



# Sacred Spiral News

Sacred Spiral Pagan Church of Arizona ([www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org](http://www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org)) August 2009

## Annual Perseid Meteor Shower

Every year, for the last 20 years or so, I've looked forward to August for one reason - the Perseid Meteor Shower, an event not to be missed. The Perseids start showing up around July 23rd and continue through August until about the 22nd, with peak viewing occurring sometime around the middle of August.

The Perseids, so-named because they appear to originate from the constellation Perseus, happen when Earth passes through the debris stream left behind by Comet Swift-Tuttle. The left-over comet particles ignite in Earth's upper atmosphere, resulting in "falling stars" which usually last for only a second or two; but their brevity is more than made up for in quantity.

In 1993, when Comet Swift-Tuttle was relatively close to Earth, the Perseids' peak rate was over 200 per hour. Depending on your viewing location (away from the city and its accompany light pollution), and the moon's current phase, you can easily see 60 per hour.

Shortly before midnight on Tuesday, August 11th, turn your gaze toward the Northeast horizon. Look for the familiar 'W' of the constellation Cassiopeia, and you will soon find Perseus, following closely in her wake.

A waning gibbous moon, which also rises around midnight, will likely interfere somewhat with your viewing, but the shower will continue through to just before dawn on Wednesday.

Although 2009 may not be an ideal year for the Perseids, it's definitely worth the time and the drive out into the desert when the result is the chance to see such a spectacular celestial event.

## In the News

### **17th century urine-filled 'witch bottle' found - Discovery provides a unique insight into witchcraft beliefs of that period.**

During the 17th century in England, someone urinated in a jar, added nail clippings, hair and pins, and buried it upside-down in Greenwich, where it was recently unearthed and identified by scientists as being the world's most complete known "witch bottle."

This spell device, often meant to attract and trap negative energy, was particularly common from the 16th to the 17th centuries, so the discovery provides a unique insight into witchcraft beliefs of that period, according to a report published in the latest British Archaeology.

Lead researcher Alan Massey, a former chemist and honorary fellow of Loughborough University, believes "the objects found in witch bottles verify the authenticity of contemporary recipes given for anti-witchcraft devices, which might otherwise have been dismissed by us as being too ridiculous and outrageous to believe."

An Old Bailey court record from 1682 documents that a husband, believing his wife to be afflicted by witchcraft, was advised by a Spitalfields apothecary to "take a quart of your Wive's urine, the paring of her Nails, some of her Hair, and such like, and boyl them well in a Pipkin."

The excavated bottle appears to have been made according to those, or similar, instructions.

(Continued on page 2 - see "Witch Bottle")

## Witch Bottle (cont'd from pg 1)

CT scans and chemical analysis, along with gas chromatography conducted by Richard Cole of the Leicester Royal Infirmary, reveal the contents of the bottle to include human urine, brimstone, 12 iron nails, eight brass pins, hair, possible navel fluff, a piece of heart-shaped leather pierced by a bent nail, and 10 fingernail clippings.

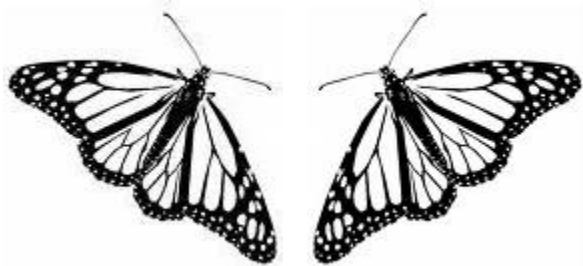
Although some 200 early witch bottles have been identified, all were found opened, with their contents likely eroded or otherwise lost. This artifact, in contrast, had its cork closure still intact. The urine contained nicotine, so a smoker produced it. Since the fingernails showed little wear, Massey believes the individual was "of some social standing."

Brimstone, the ancient name for sulfur, is associated with passages in several religious texts, including the Bible. In the Book of Revelations, for example, "false prophets" were cast into a volcano-like lake "burning with brimstone."

In terms of the heart object, Massey said other witch bottles were found to contain "a cloth heart pierced by brass pins," but "this is the first example where a nail was used for this function." The meaning remains unclear.

The bottle itself is actually a salt-glazed jar made in the Netherlands or Germany and stamped with the face of Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino (1542-1621), who played an important role in the Catholic Reformation.

- Discovery News (June 4, 2009)



## LOL

How many Aries does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but it takes a lot of light bulbs.

How many Taureans does it take to change a light bulb? What, me move?

How many Geminis does it take to change a light bulb? II

How many Cancers does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but he has to bring his mother.

How many Leos does it take to change a light bulb? A dozen. One to change the bulb, and eleven to applaud.

How many Virgos does it take to change a light bulb? Five. One to clean out the socket, one to dust the bulb, one to install, and two engineers to check the work.

