Blessings for this Equinox Season and Welcome Spring!

We welcome the warmth of spring and the increasing light. The days and nights are now equal. We should use this energy to bring balance into our lives. As we adjust to the new time change, look within yourself to see what you can adjust to bring about change.

At this time of year there are many goddesses to be honored. We have selected several for this issue. In particular for Ostara I selected Anna Perenna. She is an ancient mother goddess of Rome. The origin and original legend of this Roman goddess is a subject of conjecture, for she seems to be so ancient that even in early historical times her beginnings were unclear.

In one story she is the sister of Dido. After Dido dies, she went to Rome and was met by Dido’s unfaithful lover and his wife. When she found out that his wife was jealous of her, Anna Perenna fled and then turned herself into a river. A second story states she was an Etruscan goddess of fertility and reproduction. She was honored at a festival held on March 15th. I wonder if the word perennial originated from her name.

Blessings to you on this special day,

Dawn

**Ritual for Ostara:**

**Preparation:**
- Pastel altar cloth
- Live plant
- Cup of water
- White candle
- Green candle
Light both candles and say:

Anna Perenna, Great Mother, you are the goddess of reproduction. Please join me today. This is the start of spring. It is a time of new life. We see the results of your work. Over the winter months when it was dark, new life was forming. I bless this plant with water in your honor. Thank you for your gifts

Blessings to you Great Mother!

After the ritual, think about new life in your life. Is there a new baby in the family? Or maybe a new pet? Do you have any bulbs or plants that are blooming? Give thanks to the goddess and bless this new life.

Contents
Blessings for this Equinox Season and Welcome Spring! ................................................................. 1
Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes .......................................................................................... 3
Goddess Flora and Prayer for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas........................................... 5
Goddess Saule and Prayer for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas .......................................... 6
Goddess Wurusemu and Simple Ritual for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas ..................... 7
Intentional Insights – Q&A From Within By S. Kelley Harrell.......................................................... 9
Magic-Making by Angie Skelhorn ..................................................................................................... 13
Mama Donna’s Spirit Shop ................................................................................................................ 17
Pagan Every Day April 28th – Floralia by Barbara Ardinger, PhD. .................................................... 17
Pagan Every Day April 29th – Labyrinths by Barbara Ardinger, PhD. ............................................. 18
Spring Equinox by Sondra Slade ....................................................................................................... 19
The Labyrinth Healing Meditation by MarVeena Meek .................................................................... 22
The Orphic Mysteries by Angie Skelhorn ......................................................................................... 24
Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes

Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more.

*Ask Your Mama™

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Spirituality and Didn’t Know Who to Ask™

by

©Mama Donna Henes, Urban Shaman

A Question of Egg Balancing

Dear Mama Donna,

First let me say that I have great respect and gratitude for the work that you do. As a long time organizer in the neo-pagan community I have followed your activities with pleasure in the media through the years. But there’s one thing that really irks me: this spring equinox egg balancing hoax.

The fact is that it is no easier or harder to balance an egg on its end on any day of the year, and your promotion of such a vacuous myth is impossible for me to understand. This pseudo-science ‘eggsperiment’ is now regularly disproven by grade school students to show them the difference between delusion and knowledge. Why is a smart, strong, adult woman doing this?

Please don’t take this as an attack, but seeing you promote such a blatantly untrue and irrational belief as the egg hoax is baffling to me. It robs you and those of us with similar spiritual leanings of credibility.

Practicing Pagan in New York

Dear Practicing,

Well, we could argue about whether or not you can stand an egg up at any time of the day, week, month, year, but this is beside the point of my egg events. What is truly important to me is that thousands of people make it their business year after year to
attend to the shift of a season, to actively participate in a planetary rite of passage and to share this cosmic experience in sincere communion.

Standing an egg at other times may work mechanistically, but stood at the first moment of spring, the egg becomes the clear, rightful, recognizable symbol of a new season, the birth of new life. “Eggs On End: Standing On Ceremony” is every bit a traditional vernal fertility rite. A popular, contemporary celebration of the return of green and growth and light after the dark winter.

The event itself is astonishingly simple. An orange laundry basket that contains 360 eggs is passed among the crowd. We all hold them up in the air together, pledging to walk on the earth as if we were walking on eggs. Promising anew, in honor of the season, to protect our fragile yet resilient planet home. We count down the minutes to the equinox. And when the time is right, we stand our eggs in unison in salute to spring. No matter how many people attend, the real event is always each single person feeling for themselves what gravity and balance and equilibrium might mean.

