



Earth Healer



A Unitarian Universalist Congregation



The Official Newsletter of the friends and members of Gaia Community October 2003

There will be no public ritual or class at SMUUCH on October 26, 2003...it's "Go-Kiss-An-Oak" Day.

T. THORN COYLE PRESENTS A WORKSHOP

Nationally-known Reclaiming Tradition priestess, Feri initiate and recording artist T. Thorn Coyle will offer her workshop *Discovering Your Triple Soul*, Wednesday, **October 15th**. The workshop will begin at 7 P.M., (gather at 6:30 P.M.) and run until 9:30 or 10:00. It will be held at Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church, Gaia Community's normal meeting location.

This evening is an introduction into your deep nature, human and divine. Through exercises, Devotional Dance, play, energy work and song, you will learn to better communicate with all the parts of you soul. You will learn to align yourself through breath-work and prayer. You'll gather your life force and meet the Sticky One—your playful, sexual and intuitive soul. Learn how to contact your Shining Body, the one who speaks—your aura and first line of communication with the world. Feed the Sacred Dove—the one who listens, ancestor and personal God. Together, we will celebrate the divinity that lives within each one of us, known by the ancient Greeks, the Hawaiian priests, and the Jewish mystics. Come; learn how to align your Triple Soul. Walk toward evolution. Thorn request that attendees bring a journal to the workshop.

Thorn is an amazing woman and a fantastic teacher! She has been a Witch for more than 20 years. A Feri Tradition initiate, she was fortunate to study with the founder of Feri, Victor Anderson, in the years before his death. A Reclaiming Tradition priestess, Thorn has taught within that vital tradition for over 10 years. She is an

activist committed to social justice, conflict resolution and creative non-violence.

While Thorn finds the work of Reclaiming Tradition to be revolutionary, she finds the work of Feri to be evolutionary. It is this process of evolution that she seeks to pass on to her students. Thorn believes we have the ability to become more human and that the Feri tools are keys to that process.

She stresses the work of compassion, commitment and self-examination in her workshops and long-term training programs. She teaches to a national audience and lives in San Francisco with her partner and cat.

You may pre-register for the event by signing up at Gaia Community rituals, emailing your name, address, phone, and numbers of tickets to info@gaiacommunity.org or calling 816-931-9900. Tickets for the workshop are \$10.00 (\$7 for full active Gaia Community members).

Thorn will be Gaia Community's guest in Kansas City October 12-16th. If you can help provide transportation for Thorn, particularly during the day, or would like to help publicize the workshop, please contact Kitty Degler at songbird@kc.rr.com or 913-469-8779

welcome to The DRUID chapter!

During this Chapter, the seventh of eight in our exploration of pagan traditions, you can expect to see a broad sampling of both public and private worship—such as daily devotions, home offerings, patron rites, meditative rites and High Holiday observances. Feel free to get in touch with David (816-941-7626 or naebllis@kc.rr.com) or Nicole (913-706-9159 or saffronhare@kc.rr.com) with questions, but here's a quick preview:

continued on page 4

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
SUNDAY SCHEDULE	2
WEAVE AND SPIN FROM THE SECRETARY HELP WANTED	3
EARWORMS	3
COMMUNITY CARES	4
GAIA AROUND TOWN AND KIDSPACE	5
EARTH HEALER CONTACTS MONTHLY CALENDAR	6

pagan traditions of the world: a JOURNEY OF AUTHENTICITY—DRUID PAGANISM

Sunday, September 28th–November 2nd (Samhain)—Druid Chapter

Sunday, November 9th–December 21st (Winter Solstice)—Gaia Traditional

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

With the new year, we'll be trying something new at Gaia Community—in the weeks leading up to each Sabbat, we'll be examining and learning from different pagan traditions. All of the classes and rituals in the “Chapter” leading up to that Sabbat will relate to that tradition. In this way, we hope to make your ritual experiences more meaningful every week, and especially on the High Holidays.

Sunday, October 5th

Ritual—Walking the Path

'As you come to the clearing, you see three paths branching out in front of you. Which will you take?' Druidism, and the proto-Indo-European culture that spawned it, divide life up into Three Functions. In this ritual, we will be exploring the different roles one can take in society, and how they form an interwoven whole.

Sunday, October 12th

Class—Divination for Public Ritual

Most of us know how to examine the cards, the leaves, or our own meditative mind for the answers to the questions that bother us. But how do things change when you are asking a question for the entire group, instead of just yourself? This class will cover the elements of public divination, including some typical Druid methods as well as general information on how to adapt this useful technique to larger-scale rituals.

