



# Earth Healer



A Unitarian Universalist Congregation



The Official Newsletter of the friends and members of Gaia Community August 2003

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY—BOSTON

### A condensed summary of our delegates report

Our delegates, David Reynolds and Carey Oxler represented us very well at GA. For a full account of the report, please see the Board Secretary.

#### General Assembly 2003 Plenary Sessions and Official Business:

**Prairie Star Ingathering:** John Blevins (our new Prairie Star District representative) was there and welcomed our contingent, as well as Terry and Bruce Wiggins.

**Opening Ceremony/Plenary I:** Over 7100 pre-registered including 2100+ delegates; largest GA ever. Banner Parade was surprising because of how many people noticed us and cheered louder (which may have had something to do with us entering when Olympia's Daughters were singing, "Gimme That Olde Time Religion"). Carey and David also got to hear in that first session about the striking down of th Texas sodomy laws, and the enthusiastic reaction to it.

**Plenary II** (did not attend)

**Plenary III:** Previous office holders are recognized and new officers are accepted, including John Blevins.

**Plenary IV:** Heard opening arguments on Study Action Issues: *Weapons of Mass Destruction, Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights & Peace, Criminal Justice & Prison Reform, and Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriage*. Your delegates both voted for the latter issue, but a run-off was held between the top two issues (Human Rights & Peace, and Criminal Justice & Prison Reform), with the latter finally being selected as the Study Action Issue to be presented in 2005.

**Plenary V:** A Business item on creating a voluntary

registry of unions performed by member congregations at the national level was tabled in order to avoid voting it down until there was a force of law to stand behind our issue. Actions of Immediate Witness (with a shorter time-frame than Study Action Items. These are petitioned, debated, and voted upon in one GA. Six were presented: *Americorps, Depleted Uranium Munitions, Global HIV/AIDS, Public Hearings on Iraq, Taco Bell Boycott, and Women's Rights*. In the end, all were agreed upon as being worthy of consideration except the Taco Bell Boycott.

**Plenary VI:** Several minor changes in the by-laws.

Both delegates attended many workshops: *If not God, What? A Humanist Elevator Speech (David); Smart Social Justice: Investing for a better World (Carey)*. Both attended *Commission on Appraisal: Discussion with CUUPS*. They attended nineteen workshop together and separately and brought back bags of information for our board and committee chairs to peruse.

Both Carey and David wrote a short paragraph of their reactions to GA:

**David:** Obviously there was a lot of interaction with CUUPS; despite being different types of organizations, we have a lot in common. Outside of that experience, there was some occasional difficulty in explaining exactly what sort of creature we were to standard UUs. Eventually we came upon the analogy of light spectra: Just as the usual UU congregation is a wide spectrum of people of differing beliefs, we at Gaia Community have a great diversity of belief; we are just a different part of the spectrum, much like ultraviolet compared to visible light. We still

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#### PAGAN TRADITIONS OF THE WORLD: A JOURNEY OF AUTHENTICITY—KEMETIC PAGANISM

##### Ritual Chapters to come:

- Sunday, June 29th–Sunday, August 3rd (Lammas)—Egyptian Chapter.
- Sunday, August 10th–Sunday, September 21st (Fall Equinox)—Hellenic Chapter.
- Sunday, September 28th–November 2nd (Samhain)—Druid Chapter
- Sunday, November 9th–December 21st (Winter Solstice)—Gaia Traditional

All Sunday activities take place at Shawnee Mission UU Church; 7725 W. 87th St.; Overland Park, KS (near 87th & Metcalf) and begin at 4 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

## SUNDAY SCHEDULE

With the new year, we'll be trying something new at Gaia Community—in the weeks leading up to each Sabbat, we'll be examining and learning from different pagan traditions. All of the classes and rituals in the “Chapter” leading up to that Sabbat will relate to that tradition. In this way, we hope to make your ritual experiences more meaningful every week, and especially on the High Holidays.