Standing an egg on its end, feeling it as the yolk shifts inside to find its perfect point of balance, is like holding the entire universe in the palm of your hand. The excitement is profound and never, it seems, forgotten. I receive notes, clippings, testimonials, feedback and photos from folks from all over, who have attempted to stand up eggs either as a participant at one of my events, or alone, with friends, family, or with the entire television viewing audience. They send pictures of eggs standing on book shelves, kitchen tables, school rooms, driveways, even on a boat in the Caribbean. Eggs with kids, with astronomers, with physicists, with news anchors, with pet cats. This widespread celebration of the equinox, of the earth, of the universe and each other is what really counts.

By noting the especially energetic times of the equinoxes, solstices and other Celestially Auspicious Occasions, we associate ourselves as participants in the planetary cycles of our solar system — the seasons of the year and the seasons of our lives. It is immaterial whether or not the egg can stand at any other time. The important thing is to recognize the symbol, the season, the sky, and the kindred souls who surround us.

Yours in the spirit of balance,

xxMama Donna
*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. *Send your questions about seasons, cycles, celebrations, ceremonies and spirit to Mama Donna at: CityShaman@aol.com

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Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for The Huffington Post and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

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http://blog.beliefnet.com/thequeenofmyself/

Goddess Flora and Prayer for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas

She is known as the goddess of flowers. She also represents youth and its pleasure. Her sacred month is April and she was honored annually at the festival called Floralia. This
festival began in 238 BCE as a festival of unrestrained pleasure. The festival began on April 28th and lasted for six days. This is the anniversary of the founding of her temple on May 3rd. The female body was especially honored at the Floralia. This acknowledged Flora as the queen of all plants. The origin of the maypole and the collecting of May baskets of flowers came from her festival. Since she was the goddess of flowering in nature, this included human nature. The blooming of flowers leads to fruit, as intercourse leads to conception. A way to honor Flora was to pass medallions around, scatter beans and seeds, and make love to people going by. St. Augustine and other fathers of the Christian church abominated Flora and her festival. They said it was an orgy of nude dancing and promiscuous behavior.

She is also known as “Lady of Pleasure” and was prominent in Roman religion. Some said her name was the secret soul name of Rome itself and without her the city would die. In an ancient myth Flora was said to provide Juno with a special flower that allowed her to become pregnant without male assistance. Juno then gave birth to Mars. In one story Flora was the bride of the west wind and her gentle breath called forth the flowers to bloom. Because of her association with the hawthorn, her followers would ride out on May morning to pick flowering hawthorn boughs. It was said that for men the hawthorn had a strong scent of female sexuality. This led the Turks to use a flowering branch as an erotic symbol.

**Prayer:**

*Lady Flora, I honor you with flowers tonight. As I look around I find I am surrounded by your work. Flowers are blooming in your name. May I be blessed with your passion.*

*Blessed Be.*

**Goddess Saule and Prayer for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas**

Saule is one of my favorite goddesses. She is the ideal mother and is the equivalent of today’s working mother. She works all day long riding in her chariot pulling the sun. When she returns to her family, she is a loving mother. She becomes enraged when she
found her husband had raped her daughter. She took a sword and cut his face. These are the marks we see on the face of the moon.

Saule is a generous sun goddess that was honored in Lithuania. In addition to helping mothers with childbirth, she was also a goddess of weaving, spinning, and other household affairs.

She was known as the shining sun, the sky weaver, and the amber goddess Saule. She ruled all parts of life, from birth into her light to death when she welcomed souls into her apple tree in the west. She was married to the moon man Menesis. Their first child was the earth, after that, countless children became the stars of heaven. Saule was a hardworking mother, leaving the house at dawn each day and driving her chariot across the sky until dusk.

The light of Saule’s life was her daughter, Saules Meita (the sun’s daughter), the beloved lady of the morning star. Each evening after she had bathed her weary horses in the Nemunas River, Saule looked for her child. One evening she couldn’t find her. Saule’s beautiful long haired daughter had been raped by Menesis. Furious, Saule took her sword and slashed the moon’s face and left marks that we see today. She then banished him forever from her presence and they were no longer seen together in the sky.

Marija Gimbutas believed that Saule was an Old European goddess of the woman-honoring culture that preceded the Indo-European invasions. Saule was too important to her people to give way to a male/solar divinity.

**Prayer:**

*Saule, you are a strong mother goddess. You protect your children and punish those that show violence. I honor the mother that you are. May I be as strong as I need to be.*

Blessed Be.

**Goddess Wurusemu and Simple Ritual for Ostara by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas**

Wurusemu – This Hittite goddess was better known as the sun goddess of Arinna after a city that may have been the location of a solar shrine. She was called Estan (later a god’s name), or Wurusemu, an untranslated name; she is identified in one text as identical
with the Hurrian goddess Hepat. Her shrines were carved on rock outcroppings; upright stones were engraved with sun signs in her honor. At Yazililkaya, near Boghazkoy, an impressive shrine shows a parade of divinities headed by Wurusemu astride a lioness and crowned with solar rays. Two identical smaller female figures follow her, perhaps her daughter Mezulla and granddaughter Zuntehis. Metal statues show the goddess in a gracious open posture, a winged sun as her headdress.

