



# Sacred Spiral News

Sacred Spiral Pagan Church of Arizona ([www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org](http://www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org)) Jul-Sep 2010

## ~ Paganism Today ~

By Rosemary Szymanski

Today Wicca or Paganism is the fastest growing religion in our country. It is actually growing at 1675%. Witches are coming out of the closet by the thousands. Paradigms are being broken and the "Old Religion" is coming to be more and more main stream. The need to hide is diminishing along with the secrecy.

What has emerged, however, is a lot of bruised egos and unfortunately "Witch Wars". No one can agree on what we are all about and too many think we are only powerful if we hide. I say "BULL\*\*\*\*!" We need to put "The Burning Times" behind us and be part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and be proud of who we are.

Too many people read a few books and proclaim themselves to be an authority or they join some online "Witch School" that takes them through degree systems they haven't really earned. Because of this, too many self-proclaimed leaders are on the scene making the "Old Religion" look like some kind of a joke. It still holds true that it takes a witch to make a witch. It takes years of dedication and knowledge to move through the ranks and even then not everyone is meant to lead.

We also have the "Hollywood" stereotype wannabes who dress all in black and try to look all "SCAREY." They are just chasing some fad they think is cool without any real commitment to what a real witch really is. If we want to be taken seriously and not be looked upon as a cult or worse then we need to show the world by our deeds and example what being Pagan really means. As a whole we need to come to some kind of agreement on who and what we are.....

Why do we need a Pagan Church?... The hiding is over. It is time to step out of the shadows and proclaim our right to believe and worship as we choose. A Pagan Church does not take the Power away, it increases the power.

Besides giving us validity and respect, it gives us the strength that can be found in numbers. We don't need to sneak around in secret and try to recruit or steal members from other groups, to be part of our private little coven like so many backward thinking witches do. Instead it gives its members the security and love of being respected regardless of who you are without having to kiss the ass of the self-proclaimed high priestess/priest, or winning some kind of popularity contest where members have to vote you in!

As a church the only requirement is a love for The Goddess and God and the quest for truth. Hiding in the shadows may have been a necessary part of our past but it has no place in our future. The time for a Pagan Church is now!....

Who gets to Lead and Why?... Every once in awhile someone asks, "How do you get to be a High Priestess (Priest)?" If you are a very public person and seriously "out of the closet," so to speak, you may even field a question such as: "Is that High Priestess stuff for real?" Got to love those folks! Talk about a dose of reality and the world we live in today!

What about that world that we live in today? It's an instant place, everything is quick, easy, and no one wants to wait for anything. We microwave our food and feel horribly overworked if we have to cook dinner! Laundry is a serious chore at the laundromat and thank goodness we don't have to wring the clothes out by hand! We get our mail on the Internet, the old-fashioned way using the postal service is now called "snail mail." It's an instant world. We get stressed easily, have difficulty staying in touch with the "real" world and could easily get lost if we didn't have books to point the way for us to spiritual growth. (cont'd on page 2)

## Paganism Today (continued from page 1)

Several years ago the availability of books on the Craft, the Old Ways, or magick were very limited. Today that certainly has changed and you can find many books that literally teach a tradition between two covers. Many authors have opened a wondrous world of magick. The great mystery schools are almost passé, everyone wants it to be instant, eclectic, easy. Is it just that easy? Pick up a book and read about it, learn about it on the internet, roll a candle, light some incense, buy a few crystals, grow a few herbs, and you are on your way to being an experienced teacher? Or better yet, a High Priestess. Is it really that easy? Good question! The answer is probably different with everyone, or maybe not. Is being a High Priestess/Priest just a role that is assumed during a ritual? It could be, perhaps if you have a group of folks who have gathered together to celebrate a Sabbat or esbat. They may be solitaires and High Priestess/Priest is a part in a ritual drama. When the circle is done and the candles are packed away, and the group is sitting around talking, who's the High Priestess/Priest then?

Although, to take up a role for ritual is admirable, (public speaking is not everyone's gift), it does not make a High Priestess/Priest. So what does? Well, we have all seen the movies where the guy receives the "calling" to be a minister, a man of God. It may be real "Hollywood," but this does actually happen! It doesn't happen to everyone but, when it does, your life changes, forever. You don't choose it or even ask for it. It chooses you. Once you're chosen, there is no turning back, not really, you may walk away, but it never really leaves you. It's who you become and is as much of who you are as the DNA inside your cells.

There is no turning back. This is your life. It comes before everything and defines who you are. You put it before personal wants and needs and even before family and friends. It can be very lonely yet so rewarding. You can, do, and will dedicate your life to the Goddess. It's like breathing, very necessary. It is the life that you live. It is more than being an example, or a "model" witch; It is being a leader, a teacher, a healer, a counselor, a High Priestess/Priest, and very human! You have to walk the walk and talk the talk 24/7. It doesn't stop when you take off your robe. It is not a role that you can pack away with the candles. It is your life. It is what you live.

You may not feel like packing and loading material and then unpacking and putting things away after each ritual, or standing out there in the cold and doing ritual again or having to write four different rituals in one week, answer endless emails, trying not offend anyone or forget something, while still doing your mundane chores like being a part of a family, taking care of your home and earning a living, but that is irrelevant, you do it anyway because it is yours to do.

Being a High Priestess or Priest is dedication and hard work and those who do this work deserve the respect that they have earned. They aren't looking for groupies or someone to do menial tasks for them, rather a few minutes of solitude would probably be nice occasionally. Often what they get instead are adult cry babies who act more like children than adults because their feelings were hurt or their egos were bruised because someone forgot to email them or remind them over and over of an event and they missed it, so they feel unimportant or left out.