Sunday, October. 12th

SOS—Bardism

The Celts were, and are, all about showmanship! Singing, dancing, or displaying prowess (artistic or otherwise) were not just accepted, but encouraged. In this Sharing Our Spirits ritual, everyone is strongly encouraged to bring their willingness to try standing up and presenting their gifts for the group. Andrew and Caroline, both Gaia Community members with theater experience, will be leading this ritual together.

Sunday, October 19th

Ritual—The Song of Amergin

'*I am the wind on the sea...I am the stag of seven tines...*' Shape-shifting stretches back into the depths of time as a Celtic tradition; today's ritual will explore that concept as fully as possible. Whether you already have an alternate form (or several) you use from time to time, or are merely curious about 'how did they do that?', we will take you on an unforgettable journey.

Sunday, October 26th

Assignment—“Kiss an Oak' Day

Due to SMUUCH's Ministerial Installation on this day at the same time as Gaia Community's usual meeting time, we have decided to change the schedule slightly; instead of meeting at SMUUCH at 4pm, you are on your own to go find a spot in nature to get to know. Find a deer, talk with a squirrel, hug a tree... whatever you can find to do to get yourself reinvolved with nature. Get together with other Gaians if you wish to go hiking together, or just spend some time by yourself in communion. Come back next week for the big Samhuinn ritual!

Sunday, November 2nd

Sabbat—Ar nDraiocht Samhuinn—A Druid Samhain

Samhain, Samhuinn, Sauin...(but never SOM-HAIN), the very word conjures up pictures of jack-o-lanterns, ghosts, witches, and things that go *bump* in the night. This will be a costumed ritual, where you will be given the opportunity to dress as a favorite godden (god or goddess) or aspect of some power, in order to give praise offerings and honor to them and ask their blessing for the coming year in return. Start planning now what you will do for the start of the new year!

As with all Sabbats, there will be a potluck meal following the ritual. Please bring enough to feed eight hungry people and remember to label your ingredients for those with dietary restrictions. Also, for the Earth's sake and in pursuit of our Green Sanctuary pledge, we ask that you not bring disposable dishes. There will be some few extra dishes for those who forget theirs; we could always use more to have in reserve, though!

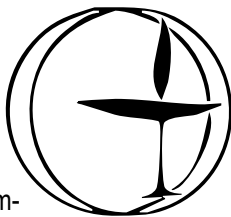
WEAVE AND SPIN



Splinters from the Board

From Nicole Turner, Secretary

Our next Ritual for Business is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th, 9:30-11:30 A.M. at Shawnee Mission UU Church (in the Jefferson/Franklin room, downstairs). Get in touch with us at board@gaiacommunity.org (or use the contact information below to direct your question to an individual) no later than Wednesday, October 8th if you'd like to add an item to the agenda.



Rituals for Business are open meetings, so all members and friends are welcome. Every voice and opinion matters . . . even if only members may be active in the consensus process. Minutes are available upon request—please get in touch with Nicole at 913-706-9159 or saffronhare@kc.rr.com with questions.



Childcare Position:

We are looking for someone who likes kids. Quiet kids, rowdy kids all types of kids up to 4-years-old to provide childcare every Sunday and some Tuesdays evenings and Saturday Mornings as needed and as you are available. Experience with infants and toddlers is highly desired, as is infant/toddler CPR. A background check will be made. The pay is \$10/hr. contact Andrew Turner at agrnmn@kc.rr.com or 913-7069167.

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

Gaia Community Board Members

President—Barbara Griggs
bpmg@earthlink.net or
816-587-2350

VP—Caroline Baughman
carolineo@earthlink.net or
816-729-7112

Treasurer—David Reynolds
naebllis@kc.rr.com or
816-941-7626

Secretary—Nicole Turner
saffronhare@kc.rr.com or
913-706-9159

Members at Large

Collene Newby
oedipus_the_doomed@yahoo.com
or 913-221-3278

Jacki Kelley
opaljax@aol.com or
816-228-0018

Jeff Park
jpark2@kc.rr.com or
816-361-0465

EMBRACING THE
EARWORM

(alternative title: Ear Worms and Mind Monkeys)

by Barbara Griggs

J.D. Salinger, that reclusive and non-prolific genius, in the novel *Franny & Zooey* had brilliant, neurotic, sophisticated co-ed Franny Glass become fascinated with the biblical injunction to “pray without ceasing.” Entranced, at least briefly, by the practice, Franny attempts to emulate a character in a novel *she* reads, by reciting “Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me,” soundlessly and continually. She explains that this practice, followed even without belief, over time automatically is supposed to produce some sort of transformation-in fact, she explains, immediately prior to lapsing into a sort of prayerful nervous breakdown, “You see God.”

