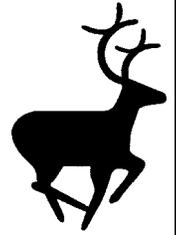




The Journey...



Official Newsletter of Church of the Spiral Tree - an Ecumenical Pagan church

President's Point

Happy holidays, whatever your path. Remember you don't need anyone to validate your beliefs except yourself. There will always be ignorant people in the world, many who choose to be ignorant out of fear, habit, or a need for control in their lives. You don't have to agree with a person's ignorant remarks, but realize in most cases, it is their problem, not yours. If you are harassed or discriminated to the point that it affects your life, there is now a huge network of Pagan organizations, including CST, that are available to help resolve serious issues.

Blessed Solstice, and Happy Yule.
- Rev. Cathy Rankin, President, CST

Summary of Board of Directors Meeting

The last 2012 quarter meeting of the Church of the Spiral Tree Board of Directors was held in Columbus, GA on November 12.

As Cynthia Jurkovic had resigned in October as Member at Large, at the meeting it was decided to appoint someone to finish out her term until the elections next September. Lord Redhawk was nominated, and a motion was passed unanimously that he will serve as Member at Large pro-tem until September 2013.

Also discussed at the meeting was the re-vamping of our ordination process. The minister's application is being reviewed and revised, with an anticipated

completion of January 2013. The application will be much more in-depth, and all potential minister's must be approved unanimously by the BoD members. Completion of a basic course in ministry will be required, and other courses will be offered optionally. Most importantly, it was decided to no longer ordain ministers for life. Instead, ordination will be granted for a three year period, during which time the person's paid membership in CST must be maintained. After this three-year period the member must apply for a renewal. These new guidelines will apply to all members ordained since January 2012 and beyond.

Lady Charissa and four other CST representatives went to the Foothills Correctional Institute in Morganton, NC for a Samhain Festival put on by AREN (Alternative Religions Education Network), including workshops and a ritual for the inmates. The prison chaplain was very receptive and has offered to assist us in any way we need including references with other prison chaplains and even traveling to provide seminars on prison ministry. Darla Wynne, the head of the prison ministry program for AREN, has also offered to help in any way we need.

Also, Lady Charissa has set up a committee to begin implementing needed changes in the Inmate Pen Pal program and work on streamlining other ways we can service the inmates' spiritual needs.

The next meeting will be held in February 2013.

Yule 2012, #49

In This Issue:

President's Point	1
Summary of BoD Meeting	1
CST BoD & Staff Listing	1
Circle of Life	2
Who Are We?	2
Info About Our Services	2
The True Story of Christmas	3
Tidbits: Egyptian Calendar & Pentagram/Pentacle	4
Poetry: The Drums Are Calling	4
Contacts	5
CST Calendar	6

CST Directors:

President	Cathy Rankin
Vice President	Linda Kerr
Secretary/Treasurer	Stephen Bradford
Member-at-Large	Charissa Iskiwitch
Member-at-Large pro-tem	Lord Redhawk

CST Staff:

CST Admin Assistant	Linda Kerr
Sacred Grove Academy Director	Patricia Greer-Middleton
Sacred Grove Educational Consultant	David Michael M.Ed.
Pagan Prisoner Ministry	Charissa Iskiwitch
Military Affairs	Vincent Andrews
Newsletter Editor	Linda Kerr
Webmaster, CST & Sacred Grove	Linda Kerr
CST Founder/Advisor	Linda Kerr

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Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 489-1017
cst@spiraltree.org
www.spiraltree.org

Circle of Life

Birthdays for January-February-March! Happy Birthday to the following CST members:

Shyra W. (January 1)
Patrick D. (January 5)
Michael H. (January 11)
David I. (January 12)
Jennifer R. (January 25)
Jacob C. (February 2)
Jenna B. (February 4)
Jesse G.-N. (February 5)
Thomas H. (February 8)
Danielle C. (February 8)
DC W. (February 9)
Catherine R. (February 25)
Jeremy F. (March 5)
Rita M. (March 9)
Cliff L. (March 11)
Pat G.-M. (March 22)
Sirynd D. (March 22)
Jacob P. (March 25)
Scott M. (March 27)
Robin E. (March 31)
Denziel T. (March 31)

Newsletter Deadlines

Our newsletter, "The Journey," is an important outreach tool to our members; as such, CST is committed to publishing this newsletter on a regular quarterly basis. Publication dates and deadlines are as follows:

March 21 (deadline: March 1)

June 21 deadline: June 1)

September 21 (deadline: Sep 1)

December 21 (deadline: Dec 1)

Please note that these deadlines are **firm!** Any submissions received after these dates will be published in the following newsletter.

