

Festive Circles Update

"Many Voices United In One Spirit!"

Spring - 1993

MIDWIFERY:

One of the Goddess' Mysteries Throughout the Ages

by Sharon and Marty

Midwifery is the oldest profession. At times we have been called Wise Women, Healers and Witches. Today we are called Midwives. Midwifery is one of the women's healing arts along with aura work, colors, herbs, homeopathy, reflexology, massage, crystals and trance states. Healing in the matriarchs was women's work as we dealt with birth, death and life forces. Healing is caring and nurturing, the ability to reach out and love others, to interconnect with all life. Midwifery is the bringing of new life into the world, the care of pregnant and birthing women and the care of newborn babes. ***It was for the easing of women's labor pain that Midwives were burned during the inquisition.***

The Inquisition was the male medical establishment attempting to stamp out all Wise Woman knowledge. They were well organized campaigns initiated, financed and executed by the church and state. The church and state used medical doctors as experts to decide whether a woman was a Witch. In the witch hunts the church legitimized the doctor's professionalism denouncing healing as heresy; if a woman dares to cure without studies, she is a Witch and must die. *Studies* were, of course, university studies that women were not

allowed to attend.

The Witch was a threat to the church because she was a woman and not ashamed of it; she was a part of an organized underground of peasant women that educated themselves and each other, and she was a healer whose practices were based on cause and effect and trial and error rather than the belief that everything was "the will of God". *Her magic was the science of her time.* Because medicine lacked her healing and knowledge, the wise woman was killed. Many of us remember "the burning times".

Today, Midwifery is still persecuted by the medical establishment. Witch

"...Midwives are arrested for possession of raspberry leaf tea, practicing medicine without a license and occasionally manslaughter..."

hunts are still common and Midwives are arrested for possession of raspberry leaf tea, practicing medicine without a license and occasionally manslaughter if a baby dies during a birth - even if major birth defects are found. Our healing knowledge is scoffed at, herbs and homeopathy not believed effective, our intuition of birth complications not believed and our visualization talents, without the benefit of machines, ridiculed. Despite all this, midwives have the best pregnancy and birth outcomes in the world!

Women's concept of healing was that of mutual sharing. Wise Women were the healers of "the people". We serve all, teach all. Medicine is big business, with knowledge hoarded and dealt out to those that can pay for it. It holds power over the poor, women,

children and the minorities. Healing belongs to all who want to learn it and is taught and shared among women in openness. Fortunately, as in ancient times, women are beginning to network again. Midwives meet and teach each other the healing herbs and old knowledge. Women meet and teach each other birthing and breast feeding knowledge that were once lost.

Call us what you may, we are here and we are teaching and sharing our heritage. Every baby we catch, every woman we heal and every child we touch will make a difference in our world. Celebrate the Wise Women - *we will heal.*

Blessed be.

(Sharon has been a Lay Midwife since 1984 and is certified in three states. Practicing the Wise Woman Tradition of Midwifery she has "caught" over 200 babies. Sharon and Marty are both EMT's and in addition to teaching pre-natal, nutrition and holistic healing techniques to women they teach natural child birthing to future EMT's.

If you would like more information you may write: Spirit Within Home Birthing Services, Rt. 1, Box 338/10, Noble, OK 73068.)

Festive Circles Update is the news source published by and for the Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition and is included with Coalition membership.

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Submissions should be mailed to: FCU, P.O. Box 26442, Oklahoma City, OK 73126-0442.

Gay Male Spirituality '93

A Conference of Embodying Our Gay Spirit

Saturday, August 7 - Friday, August 13

Are you looking for a safe place to explore your spirituality among your fellow gay and bisexual men? **GMS '93** is for those taking their first steps on their spiritual journey as well as for the "seasoned traveler". We promise you a chance to explore, envision, and invoke, to celebrate, to share, and to change, to swim, to talk on the beach, to gossip on the porch, to giggle in the woods, to drum and sing and dance, to be naked together, to wear leather or lace or polyester.

