

Between the Worlds

January 2005

Myth, Magic, and Community



Labyrinth Journey:

Living beyond old wounds to step into the power of your true self

Patterns of Choice:

Astrology for the journey through our daily lives and into our destinies

Ritual Artistry:

How our annual ritual format changes support our overall philosophy

Destiny Calls from the Shadows:

Personal practice, self-discovery, and transformation

Plus: A visit to a Favorite Place at the Grove, Updates on Dog Rescue, an Interview with a Mystery from New Orleans... and **much more!**

The Magazine of the Diana's Grove Mystery School

January 2005
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Issue 1

Between the Worlds

Myth, Magic, and Community

The Legend of King Arthur is the story of a kingdom, not a king. It is the story of "small group of thoughtful and committed citizens" who accepted the challenge to serve a vision. In that grand and consuming action, they followed their star into legend and became a part of mythology and history.



Mystery School Registration is open until January 31. Visit www.dianasgrove.com for more details.

Inside this Issue...

Destiny: Arthur Speaks.....	3
<i>King Arthur steps out of the story to speak to us</i>	
Destiny: Taking Your Place.....	4
<i>Cynthia Jones looks at the meaning of Destiny</i>	
Destiny Calls from the Shadows.....	5
<i>sisalfish invites us on a journey into the Moon Shadows material</i>	
Interview with a Mystery.....	6
<i>Shaun Moffitt's conversation with Scarabella, New Orleans Mystery</i>	
My Favorite Places.....	9
<i>Jennifer Wilson takes us on a tour of the magical dishwashing station</i>	
Patterns of Choice.....	10
<i>The newest version of Teri Parsley-Starnes' popular astrology column</i>	
Ritual Artistry.....	12
<i>River reveals the mystery behind the Grove's annual ritual changes</i>	
Labyrinth Journey.....	14
<i>Canyon's new column on the work of living beyond our wounds</i>	
Destiny.....	16
<i>Arden Goewert explores the personal impact of this month's theme</i>	
Hounds of the Hill.....	17
<i>Canine author Leo muses about Merlin, magic, and destiny</i>	
Imagining Real Toads.....	18
<i>Shaun Moffitt speaks of her passion for poetry and her online class</i>	
Going Deeper.....	20
<i>Synnove explores the many facets of the Mystery School material</i>	
Moving Images.....	21
<i>Dan Wilson screens "Merlin", a made-for-TV movie from 1998</i>	
The Story's Times.....	22
<i>History buff Arden Goewert takes us to the Dark Ages in Britain</i>	
Community Arts.....	24
<i>A new column on building community by Cynthia Jones</i>	
Mystery List Tapestry.....	25
<i>Lorely Lather's weaving of the online Mystery School discussion</i>	
Lonely Hearts.....	26
<i>Cynthia Jones on the mission behind the Grove's Dog Rescue service</i>	

Meet the Writing Staff!

All writing, editing, and layout is done on a volunteer basis as a labor of love for this community. We would love your comments and feedback so that we can continue to improve our publication.

*Please send us an email:
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Destiny: Arthur Speaks

A *great story slept within me.* I often wonder if that legend dreamed me into being...I think it did. The stories that they tell about me are grand. In truth, I was never that grand, not really. I simply tried to stay true to myself and, by so doing, I stayed true to my destiny. We were a circle of dreamers dreaming the same dream. The dreamers - the seers and the sayers, the visionaries and the vision makers - they are who invoked the legend that slept within me.

I was born at a time when magic was afoot. I was born in a time when the people needed a hero, and I just happened to pass by at the exact moment of such a summoning. I was brought into my power by those who needed me to be the masthead of a great story. Guenevere, Lancelot, Morgana, even Mordred...we each had a role to take in the making of our times.

I have been dead for some fifteen hundred years; I was killed by my own son. My bones rest in the place my people called the isle of Avalon. When they buried me in the spirit-heart of the land I loved, they said that I would rise again if England needed me. I rise again when any country or court needs me. I live in every story told about me. I live within the nameless hero, the courageous action, and the point of change. I rise and remind you that a group of dreamers can and will change the world.