As fate goddess, she allotted each person what he or she deserved. The gods received their power from her, in return for which they opened and closed the door of heaven as she passed. Her servants were the fortunetellers Istustaya and Papaya, who divined the length of a king’s reign or a worker’s hard life by their magic mirror and spindles.

As a sun goddess, she was queen of the dead, to whom funeral services were offered. Conducted by old women, the funeral started with sacrifices of ox and goats; fiery offerings went on overnight. Then, at dawn, women quenched the fires and drank to the soul of the dead. A human figure made of fruits was placed on the pyre and filled with food and drink. The priestess balanced gold and silver with mud, calling out to Wurusemu to offer salvation to the deceased.

**Ritual for Ostara**

Preparation:
- Light blue altar cloth
- Cauldron with sand
- Incense
- White candle
- Light blue candle

*Light the candles and incense then say:*

Great Mother, Wurusemu, thank you for joining me this morning. I honor you as a mother of fate. You know what my future holds and I ask for your blessing as I continue along my path. As the sun rises on this day of balance, the day and night are equal. I also ask for your blessings on my loved one that has passed on this year. As a queen of death, may you comfort them along their journey to the Underworld.

Blessings to you Great Mother.
After the ritual, make a list of what you want to happen in your future. See it coming true for you. For your deceased loved ones, leave a picture of them on your altar and let the incense burn out.

Intentional Insights – Q&A From Within By S. Kelley Harrell
Renaissance Woman Meets the Age of Aquarius

Kelley,

I am very impressed by your thoughtful and interesting answers to readers’ questions. I’ve done a lot of different kinds of spiritual work that has helped me tremendously with personal questions and dilemmas. My spiritual work utilizes meditation and guide(s), which is why I responded deeply to your insight. I have a nagging mystery that seems to have no clear answer or finality. My dilemma is the question of joining with a true soulmate or twin soul for a solid, long partnership. Until now folks seem to fall away or are not solid enough to form anything far-reaching, even though I felt they could be and I was ready. At this point in my life I feel ridiculous trying, so at least I’m not emotional about it. Am I to traverse this life as a solitary, without sharing in a beautiful, life-enriching partnership with a man? Or is my path to go fully into healing work and lead a celibate lifestyle?

Thank-you for your insight.

Shannon

Thanks for your praise and inquiry, Shannon. What I see straight away is that you are functioning at a very high level, etherically, though you’re not attracting potential lovers who are. Your chakra system and etheric field look great, but more than healthy, they are wide and strong. This is a good thing, frankly a rare thing to see. No doubt it is the result of your self-work and is supported by your strong personality and sense of self.

You hit it dead-on when you asked about a life of celibacy, in that a monastic way of living has been the way you have maintained your high level of functioning in other manifestations of yourself. Your lineage in the formed plane has most often been one of spiritual servitude, and to be able to consistently provide to your community, you set yourself apart. You formed intimate relationships, but not ones of a sexually bonded nature. One of the things that the Age of Aquarius ushers out is the correlation that
higher consciousness requires isolation. In reality it probably is easier to focus on personal growth without the distraction of interpersonal relationships, and that choice is always available. However, moving from the Age of Pisces, we are leaving behind the notion of "I" and that only cultural elites are permitted the station of spiritual leader. Our communities, our life force, and our minds are not organized for divisive spirituality anymore, which is one reason the congregations of major religions are diminishing. Now it is our charge not only to move beyond the emphasis of spiritual awareness for self growth, but that we do so amongst each other. We can no longer cloister our pursuit of personal truths behind silent walls, or cloak our bodies to separate and hide the deeply spiritual sensuality of our physical temples. We can no longer save humanity by sitting at the elevated vantage point on the top of the hill. We must walk with each other. We are whole packages now, and that's how we must live. What does this have to do with you finding Mr. Soul Complement? Everything. You have a legacy of separating in order to maintain the level of etheric balance you have achieved. You no longer want to separate, and in fact deeply yearn to bond. Rest assured there is no trade off. You do not have to give up your balance to acquire a soul love. All you have needed is to make the connection that you have carried into this manifestation, the pattern that in the past you had to choose. In your spiritual work now, allow your Nature. All That You Are knows what you need, and now you need a spiritual complement. Infuse the statement, "I allow my Nature," behind everything you do. If you feel led to do releasing work around the pattern of having to choose, do so. My feeling is that just reading this and making that connection will release the pattern. The new mantra will adjust your life force as it needs, to attract what will be right and endearing for you. Be with and be well, Shannon

