



Earth Healer



A Unitarian Universalist Congregation



The Official Newsletter of the friends and members of Gaia Community August 2005

A Letter from the R.E. Director

Dear Gaians-

What a blessing to be back among you! It has been 5 years since I left as director of KidSpace, and it feels very right to me to return. I was thrilled to see that the children's program is still going strong. I feel a need, even though most of you may not know the people I speak of, to thank Mary Love May, Terri Rogers, and Barb Williams for the work they did when we were laying down the foundations of the program. Remembering those whose feet have gone before is an important thing to do, I believe.

I'm sure those of you who have children are interested in finding out a little about me—I know I would want to know about the person who would be planning and teaching my children about Spirit. Speaking of children, I have two. My daughter, Crystal, will be 16 in August, and my son, Colton just turned 13. I never thought I would be the parent of TWO teenagers, but alas, here I am! We live in Lawrence, Kansas, where I work for the Lawrence Public Schools. My title is long, and doesn't describe very well what I do, so I'll just tell you I provide adapted curriculum materials to special needs students. Sometimes that means a special switch so a computer can be accessed, sometimes it means a simple portable word processor, and sometimes it means almost rewriting an entire text. At any rate, I have learned much about flexibility, creativity, patience, and compassion through the children I help.

In my free time, most of what I do revolves around my spiritual practice. Granted, I interpret that widely because I believe every action is potentially spiritual, but the things I enjoy doing for pleasure are usually spiritually based. My personal practice is that of the Faery Faith. Primarily, I follow the ways of the UnderWorld Tradition as taught by RJ Stewart, and will begin instruction in his Inner Temple path within the next year, if all goes as we have discussed. Other major influences for me are Lord Orion Foxwood, Caitlin and John Matthews, Thorn Coyle, Frank MacE-owen, Patricia Monaghan, and Kansas City's own Avatar DeDanann, formerly of Elvendrums, who was my first teacher on this path. More specifically, I walk the path of the Bard. What does THAT mean? For me, it is more than

just telling stories and singing songs. A Bard is one who weaves magic into the tapestry of life. Every story, every song, is a prayer in

disguise. I don't do spells...I tell stories. One of the things that appeals to me most about this path is that it is inclusive and not exclusive, much like Unitarian Universalism. I have met other pagans, Buddhists, Christians, and even atheists, who follow the path of Faery. It is one of balance, harmony, and respect for all Beings.

What does that mean for the children of Gaia? It does not, in any way, mean I will be teaching them my path. I believe that would be not only outside of my own ability level as I am still very much a student, but unethical as well. Gaia Community is a very eclectic group, with many traditions represented, and I would not ever want to interfere with what parents are teaching at home. I will be telling lots of stories. There are stories we can learn that will help us when we are afraid of the dark, or a thunderstorm, or a spider. There are stories to help us be brave when we have to tell the truth and would rather not. There are stories that show us what it means to be a hero or hera. And there are also our own stories to keep track of. We will be singing...we will be creating fabulously magical pieces of art...we will be going outside and getting wet, muddy, hot, cold, and sometimes even just right...we will be touching plants and trees and water to learn what parts of ourselves they touch back...

I want very much to establish a good, positive working relationship with the adults of Gaia Community—parents and non parents alike. If there are ever questions or concerns, please let me know. I am open to all ideas. Participation is the key for everyone. I will need help. Period. These are Gaia's children. Part of the reason I left before was because KidSpace felt like an almost separate entity from the rest of the community, and that is NOT how it should be. Each member of this community has something they can offer. For some, that may mean simply energy. For others, that may mean sharing a skill or talent or some other wisdom. In either case, the interconnectedness of the children's program with the rest of Gaia is, I believe, critical. The children running through the halls with leaves stuck to dirty faces will someday be the leaders of a ritual team, or a publicity committee, or the president of the board. No matter what stories I may tell, the moral of the story comes from what they observe as they grow in the community. I believe we can weave magic together.

Again, thank you so much for the opportunity to work with and learn from your children.

Shining Blessings

Anissa Pedram

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All Sunday activities take place at Shawnee Mission UU Church; 7725 W. 87th St.; Overland Park, KS (near 87th & Metcalf) and begin at 4 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday, August 7

Class—“The Magical Household” facilitated by Liz

Share your knowledge. What does it mean to have a ‘magical’ household? What steps might one take to make their home more openly, or just effectively, a place in which to do magical work? Come to this class to learn more about this subject, and bring your own thoughts, comments, and questions.

Sunday, August 14

Ritual—“Dog Days” 

Around the beginning of July, Sirius, the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major (the big Dog), rises just before the Sun. The ancient Greeks believed that Sirius contributed to the heating of the earth in late summer, that’s why they named it so, after a word which means “searing” or “scorching.” The rise of Sirius signals the beginning of the forty days (give or take) we’ve come to call Dog Days, or, in Dante’s words, “the great scourge of days.” It is the heart of summer: hot as a furnace, dry as the tomb. The whole world is being put to the torch. We feel burnt out. Normally we think of being burnt out as bad, something that needs to be corrected. But burnout is actually part of the natural balance, putting an end to a period of intense work. Now, at the end of the Dog Days, we’ll take this chance to examine where we are burnt out, where we need to regroup and gather our resources—and to symbolize and honor that depletion in ritual.