Our Board of Directors meetings are held around the cross-quarter days (Imbolc, Beltane, Lammas, Samhain), to allow updates and news from these meetings to be published in the next newsletter.

Who Are We?

Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical Pagan/Wiccan church, designed to foster and celebrate a sense of community and family among Pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. CST celebrates the unique Pagan family: parents, children, elders, and extended family. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and who respect themselves and others, regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with.

CST was incorporated in August 1997 to provide a legal, tax-exempt status to the Pagan community. This status enables us to offer to the community a variety of open rituals that anyone may attend, to ordain ministers, and to extend our tax-exempt status to sub-groups of CST. One of our projects has been the forming of a Pagan cover school program for homeschooling families in Alabama: (Sacred Grove Academy). CST also has a Community Relief Fund, so we can collectively donate money in the name of an established Pagan church to individuals in need and to disaster relief efforts, including the American Red Cross. CST is also pleased to offer a Pagan Prisoner Ministry, which provides outreach to incarcerated members, and a Military Affairs Committee, which offers support to deployed Pagan military personnel.

If you have important news that you would like to share in Happenings or Circle of Life in the Ostara edition of "The Journey," please email your info to Linda Kerr at info@spiraltree.org, or mail to CST, P.O. Box 8396, Columbus, GA, 31908, no later than March 1, 2013.

Info About Our Services:

Ministers: CST, being a church, may ordain any member age 18 and over as a minister. We are currently re-vamping our program to better serve our membership and community.

NEWS: The Board members of CST have passed a new policy, that any CST member who is made an ordained minister, must maintain their paid CST membership in order for their ordination status to remain valid. All ordinations will be good for a period of three years (we no longer ordain for life), during which the membership must be maintained. After this three-year period, you may apply to renew your ordination. There will be a small fee for renewal (still to be determined).

If the paid membership is not maintained during this three-year period or at any time thereafter, the ordination will lapse 30 days after the membership lapses.

This policy has been put in place to ensure that CST and our ordained ministers remain committed and connected to each other, and is effective for all ministers ordained in the year 2012 and on.

Subordinate Organizations:

The main form of a local CST group is a Grove. This can be formed by at least three paid church members, who apply to CST for a charter. If you are interested in forming a Grove, simply find two other like-minded friends, and encourage them to send in their membership to CST, then apply to us for a Grove charter. The application and first year's fee is \$35.00. Note that whomever forms a Grove and runs it, including writing and performing rituals and teaching mysteries, does not automatically become a "High Priest/ess."

The True Story of Christmas

by Ron F. White (Firedancer)

Most all humans live in a well-organized society not knowing from where they came nor where they are going. Why? Because they have been told the same lie for so long it has become the truth. We Cherokee Pagan spiritual practitioners have always tried to keep an open mind and must feel the truth from within our essence not being guided or controlled by unconfirmed stories or facts. The confirmed facts can be found in most history books, still not being sure, and you can also confirm what I or anyone else say or write by "pure inner logic." This is known by the thought "...if I can think, then I must exist!"

Once-upon-a-time there was an emperor of Rome who was called "Constantine the Great" and was the "god" of Rome, so he claimed, from the year 306 to 337. He was having some troubled times, being at war, just to hold on to his vast Roman empire. The mercenaries, which were his army, were only interested in money and were known to sell their treachery to anyone with the right silver coins. Rome itself had become a treacherous place because of all the different classes of people who had been conquered by Rome. So, Constantine moved his headquarters to Constantinople close to the sea of Marmara and the Black Sea about the year 330. From there he found that men would follow a belief, even die for that belief, but not for just silver coins. So, Constantine created the Roman Catholic Church, calling the belief "Christianity" and used the story of following the belief his people wrote called the bible. The word Christ means "all knowledge or enlightened." Constantinople's name was changed in 1930 to Istanbul.

Constantine the Great used the Catholic Church's religious leader, the Pope, to control his army and freely bring in money for the belief of unconfirmed facts, or "faith." The Christian religion was written to control people with the thought of having "ever-lasting life" in a paradise very far, far away called Heaven. Constantine's scribes used the man Jesus as the god who came to earth but was killed on a cross.