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Paranormal Investigating – Troubleshooting the Middle World

Kelley, I've been dabbling in the Salt Lake paranormal scene. Myself, a friend, and a medium-in-training went to a haunted place that is said to have demons. I have an electronic device that lets disembodied entities speak phonetically. After some questions about what spirits were with us and to see if they knew who we were (they knew my friend), the medium then said she got a feeling of dread and fear. When I asked the spirits if they knew who I was, they said, "Death." One EVP (electronic voice phenomena) said what we think was, "Don't talk to him." Another later said, "Hide." The medium said that
the ghosts were uneasy and unwilling to communicate, something not that unusual unless a "demon" entity is involved. I'm aware of previous manifestations of myself that were very affected by discarnate energies, and the degree to which I had carried that into my current life. Is it really possible for spirits to fear me because of my history? Was I being called Death or being warned of my death?

Thanks, J.

Thanks for your note, J. It's good to hear from you again. J and I have worked together before; thus, some personal info is omitted from this inquiry. As we say in the computer programming world, so spirit communication follows the same rule: Garbage in, garbage out. Thus begins your first lesson in understanding the Middle World.

The differences between mediumship and what I do as a shaman are intention and location. While shamans can act as mediums, they cast a much wider net. Generally speaking, most cultures of shamanism have a trifold cosmology, as in Upper World, Middle and Lower--none of which correspond with the assumed Abrahamic counterparts. The Middle World is the spirit layer of the Earth realm. It's the place where souls become stuck when they die and don't move on, when they have unfinished business. It's the place of earthly astral travel and lucid dreaming. This is also part of the layer where faeries are, Nature spirits, devas. The kind of spirit communication that you described happens in the Middle World, which is generally the only layer most psychics and mediums access.

What that means is when you connect with spirits in the Middle layer, they're most often not guides. They're not beings committed to working for your benefit. They may be higher entities or lightbeings, but that's where intention comes in. I teach a class on connecting safely with spirits in the Middle World according to your intentions and ability to navigate the spirit realms. Without a clear intention, as in just venturing out to see the spiritual manifestation of or in a space--particularly one you consider to be "haunted"--you ask for garden variety, you get garden variety. You have no control over with whom you connect. For many studying shamanism, the Middle World can be the trickiest to navigate simply because it is so close to our own reality. From the time we begin to explore the Middle World we are emotionally involved, and the kinds of spirits who hang out there know it. Boundaries are imperative.
The short version is that discarnate human spirits in the Middle World are usually there for a reason, the least of which is that they are not well. Generally speaking, souls and consciousness seek growth and widening their awareness. Staying stuck in one place, in form or out, is not part of the plan, and the state of being stuck often leads to suffering even if the spirit's life and death were peaceful. Any communication you have with such souls is going to reflect their state of being. In the event that you have similar buttons in your psyche regarding that state of being, they will be pushed.

That is what I feel happened in your experience. Because of your past brushes with intentionally adverse souls, you have significant buttons around PTSD, particularly PTSD that is the result of a harmful paranormal interaction. The moral of that story is that you can't just go unmitigated into spirit communication—even as the passenger. You really need a set intention and some education on what the varying options are in spirit communication, as well as how to connect with the kind of spirits who bring something meaningful to your life and quite possibly you to theirs. My sense is that the spirits you encountered were mirroring your latent fear of yourself, not expressing fear of or for you. Low vibration entities can't originate much, but they can exacerbate your fears. They truly are parasitic life forces that draw on the strongest vibe nearest them. If your vibe of fear of your shadows in your past was strongest, that is what you received back in communication from them.

This en masse modern trend of paranormal investigators that just pop in and stir up trouble then wonder why they're chronically sick, why they need to sleep with the lights on, why they're uncomfortable around large groups of people... amuses me. This etheric tapping on the fishbowl is the opposite of bridgebuilding in the arena of soul work, and is the reason that I do not under any circumstances support garden variety spirit communication. If you (or your friends) don't know what you're doing, don't risk being unable to undo it. Should you find residuals from the encounter with these spirits—things like paranoia, troublesome thought or behavior patterns that disrupt your daily life—these are indications that your PTSD switch for paranormal experiences has been flipped on and you should seek help in turning it off. Be well, J.

*Intentional Insights* is a Q&A column inviting you to look inside yourself. Submit questions regarding a brief Soul Reading, spiritual healing, paranormal experiences, or shamanism, to Kelley at soulintentarts dot com, or to schedule a full-length Soul Reading. *Intentional Insights* is a production of Soul Intent Arts, LLC, © 2011 All Rights Reserved. Read more of
Magic-Making by Angie Skelhorn

I was like most young people, I rebelled. I ventured forth into the world at the tender age of fourteen. I wanted to experience life so I just went out and lived it. I had a variety of survival jobs, which included dishwasher, hotel maid, mover and waitress. I enjoyed my years grooming horses. I enrolled twice to secondary school attempting to receive my high school diploma.