A Former High Priestess I once knew decided to try and quit. When I asked her why, her answer was, "I got so tired of dealing with a bunch of unemployed, unwashed, immature adults who wanted to blame their careless lifestyle and everything wrong in their lives on the fact that they were "Pagan".

Our Religion may be guilt free but if we want the freedom to practice our Religion openly and without fear than we have to realize that with freedom comes RESPONSIBILITY and start being responsible. Egos need to be put away and the back stabbing, gossip and whining need to end and be replaced with "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust!" We are the People! We have the Power! We make the Change! Let's start making these words mean something!!!!.....

**We are the People!**

**We have the Power!**

**We make the Change!**

# Pagan Harvest Festivals

Lughnasadh (aka Lammas), Mabon, and Samhain are the names given to the three Pagan harvest festivals celebrated annually during the waning half of the Wheel of the Year.

Lughnasadh is celebrated every August 1 and Samhain every October 31. Mabon, also known as the Autumn Equinox and the Second Harvest, is the second of the three harvest festivals and occurs anywhere from September 21 to 24. This year it falls on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

At the Autumn Equinox, day and night hang in perfect balance, reflecting our own internal struggles for balance in our lives. Appropriately enough, it is on this day that the sun enters Libra, the zodiac sign of the Scales. Mabon, therefore, is a good time to reflect upon your life, reviewing what is in balance and what is not, and how to put things to right.

At Mabon, we also prepare to bid farewell to the Sun God, who is growing weaker with each passing day. Soon, at Samhain, the Final Harvest, he will die, giving himself to the Earth, so that he can be born again at the Winter Solstice, for this is the cycle of life - birth, death and rebirth.

Mabon is a time for being thankful for the harvest and bounty of the Earth, as well as a time for reflection as we move towards winter.

## Annual Perseid Meteor Shower

You know it's a good night when a beautiful alignment of planets is the *second* best thing that's going to happen. Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, is such a night.

The show begins at sundown when Venus, Saturn, Mars and the crescent Moon pop out of the western twilight in tight conjunction. All four heavenly objects will fit within a circle about 10 degrees in diameter, beaming together through the dusky colors of sunset. No telescope is required to enjoy this naked-eye event.

The planets will hang together in the western sky until 10 pm or so. When they leave, following the sun below the horizon, you should stay, because that is when the Perseid meteor shower begins. From 10 pm until dawn, meteors will flit across the starry sky in a display that's even more exciting than a planetary get-together.

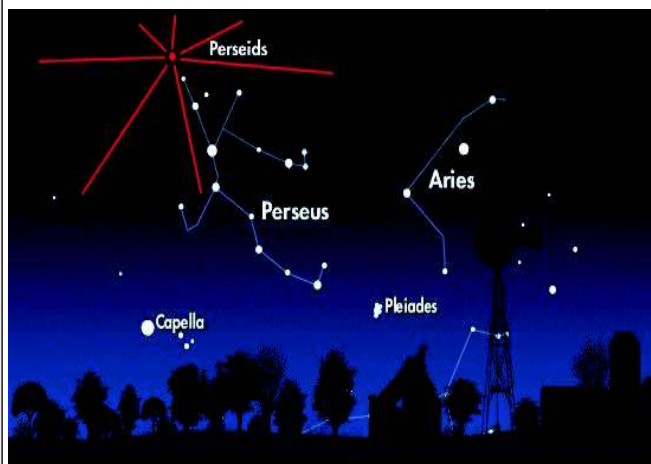
## Annual Perseid Meteor Shower - cont'd.

The Perseid meteor shower is caused by debris from Comet Swift-Tuttle. Every 133 years the huge comet swings through the inner solar system and leaves behind a trail of dust and gravel. When Earth passes through the debris, specks of comet-stuff hit the atmosphere at 140,000 mph and disintegrate in flashes of light. These meteors are called Perseids because they fly out of the constellation Perseus.

Swift-Tuttle's debris zone is so wide, Earth spends weeks inside it. Indeed, we are in the outskirts now, and sky watchers are already reporting a trickle of late-night Perseids. The trickle could turn into a torrent between August 11th and 13th when Earth passes through the heart of the debris trail.

2010 is a good year for Perseids because the Moon won't be up during the midnight-to-dawn hours of greatest activity. Lunar glare can wipe out a good meteor shower, but that won't be the case this time.

As Perseus rises and the night deepens, meteor rates will increase. For sheer numbers, the best time to look is during the darkest hours before dawn on Friday morning, Aug. 13th, when most observers will see dozens of Perseids per hour.



## 2010 Rituals \*

Fri.	Jan 29	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	Feb 5	7pm	Imbolg
Fri.	Feb 26	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	March 19	7pm	Ostara
Fri.	March 26	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	April 30	7pm	Beltaine/Full Moon
Fri.	May 28	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	June 18	-----	Litha (Campout)
Fri.	June 25	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	July 23	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	July 30	7pm	Lughnasadh
Fri.	Aug 20	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	Sept 24	7pm	Mabon/Full Moon
Fri.	Oct 22	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	Oct 29	-----	Samhain (Campout)
Fri.	Nov 19	7pm	Full Moon
Fri.	Dec 17	7pm	Full Moon
Sun.	Dec 19	-----	Yule
(Potluck at Noon / Yule Ritual at 2pm)			
Fri.	Jan 21, 2011	7pm	Full Moon

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 or go to

[www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org](http://www.sacredspiralpaganchurchofarizona.org)