different perspective. In his world, nature is alive: forests have a presence, rivers have a spirit, and mountains carry wisdom. The land is more than scenery - it is something we can build a relationship with.

Across the world, there is growing interest in gardening, herbalism, foraging, nature spirituality, seasonal celebrations, and simple ways of living closer to the earth. There is a desire to slow down and reconnect with something genuine. Pan speaks directly to that longing. He invites us to step outside and pay attention. He encourages us to walk through a woodland without headphones, to sit beside a stream and listen to the water, to watch birds moving through the trees, and to notice the changing seasons.





These small acts may seem simple, yet they can be deeply powerful. The modern world constantly pulls our attention in different directions. Pan asks us to bring that attention back to the living earth.

Many ancient cultures understood that nature could heal the human spirit. Today, science is beginning to confirm what people have known instinctively for thousands of years: time spent in natural environments reduces stress, improves mental well-being, and helps people feel calmer and more balanced. Yet there is something else happening here as well. More than just relaxing us, nature reminds us who we truly are.

When we stand beneath a vast night sky, our worries often seem smaller. When we walk through a dense and ancient forest, we become aware of a world that existed long before us and will continue after we are gone. Such experiences can create a sense of perspective that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Pan represents this feeling. He is the voice of the wild calling us back to ourselves.

One of the most important lessons Pan offers is the value of wonder. Modern culture often encourages us to analyse everything in terms of data, measurements, and empirical science. These things have their place, yet human beings also need mystery. We need moments that fill us with awe: a deer appearing suddenly between the trees, or sunlight shining through morning mist. Experiences like these speak to something deep within us.

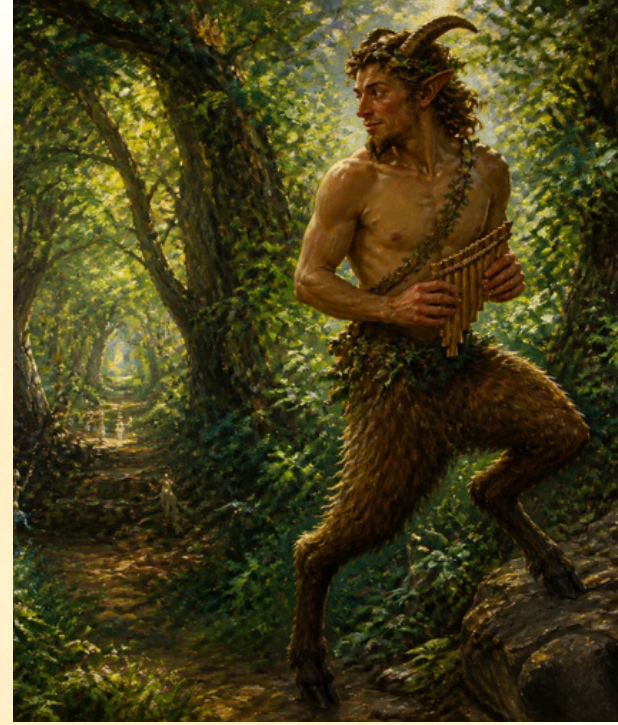
Pan reminds us that wonder is an essential part of being human. He teaches us that the world is far richer and stranger than we often imagine. This sense of wonder can also inspire care for the natural world because people protect what they love and what they spend time with.

A person who regularly walks through a local woodland is far more likely to care about its future. Someone who watches birds, tends a garden, or spends time by a river develops a personal relationship with those places – and Pan encourages exactly this kind of relationship. He invites us to become participants rather than observers.

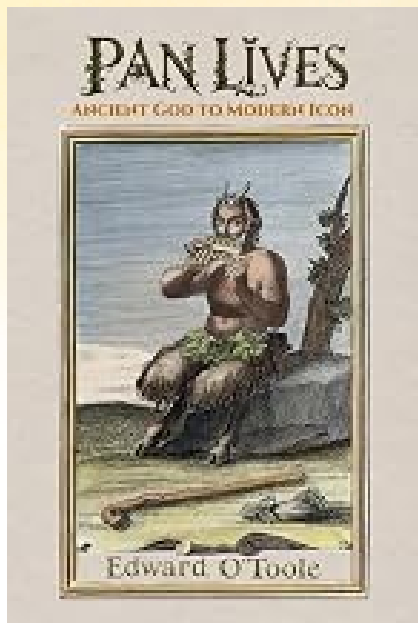
This message feels especially important at a time when environmental challenges affect every corner of the planet. Technology can help solve many problems, and scientific research is essential, yet lasting change begins with connection. If people feel emotionally connected to nature, they are far more likely to care for it and value it.

