

Voices of the Grove

April, 2008

GSG BELTANE

A Celebration of MAY DAY

There are four great festivals of the Pagan Celtic year and the modern Witch's calendar, as well.

May Day ushers in the fifth month of the modern calendar year, the month of May. This month is named in honor of the goddess Maia, originally a Greek mountain nymph, later identified as the most beautiful of the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades. By Zeus, she is also the mother of Hermes, god of magic. Maia's parents were Atlas and Pleione, a sea nymph.

The old Celtic name for May Day is Beltane (in its most popular Anglicized form), which is derived from the Irish Gaelic "Bealtaine" or the Scottish Gaelic "Bealtuinn", meaning "Bel-fire", the fire of the Celtic god of light (Bel, Beli or Belinus). He, in turn, may be traced to the Middle Eastern god Baal.

Other names for May Day include: Cetsamhain ("opposite Samhain"), Walpurgisnacht (in Germany), and Roodmas (the medieval Church's name). This last came from Church Fathers who were hoping to shift the common people's allegiance from the Maypole (Pagan lingham - symbol of life) to the Holy Rood (the Cross - Roman instrument of death). Incidentally, there is no historical justification for calling May 1st "Lady Day". For hundreds of years, that title has been proper to the Vernal Equinox (approx. March 21st), another holiday sacred to the Great Goddess. The nontraditional use of "Lady Day" for May 1st is quite recent (within the last 15 years), and seems to be confined to

America, where it has gained widespread acceptance among certain segments of the Craft population.

By Celtic reckoning, the actual Beltane celebration begins on sundown, April 30, because the Celts always figured their days from sundown to sundown. And sundown was the proper time for Druids to kindle the great Bel-fires on the tops of the nearest beacon hill (such as Tara Hill, Co. Meath, in Ireland). These "need-fires" had healing properties, and sky-clad Witches would jump through the flames to ensure protection.

Frequently, cattle would be driven between two such bon-fires oak wood was the favorite fuel for them) and, on the morrow, they would be taken to their summer pastures. Other May Day customs include: walking the circuit of one's property ("beating the bounds"), repairing fences and boundary markers, processions of chimney-sweeps and milk maids, archery tournaments, morris dances, sword dances, feasting, music, drinking, and maidens bathing their faces in the dew of May morning to retain their youthful beauty.

In the words of Witchcraft writers Janet and Stewart Farrar, the Beltane celebration was principally a time of "...unashamed human sexuality and fertility." Such associations include the obvious phallic symbolism of the Maypole and riding the hobby horse. Even a seemingly innocent children's nursery rhyme, "Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross..." retains such memories. And the next line "...to see a fine Lady on a white horse" is a reference to the annual ride of "Lady Godiva" though Coventry. Every year for nearly three centuries, a sky-clad village maiden

(elected Queen of the May) enacted this Pagan rite, until the Puritans put an end to the custom.

The Puritans, in fact, reacted with pious horror to most of the May Day rites, even making Maypoles illegal in 1644. They especially attempted to suppress the "greenwood marriages" of young men and women who spent the entire night in the forest, staying out to greet the May sunrise, and bringing back boughs of flowers and garlands to decorate the village the next morning. One angry Puritan wrote that men "doe use commonly to runne into woodes in the night time, amongst maidens, to set bowes, in so muche, as I have hearde of tenne maidens whiche went to set May, and nine of them came home with childe." And another Puritan complained that, of the girls who go into the woods, "not the least one of them comes home again a virgin."

- Continued on page 2



GreenSong Grove's 10th Annual Beltane Grand Sabbat April 25—27, 2008

GreenSong Grove Council will present a ritual honoring the past. This is a weekend of entertainment and workshops, Musical guests, Guest Authors, fun and friends. Go to www.greensonggrove.org

"Uniting our community through communication, spirituality and personal growth." We of Greensong Grove, come together from different circles and traditions, covens and solitary practices to create a Grove, just as the Oaks and Palms and Pines of the forest stand together, co-creating and being at peace with one another. We can stand together, and in doing so, build a strong foundation on which to build our own futures.