Explore a variety of spiritual activities and practices. Experience the connection between our sexuality and our spirituality. Live together as a caring and supportive community. Discover the role of gay people.

Gay Male Spirituality activities will include:

Body Painting - Practiced in many cultures of the world, body painting at **GMS** becomes a playful celebration of our bodies; *Wiccan Ritual* - Using the traditions of the ancient Pagan religion of Europe we will work Lavender Magick and call forth the Gay Spirit; *Erotic Massage* - Drawing on the teachings of Tantra and Taoism and also the modern practice of Rebirthing, we will use breath and massage to raise erotic energy in an ecstatic ritual uniting the sexual and spiritual. In

addition to these and other workshops, we invite participants to propose activities of their own.

GMS '93 will be held at Ferry Beach, a Unitarian Universalist conference center located on the beach in Saco, Maine. Ferry Beach activities will include drumming and dancing around the campfire in the Grove, a Talent Show and a Dance. Enrollment in **GMS** is limited to 30. Total cost of the conference, including housing and meals is \$310. A scholarship will be available to one person in serious financial need.

The retreat will be led by Bob Adams, a massage therapist and rebirther and by Larry Firrantello, a Pagan and computer programmer. Bob and Larry, who will be coordinating for their second year, will be assisted by Shara Redleaf, Pagan, songwriter and male belly dancer. All three have attended **GMS** since it's inception in 1990.

For further information contact: Larry Firrantello, 21 Young St., New Haven, CT, 06511, (203) 387-8447; Bob Adams, 119 Public St., Manchester, NH, 03102, (603) 669-7157; Shara Redleaf, c/o Jenkins, 4 Pearl St., #2, New Haven, CT, 06511, (203) 787-3001.

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

John F. Kennedy

G.L.P.C. Membership

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female ___

Address: _____ City/Township: _____

State/Province: _____ Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tradition or Pathfollowing: _____

If you publish would you like an Exchange Subscription Option?: Yes ___ No ___

Dues: Individual - \$12.00/Year, Group - \$15.00/Year (Residents outside of the USA and Canada add \$2.00 each category.)

Send this form with payment to: **GLPC, P.O. Box 26442, Oklahoma City, OK, USA, 73126-0442**

Your "Personals" Listing is FREE with Your Membership!

1) Limit your listing to 70 words. Anything above 70 is an additional \$1.00/word. 2) Use good taste. Sexual innuendo isn't acceptable. 3) TYPE or PRINT your listing. 4) Remember...FCU cannot forward responses to your listing. Use the space below and another sheet of paper if necessary and get your ad in the next issue of **Festive Circles Update!**

Letters, continued

Persian Gulf situation remains topical and very much on the minds of many people, especially those who continue to work for peace via magical endeavors. FCU attempts to accurately reflect those views, opinions and practices that are held by the Coalition's members. FCU depends on and encourages input, such as yours, to present alternative views and/or practices.)

Brothers and Sisters of Like Mind,

Merry meet and bright blessings. I wrote G.L.P.C. approximately two and a half weeks ago and I wish to thank all for a prompt response. It is nice to know that there is a dedicated and committed group of beautiful Pagans out there in the free world.

I am an incarcerated inmate with two strikes against me: one, I'm gay and two, I'm Pagan. In the free world I was shunned and made fun of because of my sexual preference. My 'fellow' Brothers and Sisters were the ones who showed me the most pain, agony and suffering. Prison life is no different than the free world but with a twist. I'm accepted by most of being gay but my choice of path-following is a different story. I'm labeled as the "devil worshipping fag". I am a life; the treatment I receive from non-Pagans I am forced to deal with, but the same treatment from straight (Pagan) Brothers and Sisters hurts the worst. It would be nice if all Pagans - straight and gay - fully understood the impact of the Witches Rede.