Pan reminds us that nature is more than just a collection of resources waiting to be used. It is a living community of which we are a part. Perhaps this is why Pan continues to appear in books, art, music, and spiritual traditions long after the ancient world disappeared. He represents something that humanity still needs: a relationship with the earth and a reminder that life contains mystery and beauty.

Pan stands at the edge of the forest with his pipes in his hands, calling from the shadows of the trees. His voice can still be heard today by anyone willing to slow down and listen – in birdsong at dawn, and in the sound of rain on leaves. Pan is there to remind us that the natural world is alive, and we belong to it.



Edward O'Toole is a British author who lives in a remote Ruthenian village in the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Slovakia, surrounded by incredible nature and traditional living. His latest book is Pan Lives – Ancient God to Modern Icon, published by Liminal Gates Press.



Waterbath Canning

With Teresa Jacobs



Blog #6: The Seal—What We Desire!! - vacuum seals, false seals, testing seals, storing jars, removing rings, troubleshooting failures

Welcome back to our Water Bath Canning series and our continued journey through the PACKS Method.

In our previous post, we focused on one of the most important pieces of home canning: the jars themselves. We discussed choosing quality jars, inspecting them for faults, properly preparing them, packing them correctly, removing trapped air, and processing them safely. After all that work, we wait. And then we listen.

Pop!

For home canners, few sounds are more satisfying. That tiny sound tells us something important has happened. The jar has formed a vacuum seal, transforming our carefully prepared food into a shelf-stable product ready for the pantry.

What is a "Vacuum Seal"? Why does it happen?

Why is it SO important? What causes Seal Failure? And how do we know if a jar has truly sealed, and how do we Test Seals, Store Jars, and remove the Rings?

Today we're discussing these issues and what EVERY Home Canner Desires Most: The GREAT SUCCESSFUL SEAL!

What Is a Vacuum Seal?

A vacuum seal is created when heated air inside the jar escapes during processing. As the jar cools, the remaining air contracts and creates a vacuum. This vacuum pulls the lid downward against the sealing surface of the jar.

That downward pressure keeps outside air from entering the jar and helps preserve the food inside. Without a proper seal, home-canned food is not shelf-stable. The seal is the final reward for all the careful work you've done throughout the canning process.

Why Do Lids Pop or Ping?

The most recognizable moment is hearing the lid "pop or ping." This occurs when the lid is pulled downward by the vacuum forming inside the cooling jar. Some lids seal immediately. Some seal in the water. Others may take several hours. Some canners hear dozens of pops throughout the evening; others hear very few. The sound itself is exciting, but the pop is not proof of a successful seal. It's simply a sign that the sealing process is occurring. The seal must still be verified later.



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Science Behind the Seal

During processing, food heats up. Air expands. Air escapes from beneath the lid.

During cooling, air contracts. Pressure inside the jar decreases. The lid is pulled downward. A vacuum forms. That vacuum is what keeps the lid tightly attached to the jar. Every step we've discussed previously contributes to this process:

- Proper headspace
- Removing air bubbles
- Clean rims
- Correct processing times
- Fingertip-tight bands

The seal is not one isolated event. It's the result of many small steps done correctly.

Common Causes of Seal Failure

Even experienced canners have failed seals. Failures can be traced to a few common causes. As we discussed before, jars are one of the most important items to check. They're vessels for our food to sit on our shelves today and for future longevity.

Damaged Jar Rims-A chip, nick, or rough spot on the sealing surface can prevent the lid from making complete contact with the jar.

Dirty Rims-Food residue, syrup, pectin, grease, or vegetable particles can interfere with sealing.

Incorrect Headspace: Too much or too little headspace can affect the formation of a vacuum.

Overtightened Bands-If bands are too tight, air may not vent properly during processing.

Underprocessing-incomplete processing can prevent proper sealing and create food safety concerns. Never, ever shorten processing times.

Defective Lids-Inspect lids before use and follow the manufacturer's preparation instructions.

What Is a False Seal?

When a lid appears attached to the jar, but no true vacuum exists. This can happen when:

- Food residue acts like glue
- Sticky syrup dries around the rim
- Bands are left overly tight

The jar may appear sealed initially but can lose its seal during storage. This is the reason we never judge a seal by appearance alone.