How many Libras does it take to change a light bulb? Libras can't decide if the bulb needs to be changed.

How many Scorpios does it take to change a light bulb? None. They LIKE the dark.

How many Sagittarians does it take to change a light bulb? One to install the bulb, and a Virgo to pick up the pieces.

How many Capricorns does it take to change a light bulb? The light's fine as it is.

How many Pisceans does it take to change a light bulb? What light bulb?

How many Aquarians does it take to change a light bulb? Have you asked the bulb if it WANTS to be changed?

## Book Review

Cunningham's Book of Shadows: The Path of An American Traditionalist by Scott Cunningham

Recently discovered in a battered manila envelope, this previously unpublished manuscript was penned by Scott in the late 1970s or early 1980s. This rare book includes original spells, rituals, invocations and an herbal grimoire. Featured in the design are Scott's actual hand-written notes and hand-drawn signs, symbols, and runes.

More than ten years after his passing, Scott Cunningham is still an iconic and highly regarded figure in the magical community. His books on Wicca are considered classics, and his writings continue to inspire and inform both long-time practitioners and those new to the Craft.

## Music Review

Canyon Trilogy by Carlos Nakai  
(Native American Flute)

Nakai's free-flow improvisations on this CD are based on his impressions of the Anasazi and Sinagua sites - ancient cliff dwellings that were home to communities of Native people thousands of years ago.

Using digital technology, Nakai is able to play duets with his own echo, in an effort to emulate the echoes of the past that haunt these ruins. His flute sounds even more plaintive than usual, as if the spirits of these forgotten ancestors had entered into the studio to fill his playing with the whispered reverberations of their ancient ways.

This is one of Nakai's most deeply felt recordings, one that resonates with a deep, melancholy yearning.

## Name the Religion

This religion is based upon the belief that some cosmic Jewish Zombie can make you live forever if you symbolically eat his flesh and telepathically tell him that you accept him as your master, so he can remove an evil force from your soul that is present in humanity because some woman made from a rib was convinced by a talking snake to eat from a magical tree. (Answer in next month's newsletter.)

## The Black Cauldron

(Your Anonymous Questions Answered)

What does "skyclad" mean?

The term skyclad means "Clad only by the sky".

Not all Witches/Wiccans perform rituals skyclad, but there are those who believe that the absence of clothing allows energy to transfer to and from them more freely.

Some simply feel closer to the Goddess and the God while in their natural form.

Some practitioners will wear a robe or some other ritual clothing during group activities, but go skyclad only when observing rites alone.

Regardless, going skyclad during ritual is in no way a sexual act, it is a deeply spiritual one for those who choose to do so.

## Mission Statement

We are a non-dogmatic, eclectic Pagan Tradition that seeks to unite a collective under the leadership of the Sacred Spiral Pagan Church of Arizona. We are children of Mother Earth and Father Sky, dancing the Spiral Dance through Life, Death and Rebirth, again and again, Learning, Teaching, Loving and Gaining Enlightenment.

Our commitment is to ourselves and the Divine, to bring our Pagan beliefs out into the open, to let the world see through our example that Pagan values and Pagan lifestyles are to be respected and not feared, to make a better world for our children, to let the world know that the Old Religion is alive and that we will no longer live in fear of our non-Pagan brothers and sisters. We will promote Peace and Harmony with all of Earth's inhabitants.

**WE ARE THE PEOPLE!  
WE HAVE THE POWER!  
WE MAKE THE CHANGE!**

## 2009 Rituals \*

Fri.	Jan 9	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	Jan 30	7pm - Imbolg
Fri.	Feb 6	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	March 13	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	March 20	7pm - Ostara
Fri.	April 10	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	May 1	7pm - Beltane
Fri.	May 8	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	June 5	7pm - Full Moon
Sat.	June 20	—— Litha (Camp Out)
Fri.	July 10	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	July 31	7pm - Lammass/Lughnasadh
Fri.	Aug 7	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	Sept 4	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	Sept 18	7pm - Mabon
Fri.	Oct 2	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	Oct 30	7pm - Samhain (Camp Out)
Fri.	Nov 6	7pm - Full Moon
Fri.	Dec 4	7pm Full Moon
Sun.	Dec 20	—— Yule

(Potluck at Noon / Yule Ritual at 2pm)

All Rituals (excluding Litha and Samhain)  
take place at Falcon Field Park  
4800 E. Falcon Field Dr., Mesa, AZ 85215

\*dates/times/locations subject to change  
(for up-to-the-minute info, contact Jane at Dragonstar 480-985-1308)

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**BE A STAR! SEE YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS!**

(well, at least in print)

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Submit your short stories, poems and non-fiction essays by the 15th of each month to be included in the next newsletter.  
Based on first-come, first-served basis and available space.