Beltane 2008

What a great line-up of activities and special guests.

- Authors: Kirk White, Ann Moura, Gina Estevez.
- Friday night concert by Hecate's Wheel and Faerie Elaine Silver, followed by Open Mic and Drum Circle.
- On Saturday, Children's activities, Workshops, concert with Hecate's Wheel, Main ritual.
- Vendors welcome
- Main ritual performed by GSG Council and Staff
- Drum Circle nightly, by Earth Rhythm.
- There is also a meal plan available for this Sabbat.

Don't miss out on this special weekend. Pre-register today.

For further information go to www.greensonggrove.org or www.myspace.com/greensonggrove

April	May	June
5 th - ●	5 th - ●	3 rd - ●
12 th - ☾	11 th - ☾	10 th - ☾
20 th - ○	19 th - ○	18 th - ○
28 th - ☽	27 th - ☽	26 th - ☽

O the green things growing, the green things growing, The faint sweet smell of the green things growing! I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve, Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing.

- Dinah Maria Mulock Craik

To submit an article or event to the newsletter, please contact Terrie McGowan / council@greensonggrove.org with "GSG Newsletter" in the subject line.

GreenSong Grove Membership Form

Name (please print): _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Solitary: Yes / No Coven Affiliation: _____
 May send snail mail: Yes / No
 Please add me to the email list: Yes / No
 New membership: Yes / No Renewal: Yes / No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership includes: \$1 discount to Sabbats, ***Under 18 years old must have parent or legal guardians notarized permission to join.* At no time will GreenSong Grove, Inc. give your name, personal information or email address to anyone without your prior express permission.

Extra Extra!
Read all about it!
www.greensonggrove.org



Kids Crafting

WEAVE

Behind the symbolic union of Goddess and God is the lesson that when two things come together, they form a new whole. This can be seen throughout all of the land as Earth and Sun meet to bring forth the blossoming new life. Hence, Beltane is a great time for weaving.

You don't need to have an elaborate loom to weave. Get some wheat stalks at the craft store and braid them together, then tie them in a circle to form a wreath. Weave colorful ribbons together and hang them like crepe paper or garland around your home or property. If anyone in the family has long hair, braid it for the day. Add ribbons too.

GreenSongGrove

"Uniting our community through Communication, Spirituality and Personal Growth"

Cut out & Send \$10 donation (check or money order, NO cash please !) to :

GreenSong Grove, Inc.
P.O. Box 55253
St. Petersburg Fl 33732-5253

- Continued from page 1

Long after the Christian form of marriage (with its insistence on sexual monogamy) had replaced the older Pagan handfasting, the rules of strict fidelity were always relaxed for the May Eve rites. Names such as Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and Little John played an important part in May Day folklore, often used as titles for the dramatis personae of the celebrations. And modern surnames such as Robinson, Hodson, Johnson, and Godkin may attest to some distant May Eve spent in the woods. These wildwood antics have inspired writers such as Kipling:

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,
Or he would call it a sin;
But we have been out in the woods all night,
A-conjuring Summer in!

And Lerner and Lowe:
It's May! It's May!
The lusty month of May!
Those dreary vows that ev'ryone takes,
Ev'ryone breaks.
Ev'ryone makes divine mistakes!
The lusty month of May!

There are other, even older, associations with May 1st in Celtic mythology. According to the ancient Irish "Book of Invasions", the first settler of Ireland, Partholan, arrived on May 1st; and it was on May 1st that the plague came which destroyed his people. Years later, the Tuatha De Danann were conquered by the Milesians on May Day. In Welsh myth, the perennial battle between Gwythur and Gwyn for the love of Creudylad took place each May Day; and it was on May Eve that Teirnyon lost his colts and found Pryderi. May Eve was also the occasion of a fearful scream that was heard each year throughout Wales, one of the three curses of the Coranians lifted by the skill of Lludd and Llevelys.