How to Test a Seal Properly

After cooling, it's time to test and check the Seal.

Visual Check: Look at the center of the lid. A properly sealed lid should be slightly concave, or downward.

Finger Test: Press the center of the lid. If it moves up and down, the jar has not sealed. A properly sealed lid remains firm and downward.

Lift Test: Remove the band. Lift the jar an inch or two by the edge of the lid. A properly sealed lid should remain securely attached.



Why We Remove the Bands

Bands are necessary during processing. Not necessary for storage. In fact, storing jars without bands offers several advantages. Many experienced canners remove bands after confirming seals and store them separately for future use.

Without bands:

- Hidden seal failures are easier to detect.
- Moisture is less likely to become trapped.
- Rust is reduced.
- False seals are easier to identify.

What If a Jar Doesn't Seal?

Don't panic. A failed seal is disappointing, but it isn't a disaster. You have several options.

Refrigerate It-The easiest solution is to place the jar in the refrigerator and enjoy the contents within a few days.

Reprocess It-If discovered within 24 hours and the food remains safe to handle, you may reprocess using a new lid and following the complete processing procedure again. Keep in mind that quality may decline slightly after reprocessing.

Freeze It-Many foods can be frozen instead of reprocessed. This option helps preserve quality while preventing waste.

The Emotional Side of Canning

One thing I've learned over years of preserving food is that canning is equal parts science and satisfaction. We carefully prepare our produce. We wash, peel, slice, pack, and process. Then we wait for that beautiful moment when the jars begin to seal. The sound may be small, but it represents something much larger.

It represents self-sufficiency. It represents food security. It represents preserving the harvest and the memories that come with it. Every successful seal tells us we followed the process correctly. It's confirmation that our efforts were worthwhile.

The PACKS Connection

When I created the PACKS Method, I wanted to help canners understand that every step matters.

The seal doesn't happen by accident. It begins with selecting quality produce.

It continues through proper preparation, packing, headspace, bubble removal, and processing.

By the time the lid seals, you've already done dozens of things correctly. The seal is simply the final confirmation. It's what we truly desire because it tells us the process worked.

And when YOUR JARS line YOUR pantry shelves, each one represents the REWARD FOR YOUR  patience, preparation, and attention to detail.

Your future self will thank you!





Bonus Recipe For This Month:

Bread and Butter Pickles

These sweet and tangy pickles are perfect for practicing proper headspace, rim cleaning, and seal verification. Yield: about 5 pints

Ingredients

- 10 cups sliced cucumbers
- 2 cups sliced onions-about 3-4 onions
- 1/2 cup pickling salt or canning salt
- 3 cups white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons mustard seed
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/8 teaspoon Pickle Crisp (optional-helps crunch)

Instructions

Combine veggies in a bowl. Sprinkle with salt, let stand for 2 hours. Drain well.

Prepare WBCanner, fill with water/jars.

Combine vinegar, sugar, and spices in another large pot. Bring to a boil. Add all veggies and spices. Return to boil.

Pack vegetables in hot jars, pour brine in the jar, and leave ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Add more brine to reach ½-inch headspace. Wipe rims, clean with a cloth dipped in vinegar.

Apply lids/bands fingertip tight. Place jars back in hot WBC. Water must reach over the jars 1-2 inches.

Process for 10 minutes after the WBC has reached a rolling gentle boil. Check your altitude.

Once processing is done, take the canner lid off and let jars sit in the canner 5-10 minutes. Remove jars, place on a towel-lined counter.

Cool, check seals, lid should be concave (downward), unband, and store in your pantry.

Once cooled, verify each seal. Celebrate the sound of the Pop, The Ping! YOU will be SUCCESS! Be Proud, you are on your way to being a HOME CANNER! This is the ULTIMATE GOAL of What We Desire!!

Next month, "What Happens After the Pop?"