At this time I am starting to save up my state pay to become a member of your group should the application be approved. This is the type of group I've been

seeking to align myself with.

My friends, thank you for being you and being there.

Merry part and merry meet again.

Love Under Will; Love is the Law!

Melvin Bates - #857007

(Ed - Thank you for your letter. Unfortunately it comes as no great surprise to many of us who are gay/lesbian/bisexual Pagans that the 'mainstream' Pagan occasionally has a difficult time coming to grips with the fact that there are, indeed, gay Pagans running loose amongst them. For this reason, among others, the Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition was founded. The Coalition offers free membership (as resources allow) to incarcerated who are gay/lesbian/bisexual Pagan; however, any amount of money you are able to donate will be gratefully received.)

Greetings, Desmond!

The Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance stands fully behind the Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition and will render their assistance, should the GLPC need it, in the area of networking and will continue to assist all organizations in eradicating the persecution of the Gay/Lesbian population in the United States.

Bright Blessings,
Silver RavenWolf
Director WPPA

(Ed - Many blessings to you and the WPPA, Silver. The support of the WPPA is enthusiastically embraced!)

Write us! We'd love to hear from you!

Send all correspondence to:
GLPC, P.O. Box 26442,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,
USA, 73126-0442.

Remember...if you *don't* want your mundane name printed be sure to let us know in your letter.

**Webweavers
Address Book**

Earth Religion, Earthly Concerns! - The Thomas Morton Alliance, an international network of Pagan political activists, provides links for Pagans supporting Earth-defense, Indigenous rights and Pagan rights, sexual liberation, social justice. Sample copy of the Merrymount Messenger \$3.50 (\$12/year), SASE for introductory info to: TMA-West, Box 458, 1016 East El Camino Real, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, USA.

The Rowan Tree Church - A collective of diverse persons dedicated to the Earth in all Her glory and to learning the Mysteries of the Universe. Providing an avenue for learning, growing, fellowship and pathworking for those who wish to carry into the New Age the Knowledge of the Ancients. The Rowan Tree Church, P.O. Box 383, Northridge, CA.

Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance - WPPA, P.O. Box 1392, Mechanicsburg, PA, 17055 (SASE).

Tides - A Journal of Wicca and Neopagan Spirituality. Tides, P.O. Box 1445, Littleton, MA, 02146 (\$13/yr., U.S.)

Female, Celtic Wiccan, 21, wishes to correspond with others of all ages. Please write: Michelle Payne, 149 Old Shady Grove Rd., Piedmont, AL, 36272. Will answer all letters.

Lesbian couple with kids, living in the country, looking for other couples/moms of like mind. Our kids are home born, home grown and naturally fed. Would like to network with others raising great kids to be an asset to our world. Call (405) 872-9732.

White male looking for friendship, either male or female, gay or straight. Traditional roots are of Anglo-Seax Wicca; study Kabbalah; Esoteric philosophy and Ceremonial. Student of Alister Crowley. Will answer all inquiries. Melvin Bates - #857007, P.O. Box 473, 7-Dorm, Westville, IN, 46391-0473.

Get a full year of space for your own Personals Ad!

Locate the Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition Membership Form elsewhere in the newsletter and join today to get one year of ad space!

Beyond the Grove (from Page 2)

Bob answers the phone on the first ring. "Just a minute, let me see...", he tells the voice on the other end of the line. He picks up a large, ringed binder and begins to flip through dozens of pages of resources. To the caller, "Nope, sorry. No massage." He replaces the telephone handset, looks at me, raises an eyebrow and grins. I ask him about the types of phone calls he receives. "Many of our calls are from out-of-towners wanting information on community activities. In fact about 80% of the calls we receive are those", he states. In addition to guiding people to community resources Oasis also distributes information on HIV, AIDS and other STD's and their prevention. Looking about the center you will see most of the walls covered with posters and a host of other educational materials. On the desk where Bob is seated is a large basket filled to the brim with a colorful variety of condoms and small packages of lubricant that are provided free of charge to anyone who walks through the door.