Sunday, August 21

Class—“New Patron: Lugh” facilitated by Kimberly

At the God Auction in July, the community chose Lugh, Irish god of skill and craft, as our patron for the coming year. In this class, we’ll talk about who Lugh is, where

he comes from, why he is important in the Irish mythic body and why he is important to our community today. We’ll also be dedicating a new set of altar items for our “god box” shrine, and talk about how we might honor our new patron in Gaia ritual or at home.

Sunday, August 28th

Forum—“Pagan History: Fact or Fiction” facilitated by Nicole

Did 6,000,000 witches really die in the inquisition? Did the druids perform human sacrifice? Did Gardner really just make it all up? There’s a thousand and one questions out there, and two thousand answers. We’ll talk about just some of them this day, so bring your facts, questions, and willingness to be corrected when mistaken!

Sunday, September 4th

Ritual SOS—“Labor Day” facilitated by Barbara

This modern, secular, and invented holiday nonetheless calls to something ingrained in us since childhood. It’s the end of the freedom of summer, the return to the discipline of school. Never mind that most of us were working all summer and aren’t starting up any new classes—we still have that feeling: new beginnings, turning over a new leaf. What it feels like to have a box of brand-new crayons, and crisp, fresh notebooks, and a dozen sharpened number two pencils in a new back pack. “This is the year I won’t doodle all over my notebooks. . . . read comic books inside my history text. . . . tip my chair back and listen to the teacher’s I-told-you-so when I crack my skull.” Let’s generate that fresh-start feeling for ourselves.

This is a Sharing Our Spirits ritual. Please come prepared to share ideas for how to purify, ground, call elements; what deities to invoke; what activities to do during the body of the ritual. If you like, bring items related to the theme for the altars, or a chant, song, poem, etc., that you work like to work into the spontaneous ritual we will create.

Ritual Teams and Members:


Kitty Degler
Barbara Griggs
?
?


Kimberly
Liz Ticer
Via
David Reynolds
?


Nicole Turner
Brian Butler
Linda Boyce
?


Debbie Giffin
Jeff Park
Eric Simpson
?

Gaia Community Board Members

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KidSpace

The monthly meeting will be the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at Greta’s house, as usual, and all parents, educators, and just interested persons are always welcome to attend.

July we have taken a breather in KidSpace, but August will see changes and enthusiasm to pick up the torch where Andrew has started the fire, and go forward. We will continue to have younger kids (5 and under) in the younger class, but we return to having just one older age class—with different levels of curriculum and expectations of our youth members depending on ability, not age.

September will see an official registration for all of our KidSpace kids, to be sure we know special needs, dietary requirements, and educational desires. Be prepared next month to fill in a registration form—for both kids and adults! KidSpace needs all of us, and we look forward to making the learning fun, engaging, and diverse. Adults

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GAIA EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Ritual Teams Meeting

Thursday, August 4th at 6:45 P.M.

All current ritual team members are urged to attend. Planning of and critiquing rituals are what we do. Comments from anyone in the general community about rituals are welcome as well; please communicate them to the Ritual Team Coordinator, currently Eric. Please contact the Coordinator to find out more about this month's meeting, or if you are a graduate of the Excellence in Ritual class and wish to start working with Ritual Teams again.

Voices of Gaia

Mondays at 7 P.M. AT KITTY'S HOME.

New singers are always welcome. If you have questions, or want more information, please contact Kitty Degler, songbird@kc.rr.com or 913-469-8779.

Games Night

Friday, August 19th, 7:00-10:00 P.M. at SMUCh

Games Night is a chance for Gaians to get together for fun, frivolity, and food, and NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS allowed! (We're not kidding—the Games Guru has spoken on this.) Bring a game (or ten), bring a friend (or ten), or just bring yourself and a willingness to play and visit. Snacks are welcomed but not required, to help the gaming crowds keep up their strength!

Friday Night Supper Club

Friday, August 26th, 7:00 P.M.

Join your fellow Gaians for food, friendship, and frivolity. Kick back and stuff yourself silly! July's Friday Night Supper Club will be at Mongolian Barbeque somewhere up north of the river.

Please contact Carey, David, or Kimberly to save a spot! at gaia-kat@kc.rr.com or 816-941-7626.

A look ahead at next month

Sept. 4 SOS – “Labor Day”

Sept. 11 Ritual – “Labyrinth Walk”

Sept. 18 Ritual – Fall Equinox High Holiday

Sept. 25 Class – “Sustainable Living”

KidSpace continued from page 2

connected with our kids will be joining us in KidSpace through time, supplies, or their pocketbooks - you get to decide! Our first choice is to have you teach a class, but we can exploit, errr appreciate you grown-ups in a variety of ways. Look for details next month!