Happy Canning, My Friends,

Teresa Jacobs



August Festivals



August

CIRCLE'S GREEN SPIRIT FESTIVAL – Barneveld, Wisconsin July 31-August 2, 2026

SACRED HARVEST FESTIVAL – Finlayson, Minnesota, Aug. 3 – 9, 2026

FREE SPIRIT GATHERING – Darlington, Maryland, Aug 4-9, 2026

SUMMERLAND FESTIVAL – Clifton, Ohio, Aug. 13-16, 2026

OSIRIS FEST – La Vergne, Tennessee, Aug. 17, 2026



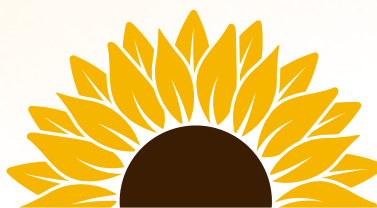
September

STONES RISING – Artemas, Pennsylvania, Sept. 2 – 7, 2026

TEMPLE FEST – Charlton, Massachusetts, Sept. 4-7, 2026

WILD MAGICK GATHERING – Needmore, Indiana, Sept 17-20, 2026

MYSTIC MABON SOUTHWEST – Tijeras, New Mexico, Sept 17-20, 2026





HEKATE'S SICKLE FESTIVAL



There are many Pagan Festivals, where you go to seekers classes, drum circles, main ritual, and back home. These festivals are fantastic places to compare, seek, and find a home. They are designed to foster a free flowing community event, that is many things to many people. They are important to our community, and we love them.

Then there is Hekate Sickle Festival. This Festival is not for seekers, although seekers are welcome. This festival is for a deep, magical, transformational experience that touches your soul and leaves you forever changed by Her hand.

Hekate Sickle Festival is where She touches you, shapes you, changes you, and claims you as Her own.



Hekate's Sickle Festival

Orcas Island, WA | November 6th-8th 2026



*Sickle
is moving
Location!*



We are moving the location for Hekate's Sickle Festival 2026!

The Goddess has spoken. We're moving. Hekate's Sickle Festival 2026 will be held at Moran State Park Retreat Center in Olga, WA, on Orcas Island; same dates, and a return to land we've walked before.

It's been nearly 15 years since we last gathered on this island, and she has been calling us back. This year, Hekate, Isis, and Ereshkigal will meet us on that same sacred ground. This land holds memory, magic runs deep, and the mysteries of place, history, and ancestry are ready to be reawakened.

What's Changing? We are providing food and accommodations as part of the festival experience. Because of this, ticket pricing is updating!

Ticket Prices this year are:

- **Register by Jul. 31st: \$199**
- **Register by Oct. 15th: \$237**
- **Register by Oct. 31st: \$297**

We're building the menu and schedule now and will share more as it comes together. Stay tuned!

We'll see you in the forest this November. 🌙



Editor's Musings

With Rev. Delphi Koch



Sommer has come to Missouri. Cumulus Nimbus clouds are building against the pale blue sky. There is no promise of rain, only teasing. The green grass is fading to brown. The earth is cracked in her thirst. Many of the trees are wilting. The Geese no longer graze in the meadow. They have retreated to the river in search of a moment of cool. On the bottom side of a Catalpa leaf, the dried shell of a Sakata clings. Life it once knew has flown away.

The humid air makes it almost impossible to breathe as the temperature climbs. A breeze gently touches everything in sight. Will it bring the clouds closer? Will the spirit of the water bring forth her nourishment to all of those in need? Yes, she will, but only in her time. For only the elements know the precise moment they will bless us with their gifts.

As the spirit of the water smiles upon the world. Giving a few moments of precious rain here and there. While the spirit of fire allows the sun to burn hotter and brighter on the earth. The four elements showing off their powers.

The God and Goddess smile as they watch their children at play.