My past was really tough. I have had positive and negative experiences in life. No human is perfect. I made mistakes. Most of my education came from close friendships, long term companions, and committed relationships. I experienced a series of broken agreements, dishonesty, not staying true to commitments. In return, I gained a great deal of distrust for people. I expected the worst. My anger became a hindrance and very detrimental to my whole being.

My constant support was my family. My mom and dad have always been there for me.

I moved home to the farm where I had a good support system after sampling many of life’s pitfalls. I wanted to control my anger. Witchcraft captured my interest. The Earth faith is the belief that the universe is a giant web, on which every person, animal, plant, tree and object holds a thread of energy connected to every other thread. To believe in magic one knows that like produces like and things that once had been in contact will always continue to have a connection. Things that have a common quality, ever quickly seek their kind.

Reading Green Witchcraft by Ann Moura and a series of Witchcraft books by Laurie Cabot, I learned the basics. I explored the fine art of spell casting during the Sabbats, Esbats, and other rituals attuned to the cycles of nature. I discovered planning is important to the process and outcome. One’s success depends a great deal on one’s effort to change. The book The 21 Lessons of Merlyn by Douglas Munro I read on authentic Druidism was based upon history and Celtic lore. Being given copies of both sides of my family tree I learned I am descended from Celtic ancestry.
I am a witch. Descended from women of Europe, being a witch and witchcraft is my heritage. Often I’m asked what a witch practitioner does. There is no single approach to witchcraft. I can’t speak for anyone but myself. The main ancient formulae guide lines in magic is followed - An herbe, a flower and a tree make three.

I walked out into the open field during the Sun’s cycles - the Sabbats, the changing of season and Moon Phases - the Esbats, the Full Moon rites and New Moon, to acknowledge the earth’s changing seasons and cast spells for me to be better to myself and others - to be conscious of my choices and outcomes. I never request for material things. I drew a protective circle on the earth with either flower petals, feathers, salt or stones. I faced each direction, beginning in the east, moving clockwise as I lift my voice to call the Spirit of East, South, West and North. Inside sacred space with the use of herbs, candles and other natural ingredients that have a common quality (to apply like energy will attract like energy). I applied witches’ spells to help accept my past choices, to find peace and my place in the world. I asked Spirit that what I willed be correct and for the good of all. I remained in the center of the sacred ring and talked openly to Spirit for guidance or meditated - listened for an answer. I closed the circle by circling around counter clockwise, drawing the energy inward and saying: The circle is undone but not broken.

On my way home I’d look for either negative or positive support from nature. If a Blue Jay appeared or if I heard the bird’s song I knew I had the resourcefulness and adaptability to accomplish that which I set out to accomplish, that which I set out to change. If I tripped over a Blue Jay’s blue, black, and white feather there would be surprises in love, the unexpected. If a gust of soft wind suddenly blew it meant for me to favor love - use the emotion to achieve harmony; the west wind would tell me to be confident, to restore hope; the east wind, I would need to be patient; the north I had gained wisdom - use my intuition.

Casting a sacred circle, spell casting and reading signs in nature I stayed aware of the person I wanted to be and the direction I would like my life to take. In my daily life I became conscious of my words and of my deeds and how they affected others and myself.

I pursued information from books. I studied a lot of literature including magical books of instruction, fragments of history, traditions, legends and formulas for conjuration. Of
all trees, the oak tree is one of the most powerful and sacred reputation. Furthermore, it is extremely good fortune to find one struck by lightning.

Both the Druids and the Hebrew race felt the oak was a sacred tree to perform magical rites - prayers with responses under it. The mighty and sacred oak tree is known as the Grandfather tree and is a great place for magic making (open the door, go down into the earth). In a remote location an oak tree of immense age made itself known to me. I cast a circle around this mighty tree, lit incense for good psychic atmosphere, and then sat center of four trunks growing upward as one. Within sacred space I talked to my grandfather's spirit, my guide, to find confidence, conquer fear, and to become more secure with self and the direction I would like my life to take. Spirit made contact in many ways. During meditation visions appeared like a movie or magical symbols to foretell the future. Sometimes a clear image, other times a voice unlike my own. I came to expect whatever I needed, not wanted but needed would surely gravitate to me.

My heart and head became open to the synchronicities, the small coincidences that were placed in the right place at the right time to change my attitude and life for the better. I dedicated to Spirit, an advisor and Otherworld Guide, and withdrew from society to live closer to my family, friends and nature. Most of my family allows me the freedom of choice without criticism. Most are quite supportive when at dawn or dusk, new or full moon, I can be found outside with candles and/or incense.