I read Franny and Zooey for the first time in preadolescence, 40 or so years ago. It made a deep impression on me. I thought the Glass family, the ultimate in sophistication and erudition, and Franny’s exposition about the prayer being a Christian cognate to meditative practices of Buddhism and other faiths, was my introduction to the very possibility of comparative religion—an introduction that made a significant long term impact on my life. However, at the time, gawky, unsophisticated, and over-earnest, what I did was-try the practice of praying without ceasing. I never saw any god, and I managed to avoid the nervous breakdown by giving myself the dispensation to pray without ceasing only when not using my mouth and mind for other, more mundane things such as holding conversations. I did, however, learn from this practice that it was far easier to accomplish than I would have predicted and that it did have a calming, focusing effect.

A few years ago, on the then-popular television program *Ally McBeal*, a story arc featured comedian Tracey Ullman as a psychologist who told the title character she needed to adopt a personal theme song. Eventually, the program frequently depicted Ally striding perkily down the street to the tune playing on the sound track and presumably in the character’s head.

As I am musically challenged, if I want to learn to sing a song with any degree of accuracy at all, I have the habit of obtaining a recording of it and playing it over and over in the car as I commute, attempting to establish the way it is *supposed* to sound in some niche of my brain. One day as I was walking down the corridor at work, I noticed an unwonted and indeed rather annoying jaunty rhythm in my step, and realized that I was in fact just barely short of *dancing* down the hallway to the tune I had been working on, which was playing itself over and over in my head. In fact, the tune had become an “earworm,” the phenomenon discussed in a recent thread on the Gaia Listserve. (If you do not subscribe to this service, I recommend that you try it-you will never be short of interesting news items, witty ditties, tidbits of news about fellow Gaians, etc.) Evidently there has been research done on the common occurrence of getting a tune “stuck” in your head.

In my experience, and I gather that of many others in Gaia Community, “earworms” usually tend to be odd scraps of tune—the theme song to *Gilligan’s Island*, for example—that one cannot wait to get rid of. However, as my dancing-down-the-hallway moment illustrates, it is indeed possible to *induce* an earworm. I did some anecdotal experimentation on myself and found that it was quite easy to intentionally introduce a particular tune and keep it running in the back of

continued on page 5

continued from page 1—The Druid Chapter

Introduction to Druidism (Class, September 28th): Why do Druids have three elements instead of four (or five?) What do they do to protect themselves if they don't cast a circle? Were there female druids? And why on earth would you want a bile (pronounced 'bee-lay', not 'buy!') in your ritual space? All of these questions and more will be answered at the first class on Druidism. We will also be covering the elements of ritual so that you are (hopefully) not caught off guard in the coming weeks.

Walking the Path (Ritual, October 5th): 'As you come to the clearing, you see three paths branching out in front of you. Which will you take?' Druidism, and the proto-Indo-European culture that spawned it, divide life up into Three Functions. In this ritual, we will be exploring the different roles one can take in society, and how they form an interwoven whole.

Divination for Public Ritual (Class, October 12th; 3:00 P.M.): [editors note: schedule change] Most of us know how to examine the cards, the leaves or our own meditative mind for the answers to the questions that bother us. But how do things change when you are asking a question for the entire group, instead of just yourself? This class will cover the elements of public divination, including some typical Druid methods as well as general information on how to adapt this useful technique to larger-scale rituals.

Bardism (Ritual, October 12th): The Celts were, and are, all about showmanship! Singing, dancing, or displaying prowess (artistic or otherwise) were not just accepted, but encouraged. In this Sharing Our Spirits ritual, everyone is strongly encouraged to bring their willingness to try standing up and presenting their gifts for the group and the glory of the gods. Andrew and Caroline, both Gaia Community members with theater experience, will be leading this ritual together.

The Song of Amergin (Ritual, October 19th): 'I am the wind on the sea...I am the stag of seven tines...' Shape-shifting stretches back into the depths of time as a Celtic tradition; today's ritual will explore that concept as fully as possible. Whether you already have an alternate form (or several) you use from time to time, or are merely curious about 'how did they do that?', we will take you on an unforgettable journey.