War and Peace

With Cheryl Costa



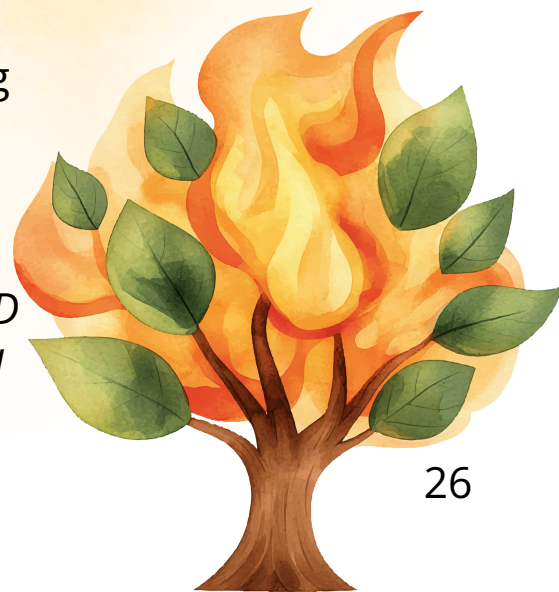
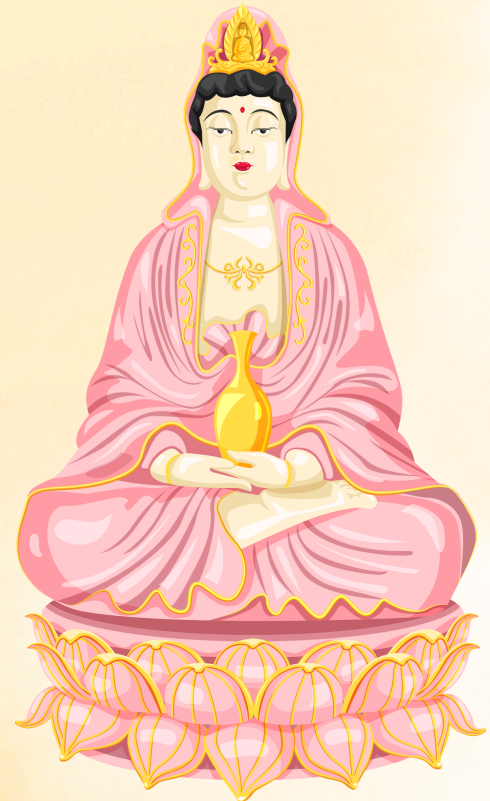
I was doing a little research for someone seeking a protection spell, but I found nothing related to a specific deity that you could call upon for the purpose of shielding you from physical harm by man, beast, or magick. That said, some of the Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist tradition are considered Protectors. But most Western Pagans generally wouldn't consider invoking Buddhist Bodhisattvas.

I decided to take the martial approach and looked at the War deities. Oh, there were plenty of them: brave, fierce, wrathful, but none you could call upon to protect you. These deities were only war-making oriented and very suitable for attack magick.

Across 34 world cultures, there were about 170 fierce war-making Gods and Goddesses. I found this highly troubling. What does this say about our human species and the deities we as humans have venerated for eons?

Even the Christian God, Yahweh, Exodus 15:3. (King James Version) ... *The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.*

Add to that, we get a good Idea of Yahweh's temperament in Nahum 1:2 (Biblehub.com): *The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and full of wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on His foes and reserves wrath for His enemies.*



In the back of my mind, I hoped and assumed that there had to be a balance between war-making deities and the peace deities. It was a very bad assumption. Only 8 world cultures had peace-oriented deities. Represented by 11 Goddesses and 4 Gods. The cultural break-out of Peace deities went like this:

- 4-Greek
- 1-Lakota
- 1-Lithuanian
- 1- Māori
- 2-Norse
- 1-Persian
- 4-Roman
- 1-Venezuelan



In the final analysis, I find myself returning to the moral ethic of Stan Lee: *"With great power comes great responsibility."* As I stated previously, for magickal adepts, this phrase has a simple meaning: if you have the ability to do something, make sure that you do it for the good of others.

While I was in monastic life, I was taught a ritual process for *"Raising the Great Abundance."* The philosophy is simple but has wonderfully great implications. Many people practice magickal only for themselves or their immediate family and friends. They literally are handing out the Magickal Benefit by the Spoonful.

Instead, consider raising that energy and offering it for the benefit of all beings, everywhere, everywhen?

Think about this in a magickal ritual context. Raising power and offering it purely for the benefit of all beings everywhere across the multiverse, in every temporal domain: past, present, and future. Every experienced Magickal Adept understands there is Magickal blowback: both positive and negative. Do questionable working and sooner or later it's going to bite you! Do a beneficial work, and its blowback is going to be quite beneficial. If you execute a beneficial ritual for zillions upon zillions of beings everywhere, wouldn't it make sense that the blowback would be abundant and positive for you? Can I hear a So Mote it be!



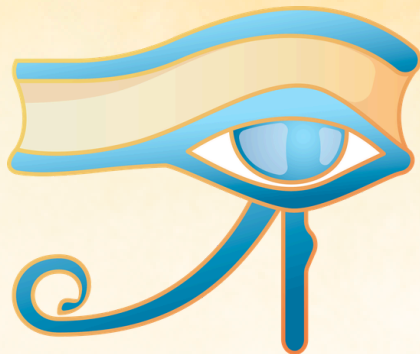
But I've lectured on this topic for years and had some students rolling their eyes and saying, "I don't care about those other beings; I just worry about myself." So much for selfless magickal practice...and people wonder why I retired!