For EVERYONE, our KidSpace Camp out is August 26th and 27th and will be convened this year for the first time at Camp Gaea instead of Wallace State Park. This way we can have as many adults as we want (instead of keeping it to more kids than grown-ups) and we can make noise as late as we want! (Drummers, I'm talking to you) So pack a bag and contact Greta Erhardt, KidSpace Committee Chair or Anissa Pedram, KidSpace Director, to sign up. We will also have a sign up at the greeter's table and we may have a lovely volunteer head up this project (it could even be YOU!).

WEAVE AND SPIN

Splinters from the Board RfB minutes summary

Here's what happened at RfB on July 9th, 2005:

Treasurer's report: pledge update letters did not go out as scheduled in June, they will be mailed soon

Old Business

Garage sale: the garage sale will be held 8a - 4p on 7/22 and 7/23 at David, Carey, and Kimberly's house. Devin has put an ad in the Star

Report from General Assembly: CUUPS has asked that we do the ritual at GA in 2006. This request was forwarded to ritual teams, and they have agreed to do this.

From Jeff's perspective it appears that we are doing a good job as a congregation of being UU's.—

A. We should look into becoming a “Welcoming Congregation.” There was a suggestion to check with All Souls, which Jeff will follow up on.

B. He suggested we consider doing a booth at GA in 2006 in St. Louis.

C. Jeff cast our vote on the issues for “Morals and Values for a Pluralistic Society”

There was some discussion of the Youth Caucus. It appears there is a trend for teenagers to leave the UUA as they get older. This engendered discussion of teenagers/youth in ritual. This topic will be forwarded to Ritual Teams for further consideration.

D. Jeff attended the GA this year on a program that reimburses Presidents of congregations. This program is being phased out because the UUA feels that each congregation should be paying for their president to attend. It was suggested that we consider adding a line item to the budget for this in the future.

E. Jeff also suggested that we take the labyrinth to GA next year.

Lease: Jeff and Devin will be meeting with Dave Bryant on 7/10 at noon. Several ideas on how to negotiate the lease were discussed.

New Business

Grants: Devin is looking for assistance to help looking for grants both at the district and national levels, possibly for adult RE and KidSpace. Yale said he would try to help.

Phone: Kitty has opted to go with no land line at her house. As the Gaia phone is currently redirected to her home line, it is not being answered at the moment. Several options were discussed, and it was decided that we should look into have the Gaia phone number ring to a voice mail line that we can change the message on weekly.

Committee updates

Stewardship: no report; **Membership:** no report; **Kid-space:** no report; **Communications:** they are currently setting priorities and procedures (schedule changes, calling trees, etc); they are looking into updating our online listings with sites like WitchVox, etc; there was some discussion of promoting Gaia in local shops that are pagan friendly or publishing a list of pagan-friendly stores for people to shop at.; **Ritual teams:** no report; **Site committee:** no report,

Debbie G will be chairing the meeting next month, 8/13.



P.O. Box 45307
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Address Correction Requested

**KidSpace
 Camp Out
 at
 Camp Gaea
 Aug. 26-27
 Sign up now**

Contact Earth Healer

Send letters, articles, poetry or prose, borrowed wisdom, comments and suggestions to: earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org or by phone (number inside) no later than the 17th of each month. Please tell us if you are receiving duplicate copies of *Earth Healer*, if we're getting your name/address wrong or if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email. Let us hear from you before the next *Earth Healer*.

**MAY YOU
 NEVER
 HUNGER.
 MAY YOU
 NEVER
 THIRST.**

August 2005						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Adult RE 7 pm Everyday Spiritual Practice	3	4 ● Ritual Teams Meeting 6:45 pm	5	6
SR 3pm 7 Class: The Magical Household 4 pm	8	9 Adult RE 7 pm Sacred Rhythms	10 Rites of Passage task force	11	12 ◐	13 Ritual of Business 9:30 am Pagan Pride Day
SR 3pm 14 Ritual: Dog Days 4 pm	15 Voices of Gaia 7 pm	16 Adult RE 7 pm Druid Study Group	17 Site Committee Meeting 7-9 pm	18 KidSpace 7 pm	19 ○ Games Night 7 pm	20
SR 3pm 21 Class: New Patron: Lugh 4 pm	22 Voices of Gaia 7 pm	23 Adult RE 7 pm Intro to Paganism	24	25	26 ◐ FNCS 7 pm KidSpace Camp out	27 KidSpace Camp out
SR 3pm 28 Forum: Pagan History: Fact or Fiction 4 pm	29 Voices of Gaia 7 pm	30 Adult RE 7 pm Grab Bag	31	1 September Ritual Teams Meeting 6:45 pm	2	3