Reading witchcraft literature and practicing out in the open field beliefs, customs and traditions, I've learned to accept people for who they are or attempt to right the wrong. I'm not pushed or agitated by the whims of others for a long period of time.

Tuning into the seasonal activities connects one with the wheel of life. Life is continuously changing, evolving, dying, and re-born. Winter is fading and releasing the emptiness. Spring has sprung; seeds begin to stir beneath the soil, and soon will begin to open to become solid forms.

The time when the Sun enters the sign Aries -the I, an internal re-centering period, the first day of spring, when day and night are in equal length, something inside each individual is renewed, the seed for all beginnings. If you have been kicking around the idea you would like to know more about practical earth magic to allow physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual expansion, head to your local new or used book store.
Risk overloading information found in the witchcraft or spiritualism sections by taking a quick survey of the array of titles. Close your eyes and relax. With your left-hand allow your fingertips to float across each spine in the row of books on the shelf, out loud or to your self saying, “Come forward, allow me to thrive by uniting your knowledge.” Allow your intuition to pick out what books contain the information you need.

If there are many books on more shelves, one by one perform the process. Look for the connection in the book you chose. Take time reflecting on the content. Read; uncover the secret knowledge for yourself - Truth in our hearts, Strength in our hands, Consistency in our thoughts. By doing this you are performing a valuable act of personal magic. It will put you in touch with your inner self.

The magical books of instruction, fragments of history, traditions, legends and formulas for conjuration might transform your way of thinking and your way of living.

Angie has been a student of the magical arts since 1996. Her interests include tarot, and other forms of divination, astrology, spell-casting, healing and spirituality, mythology, folklore, and fairy tales. She is the author of On the Edge, and No Reins. Her website http://www.Witchskel.com http://witchskel.blogspot.com http://AngieSkelhorn.com
Today is the first day of the Floralia, a three-day love festival. Floral was a Sabine goddess of youthful pleasures, whose worship is said to have been introduced into Rome by King Titus Taitus. For the Floralia, people inaugurated themselves with flowers and engaged in a feast of unrestrained love and merriment. There were also games and lewd theatrical performances. (And we think Mardi Gras invented bawdiness!)

If I went to a Floralia, I'd highjack a time machine and kidnap the poets below and take them with me. Here are my favorite lines from Donne's Elegy 19, To His Mistress Going to Bed:

License my roving hands, and let them go
Before, behind, between, above, below
O my America, my new found land,
My kingdom safeliest when with one man manned,
My mine of precious stones, my empery,
How blessed am I in this discovering thee!
And these lines are from Marvel’s To His Coy Mistress:

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime...
But at my back I always hear
Time’s winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D. ([www.barbaraardinger.com](http://www.barbaraardinger.com)), is the author of Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don’t want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Pagan Every Day April 29th – Labyrinths by Barbara Ardinger, PhD.

The labyrinth is a spiral pattern that dates back at least four thousand years and is found on pottery, tablets, and tiles. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has one path that leads to the center and back out again. You can’t get lost in a labyrinth. It’s not a rat race, there are no dead ends or false turnings. The Website Veriditas.net says it is “a path of prayer, a walking meditation, a crucible of change, a watering hole for the spirit and a mirror of the soul.”

The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, inlaid in the stone floor when the cathedral was built in the early thirteenth century, had been ignored for centuries and covered by chairs. In 1996, Dr. Lauren Artress duplicated the Chartres labyrinth at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and began using it as a meditation and healing tool. Today, using the Veriditas.net “labyrinth locator,” we can find labyrinths all over the United States. There
are also books that teach you not only how to properly walk the labyrinth, but also how
to draw one and how to make a “finger labyrinth.”

I once belonged to a Goddess circle that constructed a labyrinth on the beach at dawn
on the summer solstice. We drew the path with kelp, put fruit and flowers in the center,
and invited everyone we knew to walk with us. Now I go to the labyrinth at a local Unity
Church.

As you stand at the opening, you can see the entire path, which is marked with river
pebbles. You begin walking back and forth, making sharp turns, and you’re traveling
through the whole wide world. Even as you focus so you won’t trip, your mind goes
somewhere else. Just when you think you’ll never come to the center, you make a final
turn and there you are.

Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D. (www.barbaraardinger.com), is the author of Pagan Every Day:
Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique
daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her earlier books are Finding New
Godresses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the
Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don’t want to embarrass
themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of
Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Spring Equinox by Sondra Slade

Isis
Mother Goddess of
wheat
fertility
nature
healing
Rises with the moon from the sea
wearing upon her head
the horns of a cow
encircling the silver lunar disk
she unleashes the
untamed
unpredictable
Winds of March
to sweep through
and cleanse the cobwebs
from Winter's corners
She opens the unknown seas
to navigation
undertakes her quest
to reanimate lost Osiris
ushering in the Spring Equinox
and the resurrection of the Light
Gaia
stands at Her Axial Balance Point
World Tree
World Spine
Shaman's Pole
vertical conduit for energy
endlessly rising
and falling
and rising again
Connecting Heaven and Earth
Her navel
the Sacred Center
Omphalos
Home of the Ancestors
Threshold to the Spirit World
Spinner of the Golden Cord
Connecting Body and Spirit
Mistress of The Crossroads
pivot
turning point
House of Equality
convergence of the Sacred
with the Profane
coalescing the cycle
of death and rebirth
into Unity
She is The Null Point
stasis of absolute symmetry
one breath improbably suspended
on the precipice of time
before tipping back
into the cold grasp of Chronos
the perfectly still pool
where no ripple
ever stirred the surface
The Mirror of Essence

Sondra Slade (aka Auntie Matter)

Sondra a Writer, Ritualist, Musician, Event Producer, Visual and Media Artist, and Herbalist. For over 25 years she has immersed herself in studies and practices of World Music, Eastern Spirituality and Comparative Religions, science and Cosmology, and the newest frontiers of Field Effects, Coherent Intention, and the Noosphere - Global Consciousness. She has studied music her whole life and performed with a variety of bands from Rock n' Roll to Spoken Word, Acid Jazz and Sacred Sound, and founded the Tantric Trance Chant band, AXIS MUNDI. She studied New Music with John Cage & Classical North Indian music with Maestro Ali Akbar Khan at the Ali Akbar College of Music, where she first became involved in Sacred Sound as a spiritual path and began journeying the mystical road of Trance Drumming as an integral part of her practice of Bhakti and Anahata-Nad Yoga. She has been Producer, Artistic Director and Publicist for a variety of World Music Events, including assorted Sacred Sound Ritual Celebrations for the California Institute of Integral Studies, Saint Gregory’s Church, Rodney Yee’s Piedmont Yoga Studio, the Harmonic Concordance, PantheaCon, EarthDance, Open Secret, and the Association of Transpersonal Psychologist’s premiere Sacred Music Concert at Saint Aidans Church.

Sondra is also a Media Producer who has created many projects for the Bay Area spiritual community, including 3 years of creating the Immersive Media Surrounds for Matt Fox’s Techno Cosmic Mass, several projects for Da Avabasa (formerly Da Free John) and the Free
Daists in the lineage of Muktananda and Ramanamaharshi, and a video on Hildegarde of Bingen in conjunction with Rev. Lauren Artress of Grace Cathedral.

She has served as Adjunct Instructor of Spirituality at Holy Names College and the University of Creation Spirituality, on the faculty at GAIA Institute teaching Drumming and Sacred Sound for Transformation, and she now performs with her band and teaches Trance Drumming in classes and private lessons around the greater San Francisco Bay Area, facilitates local Drum Circles, and leads Rituals and Drumming Retreats.

The Labyrinth Healing Meditation by MarVeena Meek

You can find labyrinths at a lot of churches and spiritual centers. I have had one on my ranch for about 10 years now. In a prior article I tell the story of how it came to be, how several different Goddess women helped me to organize it and actualize it.

There are 180 stepping stones in my garden as of now. Some of my sister priestess friends and clients bring me beautiful stepping stones for the Labyrinth. The numerical value of 180 is 9, a powerful number in the universe. It is a number of return. What you send out comes back to you quickly. So the prayers that you pray here are answered fast in my Labyrinth Garden.

The idea of the labyrinth is to have an intention in mind before you begin the walk. It can be an answer to a question you might have on your mind; maybe your desire to feel a connection to spirit. Even healing for an ongoing situation.

When you begin the walk I light a stick of incense and walk up to the entrance. Stop and make a heart connection to the Labyrinth, send out a prayer for instance. (Goddess Beauty, thank you for hearing my prayers today and helping me solve this situation in a beauty way for all parties concerned.)

The main thing here is that you let your heart talk, say what it needs to say. Then begin the walk by stepping onto the first stone or the path.

As you are walking the spirals of the Labyrinth, send out to the Goddess what is on your mind; this is where you are talking to her spirit. It is a long walk to the center; you have plenty of time to mull over the thoughts coming across your mind. So let them be verbalized. There is no penalty for saying what needs to be said.
When you get to the center, take a minute to pray and ask for what it is that you think you need. I put my incense stick into the ground in the center. The smoke from the incense is a symbolic way to let the elements carry your prayers out to the Universe.

Now as you are retracing your steps out, you want to let your mind go blank. This is where you let Goddess talk to you.