By the way, due to various calendrical changes down through the centuries, the traditional date of Beltane is not the same as its astrological date. This date, like all astronomically determined dates, may vary by a day or two depending on the year. However, it may be calculated easily enough by determining the date on which the sun is at 15 degrees Taurus (usually around May 5th). British Witches often refer to this date as Old Beltane, and folklorists call it Beltane O.S. ("Old Style"). Some Covens prefer to celebrate on the old date and, at the very least, it gives one options. If a Coven is operating on "Pagan Standard Time" and misses May 1st altogether, it can still throw a viable Beltane bash as long as it's before May 5th. This may also be a consideration for Covens that need to organize activities around the week-end.

This date has long been considered a "power point" of the Zodiac, and is symbolized by the Bull, one of the "tetramorph" figures featured on the Tarot cards, the World and the Wheel of Fortune. (The other three symbols are the Lion, the Eagle, and the Spirit.) Astrologers know these four figures as the symbols of the four "fixed" signs of the Zodiac (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius), and these naturally align with the four Great Sabbats of Witchcraft. Christians have adopted the same iconography to represent the four gospel-writers.

But for most, it is May 1st that is the great holiday of flowers, Maypoles, and greenwood frivolity. It is no wonder that, as recently as 1977, Ian Anderson could pen the following lyrics for Jethro Tull:
For the May Day is the great day,
Sung along the old straight track.
And those who ancient lines did ley
Will heed this song that calls them back.

Used with permission from Mike Nichols "Author of "The Witches' Sabbats""
www.myspace.com/witchessabbats

GSG Calendar of Events

Council Meeting dates

All meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at the Pinellas Park Library @ 7:00 p.m.
7770 52nd St., Pinellas Park, FL

Beltain

GreenSong Grove's 10th Annual Beltane Grand Sabbat April 25—27, 2008

Time: Gates open at 2 PM on Friday April 25, 2007
Event Location: 2900 31st Street South in St. Pete
Vending: \$10 for a 10x10 space
Donation: \$20 for members \$25 non member per person per campsite.
Ritual only: After 5 PM Saturday, (leaving by 2 AM)
\$7 non member \$10 for members

Guests: Elaine Silver, Hecate's Wheel, Kirk White, Ann Moura, Gina Estevez and many more.
Friday night: Do you sing, dance, spin poi, recite poetry, or have some other amazing talent you want to share then email: council@greensonggrove.org to register for the event.
Friday night at 8 PM, Concert, Talent Showcase, awards and drawing for all participants.

Midsummer

June 21, 2008- Midsummer - presented by The Women of Synergy Circle Join GreenSong Grove as we celebrate the Wheel of The Year Where: 2900 31st Street South, St. Petersburg, FL When: Gates open at 7 PM Donation: \$4 for members, \$5 for nonmembers Phone: 727-804-9370 Email: council@greensonggrove.org

Community Events

March 19- The working Circle Wicca 101- Open to the public. sponsored by Circles in the Woods CUUPs . Class times are from 7:00 - 9:00 pm on the Reserve your seat - Send to gldnpuma@earthlink.net or mail to: UUCT 11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa, FL 33637

March 22 – CUUUPs Full Moons - Open to the public. Sponsored by Circles in the Woods CUUPs. Start time is 7:00 PM for more information contact gldnpuma@earthlink.net or mail to: UUCT 11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa, FL 33637

March 26th - Crystal Healing Classes (wednesdays) 7:00pm - 9 :00pm This 6 week beginners class focuses on the basics of using stones and crystals as healing tools. Topics will include; Individual stones, their properties and uses Choosing and cleansing stones Protection and grounding Remote Healing Laying on of stones and much more To register for classes or for information contact; Ancient Healing Secrets 5225 4th St. N. St. Petersburg FL 33703 727-522-8281