What most educated people today don't realize is that people were without schools unless they were from wealthy families. People have been told over and over that the uneducated twelve followers of Jesus, known as the Apostles, wrote the bible. But with a little study of history, you can confirm that the bible was written by scribes who worked for Constantine over 250 years after the man Jesus was placed on the Roman cross. If you study some history, you will find that the time was called the Dark Ages, as people were without schools, being intellectually stagnated, living mostly in poverty, mostly ignorant, living in a period of cultural decline. People in this state of affairs would follow a belief of immortality. So, using your inner essence thought,

how could a big fisherman, Peter, or any of the uneducated peoples, have written one of the books of the bible. Remember, Moses had been educated by Egyptians, who were pagans, but Moses needed a way to move the people with his single-god visions; the same as Constantine used to control his people.

It is interesting to note that the Romans kept records of their trials and all official records with the same type of scribes Constantine used to write the bible. After all, it was from these records that we know Pontius Pilate had ruled to put the man Jesus on the Roman cross to die. Just think, what would Christianity be without the crucifixion as a symbol of the Christian god? What if Pontius Pilate had refused to put the man on the cross and no record was ever made of the issue? There would be no Christianity as we know it today.

The man Jesus was telling people, according to the court records, that he could heal people, but they must have "faith;" the same as our faith healers of today. It was and is illegal to tell the people you can do something that you in fact cannot do. When the man Jesus could not do his magic healing act, the people pleaded to have him put on the Roman crucifixion cross to die.

Well, to further Constantine's created religion, from Roman court records, we see he used the known fact of a pagan celebration of the rebirth of the sun, as winter starts on December 21st. This is the deepest, darkest, longest night of all, and marks the end of the solar year, and on December 25th is the birth of the "new" sun. Even the pagan custom of bringing an evergreen tree into the home and decorating it is still followed; this magical ritual ensures light and food throughout the year and the return of spring.

We Cherokee look upon this time of the year as Mother Earth cleaning out the dying and recycling life's forces back into Herself to be reborn once again come spring. This is not a belief of faith! It is a fact anyone can clearly see.

Constantine used the birth of the sun to claim that the man Jesus was born on December 25th and called it birth of the "Son," using the same pagan rituals. The lie has kept being told over and over and history will tell you that day one of the calendar was the founding of the city of Rome. It was Constantine who changed the calendar to "before Christ" and "after the birth of Christ." It's a well-known fact that no one knows for sure when Jesus was actually born, but he was born 8 to 4 years before "day one" of the calendar and died about 29 years later on a cross for lying to the people.

Machiavelli wrote the book about political deceitfulness and the use of force to control the people. The book was called "The Prince," and it

Continued on page 4

Tidbits: Egyptian Calendar & Pentagram/Pentacle

By Silhouette Jones, HPS

A Brief History of the Egyptian Calendar

The Egyptian calendar was based on a 365 day cycle that was divided into 12 months of 30 days each, with 5 extra days at the end of the year. Each month was divided into three weeks with 10 days each. In the Egyptian calendar the stellar events were not fixed—they “wandered” throughout the year and were based on the knowledge of the stars. On a tablet found by Egyptologists from the reign of the First Dynasty King Djer circa 3000 BC, it has been established that the early Egyptians knew about the heliacal rising of Sirius. The Egyptian year was divided into the three seasons of Akhet (Inundation), Peret (Growth/Winter) and Shemu (Harvest/Summer). The months of the year were not referred to by a specific individual name, but rather were numbered within the three seasons. This remained until the dawn of the Middle Kingdom (circa 2030 BC) at which time each month received its own name. Another change to the names of the months happened at the dawn of the New Kingdom (circa 1550 BC).

The Drums are Calling by Nion

The drums are calling
The fire beckons
In the velvet darkness
Under the full moon's light
The rhythms pounding
Feet dancing in the dirt
Caressing the Mother Earth
Drawing Her strength
Felling Her womb's beat
Hot fire and cool air
Kissing the skin
Sweat sheened forms
Hot, naked, free
Aware of none but the one within
Sounds not heard but the rhythms of the drums
And the coursing blood's hot surge and flow
Sensual swaying to the music felt within
And heard without
In tune to one another
Meshing together as one
Spirit borne upon the rhythmic sounds
Beyond the now to the within
To far off places not of this one
To the mists beyond the veil
Into the Dreamtime
The drums are calling

The Pentagram & the Pentacle

The pentagram is the symbol of the five pointed star that represents the five elements. The top of the pentagram represents the element of spirit which brings the other four elements together as one (earth, air, fire & water). Other interesting tidbits surrounding the magical number of five are we have five fingers and toes, we have five senses, and we live life in five stages (birth, adolescence, coitus, parenthood, and death). Throughout the ages we see the number five in other things:

- Christianity's five wounds of Christ on the cross
- Five pillars of the Muslim faith & five daily times of prayer
- Five virtues of the medieval knight (generosity, courtesy, chastity, chivalry & piety)
- Wiccan Kiss (feet, knees, womb, breasts, lips)

For centuries the pentagram has been worn as a symbol of protection to ward off evil, shield conflict of the wearer and home, and can be seen as the symbol of strength in the Pentagon.

