

**Issue 3 Beltane 2009**

**Contents**

**Holy Days**

*Beltane and Litha, Ajna DreamsAwake*

*Beltane, Lady Zephyr*

**Goddess Work**

*Working with the Fae, Aisling*

**Ritual Work**

*Nighttime Rituals, Kerritwyn*

**Gardening with the Goddess**

*Weeds, BellaDonna Oya*

**Sacred Sites**

*Denderah, Ajna DreamsAwake*

**OWM Awareness**

*OWM Happenings, Nessa CrescentMoon*

**The Bardic Soul: Poetry and Song**

*Renewal, River*

*Blue or Green, Mystic Amazon*

*Our Voice Should Not Be Silenced, Mystic Amazon*

### **The Creative Muse**

*Spring and Summer Goddesses, Maeve MoonBird*

### **Recipes Fit for a Goddess**

*Farls, Lady Zephyr*

### **Just for Fun**

*Young Love Potpourri, Moonwater Ashwood*

## **Beltane and Litha**

Beltane, literally the "Fire of Bel", honours the Celtic God, Bel, as a vegetation God, commonly known as Green Man. The Young God has grown into His power and now plants His seed into the fertile land that is Goddess.

This Fire Festival celebrates the sacred union of Goddess and God. We can honour the Goddess by exploring our own sexuality. Light the fires of passion this evening with your lover or honour the Goddess within by sending Her to the heights of sexual delight. This is a festival of purification as well. Light two fires (or two

candles) and walk between them to cleanse your spirit. Do something fun and spontaneous during your ritual this evening. Wear crowns of Mayflowers and enjoy the colourful beauty of Goddess in bloom.

Litha, meaning gentle (as in gentle breezes), is also known as Midsummer or Summer Solstice and marks the height of power of the Sun God. Hang a golden or yellow disc, representing the sun, outside to catch the sun's rays. Or create a wreath of yellow flowers. At this time, we also honour the Goddess in Her role as Divine Mother, offering nourishment to the land.

Plants gathered on this night are said to have exceptional healing properties... Although often referred to as the longest day, Litha, in fact, is the time of the longest twilight. This magickal time between day and night opens a gateway to the realm of the Fae. If you are patient, you may catch a glimpse of the Dance of the Fae.

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*Ajna DreamsAwake is an Initiate of [The Sacred Three Goddess school](#). She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.*

## **Beltane**

First thing in the morning eat Oatmeal or anything made from oatmeal products. Oatmeal brings good fortune and encourages the power and magick of the faerie.

Wash your face in dew at sunrise on Beltane for beauty in the coming year. (Traditionally the dew from the hawthorn tree, but dew from grass and flowers will do.)

Make a wish at the hawthorn tree, a tree associated with faeries. Place strips of cloth symbolizing your wish in the tree (blue for health, pink or red for love, green or gold for prosperity). Take some time to attune to the tree. Visualize your wish coming true as you hook the cloth on one of the tree's thorns, chanting your wish. When you have finished, leave a gift for the tree.

Altar: Dress your altar in a green cloth and decorate it with blooming flowers and herbs.

Herbs: Thistle, daffodil, dogwood, coriander, fern, nettle, hawthorn, marjoram, paprika, rose, almond, elder leaves.

Incense: Rose jasmine, ylang, peach, musk or vanilla

Stones: Malachite, garnet, rose quartz, emerald, beryl, and tourmaline

If possible, celebrate Beltane in a forest or near a tree. Create a small token or charm to hang upon the tree in honor of the love between the Goddess and her Horned God. Small bags can be filled with flowers, beads, whatever you want to put in them.



## **Ritual to Ensure Prosperity, Safety, Good Luck and Love**

Mark your circle with oatmeal, the traditional Beltane grain.

Call upon Deity, Guardians etc...

Say the following:

*The month of May has arrived,*

*Flowers and plants through the winter have survived.*

*Their little heads poke up from the green grass.*

*Winters' cycle is in the past.*

*The cycle continues,*

*Beltane is here.*

*Mother Earth decorating herself with beautiful hues.*

*The Rainbow Arc surrounds us to enjoy.*

*Tis the mating season,*

*Bringing forth new birth*

*To continue the life's' cycles*

*In honor of Mother Earth.*

*May we be blessed*

*With good luck,*

*Prosperity and fertility*

*By Mother Earth and*

*The Goddess.*

Lady Zephyr (4/25/09)

Lady Zephyr is a Level II Initiate with Sisters in Celebration. She is also a member of the Tupelo Area Pagan's Group.

## **Working With the Fae**

Many associate the seasons of Beltaine and Summer Solstice as a time of heightened faerie activity. So what better time to say hello to these fabled beings?

Legends tell us of both friendly fae and those whose antics humans do not understand/are distressed by. As such, always make sure to set a clear intent as to your interactions and ward your space (home and yard) appropriately so you attract positive encounters.

Ever drop a pretty earring or other shiny object and not be able to find it when you know it fell right there? Maybe you left your keys or a favored necklace in one spot, but find it days later in a completely different locale? The fae could be playing in your home!

In my experience, the faeries seem to love shiny, bright, or highly colorful objects. One practice I've found helpful in keeping my keys and jewelry from disappearing is to designate a 'play area' and leave lots of pretty objects there. Good spots are near a window, a house plant and/or out of sight. Make sure there's cover for the fae to hide under and keep out! Like a child's club house, this is fae only area and you're only admitted on invite! Such as when it's time to change out the toys. :)

Some good items to add to your faerie area would be necklace or bracelet charms, earrings, crystals, chimes/bells, little dishes of water and so forth. Make sure you don't want back the items you leave the faeries. It's not very nice to give a gift to a friend and then ask for its return. When you have an item that you get a sense the fae just don't want there anymore take it outside and bury it or leave it on a rock or amongst tree roots for some of the other nature spirits and/or local fae to enjoy playing with.

Make sure to change the items in your fae spot regularly. If you start noticing your jewelry, keys and such disappearing again it probably means it's time to give the

faeries something new to play with. It's also helpful to state out loud to the faeries which items are off limits. Say this while holding the item so it can be seen and explain why it's off-limits (emotional attachments, important in your day to day life, etc...). Explaining the reason seems to help prevent items from disappearing versus just saying 'don't touch this'.

If you keep a garden(s) there's probably a fae or two already living there! Especially if your patch of soil is an oasis in the concrete desert of a city. To honor the faeries living in and helping your garden flourish, create a house for them. The sky is really the limit here! Some people create elaborate miniature houses (you can start with a birdhouse as a basis) others just designate a secluded corner with some stones and everything in between.

I usually construct mine with natural materials. I'll find some small twigs or a piece of discarded bark and use it to create a lean-to against some pots or other items in my garden. Other times I'll just arrange some planters so they create a secluded area between them. Then leave items in your faerie home similar to those used for the inside area, but veer more towards found natural objects. Items can include pretty stones, a piece of jewelry, a beautiful leaf that's dropped to the ground, a feather a bird lost in flight, and so on.

Experiment and find what the faeries around you prefer! The main things I add to my outdoor faerie home/area are flowers. For the garden fae, these seem to be the most well-received. I don't pick flowers to leave (remember, they're the ones tending to the blossoms and helping to create such beauty!), but will pick up blossoms that blew over in a storm or those that are on parts of the plant I had to trim.

Maybe you just want to honor the fae for an evening as they pass by. An excellent way to do this is to leave out some milk, honey and bread. Whichever method(s) you choose, the faeries will appreciate your generous gift!

© Aisling

*Aisling is an Initiate of the [Order of the White Moon](#) and is currently a Level 2 student with Sisters in Celebration. A druid, perpetual student of herbalism and Reiki 2 practitioner, Aisling is deepening her work with shamanism, as well as forms of healing.*

## **Nighttime Rituals**

Many of us have trouble feeling safe. We are women raised in a sexist, patriarchal culture, and many of us have spent most of our lives working to overcome the negative effects of the oppressive and frightening realities and myths taught to us as girls and young women.

Seeking the Goddess is one way that many of us have chosen to restore our faith and joy, but we often find that we need to do reparative work in MANY aspects of our lives. Our sense of personal safety is a critical aspect of our mental, emotional and physical health.

Feeling safe is also critical to getting a good night's sleep. If you are like me, you might have spent many years having trouble getting to sleep at night. Over the

years, I have developed a set of nighttime rituals to help me sleep, and dream, in peace and serenity. In total, these take less than five minutes or so, and require no elaborate preparation.

### **Small Bedroom Altar**

The first part of my own routine involves nightly devotions at a small Altar which I set up on my way to bed, each night. In my former house, I used a small night table at the bottom of the stairs. Two years ago, my husband built a new house for us, and built a small wall alcove outside our bedroom door for me. I have a small Goddess statue in it, two small candles, and a small cone incense holder, and it is before this mini-Altar that I start my nighttime devotions.

I go up to bed a few minutes before my husband, and have special invocations that I do at this Altar, every night, before I go into the bedroom. I ground and center, invoke the ancestors of my blood and the ancestors of my spirit, several Goddesses, and She in Her form as the current phase of the Moon. I give thanks, and go into my bedroom.

You can set up your own mini-Altar for bedtime devotions with just a few intimate items, such as a shell, a small container for water, a candle, a beloved book of poetry, a small vase of fresh grasses or flowers, or whatever pleases you, calms your spirit, and connects you to Goddess. It can be very small and intimate, so long as YOU are soothed and refreshed before it, reconnecting to Her each night.

## **Snuggling**

After I wash my face, do a little reading, and brush my teeth, I join my husband in bed, and we snuggle, telling each other how grateful we are that the Goddess brought us together, and sharing our love for each other. While together, I also do a "gratitude list" in my head, thanking the Goddess for all the goodness in my life. Doing that list makes it very clear to me that I have MUCH to be grateful for, despite whatever else might be hanging over my head.

If you have a beloved spouse or partner, I affirm the age-old advice to try to never go to bed angry with each other. With humility, grace and a little luck, you can find a way to seek understanding or graciously grant forgiveness, when you have had an argument or a very difficult discussion. Comforting each other is one of the main benefits of being in a long term relationship.

If you have no current partner, snuggle into your wonderful bed, under the covers, wrap your arms around yourself, and give yourself a loving, appreciative hug. You are beautiful and Her joyous creation! Appreciate your own lovely, strong, functioning body, in all its glory!

## **Casting A Circle of Protection**

After we part to our own pillows, I ground and center, again, and then cast a circle of protection around my home, excluding harmful energies and entities. I used to do a reflective mirroring as well, but no longer do that, now that I am working with Reiki and want my sisters to be able to send and receive energy and healings. Reiki also gives me a sense of serenity I did not have before. I then do a series of self-

healings, up and down my body, to ease aches and pains and create a sense of physical relaxation. I send love and appreciation to all parts of my body, as well.

## **Zen Mindfulness Meditation**

Finally, if I still don't feel sleepy, I practice listening to and concentrating only upon my breathing, upon the cycle of in and out, in and out, in and out, excluding all other thoughts, gently but firmly.....which almost always works. All of these practices have helped me to arrive at a place where I now usually get a good night's sleep. Occasionally, I cannot still my racing thoughts for a half an hour or more, but that is very much the exception now, rather than the rule as it once was.

Blessed and peaceful sleep to all my Sisters.....!!

© HP Kerritwyn

HP Kerritwyn offers OWM teachings to women in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and to male-to-female transgendered seekers in the affiliated [Order of the Rainbow Moon](#). She is also a member of the OWM's Board of Directors and the Vice President of Ordinations.

## **Weeds**

Weed... such an ugly word. Defined as a nuisance plant or a plant growing in an undesired place, the weed has been maligned by gardeners since gardening began.



This year my garden has been overrun with weeds. I don't mean there are just more than last year; I mean they are EVERYWHERE, and spreading faster than I can pull them. Those with shallow roots are quick to spread just under the surface of the soil and are sometimes over a foot long when I rip them up, while the ones with deep heavy roots break off at the surface when I pull them and require the use of my trowel to dig them out of the ground, or perhaps even assistance from someone else if they've gone REALLY deep. Those with seeds pop them into the air as I pull the mother plant out of the ground, ensuring there will be more of them sprouting in the near future....

The other day, as I muttered and snarled at them, I suddenly began seeing the weeds as the 'pinpricks of life', all the daily annoyances, frustrations and problems we have to deal with in our lives. Most are fairly small and easily dealt with, while some are a bit more difficult and require more work on our part. A few are truly huge, and we usually need to call in others to assist us in removing them. Some may leave traces that will grow and spread, and eventually we will have to deal with them again. But it's all a part of life as we know it, and dealing with these things is what makes US grow stronger. Perhaps without having to fight our 'weeds', we wouldn't be able to flower.

"Goddess, help me learn to find the flowers among my weeds."

BellaDonna Oya lives in Hayward, CA, where she runs a small eclectic coven. She is a Level II Initiate of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and is currently working on Level III.

## Denderah

The Temple at Denderah, one of the best preserved in all of Egypt, is dedicated to the Egyptian Goddess, Hathor. Located in Upper Egypt, it is situated near the modern Arab town of Qina, on the West Bank of the Nile River. Qina is built on the ancient site of Ta-ynt-netert which means 'She of the Divine Pillar', or Tentyra which is Greek for Dendera.

The Temple Complex itself rests on the foundations of earlier buildings that date back to the reign of Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid of Cheops (approx. 2570 BCE). Additional buildings were introduced by subsequent Pharaohs. The Temple Complex as we know it today dates back to the Ptolemaic Dynasty of Late Period Egypt and was completed by the Roman Emperor Tiberius (42 BCE-37AD).

Denderah is famous for two fascinating pieces of architecture, the Hathorian columns and the Denderah Zodiac. The columns have a unique appearance. Each one bears a four-sided capital carved with the recognizable face of the cow-eared Goddess. Enshrined Solar cobras (emulating the Holy of Holies) appear at the tops of the columns, making the entire structure appear like a giant naos sistrum, an instrument sacred to Hathor. The faces on the columns are also unique in that they demonstrate one of the few frontal views of a deity in Egyptian art or architecture. Many of these faces were vandalized in antiquity, yet the beauty of the Goddess with the enigmatic smile remains. Archeologists have discovered traces of paint and it is most likely these columns were beautifully painted in an array of bold colours.

The Denderah Zodiac was carved onto the ceiling of a chapel dedicated to Osiris. The original zodiac is now located at the Louvres in Paris, with a plaster replica in

its place at Denderah. The round zodiac is a map of the stars (a planisphere), showing the twelve zodiac signs, the known planets, the Moon, the Star Sirius and the constellations of Orion, Draco, Ursa Minor and Ursa Major. The relief was dated to approximately 50 BCE but is likely based on much older astronomical knowledge.

The Egyptian calendar has been dated to at least 3,000 BCE and may possibly date back to 4,200 BCE. Unlike our current zodiac which begins in Aries, the Denderah Zodiac begins in the sign of Cancer. This is because the Egyptian New Year begins July 19, when Sirius is once again visible in the night sky.

The Temple Complex is made up of a number of different buildings that honour Hathor in Her many aspects, as well as a number of underground chambers and tombs. As noted above, Sacred Astronomy is important to this celestial Goddess. A Lunar Temple within the complex also contains a series of zodiacal images though not as famous as the round Zodiac.

It is clear Denderah was home to the astronomers who tracked phenomena in the Heavens. Other buildings of the Temple Complex offered funerary services to honour Hathor in Her role as "Lady of the Sycamores", the Goddess who nourishes the Dead on their journey through the afterlife. Other buildings were used as birthing chambers, dedicated to Hathor in Her role as "Mistress of the Vulva". She presided over conception, labour, childbirth and healing. Nearby, a sanatorium was situated next to the Sacred Lake. Here, visitors could bathe in the sacred waters or spend the night in order to receive a healing dream from the Goddess.

The Hathor Temple contains three stone reliefs depicting what is sometimes known as the Denderah Lights. Much controversy surrounds the meaning of these images. There are some who believe the images appear very much like our modern

incandescent light bulbs and propose the theory that the ancient Egyptians were able to generate electricity and operate these light bulbs. The view of most Egyptologists, however, is that the reliefs are a mythological depiction of a djed pillar and a lotus flower, spawning a snake within, representing aspects of Egyptian mythology. These images remain an intriguing mystery none the less.

The roof of the main Temple is the highest area of the Complex. During the Festival of the New Year, Hathor as Wadjet, the sun's eye, was reunited with Her Father, Ra. On this day, an image of the Goddess was removed from the Holy of Holies, brought to the roof and exposed to the sun's rays to receive cosmic energy. By doing so, the Goddess was able to radiate this magickal energy throughout the world. This Temple was used by the pious and still contains gaming boards, carved into stone blocks, which the faithful used to pass the time during their vigils. The masses were not allowed in this main Temple; instead, they visited the Hearing Ear Shrine where they could make supplications to Hathor.

Two weeks before the new moon in the third month of the summer season, the priests would place the statue of Hathor on Her barque (ceremonial barge). She traveled south from Denderah to visit the God Horus at Edfu, stopping the procession at various temples along the way during the two week journey up the Nile River. Hathor's procession arrived at Edfu for the Festival of the Beautiful Union. This festival honoured the divine couple as they enacted their sacred marriage.

Other important dates honouring the Goddess Hathor include August 29 and September 17. Although most well known as a Solar deity, many of Her rituals took place at night. At this time, She is in Her youth and followers celebrate with music and dance. Both the sistrum (a percussion instrument) and the menat (a beaded necklace that was used as a rattle) are both sacred to Hathor and to women's

mysteries.

Milk is a sacred offering to this bovine Goddess, it is said the Milky Way was produced by Her udders. As a Goddess of mining and smithing, galena, turquoise and copper are sacred to Her. Honour Her as the Goddess of Love with phallic offerings. Call upon Hathor when working with divination tools, especially the scrying mirror, which is sacred to Her.

Since 2007, the Temple at Denderah has been undergoing restorations to clean soot and grime from the ceilings. Images that have not been viewed in centuries are now making an appearance. Although only a small portion of the ceiling has been cleaned, the results are fascinating. Vivid colours have been well-preserved under the layers of soot, most notably, blue pigments which were very rare and expensive at the time the images were painted.

Newly restored images depict a series of astronomical scenes, figures representing the hours of the night, signs of the Egyptian zodiac and the Moon's course through the sky. This collection of images depicts the opposition of northern and southern skies, of day and night, between sun and moon. The backbreaking restoration work will continue for years to come, offering up new details that may teach us even more of the wisdom of this ancient society and the worship of the Goddess Hathor.

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*Ajna DreamsAwake is an Initiate of [The Sacred Three Goddess school](#). She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.*

## **OWM Happenings**

OWM Happenings.. ....and the headlines read!

10th Anniversary preparations underway at OWM!

Annual Gathering expectations at an all-time high!

Workshops, rituals, and sisterhood are the talk of the town!

HP candidate Heathwitch plans visit to the US for the 10th Anniversary and gathering of OWM!

Everyone will look amazing in OWM T's while sipping tea (or coffee) from their OWM Mugs!

## **OWM Sister Happenings!**

Danu GrayWolf completed Level 4 studies and is now a High Priestess of the [OWM](#) and is currently co-teaching with HP's Artemisia, Nessa and Serenity at Sisters in Celebration.

Mystic Amazon completed Level 4 studies and is now a High Priestess of the [OWM](#) and is currently teaching at [Sisters of the Rising Moon](#).

Danu GrayWolf accepted nomination for Ordination Council and joins HPs Kerritwyn and Tranquillity on the OC.

Initiate Maeve Moonbird completed level 1 studies with Sisters in Celebration and is now a lifetime member of the [OWM](#)

HP Candidate Silver WolfWinds has been accepted into level 4 studies.