Cheryl's Ethical Rules



1. Do not practice attack Magick.
2. Be Kind.
3. Do unto others as you would do unto yourself.
4. Be Generous with your magick.
5. THINK BIG – THINK REALLY BIG with your magick.
6. Offer Great Magickal offerings for the benefit of all beings, everywhere, everywhen.
7. If you know protective magickal techniques, generously use them to protect the vulnerable.

Afterthoughts: I hear some of you asking. “Where do I find a book of Magickal Protective spells?” Let me say it this way: as Magickal Adepts, we practice the art of turning Thought into Form. Protective magick amounts to being creative. Visualize a magickal barrier of any sort around yourself or the person you are trying to protect. Again, it comes down to quieting one’s mind and effectively visualizing. You need not light a single candle or burn a single stick of incense. Personally, during meditation, I regularly wrap myself in magickal protective barriers and reinforce my previous protective wrappings. My policy is I don’t use attack magick. That said, I don’t install attack aspects to my protective barriers either.



About the author: Cheryl Costa has been a Witch for forty-nine years. She spent seven years in contemplative Buddhist monastic life. She has been an ordained Tibetan Yogini for the past twenty-nine years. She considers herself a simple contemplative sorceress.



Lammas with Weavers



With Rev. Ella Silverstar

Lammas at Weavers of the Web, ATC

We have officially entered the first harvest of the season. At this time, you should really be seeing those goals we made back at Imbolc produce fruit that is ready to harvest. This is when we really begin to reflect on the year. We have passed through the zenith, and the waning of the year has begun. Think of the waning moon cycle and how we begin to let things go during this time. This is a similar type of energy but on a much larger scale and has a greater impact on our year and life goals. This is when we take some time and really look at our goals. How have they progressed? Did they all grow or are some of them still on hold? Some goals may still need some work, and that's okay because it's the first harvest! There will be some goals that have progressed beautifully, and you are really seeing the results flourish. If you have some goals that have not really been started, this is a good time to let those go and focus on what you have accomplished.



Something we do here during this time is our Lammas Monologues, where many of us who are in Seminary will invoke a deity, elemental, or higher self depending on what year we are in as part of our training. We at Weavers of the Web also encourage our community members to join us in this. Through this, they are able to audition for roles in our rituals throughout the year as we have need of people to hold Deity. It is great fun to see all the ways people connect with deity and how the Gods speak to us.

During Lammas Season, we can be grateful for what we have accomplished, for those around us who have helped along the way. As part of our ritual, we call in Lady Sif, she of the harvest and the golden hair, wife of Thor. We call in Freyr, who gave up his Sword of Summer for love. And we call in Loki, the catalyst that brings change.





A common tradition during this time is to make a Wickerman to put prayers and offerings into and burn to release them to the Gods. For this ritual, we make corn dollies as our own personal Wickerman. We do this leading up to the ritual, encouraging people to be creative with them.

During the ritual, we talk about having gratitude for the Gods who have helped us, those whom we have devoted our time to, and who have sacrificed for us to help us with our goals. We then share gratitudes for our ancestors whose sacrifices allowed us to be where we are today and how their contributions made this possible. Next, we share our gratitudes for people who have touched our lives, been there for us when we needed them, and shown up to help us get through this year. Finally, we think about our own sacrifices, for others, for ourselves. We also think about the future generations that will look back and burn their own wickerman, thinking of the sacrifices we made for them. We take all of this and pour it into our corn dollies and charge them up before putting them into the fire.

This ritual is a journey, and as we go through each part, we tell the Norse story Sif's hair being cut, which represents the harvest of the grain. When Loki gets blamed, as he usually does, he goes to the Sons of Ivaldi and challenges them to create golden hair. This led to the challenge of Brokk and Eitri competing against the Sons of Ivaldi for who can make the most incredible gifts for the Gods. This is how we get Sif's golden hair, Thor's Mjolnir, Odin's staff Gungnir, and Freya's boar Gullinbursti. Loki made a wager that would cost him his head, so he manipulated the dwarves as they worked in an attempt to move things in his favor. Here we learn of the challenges and sacrifices that come with the cycles of the year and how it connects with the harvest.