"Go Kiss an Oak" day (Take the day to commune with nature. We will not be having ritual or class on October 26th at SMUUh)

"Ar nDraiocht Samhuinn" (Ritual, November 2nd): Samhain, Samhuinn, Sauin . . . (but never SOM-HAIN) . . . the very word conjures up pictures of jack-o-lanterns, ghosts, witches, and things that go *bump* in the night. Our ritual will be all of these things and more, if you let it, but most of all it will be a chance to participate fully in all that you've learned and join us in a massive celebration of the Celtic New Year! In our practice, as with many others, there is a tradition of dressing up at Samhain—not merely in a cool costume, but in such a way as to represent the Powers you want to bring forth from yourself (or bring into yourself) in the coming year. So . . . start thinking now about how you want to arrive at the Feast Hall!

As with all Sabbats, there will be a potluck meal following the ritual. Please bring enough to feed eight hungry people and remember to label your ingredients for those with dietary restrictions. Also, for the Earth's sake and in pursuit of our Green Sanctuary pledge, we ask that

you not bring disposable dishes. There will be some few extra dishes for those who forget theirs; we could always use more to have in reserve, though!

A few other notes:

Please understand that our particular approach encompasses the wide range of Indo-European experience—which include cultures as divergent as Hellenic and Vedic and Norse. Our focus is primarily Celtic (well, British Isles, if you want to be really specific) and not necessarily reconstructionist. Your mileage may vary.

You should also be prepared for at least a portion of each ritual to take place outside, even if the weather seems less than ideal. Maybe you'll want to put a lawn chair and/or sturdy blanket in the trunk right now. (Classes will be indoors for sure, as will the October 19th Ritual: *The Song of Amergin*.)

COMMUNITY CARES

Joys and Concerns

Compiled with YOUR input.

Congratulations to . . .

- All those people who made their own drums in Eric Simpson's class. They are truly awesome.



Heart felt wishes and healing to . . .

- Jacki Kelly and her ankle.
- All our friends who are working at Ren. fest., we have missed your smiles and warmth...hurry back soon.

Peace & strength to . . .

- Friends who are rolling with the punches of unemployment and job searches.
- Those struggling with substance abuse and addiction.
- Those in our community experiencing the pain of divorce or separation.

Happy Solar Return to people celebrating their birthday this month: ♌ & ♍

10-7: Jacki Kelly

10-9: Debi (Jacki's daughter)

10-16: Bryce MacDonald

10-28: David Nelson

Thanks Miki for providing birthdays. If we've missed you, clue us in again! Let Earth Healer know—earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org or 816-361-0465 or just sort of let the people at the greeter's table know.

And a special welcome to the folks who visited us for the first time recently:

Gary Stanfield, Suzette Mack & Nicki France; Dani Marshall, Terry McInteer, Metti Bernhardt, Tuyer Zimniak

editors comment: Sorry if I've mis-spelled your name or got it completely wrong—let me know and I'll fix it proper.

GAIA AROUND TOWN—EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Family Support Night

[editor's note: Family Support Group may be evolving into a differently structured format...stay tuned for updates in weekly announcements and the yahoo e-list.]

Voices of Gaia (Starts back Thursday, October 9)

After a very long summer hiatus, Voices of Gaia, Gaia Community's pagan chorus, will start up again in October. Our first meeting will be Thursday, October 9th from 7–8:30 P.M. We meet downstairs at SMUUch in the classroom with the keyboard.

Our primary focus will be preparation for our December 21st Winter Solstice carol sing, with some Samhain related music thrown in for good measure. If you have music selections for either of those holidays, please bring copies to share. We'll also continue to create sacred space in song.

Future meeting dates include November 20th and December 11th. Our normal meeting day will be the second Thursday of the month, but occasionally I have a staff meeting conflict and have to adjust the date. I would expect we'll schedule a few extra rehearsals in December to be ready for the carol sing.

Everyone who likes to sing is welcome to come to Voices of Gaia. We always welcome instrumentalists and drummers as well. If you have questions or comments, please contact me, Kitty Degler, at (913)469-8779 or songbird@kc.rr.com for more information.

KidSpace Committee Meeting

Friday, October 10th, 7:00 P.M.

The KidSpace Committee Meeting is a place for all parents, kids at heart, and KidSpace volunteers to come together and discuss the future of our children. Plans for future activities, volunteer opportunities, dinner, and the direction of the future of KidSpace could all be on the agenda.