The pentacle happens when a circle is drawn around a pentagram giving the symbol extra protection. The circle symbolizes eternity and infinity as well as the cycles of life and nature. It symbolizes the spiritual containment of the magical circle that we cast during ritual.

Christmas, cont. from pg. 3

gives the same facts of how Constantine's lies worked. He also told his people to follow certain beliefs, and used force to make this happen.

Once again, history tells of possibly about nine million people, mostly pagans, were burned in the Christian inquisition, with the courts forcing the Christian lies on people. This reign of terror was partly so the churches could confiscate pagans and wealthy people's property, and also helped confirm the religious lie to control the people.

Today most people don't know how the pagan festival of Yule became Christmas. It's the only way Christianity could enter the mainstream of society, by confirming the pagans' religious beliefs.

Many lies have been told to lazy people who will not take the time to know from where they came nor where they are going. So, keep your Yule belief and enjoy the truth of why we pagans celebrate the rebirth of our “Sun.” Only believe from your pure inner logic and know that it is our creator that gently holds Mother Earth and Father Sun in the vastness of the cosmos.

Contacts:

You get a free contact listing with your membership. You may also submit your listing at any later time. As an additional service, you can send letters to CST, and we will forward them to your intended recipient.

A Brother to My Sister: Serving the nemeton of Phoenix Grove in Oregon House, California.

abrothertomysister@gmail.com.

Lady Charissa: As an ordained minister, I offer Handfastings, Handpartings, Wiccanings and Crossings. As a Reiki Master and healer I offer healing in many ways. I offer a variety of workshops for groups or at festivals and co-own Star's Bazaar, an online metaphysical store with my husband, David. You can find more about the workshops and services she offers at www.starsbazaar.weebly.com. My group, North Georgia Solitaries, offers Sabbat celebrations, workshops and socials that are open to anyone that wishes to attend. Information on NGS can be found at www.ngsolitaries.com.

Clifford Joseph Bowling #020405: Wanted: D/W/M eclectic Wiccan with interest in Thelema, Kabbalah, Greek/ Roman/Sumerian/ Babylonian/ Egyptian paths, seeks similar female to share knowledge and thoughts. Zephyrhills Corr. Inst., D2116L, 2739 Gall Blvd., Zephyrhills, FL 33541-9701.

Dana Ston:

DanaVictorSton@aol.com.

Denzial Ray Tittle #66072-179

A-3: 55 year old bi, poly, incarcerated man would enjoy correspondence with good people about goddess worship and/or sacred sexuality (and life, liberty...). FCI, PO Box 7000, Texarkana, TX 75505.

Lady Eibhlean and Lady

Aracos Arendel: GryphonSong Clan, Atlanta, GA.

piperpettus@yahoo.com,

www.gryphonsongclan.com.

Rev. James Middleton or Rev.

Rita Middleton: You can contact us at Drdjimid@aol.com or 706-291-2385.

Jayson Schertz #B50630:

Pagan in prison. I am following a Druid/Celtic path. Can't get much to study/learn in here. Anyone willing to correspond with me or teach me, please do. Blessed be. Menard, M.C.C., P.O. Box 1000, Menard, IL 62259.

John Herman Cooper #191141:

I am the teacher of the Pagan/Wiccan group at Staton C.F. I am interested in the growth of Paganism into a valid culture in its

own right. F3-26B, P.O. Box 56, Elmore, AL, 36025.

Dr. Katharyn Privett-Duren:

dr_privett@yahoo.com.

Mary Ann Muller:

MarMulRN@aol.com.

Matt Farley #1446657: TDCJ is not geared towards rehabilitation anymore. To anyone who cares, please send information on correspondence courses to me at Smith Unit, 1313 CR 19, Lamesa, TX 79331. Blessed Be!

Michael Lee Harris #221321:

Wiccan pagan, My path is Celtic. Interest in reading Wiccan pagan books, Circle magazine, Pagans and the Law by Dana D Eilers. Fox Lake Corr. Inst., Box 200 HU One, Fox Lake, WI 53933-0200.

Patrick Henry Drews #1203960, Neal Unit, 9055 Spur 591, Amarillo, TX 79107.

Phillip James Bartley #HJ6640:

Eclectic Wicca, god & goddess studies, witchcraft, some Qabalah studies. S.C.I. Huntingdon, 1100 Pike Street, Huntingdon, PA 16654-1112.