### **Sunday, August 3**

#### **Unleashing of the Eye of Re Festival**

(aka Sekhmet's Revenge on the Unfaithful). Sacred theatre, dancing, music, and food (the tradition potluck will be part of the ritual, so bring your food and dishes on in with you. It is recommended that you bring easy finger foods that need little or no prep. like fruits, veggies, nuts, cheese, sandwiches, hummus and pita, you get the idea).

A note about our Egyptian Chapter: This section will have rituals based on reconstructualist ideas from the Old Kingdom and the 18th Dynasty New Kingdom eras. The coordinator is Heather and the secondaries are Nicole, Carey, David, Kimberly, Caroline, and Collene.

The ending of Egyptian and the beginning of Greek

A seven-week journey into the rituals and mythology of the Ancient Greek religion and the Hellenic tradition. The coordinator is Carey Oxler.

### **Sunday, August 10**

#### **Kindling the Eternal Hearth-Flame of Community New member Sunday**

One of the things that was very important to Hellenic religion was the eternal hearth-flame of Hestia—a flame that was tended night and day, was never allowed to go out, and served as the spiritual center of the community. The first and the last offerings in any Hellenic ritual were always to Hestia, and the sacred altar flames for every ritual were kindled from a flame from the community's eternal hearth-flame. We can keep this flame going through the entire chapter (I can carry it home and bring it every Sunday for lighting the altar). At the end of the chapter, we can use this flame to light the sacred fire for the altar of the first Druid ritual, and thereby “pass the torch” to the next chapter.

### **Sunday, August 17**

#### **Class: Piety, Philosophy, and Mystery—Introduction to Hellenism**

First class; a brain-busting introduction to liturgical outline, purpose of the rites, cosmology, place in the Indo-European lineage, notes about language, and about a billion other things. Fortunately, there will be a booklet to take home and read.

### **Sunday, August 24**

#### **Ritual: Festival of Dionysus**

Hellenic ritual wasn't all tragedy and mystery; there were also rituals of revelry and games! Dionysus is not just the god of wine, he is the force that brings communities together in celebration, bridging all gaps: young and old, male and female, family and stranger—all come together in celebration when Dionysus is here!

### **Sunday, August 31**

#### **Class: Sacred Theater**

The origins of modern theater can be found in the Hellenic ritual tradition. How do you make theater sacred? Why do you make rituals theatrically appealing? Why is sacred theater important?

### **Sunday, September 7**

#### **SOS: The Meaning of Sacrifice**

“Sacrifice” is a term with a lot of modern baggage—but what did it mean in Hellenic rituals? How and why was it done? What are our reactions to the idea? How can we reclaim this “rite of making the ordinary sacred through dedication to the Gods”?

**MAY YOU NEVER HUNGER.  
MAY YOU NEVER THIRST.**

## WEAVE AND SPIN



Hello all, and welcome to the new fiscal year! While ordinarily this would not be cause for great celebration, or even comment, I am pleased to let you know that there is one big difference in the 2003–2004 budget compared to recent years. As read this, Gaia Community is free of outstanding debt and only paying current expenses. Our obligations to our former Minister have been taken care of and the budget in the future will look a little different as a result. For example, this year there is, on the books, an expected \$2000+ item for our New Home Fund; this means that instead of merely growing from the surplus funds that our great community provides over the course of the year, there is a projected amount that we can expect to be able to set aside for our eventual permanent home.

In addition, I have more good news: Thanks to the efforts of our Stewardship Chair, Heather, and all of the participants in the God Auction on August 3rd, we set a new record for our summer fundraiser. More than \$568 of monetary 'tribute' was raised at that event, in addition to a truckload (no exaggeration) of goods for Harvester's! I am continually amazed and pleased at the way this community shines as an example of modern, responsible paganism.

*David Reynolds, Treasurer*

*"Three things which cannot be obtained: poverty from almsgiving, wealth from robbery, and wisdom from prosperity."*

## From the President

from Barbara Griggs

Elsewhere in this issue of Earth Healer, you will find the ebullient and energizing report from David and Carey about this year's Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly. I always marvel at the power and inspiration that gathering with other congregations of our denomination provides. Although we differ very dramatically from other UU congregations in theological orientation and worship style, we have so very much in common in the challenges we face that contacts always seem to offer new ideas.

We will have additional opportunities to network with other UU congregations in the upcoming "Gathering" of local congregations, as well as several other conferences within the district, this fall. We have also offered to help with the Prairie Star District Conference next spring. I hope that involvement, together with the fact that the conference will be right in town, will spur many of us to participate, network, learn, and teach.

Our delegates' experience in Boston also reminded me that our tiny congregation retains a leadership role. We are blazing a path as a "Unitarian Universalist Theme Congregation." The work of being a pioneer is usually hard but also thrilling! Carey and David report being greeted and welcomed warmly by the other delegates. During the debates on "a new language of the sacred" which seemed to be so very binary—either "one" god or "no" god—I was happy to hear that voices were raised to speak, albeit in a profound minority, for the possibility

of many. It reminded me to pay attention to what is going on in the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, through which we can be connected with others who may share our views of deity and worship style.

I also enjoyed hearing that this year's exploration of some of the widely differing approaches to spirituality that come under the umbrella of paganism helped overcome a surprising communication barrier between us and more conventional UU congregations. I refer to the misperception that if the whole congregation is "pagan" then we must all believe alike! I can imagine it was reassuring for people to learn that there are as many different ways to be a pagan UU as there are...well...pagan Unitarian Universalists.

## Splinters from the Board

From Nicole Turner, Secretary

We covered a lot of ground at July's Ritual for Business, and it wasn't very heavily attended, so be sure to follow up with folks if you want more details about any of these highlights:

- *KidSpace*: Heather Smith, our childcare provider, needs to resign her position with us to dedicate more time and energy to her nursing career. We'll miss her and wish her well. A search to find a replacement has already started; contact Andrew Turner at 913-706-9167 or agrnmn@kc.rr.com—or anybody else on the KidSpace Committee—if you know of somebody who would like to do paid childcare for our littlest ones.

- *Adult Programs*: Teaching Tuesdays/Trance Tuesdays are off to a great start! Pick up a schedule at the Greeter's Table, check in at the website or talk to Caroline or Kimberly for details about upcoming weeks.

- *Report from General Assembly*: Our delegates, Carey Oxler and David Reynolds, were brimming with stories and great information about their experience at GA and what it has to do with us here at Gaia Community. Ask them.

Please join us for the next Ritual for Business, where we'll be (re)convening a Site Search Working Group to figure out where we go from here (meaning SMUUCH) when we likely cannot renew our lease in another year or two. It's not the most glamorous work, but it's crucial.

***If you have business items you'd like to add to our agenda for August, please get in touch with Jeff Park (it's his turn to facilitate) no later than Wednesday, August 6th.***

Saturday, August 9, 2003; 9:30–11:30 A.M.

SMUUCH (Jefferson/Franklin room, downstairs)

*Complete minutes from Rituals for Business are available upon request.*



## Gaia Community Board Members

President—Barbara Griggs  
bpmg@earthlink.net or  
816-587-2350

VP—Caroline Baughman  
carolineo@earthlink.net or  
816-729-7112

Treasurer—David Reynolds  
naebli@kc.rr.com or  
816-361-5383

Secretary—Nicole Turner  
safronhare@kc.rr.com or  
913-706-9159

## Members at Large

Collene Newby  
oedipus\_the\_doomed@yahoo.com  
or 913-221-3278

Jacki Kelley  
opaljax@aol.com or  
816-228-0018

Jeff Park  
jpark2@kc.rr.com or  
816-361-0465

continued from page 1 "Why I am a Unitarian Universalist"

have, and value, diversity, respect, interdependence, an all of the other principles. That point came across clearly in both the COA discussions and the one in Plenary on the "language/behavior of reverence."

**Carey:** BTW, The next CUUPs Convocation will be in North Carolina over Ostara weekend '04. Gaia Community has been invited to lead some workshops if we can get people out there. Isaac Bonewits will also be there, and will lead the main ritual. The primary purpose of the convocation is to continue—an possibly finalize—the re-visioning work of CUUPs that is taking place this year. CUUPs is recovering from past organizational difficulties, and is gearing up to be reborn from the ashes. I think that CUUPs could really do it this time. We did a lot of good networking, and made several friends we are keeping in touch with via email.

## GAIA PROFILES:

*A new feature for the Earth Healer...Getting to know Gaia members.*

**H**er name is Victoria Ann Guhr, but call her Vicki. She's one of Gaia Community's new members. Currently Vicki works both as a mental health technician at Truman Medical Center and an emergency medical technician and instructor for MAST, Kansas City's ambulance service. However, the bachelor's degree she received seven years ago from the University of Missouri-Columbia was in civil engineering. Whew! Did she mention that she has a multitude of talents and enjoys going to school? Right now she's also working toward a nursing degree, which she will complete in 2006, if all goes as planned. As a civil engineer, Vicki worked for Taliaferro & Browne, Inc., and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. This amazing woman has also served in the U.S. Air Force, the Air Force Reserves and the Kansas Air National Guard.

Also, Vicki says to be sure to say that she has two grown daughters, one great husband, assorted Siamese cats and one dog.

At Gaia Community, she enjoys the eclectic group of people. She especially likes the Unitarian Universalist Association affiliation because of her respect for all religious paths. So next time you see Vicki at Gaia Community Sunday, say "Hello!"

**H**er name is JoLynne Martinez. Post-menopausal mother of a three-year-old (the gods have a sense of humor). Isabella's father and she fell in love at first sight more than a decade ago and were handfasted a year later.

JoLynne has belonged to Gaia Community for a couple of years. Prior to that, She founded Kansas City's first pagan publication, *The Rune*, and served as VP of HSA when they purchased the land that became Camp Gaea.

Dance is her therapy, so she started the Sacred Dance Group. She has been dancing since the age of five. Belly dancing for the last 20 years. Her choreography has been featured at *City in Motion*, the *Lawrence Arts Center* and the *Cleveland Performance Arts Festival*.

As a poet, her work has been published in journals, and she had read her works at places like the *Kansas City Artists Coalition*.

Writing is what she had done for a living since graduating from KU and starting as a journalist for Cable News Network and going on to support herself as a freelance writer and public relations professional. Now she's going back to school to be a teacher.

If you don't see her on Sunday, she's probably volunteering downstairs in KidSpace.

## childcare position:

**W**e are looking for someone who likes kids. Quiet kids, rowdy kids all types of kids up to 4-years-old to provide childcare every Sunday and some Tuesdays evenings and Saturday Mornings as needed and as you are available. Experience with infants and toddlers is highly desired, as is infant/toddler CPR. A background check will be made. The pay is \$10/hr. contact Andrew Turner at agrmmn@kc.rr.com or 913-7069167.

## COMMUNITY

### CARES

#### Joy and Concerns

*Compiled with YOUR input.*



Congratulations to . . .

- Carey and David on closing on their new home and moving.
- Greta and TJ on closing on their new home.

Heart felt wishes and healing to . . .

- Katherine Menges for the passing of her mother.
- May all the prayers from the "Thoth" ritual materialize this month.

Peace & strength to . . .

- Friends who are rolling with the punches of unemployment and job searches.
- Those struggling with substance abuse and addiction.
- Those in our community experiencing the pain of divorce or separation.

Happy Solar Return to people celebrating their birthday this month: ♀

Some late Julyers ☽

7-10: Karla Ticer

8-11: Kieran MacDonald

8-24: Matthew MacDonald

*Thanks Miki for providing birthdays. If we've missed you, clue us in again! Let Earth Healer know—earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org or 816-361-0465 or just sort of let the people at the greeter's table know.*

And a special welcome to the folks who visited us for the first time recently:

Liz and Daniel Ticer, Choenix Manos, Erica Sell, Debi Rodvelt, Allyson Lozano, Chris Spences, and Brenda Warren.

## GAIA AROUND TOWN—EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### Family Support Night

Wednesday, August 6th, 6:30 P.M.—9:00 P.M.

A Safe Space: Friends Family Support Group is for anyone who is experiencing conflict within or because of their past or present family situation, or just to enjoy the company and friendship. Dinner is generally provided by the person(s) doing the hosting, and donations to defray meal costs are welcome but not required. Contact Jacki or Greta for more information about the August FSG gathering. Contact Jacki at opaljax@aol.com or Greta at (816)822-2070 for more information about this month's (or any month's) gathering.

### Voices of Gaia (on hiatus for August)

Voices of Gaia is Gaia Community's choral group. Male and female voices are welcome and encouraged to join us in exploring vocal harmony, rounds, chants and pagan songs. Our vision is to evolve into a (primarily) pagan chorus that would perform publicly. Voices of Gaia is currently on hiatus and will return after the summer. Contact Kitty Degler at (913)469-8779 or songbird@kc.rr.com for more information.

### KidSpace Committee Meeting

Friday, August 8th, 7:00 P.M.

The KidSpace Committee Meeting is a place for all parents, kids at heart, and KidSpace volunteers to come together and discuss the future of our children. Plans for future activities, volunteer opportunities, dinner, and the direction of the future of KidSpace could all be on the agenda.

Come to the meeting or contact Andrew Turner, our Director of KidSpace Programming, for more information at agrnmn@kc.rr.com or (913) 706-9167.

### Games Night/Sacred Dance

Friday, August 15th, 7:00-10:00 P.M. at SMUUCH

Games Night is a chance for gaians to get together for fun, frivolity, and food, and NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS allowed! (We're not kidding—the Games Guru has spoken on this.) Bring a game (or ten), bring a friend (or ten), or just bring yourself and a willingness to play and visit. Snacks are welcomed but not required, to help the gaming crowds keep up their strength!

Games Night now alternates with Sacred Dance on the 3rd Friday of the month. Sacred Dance is generally held downstairs and/or in the Barn Chapel, weather and activities permitting.

### Friday Night Supper Club

Friday, August 22th, 7:00 P.M.

Join your fellow Gaians for food, friendship, and frivolity. Kick back and stuff yourself silly! August's Friday Night Supper Club will be at Tasso's Greek Restaurant; 8411 Wornall Road, KCMO 64114; 816-363-4776. We will be in the middle of the Greek Chapter, so Greek sounded just right. For more information contact Jeff Park at jpark2@kc.rr.com or 816-361-0465.

### Tuesday Night Adult Education

Now on Tuesdays 7-8:30 P.M. at SMUUCH

We've got new Adult Education classes every Tuesday! Every week will alternate between a class and a trance. Each Tuesday night offering will have a small fee for attendees: \$3 for Members and \$5 for non-members. Also, childcare will be provided at \$3/child for the duration of the session, but you will have to notify Caroline or Kimberly beforehand so that someone is available.

If you find yourself unable to contribute towards the cost of a given session, get in touch with either Caroline or Kimberly to see if you can make other arrangements. No one will be turned away based on a lack of funds.

### Pagan Pride Day

Shawnee Mission Park Shelter #10

August 23rd: 10:00 A.M.—6:00 P.M.

Confirmed speakers:

Ellen "Garden Witch" Dugan (11:00-12:00)

Dorothy Morrison (12:15-1:15)

Speaker from Solace House (1:30-2:30)

musical performance by Blackbird (3:00-4:00)

Avatar De Dannon with Todd Altizer (4:30-5:30)

Closing Ritual (led by **Gaia Community**) (6:00)

Silent Auction from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., with the proceeds to benefit Solace House.

While this is a FREE event and open to the public, please remember it is a fund raiser for Solace House. If you can bring a donation please do so. If you can not, that is ok. Please come and enjoy the day anyway.