What are the thoughts running through your mind? Be aware of the images that come up, the feelings. You might feel vulnerable. Maybe some tears will flow. You might want to lie down in the garden for a while. That is all fine. Just trust that you have taken your case to the center of the Universe and it will be heard and answered in some fashion.

Walk all the way out of the Labyrinth. When you step out of the Labyrinth, turn around and send out your thanks to the spirit of the Labyrinth, the elementals and The Goddess for hearing your prayers and helping how they can.

Then I go someplace quiet where I can journal or just be aware of the ideas and what I need to do, who I need to talk to so that I can get past whatever is holding me back or keeping me sick.

When I made my Labyrinth every single stepping stone was laid down by me and a prayer and blessing was set into it. All of them are different. All blessings to help us stay on our soul’s path and be strong enough to master our ego self while on this journey here. So every step you take you are waking up a prayer and activating it in your life. The prayers are there, all you have to do is be open to receiving them. You can see my first article on the creation of the labyrinth here at the Oracle archives.

If you have questions about this meditation please send me an email.

Namaste'

MarVeena Meek

*If you like this article and would like to use it in your e-zine or newsletter you may do so. All I ask is that you include this complete blurb: From Dallas, TX, MarVeena Meek publishes her Ghost Queen E-zine each week with hints and tips on paranormal and spiritual teachings. You can sign up for free at her website www.marveena.com*
Dionysia, in Greek religion, is the fertility festivals to honor the god Dionysus. Dionysus, son of Zeus and Semele, is the god of fertility and wine, the patron of choral song and drama. His worship is full of enthusiasm and emotionalism. Their secret rites were performed in frenzied ecstasy, drinking, and sweet wild music. Pan and Silenus were his companions. He was surrounded by the Bacchae, female worshipers of Dionysus. His seat was supposedly at Delphi, which was sacred to him in winter; thus he achieved a sort of parity with Apollo. He was chief deity in Orphic Mysteries, a nature god.

The Orphic Mysteries is the secret religious rites in worship of Dionysus. These are based on the myth of Dionysus Zagreus. Zagreus, son of Zeus and Persephone, was devoured by the Titans to please Hera, queen of Olympian gods, protectress of women. Zeus destroyed the Titans by lightning, and from their ashes sprang the human race, who were now part evil (Titan) and part divine (Zagreus). Zeus swallowed Zagreus' heart and from it was born the new Dionysus Zagreus.

The Greek mystery religion Orphism explains good and evil in humans by the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, and it taught the importance of pure moral and ritual life for immortality. Dionysus symbolized yearly decay and renewal of vegetation, and the immorality of the soul.

The Easter age is pre-Christian. It is the Wolf Egg, laid by the Goddess and split open by the heart of the Sun God; "and the hatching-out of the world was celebrated each year at the Spring festival of the Sun" (Graves, The White Goddess, pp. 248-9). Originally it was a snake's egg; the caduceus of Hermes portrays the coupling snakes, Goddess and God, who produced it. But under the influence of the Orphic mysteries, as Graves points out, "since the cock was the Orphic bird of resurrection (continuity of life and the overcoming of obstacles), sacred to Apollo's son Aesculapius the healer, hens' egg took the place of snakes' in the later Druidic mysteries and were coloured scarlet in the Sun's honor; and became Easter eggs."

*A Witches' Bible The Complete Witches' Handbook by Janet and Stewart Farrar

The egg is a perfect symbol of creation. When the egg is fertilized, the result: a product of life. The shell is a symbol of the earth's crust, and inside the membrane - air, yolk - energy and the white - water. Each ingredient is an essential to life. The egg has great
strength, yet the eggshell itself has 6,000 to 8,000 microscopic pores. These pores allow oxygen to pass in and carbon dioxide to pass out. The entire yolk inside is only one cell, one of the largest made by Mother Nature.

The distinction between living and non-living matter is all living organisms are made of cells. Cells are a higher level of organization, which differ from one organism to another or within the same organism. Non-living matter has no cells. Cells are the units grouped together within a larger organism; they are the structure units of all life. Within the unbelievably complex building blocks, each cell has coded information and each one differs considerably in size, shape and function.

A cell consists of two essential parts; one in the yolk representing the nucleus, and the other is the surrounding area, the cytoplasm. The nucleus represents the center of one's life. This is the stable group of atoms, what others may attach to form a series of compounds. The nucleus acts as a control center for the activity of countless numbers of ever-moving cells. The clearer part of the egg represents the cytoplasm. This area is where the busy life activity takes place. The egg is used extensively in fertility charms and potions.

Angie has been a student of the magical arts since 1996. Her interests include tarot, and other forms of divination, astrology, spell-casting, healing and spirituality, mythology, folklore, and fairy tales. She is the author of On the Edge, and No Reins. Her website http://www.Witchskel.com http://witchskel.blogspot.com http://AngieSkelhorn.com