The phone rings again. After a few moments of discussion he places the handset down and thumbs through his book until he finds the number he's looking for. Bob makes his call and delivers his message. What happens when the center gets a call from a troubled individual? "All crisis calls are referred to the Gay/Lesbian Help line or to Contact (a crisis hotline) where the volunteers are trained to handle those types of callers. We never take on crisis calls ourselves", he warns. Although not a "crisis center" per se, Oasis has at it's disposal an arsenal of resources which include approximately a dozen religious groups consisting of the Catholic, Episcopal, Church of Christ and Methodist faiths among others; twenty-six organization resources (one of which is the Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition); local and national information and/or crisis lines; numerous bars and eating establishments, and individual listings of physician's, attorney's and others whose professions serve the gay and lesbian populations of our area.

For the past decade the Oasis Resource Center has been the place where changes occur. Being a major role player in getting information out to countless individual's and groups on being gay in today's world, HIV, AIDS and other vitally important issues - that not only impact the gay and lesbian communities but other segments of our society as well - Oasis looks toward the future when information dissemination will become increasingly important. A couple of Bob's goals for Oasis' future include staffing the center full-time and having someone at the phone bank around the clock. He also tells me he would like to see Oasis "become the hub of the community" some day. From what I observed in such a short period of time at a place where it's history is filled with a decade of success and service I would say that Oasis is well on it's way to becoming that hub - if it isn't already.

Beyond the Grove is a regular feature of *Festive Circles Update* that highlights your local community service agencies, groups or organizations. If you are aware of, or are associated with, a community service you'd like to spotlight in *FCU* just submit your article (or other pertinent information) to: *Beyond the Grove*, c/o GLPC, P.O. Box 26442, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73126-0442.

Letters

Dear Desmond,

I am writing to express concern about the article, "Peace Poppets" by Yarrow in the Yule ('90) issue of *Festive Circles Update*. Poppet magick is a tried and true part of our heritage. It is also an extraordinarily serious one with great responsibility attached. I agree that the Persian Gulf situation has become one that is of vital importance to us all. I am concerned that readers will not realize the gravity and responsibility of creating a poppet. It is not Wicca 101. In my fifteen years as an initiated Wiccan I have only done poppet magick twice and then only in dire circumstances.

When a poppet is created

you also create a strong magickal link between yourself and the person. This should not be taken lightly. You are *responsible* for their welfare. Just as a bond is created between the poppet and the person, there is also a link created between your and the person. Think about being linked to (then) President Bush and Saddam Hussein. Think seriously. Do you want that responsibility and connection?

Then consider that you are responsible for the person's welfare. The poppet IS the person, remember. So proper care must be taken with the image. It must be taken apart in a special ritual in the proper way to truly dissolve those links.

I appreciate that Yarrow may consider the "radical faerie" spirit as a type of Trickster energy. Nevertheless, the care and de-consecration of the poppets is very important. While the idea of sending the poppets to the White House may seem humorous or magickally appropriate it could do serious harm. First, the most likely scenario is that they would be destroyed when received. Would you want that done to a poppet made of you? There is no chance that they will be properly handled, understood, or properly disposed of. And should it be destroyed you are responsible. It is your karma. You may choose to do this. But you must be

warned. I did not feel that the article conveyed the importance and responsibility of the working.

We always make choices when we do magick. We choose when we decide to do 'manipulative' or 'non-manipulative' magick. Each is a choice. But we must be properly informed. I hope that Yarrow and *FCU* will take a somewhat more prudent course in the future.

May Peace Prevail on Earth,
Michael Thorn, Kathexis
Coven

(Ed. - *The Persian Gulf Crisis* appears to have resolved since we received your letter, Michael. However, we feel the issue of the

OASIS RESOURCE CENTER

2135 N.W. 39th

Oklahoma City, OK 73112

(405) 525-2437

Hours: Sun-Thurs: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm, Fri-Sat: 6:00 pm-2:00 am

Submitted by Desmond Stone

"There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed."