### Loaf-Fest

You are invited to a Loaf-Fest celebration to be held at 6:30 P.M. Saturday, August 2nd, at the home of JoLynne and Robin Martinez. JoLynne and Robin are working to establish a new heathen organization in Kansas City. The festival is open to all, not just those interested in the heathen path. Although there are many variations in beliefs and practices within the modern heathen faith, and many ways of describing and classifying these differences, we all share a defining personal loyalty to the gods and goddesses of the Northlands, such as Odin, Thor, Frigga, and many others. We have a deep respect for our northern European religious, cultural and historical heritage while at the same time welcoming all who hear the call of our gods, whatever their background. Together, we seek to practice the moral principles followed by our noble predecessors, including Courage, Truth, Honor, Loyalty, Discipline, Hospitality, Industriousness, Self-reliance, and Steadfastness. If you are interested in attending, please contact the hosts for suggestions on what to bring to the potluck and for directions to their home. (816) 453-7122 jmartinez5@kc.rr.com

## KIDSPACE

We are following right along with the adults these days, believe it or not. The kids have been learning about the various traditions just like the adults. Unlike the adults we are branching out into other things as well. One of the new opportunities I am looking into is Aikido classes. Aikido is a martial arts that seeks to neutralize the attacker as opposed to inflicting harm. I hope I can arrange for them at Gaia on Sundays but they may fall on another day. I figure I will have more pull if I can say I have at least ten people interested. I am trying to get an instructor who will allow children and adults. This class will cost the participants, but I am not sure how much yet. If you are interested please let me know. agrnmn@kc.rr.com or 913-706-9167

And like the rest of the congregation continues to grow so does KidSpace. In fact we have a TeenSpace class going now. Hattie Williams has joined us again and has been doing some great work with our teens. We are also hoping to start a 1-2 times a month preschool class getting some of our older kids out of Childcare occasionally.

*Raucous and Joyful blessings,*

*Andrew*

### Contact Earth Healer

Send letters, articles, poetry or prose, borrowed wisdom, comments and suggestions to: [earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org](mailto:earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org) or by phone (number inside) no later than the 15th of each month.

### Save the Snails

Please tell us if you are receiving duplicate copies of *Earth Healer*, if we're getting your name/address wrong or if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email. Let us hear from you before the September *Earth Healer*.

### August 2003 Calendar—details inside!

**Sunday, August 2;** 6:30 P.M. Loaf-Feast at the Martinez's

**Sunday, August 3;** 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Unleashing of the Eye of Re Festival (Potluck dinner)

**Tuesday August 5th** 7:00–8:30 P.M. ADULT RE

**Wednesday, August 6th** 6:30–9:00 P.M. Family Support Group

**Friday, August 8th** 7:00 P.M. Kidspace Committee Meeting

**Saturday, August 9th** 9:30–11:30 A.M. Ritual for Business Business

**Sunday, August 10th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Ritual—Kindling the Eternal Hearth (Greek Chapter/New Member Sunday)

**Tuesday August 5th** 7:00–8:30 P.M. ADULT RE

**Friday August 15th** 7:00–10:00 P.M. Games Night

**Sunday, August 17th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Class—Piety, Philosophy, and Mystery

**Tuesday August 5th** 7:00–8:30 P.M. ADULT RE

**Friday August 22th** 7:00–8:30 P.M. Friday Night Supper Club

**Saturday, August 23th** 10:00 A.M.–6:00 P.M. Pagan Pride Day

**Sunday, August 24th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Ritual—Festival of Dionysus

**Tuesday August 5th** 7:00–8:30 P.M. ADULT RE

**Sunday, August 24th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Class—Sacred Theater

Gaia Community  
P.O. Box 45307  
Kansas City, MO 64171-8303

*Address Correction Requested*

## SACRED RHYTHMS

Bring your drums  
Bring your shakers  
Bring your heart

No previous experience needed

Starts later this month before rituals

Watch for details in the Sunday  
Announcements and the e-groups.