Richard Peebles #523160: I will correspond with Wiccan gay or straight males and females alike; I only ask to write and make friends. Wheeler Correctional Facility, P.O. Box 466, Unit 100-M, Alamo, GA 30411.

Rob Von Allmen: Tired? Bored?

Wanting to find true love and happiness? Well, what are you doing talking to me?! I don't have all the questions, much less the answers. But I do have a clue (I found it in a cereal box) and am licensed to share the wisdom of the ages (answered an ad in Roling Stone). If you also ponder such mysteries as "Is there life after death?", "Was he a man dreaming he was a butterfly...?", and "Where am I parked?", then please drop me a line at: "Skippy" Rob Von Allmen, 425 Webster Road #934, Auburn, AL 36832, <skippy_the_witch@yahoo.com>, 334-826-3953.

Rev. Rowen Greenwolf: I am a 2nd Degree self-initiated Celtic Witch. I also serve as Ritual Priest and Grove Steward for the Bluewater Pagan Grove in Port Huron, MI. I am an active member and ordained with CST. (810) 689-7074.

Siryndolphinson-Bradford:

Siryndolphinson can be reached at Bio-Buzz in Albany, GA, where we have a vast

array of metaphysical and root-working supplies. Also offering in-depth classes, workshops, and seminars, at some of which Siryndolphinson shares different topics on the many paths she has traveled, and the specific tools she utilizes today. She is available as a speaker at other venues on request. Siryndolphinson is an intuitive reader who offers Tarot, Aura, and Obi (shell) readings, and in-depth palmistry at the store, and has other readers available. She is a Usui Reiki Master/Teacher with Lightarian incorporating crystal healing, chakra cleansing, pendulum clearing/balancing, guided meditation, energy work, lfa based root work, and spiritual/healing advisement. Her work as a minister includes all rites, most rituals, and she is willing to travel. Siryndolphinson is founder of the CST grove S.T.A.R. (Sacred Tribe of Ancient Roots), and creator of the Pagan Family Reunion (PFR). Siryndolphinson can be reached at Bio-Buzz, 612 N. Slapppy Blvd., Albany, GA, 31701; (229) 395-9718; la.siryndolphinson@yahoo.com.

Stephen Bradford, aka Tyernan

WaterOak: An intuitive medium and natural healer. Within my Eclectic Witch and Yoruba Path, I do Tarot readings, rootwork, chakra balancing, crystal healing, energy work, and Reiki. I own Bio-Buzz Botanica, a metaphysical supply and service oriented business in Albany, GA. As an ordained minister, I offer legal communions, handfastings, handpartings, Wiccanings, and requiems (passing on rites). At the store and across the US, I offer ongoing classes, workshops and various teachings. Bio-Buzz is also the home of Albany Pagans and the Magickal Mystery Tour, which is an ongoing discussion of anything metaphysical and spiritual related topics. I offer these services and classes with help from the community at my other store in Auburn, AL called Dream-Scapes, our second location of metaphysics and spiritual supplies galore. Look for me in the Panhandle of Florida and North Georgia quite often too! Stephen A. Bradford, 612 N. Slapppy Blvd., Albany GA 31701, (229) 438-5878 or (229) 395-0963. Email: tyernan2003@yahoo.com.

Taavi Kellett: Can be reached by cell phone at (334) 297-6243. 🐾

CST Calendar:

CST and its affiliate Groves welcome church and community members, beginners, newcomers, solitaires, and anyone else interested in participating in rituals honoring the Sabbats and new & full moons. You need no experience or knowledge to participate, but we do request you come with an open mind and heart, and show respect for your fellow participants. We usually share a potluck dinner after each ritual, so those who come are asked to bring some type of food to share. Please wear something comfortable and appropriate for outdoors. Ritual robes are welcome but not necessary. Children of all ages are welcome. You do not have to be a member of CST to participate! Donations to the Church are entirely optional but appreciated.

Note: the schedule below is subject to change! Firmer times and locations of all rituals will be available closer to the date of the ritual. Please visit <www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtm> for up-to-date information, directions, and links to RSVP for each ritual.

EVENT DATE TIME LOCATION/HOST

GROVES, PLEASE SEND IN YOUR SCHEDULE OF RITUALS!

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held February, 2013. BoD meetings are held four times a year; check website at <www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtm> for date and location of the next meeting.

Upcoming Festivals (Not CST events):

Moondance: May 23-27, 2013, Roxanna, Alabama

Church of the Spiral Tree
P.O. Box 8396
Columbus, GA 31908

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED