



books★ gardening★ recipes★ ritual elements★ articles

Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada

Vol. 8 | #5

Beltaine  S. Solstice

May 1 — June 21, 2025

HAMILTON ★ TORONTO ★ WINDSOR



The Wiccan Church of Canada

The Wiccan Church of Canada has offered open Wiccan temples facilitating classes, rituals, and training to the public since 1979.

Drawing on resources available in our own communities and temples, we are a diverse, accepting, caring group of people united by our love of the Gods and our own journeys. W.C.C. classes and rituals are open to one and all, regardless of one's level of experience in the Craft. We offer an open, and accepting place to worship as an experienced practitioner or someone who's vaguely curious, all are welcome. We encourage you to check out the F.A.Q section on our website or contact us if you have questions.

We hope our publication will reflect the diversity of our membership in offering a local pagan magazine written by the community for the community. Our articles are the voices of our community, those with knowledge and resources to share. Herbs and seasonal recipes we've tried and keep bringing back to our feast tables. We'll keep you abreast of pagan events, vendors and local artisans, as well as WCC classes & rituals.

The WCC is pleased to offer free online weekly classes Tuesday evenings 7:00-9:00 pm

As well as a social Meet & Greet every Wednesday night via the ZOOM conferencing app.

If you wish to participate, please email LPH.WCC@gmail.com with your email address.

Wheel of the Year

with Xylia

May is the fifth month of the Gregorian calendar and it was named after Maia, the Roman Earth Goddess, a nurturer, a mother, a nurse, and grandmother of Magic. She is also a midwife (Maia means midwife in Greek), bringing new life into the world. One of the oldest celebrations in Greece was the flower festival Anthesteria. On the first of May, May Day or Protomagia in Greek, you will find families having picnics in the countryside, where they collect flowers for health and happiness.

Most Wiccans know May Day as Beltane. Beltane is a time of promise, a time for us to celebrate and honour the God and Goddess who tie the bonds of love and bring fertility to the land. A time when plans are set into action, when the Gods release greenery and the warming brightness of the sun, blanketing the land with fresh, new life.

We have the opportunity to become part of this cycle of rebirth, to revel in this joyous time of new life.

Remove Winter from the land– also known as “beating the bounds”. Take a few sticks, or branches, and walk around the edge of your property tapping the ground with a chant of “Winter out, Summer in”. This is an old custom that was said to remove “evil”, or the dregs, of winter from the Earth, encouraging it to wake.

Balefire- You may not be able to have a balefire, but you can leap a small candle. This is said to bless and protect all those who jump the flames, for cleansing, health and fertility.

Feast- One of the most lovely solitary observances of Beltane is to make a special meal with the Gods in mind and share it with them. Decorate the table with spring colours (pale greens, yellows and pinks) and give the best portions of the meal to them. Eat each morsel on your plate with an awareness of the nature of Their gifts to us.

Meditation- One can also approach this sabbat in the form of meditation and experience visions of an ancient Beltane rite, or see the greening of the earth unfolding before your mind's eye. Close your eyes and visualize the lighting of the Balefire as the sun rises or the image of Morris Dancers with their bells waking up the land and their handkerchiefs pulling down the nourishing rains from the sky. Visualize the seed cracking through its outer shell and breaking through the soil to be kissed by the warming sun.

Winds of Love. Spread your joy and happiness upon the winds. Write words of inspiration and happiness upon the tips of multicoloured ribbons and tie them to a tree. Let the spring winds carry your inspirations out to the world, just as the seeds of new life are carried to fertile soil.

May Wreaths, symbolizing fertility and fruitfulness, prosperity and happiness can be made and hung on doors or above your altar or shrine. For a lovely devotion to the Gods for their renewed gifts of life, you might leave the wreath in the forest or a park or garden. As the Earth greens after a winter of dormancy, encountering a May Wreath will put a smile on your face. Using green as your base add seasonal flowers in spring's hues – the yellow of daffodils, forsythia and dandelions; the purples of the lilac; the blue of a spring sky or a robin's egg.

Beltane Water Blessings. Wake before dawn on May morning and go outside to collect from the grass, the first morning dew of May. Wash your face with it for a special Beltane Blessing, bringing youthfulness and beauty.

Remember May Day is a joyous celebration – bring your sense of fun and energy to whatever you do!

Happy Beltane Blessings to you all !!!!



Kindle the Fire

Beltane celebrates with a Fire that burns away the old, clearing the way for the new. Like many Fire celebrations, Beltane is transformational in the way it embraces the integrity of Fire.



Fire, in a very real sense carries within it the essence of all forms of magic as magic is a process of change. It is the realm of dedication, energy, and divinity; it is considered the most physical and spiritual of the elements as it leads to a new incarnation of reality through its transformational quality.

The Fire element has invoked a religious and spiritual awe since the dawn of time. It has represented the very essence of the Divine, being a visible and unarguable vehicle of the Creation/Destruction cycle that transforms our existence. Its shifting form is the nurturing hearth, the creative forge, the joyful light of celebration, and the agent of change. The allure of the transformational aspects of fire has fascinated mankind across time and cultures; it is this very aspect which has lead to the three most common Fire rituals known.

Divination

Through watching and attuning to fire, the mind seems to relax its rigid hold on consciousness, ones eyes grow heavy as the mind grows lighter and we open our psyche like a light sensitive flower. Shapes, images, and other symbolisms present themselves to the waking mind. To open up to the power of Fire within you, you can light a candle and see what the living flame has to show you.

Purification

Purification through fire has existed as a ritual since the nature of fire was discovered. It is found in the crucible of human experience, the distillation of a pure essence, the sterilization of negatives, or the transformational act of divine consumption of ones being. It is through these understandings of these elemental attributes that Fire is an agent of change which has often been used as an avenue which leads to further spiritual development.

Dedication

Dedication through Fire is often viewed as sacrificial; one offers themselves up to Divinity through its essence, in the hope of spiritual unity. Using Fire as a vehicle of intention offers an object or individual the means of unconditional and essential transformation, therefore altering it into a new state of existence or purpose.

*I light the fires of Beltane,
sweet smoke drifting high.
The bright flames purify and protect,
illuminating the Wheels path
May the light and heat of this fire
bestow its light and life upon me.
Blessed be.*



Herb Lore with Glenys

Wild Garlic

Beltaine celebrations are about life, vitality, and joy. As we celebrate the season we look to the fields to find the early growing plants for the feast table. One of the popular plants for foraging at this time of year is Wild Garlic (*Allium canadense*). Common names are Canadian garlic, wild garlic, meadow garlic, wild onion, ail du Canada, and oignons des prairies. The European version is *Allium ursinum*. Other common names for it include ramsons, cowleekes, cowleek or cow's leek as well as wood garlic, bear leek, bear's garlic, or Eurasian wild garlic.

Alliums are a member of the amaryllis family, Amaryllidaceae. Alliums include garlic, onions, shallots, leeks, and chives. The allium plants are all bulbed plants with narrow leaves and a single stalk with the multiple flowering head that produces seeds if left to dry out.

Canadian wild garlic has an edible bulb which is covered with a thick skin made of brown fibers. It has narrow thin leaves like grass which sit at the base of a single stalk of flowers. The flowers are star-shaped and can be white or pink and are clustered in a sphere-shaped head. These flowers will eventually be replaced by little bulbs which can be dried and planted. The flavour can be more reminiscent of onion rather than garlic. When the leaves are crushed you will have a distinct odour of onions or garlic dependent on your sense of smell. Since there are similar toxic plants the odour test ensures you are harvesting the correct plant. However, if you are not sure please err on the side of caution and do not harvest them.

Indigenous tribes would forage the wild garlic in the early spring to eat and use for medicinal purposes. It can be eaten raw or cooked in any recipe calling for onions or garlic. All parts of the plant are edible. Harvesting the full plants in the spring the plants are used like spring onions. If you want the bulbs leave some to be harvested in the fall. If you pull the young stems in the spring, leaving the bulbs in the ground, you can dry the stems out by leaving them on racks, drying them on a tray in the oven or using a dehydrator. Once dried you can grind them to a powder to use as a seasoning like onion or garlic powder.

Medicinally, wild garlic can be used as an anti-inflammatory as well as an antimicrobial. It helps increase immunity. They contain components that have been shown to lower blood pressure, cholesterol and are anti-diabetic. They can protect the heart and nervous system. Indigenous tribes would rub the plant on the body to protect against insect, spider, and scorpion bites. It will also help ease the itch from bites and hives.

Magically wild garlic is masculine and associated with the element of fire and the planet Mars. It is used for protection against negative forces (not just vampires). If you plant wild garlic near your doors and under windows. If planting is not an option, then hang the wild garlic near the entrances or place cloves on the sills. There is a belief that placing wild garlic near a sick person would absorb whatever ails them. Like lemon juice you can use the juice from the wild garlic for invisible ink to write incantations. The skin can be used to attract prosperity by burning it. If you right your intention on the skin and then burn it, it can enhance any spell.

Wild garlic makes a terrific addition to Beltaine feast by incorporating it into your greens. You can also add it to potato dishes or baking it into your favourite savoury bread. Use the plants to decorate your altar. You can use the powdered form or leaves very sparingly in your incense.



STONES WITH SORCHA

Rose Quartz

The Lore of Rose Quartz. Adonis, lover of Aphrodite, was attacked by Ares, god of war, in the form of a boar. Aphrodite rushed to save him and caught herself on a briar bush. Their mingled blood stained the white quartz pink. Zeus then took pity on them and restored Adonis to Aphrodite for six months of the year. Because of this myth, Rose Quartz has become a symbol of reconciliation in love. Rose Quartz is associated in ritual with Isis, who was connected with regeneration and renewal. . Rose quartz amulets and talismans were also placed in tombs to assist and guide the soul into the afterlife, bringing calm and emotional healing to the departed and carrying the energy of love. In the Middle Ages, medical practitioners used Rose Quartz in their healing potions, known as '*The Love Stone*', it was said to balance the emotions, healing anger and disappointment and providing an overall sense of well-being.

Element:Water & Earth

Energy:Receptive

Planet:Venus & The Moon

Chakra:Heart

Zodiac:Taurus & Libra

Tarot:The Empress & The Lovers



Magical Properties:

Acceptance, Activate/Awaken, Balance, Beginnings, Calm, Charity, Comfort, Compassion, Confidence, Dignity, Emotions, Energy, Faith, Fertility, Fidelity, Freedom, Friendship, Gentleness, Happiness, Harmony, Healing, Heartbreak, Imagination, Improvement, Love, Nurture, Optimism, Peace, Pregnancy/Childbirth, Protection, Reconciliation, Relationships, Self-Work, Self-Worth, Sorrow, Stress, Success, Unity

Magical Uses:

To attract love, wear a heart-shaped piece of rose quartz around your neck close to your heart chakra. Use it in magical workings to promote peace, harmony, happiness, and fidelity in relations. A chunk of rose quartz beneath a baby's bed will soothe restlessness and aide in drifting them off to sleep. Young girls at the early stages of blossoming womanhood can carry or wear a piece of rose quartz to increase healthy self-love and self-esteem. It is an excellent stone for rescue animals or strays who may be traumatized or trying to adjust to their new surroundings, and by placing the stone in their bed it will aide in calming them and opening up to receiving love. The best time to work with Rose Quartz is during the waxing moon, on a Friday during the early morning hours as the day begins as this time symbolizes new opportunities and the renewal of energy, especially during the Spring season.This is an ideal time for setting intentions related to love, compassion, and emotional healing.

Healing Uses:

Rose quartz is an essential stone for healers. It helps ease pain or tension, quickening the mending process of cuts or bruises, and greatly aids in emotional wounds, such as grief, stress, fear or anger. It keeps away nightmares and promotes peaceful rest and can even enhance peaceful or psychic dreams. Rose quartz can help to bring suppressed emotions to the surface, allowing them to flow from you, giving you a sense of freedom and peace.

Rose quartz is used at Beltane because of its association with love, and emotional well-being. It aligns with the theme of fertility, new beginnings, and the return of the Sun's power. It is believed to open the heart chakra, promoting self-love and positive relationships, which are important aspects of the celebrations at this time.Don your rose quartz before you dance around the Maypole or jump the ancestral Beltane bonfires, and take this moment to indulge in all of your senses, with focus on enjoying the beauty and richness of the season through food, clothing, music, and all forms of pleasure. Happy gallivanting!

Bellas' Book Nook



The Spring has sprung. In the UK, the trees are completely green, the weather is delightful, and we are here, sitting at an over night low of +4C. Hmmm.... On the bright side, it is getting warmer. When I think of Beltane, I think of just that, warmer weather, being outdoors and not worrying about mosquitoes, and enjoying nights that are still cool enough for a nice bonfire.

The book I wanted to review, has decided to go on a wander. It decided it didn't want to be reviewed at this time. IT WAS sitting next to my laptop and "POOF!" it vanished... cue music from the Twilight Zone... Well, lo and behold, on my favourite reading spot, I find **Rachel Patterson's Kitchen Witchcraft: The Elements of Fire**. Published by Moon Books (John Hunt

Publishing, 2022) at 139 pages, including a suggested reading list. ISBN: 978-1-78904-721-9.

Fire within me, Flames around me, Passion beyond me, Energy fills me.

That's how the book begins, with a clear declaration, that is Fire.

Part one of this book is all about the basics. What is the Fire Element, the correspondences; colours, animals, the places, the tools, ... a whole array of items in an assortment of mini chapters. It does include a caveat that if you are going to be doing fire scrying, that you check to make sure you have permission (if you are in the wilds) and that you have taken all precautions, water to douse fire if it gets out of control, etc.

Fire is about de-cluttering, about cooking, about being creative, about driving, dancing and enjoying the sun. The author describes various forms of magic using fire from lighting candles to lighting incense, and hearth magic. She also includes what I consider mini meditations and various exercises to help absorb the information.

Part Two – Working with Fire, is the guts of the book, the meat and potatoes of sort. This is where you find a wide array of ways to work with fire, from BBQ's and bonfires to sunrise workings and blacksmithing. Each section has its own exercise to help experience fire, without burning yourself.

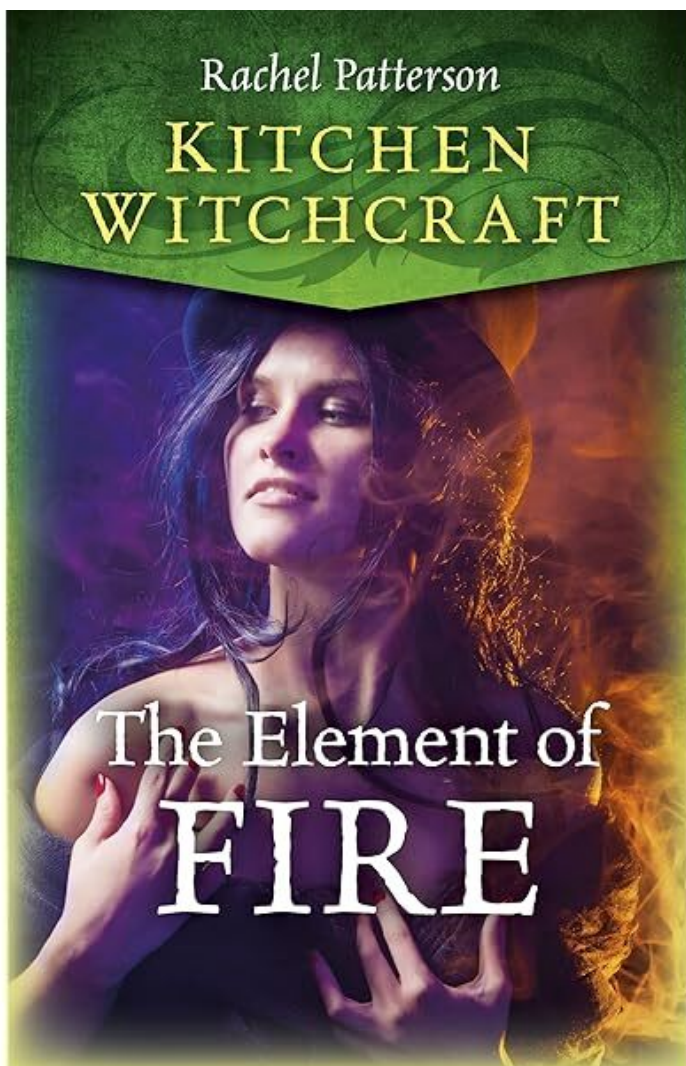
The section on practical fire elements includes herbs and plants, planetary associations, incense recipes, various recipes such as saffron cupcakes, crystals, Gods and Goddess, a Fire ritual, fire spells and an explanation of various forms of fire divination.

I happen to like all of the books from Rachel Patterson, so I'm a bit biased, but it is a wonderful book to have in your collection. She has also written, in the same style, Elements of Earth and Elements of Water. Each book has its own flavour and filled with useful information, meditations and exercises.

So, until next time, enjoy the increasing light, and many blessings for Beltane.

Happy Reading!

Bella



The Sabbath Table

Maibowle Cream Cake

Magically, woodruff can be used for multiple purposes. You can attract prosperity with this plant. Its best-known uses, however, are related to love and relationships.

Directions

Place dried/wilted woodruff, whipping cream into a pot and set on lowest heat. Bring just to a simmer, then allow to cool completely. Strain out the leaves, then chill in the fridge.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease and flour a bundt pan; set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Sift flour mixture and set aside.

In a bowl, whip the infused cream on low, gradually increasing speed to medium-high as the cream thickens, until stiff peaks form.

In another bowl, whisk together wine, eggs and vanilla. Gradually add egg mixture; beat until thickened (like mayonnaise) and well combined. Gradually add sugar.

Gently fold half the flour mixture into the cream mixture until flour is dissolved and well combined. Repeat the process with the remaining flour mixture. Transfer batter to the prepared cake pan.

Bake until a cake tester inserted into the cake comes out clean and springs back when lightly pressed with your finger, 25 to 35 minutes.

Combine 1/2 cup white sugar, butter, 1/4 cup white wine together in a saucepan immediately after removing the cake from the oven. Cook sugar mixture, stirring constantly, over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and butter is melted 3 to 5 minutes. Spoon 1/2 the glaze over the cake while the cake is still warm. Let cool.

Invert the cooled cake onto a cake plate and spoon remaining glaze over top of the cake. Allow the cake to absorb glaze, about 15 minutes. Using a metal spatula, loosen the top edges of the cake and invert onto the prepared wire rack. Let glaze set. Before serving, sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Ingredients

- 3-4 tablespoons dried/wilted sweet woodruff
- 2 1/4 cups cake flour, sifted
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 cup may wine
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons superfine sugar
- Powdered sugar, for dusting cake

Glaze

- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup white wine



Maibowle

Maibowle or May Wine is best described as an argumented wine punch similar to sangria. Instead of citrus, the wine is flavored with sweet woodruff. By steeping leaves and wine, the wine is imparted with a sweet herbal flavor that some people like into sweet grass or lemongrass, others think it tastes like almonds. Traditionally, Maibowle is served on the May holiday but anytime during the Spring you'll find it on menus or at gatherings.

Note there is a milky substance in the stems of Sweet Woodruff that is quite bitter. You don't want this in your wine! Either bundle or her so the stems up out of the wine or strip the leaves from the stems and throw the stems away.

Woodruff is easy to grow in a shady spot in a garden or in a container. It is a good ground cover and a pretty plant.

On the day before the May wine is to be served, place the woodruff leaves and flowers in a container large enough to hold all the wine, then add the white wine. Cover and chill in the refrigerator.



Ingredients:

- 1.5 liters of an inexpensive, young, mildly sweet or fruity white wine
- 20 sprigs of woodruff leaves and blossoms, washed and stems removed
- 2 tbsp local honey
- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- 1 orange, thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 1.5 liters of extra dry Champagne

Instructions:

Choose a light white wine, the younger the better.

Pour into a container large enough to hold all the wine and flowers.

Add sweet woodruff (about 20 sprigs).

Add a couple of tablespoons of honey.

Cover it. Let it rest in the refrigerator overnight so the wine is infused with the herb's essence.

Just before serving, place a block of ice and the fruits in a punch bowl. Strain the white wine as you pour it over the ice and fruits.

Add the Champagne.

Decorate with woodruff leaves and white flowers that have been rinsed off. Y

ou can also make the punch without the fruit, and just pour it from a nice pitcher.

May Punch without alcohol:

- 1 l of lemonade
- 1 l of sparkling water
- 1 l of spring water
- 200 ml of sweet woodruff syrup
- 445 g of canned pineapple chunks
- 4–6 drops of natural green food coloring (*optional*)