Every year, we challenge our community to come together and have another kind of harvest, bringing together non-perishable foods to donate to the Pagans In Need food pantry to make sure we can feed our local community. We bring our beloved Baldr and try to bury him in food. This all ties in to the sacrifice we do for each other and our community.



Weavers of the Web, ATC

- 809 Center Street, 48906
- +1 517-657-5800
- clergy@weaversoftheweb.org

Dying to Know

With Diana Raven



Hello, folks!

It is me again, back at it with the death and despair! Okay, maybe with less despair this time. It is the height of summer after all, a time of sunshine, happiness, swimming, heat, green grass, Lammas, Lughnasadh, and did I mention heat? Like, literally, it is the hottest part of the year here in Nebraska. It really is like a free trial of cremation.

That heat is a good thing, though. It lets us know that we are approaching Lammas and Lughnasadh, two holidays that mark the beginning of what I consider to be "Sacrifice Season," probably more conventionally known as the "harvest" sabbats.

They signal the beginning of the harvest season, and you will see loaves of bread made from the first harvest of grain for those who celebrate Lammas.

But what about Lughnasadh? It occurs around the same time, does it not?

Yes, it does! However, it is focused on a series of games celebrating the Celtic God Lugh. There is so much mythology surrounding this particular sabbat, but I wanted to keep it relevant to the theme of this column. When I was doing my research, I found a paragraph that Lugh held several games to honor a fallen goddess. I thought it sounded familiar to tales that I had heard of Rome's Emperors holding gladiatorial games to honor the lives of the recently deceased.





Then I got to thinking. What would funerary games be like today? There are certainly so many memorial golf tournaments and poker runs held every weekend. Could those count? Certainly, they are not as bloody.

What do you think?

I think this also raises the question of how appropriate it is to have joy and laughter at an event that celebrates death. Honestly, I am for it. I think everyone should be able to express the full range of human emotions when they are mourning a person. I do not think funerary events need to necessarily be stuffy events where everyone is in uncomfortable close, and the building smells like stale flowers and old crackers.

Those events are totally fine, too. However, we should allow space for people to celebrate the life of the deceased in a way that honors their memory. If the deceased would have loved to have a ping pong tournament in a funeral home, go for it. If they would have loved a week-long Dungeons and Dragons session fueled by Baja Blast and Circus Peanuts, awesome! (Please eat some vegetables, though.)

It is also worth noting that some other cultures do not have the same aversion to death as the American culture does. Even within the United States, we can see the diverse approach to funerals. For example, in New Orleans, marching bands parade down the street for second line during funerals.

I personally am having a combination of Wiccan and Norse traditions at my funeral with a blot afterwards. At some random point during the service portion, I want "Pop Goes the Weasel" to play.

So, yes, I am in favor of funerary games. Are you?

This is a great question to journal about, especially if the idea of people laughing and carrying on at a funeral puts you off or offends you in some way.