Come to the meeting or contact Andrew Turner, our Director of KidSpace Programming, for more information at agmmn@kc.rr.com or (913) 706-9167.

Games Night/Sacred Dance

Friday, October 17th, 7:00–10:00 P.M. at SMUUch

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!

Games Night now alternates with Sacred Dance on the 3rd Friday of the month. Sacred Dance is generally held downstairs and/or in the Barn Chapel, weather and activities permitting.

Friday Night Supper Club

Friday, October 24th, 7:00 P.M.

Join your fellow Gaians for food, friendship, and frivolity. Kick back and stuff yourself silly! October's Friday Night Supper Club has not been set at the time of this printing, so check weekly announcements and the e-list for details. For more information contact Jeff Park at jpark2@kc.rr.com or 816-361-0465.

Tuesday Night Adult Education

Join us this month on Tuesday nights from 7:00 to 8:30 for classes and trances! Our schedule for the month is:

10/7 Piercing the Veil Class
10/14 Path of the Mist Trance
10/21 Samhain Class

WATER

10/28 Into the Depths Trance

Please RSVP to Caroline or Kimberly (adulded@gaiacommunity.com) if you are planning on attending any of these sessions—There is a requested fee of \$5 per week for non-members, \$3 for members to cover supplies and handouts.

Child care is available with advance notice—the fee for childcare is \$3 per child.

KIDSPACE

I'd like to thank everyone who showed up to the KidSpace Open House. I'd like to thank even more those folks who gave me feedback. I'd like to thank even more than that the folks who volunteered to help in KidSpace. And finally my greatest thanks goes to those who have been helping.

If you aren't included in that list it's not too late to get thanked. Call me or email me with ideas about and for KidSpace. Keep your eye out for the KidSpace committee meeting and show up. And let me know if you'd like to help KidSpace in anyway but can't figure out what to do.

The kids and I look forward to seeing new and different faces downstairs, especially the kids anything to keep from looking at me.

Raucous and Joyful Blessings

Andrew

continued on page 3—Earworms

my head, and to get back on track if someone got me started on *Pop Goes the Weasel* or another unwanted strain. At that moment, I realized that I had indeed acquired a "theme song" and that it was affecting my outlook on life at that particular moment in a positive way.

Which brings me back to Franny Glass' practice of praying without ceasing. Many different spiritual paths embrace a form of meditation. Various strains of Buddhism, for example, teach that the human mind acts rather like a monkey—rapidly jumping around from one train of thought to another, confusing and distracting its owner. Many techniques have been developed to assist in quieting the mind. In some forms of meditation, a *mantra* is used. Consider the possibility of harnessing the mind's ability to grab hold of a snatch of melody and replay it endlessly, and using it to elevate your mood, focus your conscious mind, and possibly even calm you and alleviate stress. Imagine providing your life with your own personal sound track. Embrace the earworm! You may find yourself waltzing through your workday.



P.O. Box 45307
 Kansas City, MO 64171-8303

Address Correction Requested

SACRED Rhythms
 Sundays 3 pm
 Bring your drums
 Bring your shakers
 Bring your heart, your feet and your hands
 No previous experience needed
 (we will not meet on October 12th and 26th as scheduled)

Contact Earth Healer

Send letters, articles, poetry or prose, borrowed wisdom, comments and suggestions to: earthhealer@gaiiacommunity.org or by phone (number inside) no later than the 15th of each month.

Save the Snails

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 November *Earth Healer*.



October 2003						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	☾ 2	3	4
		Trance— 7-8:30 p.m.		Ritual Teams Meeting 6:45 pm		
SR 5 3 pm Walking the Path-4 pm	6	7	8	9	☉ 10 KidSpace 7 pm	11 Ritual of Business 9:30 am
Class 12 Divination 3 pm Bardism 4 pm	13 Deadline for EH sub- missions	14 Trance— 7-8:30 p.m.	15 lecture T. Thorn Coyle 7-9:30 p.m.	16	17 Sacred Dance/ Games Night 7 pm	☾ 18
SR 19 3 pm The Song of Amergin 4 pm	20	Adult 21 RE— 7-8:30	22	23	24 FNCS 7 pm	● 25
Daylight savings 26	27	28	29	30	31 Samhain/ ritual/potluck on Nov. 2	
Go Kiss an Oak Day (no ritual)		Trance— 7-8:30 p.m.				