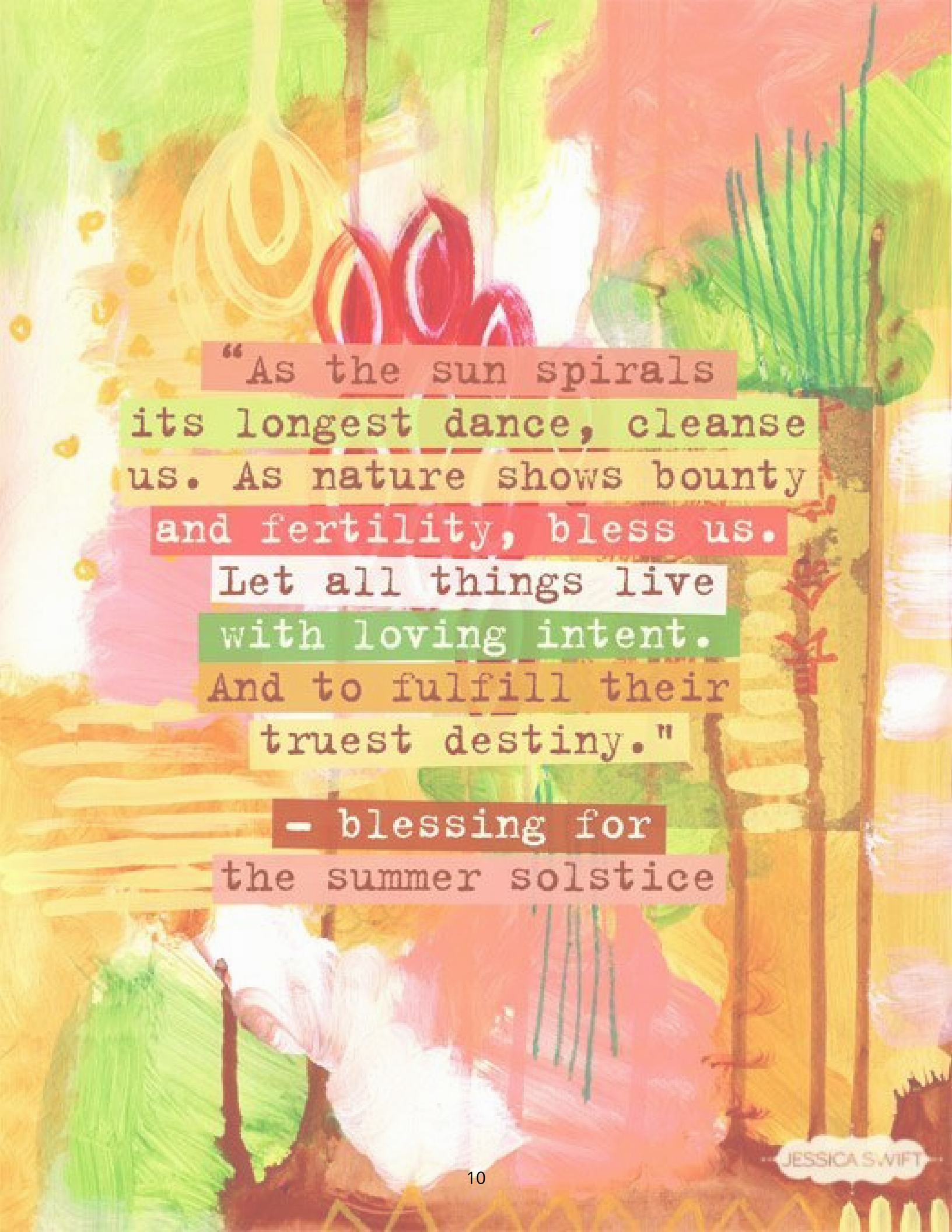
If you are using canned pineapples, place them in a sieve to drain.

Using a whisk, mix the woodruff syrup with the spring water.

Add in the sparkling water and the lemonade (or grapefruit beverage) and stir.

Add the food coloring until the punch has reached your desired shade of green.

Fill a nice glass pitcher with the punch and add in the pineapple chunks. Serve chilled.



"As the sun spirals
its longest dance, cleanse
us. As nature shows bounty
and fertility, bless us.

Let all things live
with loving intent.
And to fulfill their
truest destiny."

- blessing for
the summer solstice



LOCAL RESOURCES

Looking for ritual or metaphysical supplies for your Craft? Check out our local favourites and support the stores in our communities.

Obskurah Bazaar

www.obskurahbazaar.com

Candles, Tarot & Oracle decks, magical curios, ritual supplies, spiritual self-care items, herbs, books, incense and occult inspired accessories are available online or at our retail shop in Hamilton, Ontario. Our goal is to provide ethically sourced, sustainably made, fair trade and ecofriendly products that support fair wages and working conditions for the makers and honor their traditions.

The Occult Shop

www.theoccultshop.ca

Your one stop shop for quality occult, Pagan, Santeria and Wiccan spiritual supplies & gifts.