March 28th - Wicca 101 classes 7:00pm - 9:00pm Come and learn the basics of the Old Religion - the craft of the wise! After 13 weeks, each participant will have

a basic knowledge of the God/Goddess, Wheel of the Year, grounding and raising energy, how to prepare & conduct a ritual, basic divination, herbs, crystals, healing, spell work and much more. The class will meet every Friday over a 13 week period. For more information or to register, contact; Ancient Healing Secrets 5225 4th St. N. St Petersburg FL 33703 727-522-8281

March 29-Pendulum for Beginners, with Beth, cost is \$15.00. March the 31-Wicca 101, cost is \$20.00 for first class, covers book included in the course, every class

after that will be \$15.00. Enchanted Moon (formerly known as Enchanted Cauldron) 2909 16th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33704 Phone: 727- 824-6053

APRIL

April 19 – CUUUPs Full Moons - Open to the public. Sponsored by Circles in the Woods CUUPs. Start time is 7:00 PM for more information contact gldnpuma@earthlink.net or mail to: UUCT 11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa, FL 33637

Check the website for more info: www.greensonggrove.org

Beltane Pre-registration:

Saturday night only after 5 PM until 2 AM- includes ritual, feast, drum circle (please bring a pot luck dish to share) :\$10 non-members \$ _____ \$7 members \$ _____

Friday- Sunday per person includes primitive campsite, concerts, open mic, workshops, ritual, feast, drum circle : \$20 for members \$25 nonmembers. \$ _____

CABIN rental: \$15 per cabin bunk per person for event. \$ _____ Handicapped accessible cabin needed ()

Cabins are rented on a per bunk rate and on a first fee paid basis. They rent quickly, if you wish to be with a specific group, send in all event fees and cabin reservations in one envelope. Due to the charges from the park, there will be no refunds after April 18, 2007

Name of group you wish to share cabin with: _____

Merchant:

Per person admission which includes campsite, open mic, drum circles, ritual, workshops plus \$10 for each 10 by 10 space a donation for auction would be appreciated.: \$ _____

Total \$ _____ Make checks payable to: "Green Song Grove"

Name: _____

Address: _____

Craft Name: _____

Name of minors attending with you: _____

Contact Information:

GreenSong Grove
P.O. Box 55253
St Petersburg, FL 33732-5253
Email: Council@greensonggrove.org
Phone: 727-804-9370 (Leave us a message!)

Brooms and Books 8120 121st Ave East, Parrish FL, 34219 (941) 776-1235 Website www.broomsandbooks.biz		Friends of GSG	
Mystikal Scents 9545 East Fowler Ave. Thonotosassa Phone: 727-957-1181	Under the Gypsy Moon 1500 N. Parson's Ave Brandon, FL 33510 Phone: 813-689-7595 UndertheGypsyMoon@tampabay.rr.com	Enchanted Cauldron 3015 16th Street North Saint Petersburg, FL 33704 Phone: 727-823-9291	
Ancient Healing Secrets 5225 4th Street N. St. Petersburg Phone - 727-522-8281	Magickalystics 34838 US 19 Palm Harbor, FL 34684 727-772-8700	Dragon Den USA Flea Market 73 4th Street Port Richey, FL 34669 www.thedragonden.com 727-856-8164	
Healing Hands 7132 49th St. N., Pinellas Park FL 33781 Phone # 727-538-8969	Skye Metaphysical Shops and Psychic Readings Location: 12427 US Hwy 19 Hudson, FL 34667 Phone: 727-697-3617	Enchanted Moon (formerly known as Enchanted Cauldron) 2909 16th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33704 Phone: 727- 824-6053	
Mystic Goddess 7500 Ulmerton Rd. Suite 17, Largo, FL 33771, RoseTree Plaza Phone: (727) 530-9994 Website: http://www.mysticgoddess.org/	Angel Heart New Age Gifts, LLC 3401 Henderson Blvd, Suite H Tampa, Florida 33609 813-877-8117 www.angelheartgifts.com	Practically Frivolous Hair Salon 4140 16th Street North St. Petersburg, Florida 727-528-2702	