Panthenaeed

With Ava Althea

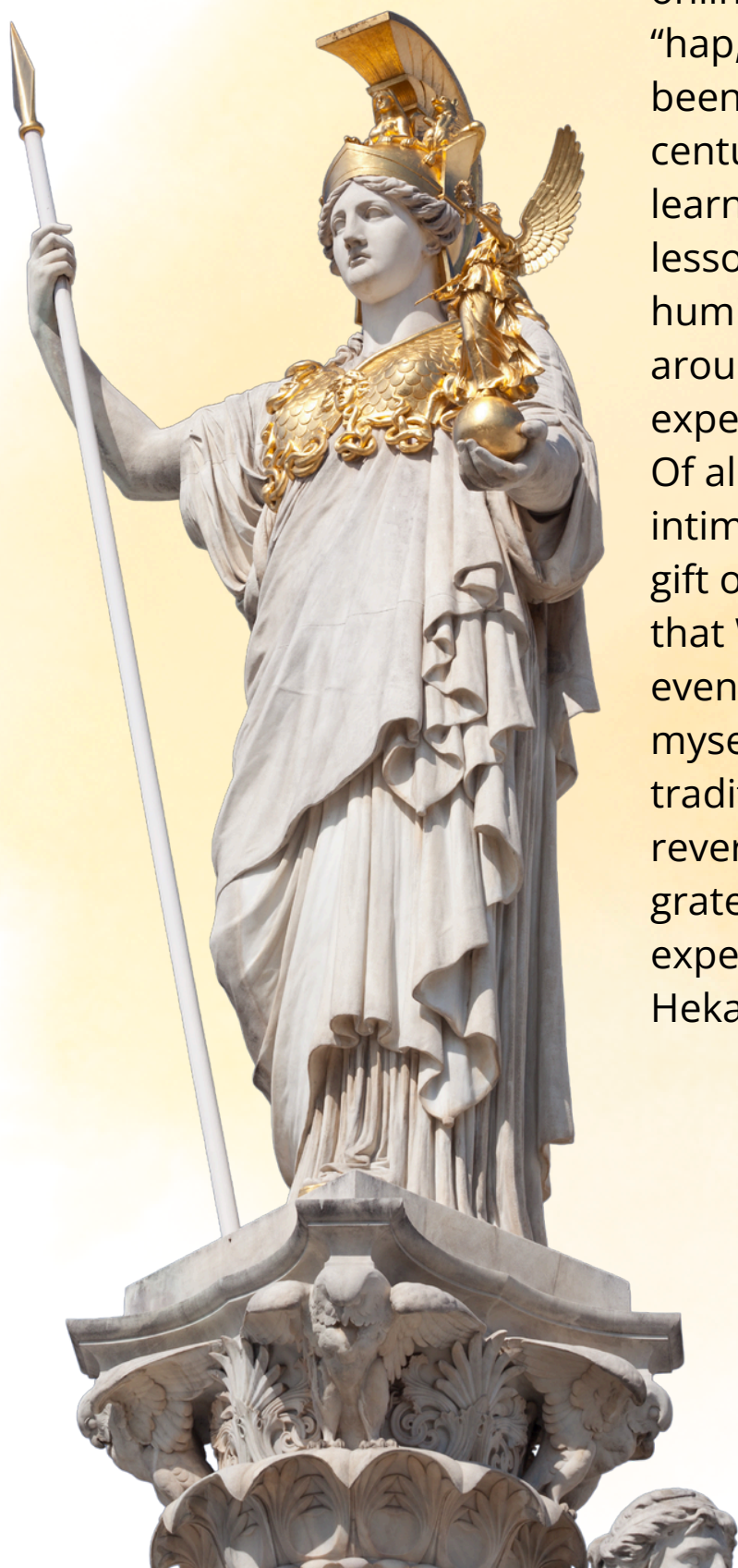
An Ancient Festival to Athena Finds Home at a Lammas Celebration

Midsummer in Ancient Greece was celebrated with one of the most important festivals of their time: Panthenaea, to honor the patroness of Athens, the mighty and wise Athena. And to take it one step further, every four years they celebrated the Greater Parthenaea with athletic games, parades, stage plays, and more. Now, thousands of years later, during midsummer in the western United States, the Parthenaea was celebrated online for Lammas Monologues presented by WSTS.



The whole weekend centered on the gift of knowledge, wisdom, and reason (all things Athena presides over) as people presented workshops on topics such as aromatherapy, the origin and tradition of maize, getting magical in the kitchen, and the importance of gratitude. To top it off, we had the votary of the Temple of Athena, Brenna Grace, invoke Athena and present her messages.





One thing I did learn is that the words “happiness” and “happen” come from the root word. I looked up the etymology online, and sure enough, they come from “hap,” which means “chance, luck” and has been seen in records as early as the 14th century ([source](#)). But more importantly, I learned humility. There are so many lessons we learn in this spiral of a life, and humility is one that always comes back around for me. This was my first time experiencing a shrine moment with Athena. Of all the times I went to SMF, I was too intimidated to speak with her. But with the gift of technology and the amazing work that WSTS does to put together community events, I was able to experience Athena for myself and preserve a centuries-old tradition. The beauty of invoking the gods is revered in the Wiccan tradition, and I am so grateful to experience it, and I can’t wait to experience it with the Kemetic gods at Hekate’s Sickle Festival this fall.

Thank you!

Dusty Dionne for Celebrating Bella!

Belladonna LaVeau for Choosing a Magical name!

Kara D. Williams for Menhir News Special!

Silas Mimir for Wavebound Whispers!

Cassandee for Notes From the Garden!

Edward O'Tool for Pan in the Modern World!

Teresa Jacobs for Waterbath Canning!

Ava Althea for Panathenaea: A Celebration of Athena!

Ella Silverstar for Lammass with Weavers!

Delphi Koch for Editor's Musings!

Diana Rowan for Dying to Know!

Cheryl Costa for War and Peace!

To All of You who Subscribe!