Specializing in custom incense sticks and cones, herbal blends, bath salts and over 2,000 magical oil blends. All made in house. We also carry a variety of books, candles, herbs & roots, jewellery and much more.

SABBAT SCAVENGER HUNT

flower
wreath

crocus

a may
pole

3 orange
candles

a labyrinth

3 red
tulips

a blue jay

ducklings

a cherry
blossom

a fire

Music for
flute
inspired by
Canada's
wild spaces

New music for flute in a
variety of small ensembles
that include harp,
percussion, bassoon,
Indigenous storyteller,
and piano

Download from
fluteinthewild.com or
support the artist with
merch from the store!

FLUTE IN THE WILD
Jaye Marsh, flute



Supporting pagan arts, music and knowledge

WILDMOOD

Cloud.collectorz.com/hamiltontemple/books

HAMILTON TEMPLE LEGACY LIBRARY

*Learning through
lending and legacies.*

Membership requests can be sent to
WCCHamiltonTemple@gmail.com
subject line: HTLL

WildFlute on Spotify
brings you music inspired
by wild spaces, and
places.

Jaye Marsh offers
Classical, Rock and
everything in between
compiled for your pagan
moods.



Listen on

Spotify



If You Know, You Know

Stories from the early days of the WCC.

by Ross Carter

Part 1 – A Wizard, A Unicorn, and a Chalice of Wine

In late April of 1981, Richard James announced that as of May 3, which was the date of our Beltane ritual, we would be moving to one of Toronto's many public parks for our weekly Sunday rituals. He had discovered a quaint, grove on the edge of a cliff that was isolated enough that we would not likely be disturbed, and for several years of Sundays, we weren't. We met in that park every year from Beltane to Harvestide for over thirty years. Each year, the park police would come to check on us to make sure that we were okay, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horseback. We became a fixture in the park during the summer months and although we had to find a new spot to meet after part of the grove took a tumble over the edge of the cliff after a winter storm, we met in that park every summer from 1981 until 2013.

During those years in the park, we were visited by a number of high-profile Wiccans such as Margo Adler, Ray Buckland, Tim Zell, and Janet and Stewart Ferrar,

Tim Zell, also known over the years as Otter Zell and now Oberon Zell was a rather majestic-looking man. He had come to Toronto to attend an event and had taken some time to visit with Richard and Tamarra. He arrived at the park in full ceremonial dress, complete with a two-meter staff that was illuminated at the tip by a teardrop-shaped container filled with bioluminescent "firefly light". A rather impressive sight (that most people might describe as a Wizard), he was accompanied by Lancelot, a pet goat with only one horn coming out of the middle of his head. Lancelot was known then as the world's only living Unicorn and was likely a subject of interest to any circus of the day as a potential attraction. (which, I understand, he did eventually become.) Over time, starting from infancy, Zell somehow managed to meld the two horns into one.

Although Lancelot was a goat, he behaved much like an excited little puppy and had a habit of checking out everyone he met by sniffing at their crotch. This, of course, could be a little awkward for the sniff-ee as Lancelot didn't seem to have any concept of what might be happening at the tip of his singular horn. However, everyone seemed to have a sense of humour and no one got hurt.



Lancelot not only liked people, but he was also quite fond of wine.

The altar had been set up on the ground and Lancelot made a point of pushing past Richard and Tamarra to get to it, basically draining the chalice. We now had a rather intoxicated goat with a single pointy horn moving about the grove bidding hello to those who had gathered for the night.

It was a rather humorous evening but everyone seemed to take it in stride.

I caught up with Zell in 2017 when he attended The Parliament of World Religions in Toronto. He seemed to remember that night in 1982 rather fondly.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Looking to find out whats going on in your local temple? Perhaps you have questions regarding classes and rituals. Maybe you're a new seeker, or a solitaire looking for company or to share favourite seasonal fare; all are welcome. Our online communities are rich with diverse experience, skills and pagan knowledge. WCC Facebook groups strive to be safe spaces to discuss the Wiccan Craft and explore ideas of paganism in general without politics or proselytizing. Come see what we get up to between the sabbats!



Wiccan Church
of Canada



Hamilton



Toronto



Windsor

Fire blend and fire light,
I celebrate Beltane this warm spring night.
This is the time of most fertile earth,
the greening of the land, and new rebirth.
Fire and passion and labor's toil,
life grows anew out of the soil.
By Beltane's flames, bring fertility to me,
As I will, so it shall be.

Unknown