*Nessa CrescentMoon is a High Priestess, an Ordained Minister, Treasurer of the [OWM](#), a founder of Sisters in Celebration.*

## **Renewal**

*A break in the clouds  
rays of sunshine streaming down  
in the crevice of stone  
a sprig of green  
reaches towards the light*

*The warm caress of gold  
water - once tears of pain  
now bathes the fronds  
and quenches the thirsty longing*

*Buds swell  
when touched by gentle hands  
the intimacy of two souls  
connecting in some deep place  
until the pressure builds*

*explodes*

*and blooms into Being.*

© Amanda A. Ashbach, June 2008

Amanda is a Level 1 student in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#).

## **Blue or Green?**

*Seems like I have a choice today,  
I can be blue or green.  
Of course there are many colors  
And many shades and tints*

*But those are what are calling to me  
Just for today.  
If I stay blue I won't get anything done  
And will withdraw into a shell*

*But if I am green,  
Then healing and nature will come*



*And swirl around me  
Make me laugh and even dance,*

*Thinking about elves and fairies  
And squirrels and their acorns  
Feeling grass between my bare toes.  
Then the wind picks up*

*Very gently, and ruffles my hair  
And if I close my eyes and pretend  
That it's the touch of a lover instead,  
No one knows why I'm smiling.*

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Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

## **Our Voice Should Not Be Silenced**

*There was a time when I would do whatever asked,  
And if it would please you, I would gladly do it.  
I was desperate for acceptance and friends,  
And if it took turning myself inside out and not  
Letting the real me show up at all, then it was a  
Fait accompli, an accomplished fact.*

*When I heard the expression "people pleaser",  
It was like hearing a "helloooo there" in my ear...  
That was me! And not a good place to be,  
Either. It has taken time and the experience of aging,  
To help me stop tromping my real self underfoot  
In order to be accepted.*

*And along with time, learning that my real friends  
Like me, and they (along with myself) are the only ones  
That I want to please, anyway. We are all unique,  
And have our own songs to sing. We were born to be  
A beautiful note or stanza in the overall music  
Of the Universe.*

*It is wonderful to start singing that note, that prelude  
To a stanza of joy, our gift of ourselves to the  
Universe; we must not let ourselves (or anyone else)  
Silence our voice...*

*For without us, the human chorus  
Will not sound the same. And it might be our voice  
That will sing at just the right time, to lift up  
The Human Spirit and ring toward the Heavens;  
Joining with the Angelic Chorus in a paen of praise.*

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Beth Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

*Mystic Amazon is a High Priestess of the OWM and is currently teaching at [Sisters of the Rising Moon](#). Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and*

reading.

## Spring and Summer Goddesses



© Maeve Moonbird

*Maeve Moonbird is a visual artist and loves to paint, draw, and also be crafty with sewing and fabric. Her art explores women's connection to the Goddess, spirituality, nature, cycles, and ritual. She is studying to become a spiritual counselor and interfaith minister and is deeply called to the path of becoming a priestess.*

## **Farls**

### **Ingredients:**

3 cups real mashed potatoes

2 cups dry oats

2 tablespoons butter

1/2 teaspoon cornstarch

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon salt

Pinch of pepper

Pinch rosemary

Soak oats in warm water for 15 minutes until soft and swollen. Mix them with all other ingredients in a large bowl. Knead until mixture is like thick dough. Make patties, fry in hot oil until brown. Serve immediately.

Pre-packaged oatmeal cookies will do just as good. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

© Lady Zephyr

*Lady Zephyr is a Level II Initiate with Sisters in Celebration.*

## **Young Love Potpourri**

### Ingredients:

- 5 parts rose petals (preferably ones that were given to you by a loved one)
- 1 part baby's breath
- 2 drops rose oil
- 2 parts geranium petals
- 2 parts lavender blossoms
- 3 sticks cinnamon (broken in half)

Mix each ingredient thoroughly, one at a time. Place in a decorative jar or bowl near your hearth (heart of the home) or the centre of your home. Smell frequently for increased love and contentment, or anytime you want a breath from a rose garden.

© Moonwater Ashwood

*Moonwater Ashwood is an Initiate studying with the Sisters In Celebration. She is a writer and reiki master/teacher in Central Ontario, Canada, and has been a solitary Eclectic Wiccan practitioner for over ten years.*