Albert Schweitzer

Beyond the Group

Entering it's tenth year the Oasis Resource Center is a place where one may find just about anything in the way of information and support services targeted for the gay and lesbian communities of Oklahoma City. Funded only by private donations and staffed with fifteen volunteers this oasis, in a world which often brings the harsh reality of merely surviving to many, plays an integral role in the lives of not a few people of this town.

Oasis is a meeting place for those who drop in to sit and chat over a cup of coffee or soft drink. When I visited the place late one Saturday evening there was a steady movement of people in and out of the center, and sitting at one of three desks situated near the entrance was Bob Yowell, director since January, greeting all who wandered in with an affable, toothy smile, a warm handshake and an occasional hug. A transplant from Minneapolis-St. Paul, Bob has been in Oklahoma City since May of 1992 and was recruited by the Oasis Foundation to oversee the

center's functions. Knowing the area that Bob is from has an active gay/lesbian community I asked his impression of Oklahoma City's gay community. "I was surprised. Here in the buckle of the bible belt you have an entire community centrally located right here in Oklahoma City", he responded. "You can't find another city this size in this part of the country that has such a large gay community with two restaurants, numerous bars and a large hotel that is totally gay owned and operated. It's unheard of!" He points beyond the large plate glass windows at the constant movement of people outside. Oasis is located in the middle of "the strip", that area of OKC where many of the gay owned establishments are located. Tonight everyone is out en force.

Directly across the street is one of the two gay restaurants Bob mentioned and next to it is Coyote's, a trendy, stylish bar for womyn. Located next door to Oasis will be one of the new businesses scheduled to open

soon, a book store called Lobo; adjacent to Lobo are two popular watering holes and beyond those is one of the city's most active night spots for both gays and straights alike. One can move literally in any direction from Oasis to find a bar, eatery, bookstore, other resource centers, a large hotel and well, the list goes on.

Bob glances over my shoulder and says, "Isn't she beautiful?" I turn to see a tall, attractive, Black female impersonator flashing a brilliant smile at Bob. A few moments later another female impersonator emerges from the restroom, which doubles as a dressing room this evening. I look at Bob asking, "Show time?" He laughs, raises his arms and proclaims, "Show time!"

Our conversation continues as several teenagers enter and make themselves at home in this cozy, if not busy, environment. They flop down on the sofa and easy chairs which are skillfully and strategically arranged among other desks and literature displays in the smaller, front portion of the center. Oasis offers it's space for meetings held by the Youth Gay and Lesbian Alliance which is sponsored by Red Rock Mental Health Center's gay and lesbian outreach program. The meetings are led by a

licensed professional counselor each Sunday evening. One teen volunteers, "If it weren't for this place I would have never come out of the closet. I've found a supportive environment here." He goes on to say that he is now one of the more vocal proponents of gay/lesbian rights in his school. Other teens voice the same sentiment of the type of support the center offers by it's simple existence. The Y.G.L.A. has seen it's rough times but this past year seems to have solidified the group, Bob offers. While some sit in front of the television set watching a rerun of Saturday Night Live, others move to the back to chat with friends. A relaxed atmosphere pervades the room along with the intensity, vitality and enthusiasm that seem to accompany teenagers wherever they go - regardless of sexual or affectual orientation. Oasis also makes it's space available to other gay and lesbian businesses and organizations. Located at the back of the building is the conference room where many of the decisions regarding Oklahoma City's gay/lesbian progressive movements take place. *(continued on page 3)*

Oops! Please note the corrected GLPC dues found on the membership form in this issue of FCU.

GAY AND LESBIAN PAGAN COALITION
p.o. box 26442
oklahoma city, oklahoma 73126-0442
U.S.A.

"Many Voices United in One Spirit!"



50% post consumer waste