You live in a time like my time, a steep time. The past is sliding into the sea; the future rises sharp against the dawn. You live in a time that calls to those who are willing to be the stuff of legend. Don't ask me how I pulled that sword from the stone; ask yourself whether you will grab a sword for your brother. Will you take an apple from your sister? Will you accept a role in your times and live your life as if the future were yours to make?

If you will live my story with me, a seat at my table round waits for you.



Destiny: Taking your place

by Cynthia Jones

Destiny: taking a place in the evolving consciousness of our world. Each of us takes a place in the fabric of time, in the pattern of society. Everyday, you stand in a place called now. History is beneath you; the future is before you. The reality of the day is yours to create.

We turn the past into the future. The question is - what piece of life is yours to weave? What piece of life is yours to heal, to comfort, to create? What dream is yours to bring to life? What do you know that is unique to the situation the surrounds you? How do you give yourself to life?

That is destiny. We all have days; we all have destiny. Perhaps a destiny, like a day, has little to do with its predetermined pattern. The sun rises and it sets. Between sunrise and sunset, there are countless things that we can do in a day...there are countless things we can do in a destiny. What have you done in the destiny that holds you? What have you done for your destiny?

Destiny is a blueprint of potential that whisper the secrets of being in the language of desire. Our talents shape us. Our gifts take us by the hand and lead us into places that hunger for our presence. Destiny could be as simple as saying yes. Yes...and then, what do need to do to serve this calling?

Destiny, destination...a course of action, a direction. Destiny is the north star that guides our journey. Unreachable, a point that determines direction, a way to set a course...of action.



Destiny Calls from the Shadows

by sisalfish

Greetings, and welcome to Destiny Calls from the Shadows. That seems a rather melodramatic title.... What saves me from worrying about its over-the-top melodrama is that it is your destiny, as well as mine, calling. This monthly article will work with themes introduced by the Diana's Grove Moon Shadows book, which works with the energies of the new and full moons. But you needn't have access to Moon Shadows to seek enlightenment from the moon, that cyclical being that has floated in the sky since long before you or I entered this lifetime.

What does moon shadow work offer you? A side of self discovery that, for a long time, seemed to me to be something to avoid at all costs. Darkness. Things that hide from the light, and for good reason – things that seem meant to be hidden, until the light strikes them - light of the moon, light of understanding - and they're transformed...because, in that moment of seeing them as they really are, I find I am transformed. And things just don't look the same. That's what this article is after: transformation. A different way of seeing yourself, the world, the world between the worlds, and your place in each of them.

Or, to say it without quite so much melodrama: if you walk in this world, what you see is lit by the sun, and is generally outlined clearly. If you walk between the worlds - on the mystical path of the hero - what the moon lights is shadow, intuition, possibility and dream. Not so clearly defined, and often richer for that. I find moon shadow work richer in terms of self discovery, the unexpected - mystery. It's my hope that you will, too.

The January full and new moons in Moon Shadows wax and wane on a number of subjects - prophecy and promise, Merlin, and the other magicians blessed by Mercury. And the priestesses of Avalon, each of whom holds the full moon in her hands.

That's quite a picture. I can see them, Morgaine and Igraine, and the other priestesses of that time; strong in their faith and their power. They are strong

enough to hold the full moon in their hands and know their own magic...

As are you. The January moon is full on the 25th, and Moon Shadows invites you to take the full January moon and hold it in your hands. There, in your hands, it represents all the magic within you, and that magic takes many forms. Your mind may tell you that it's nonsense to believe you hold the moon, and to believe that you, yourself, embody magic. But, for myself, if I close my eyes, and feel the weight of the full moon in my hands - its weight less than nothing, transparent with light - I can guess at the magic within me.

Even so, I find myself turning away from that vision. It's so much easier to see the moon in Morgaine's hands, or Igraine's - or in your hands - than it is to imagine it in my own. In your hands, I can believe the moon holds many aspects of magic - the gift of song, a way with children, the spark of poetry, a healing touch....

And in mine? That's harder. I don't want to imagine I have that much magic in me, and I certainly don't want to name it.

But the full moon is insistent, and her challenge won't be denied. "What aspects of magic do you hold within you," she asks, "and which of them asks to be shared with the world?"

All right, then. In my hands, the full moon holds the magic of passion (though not as much compassion as I might wish). She holds music and poetry. She holds the magic of trance facilitation. And she holds transformation - and transformation is the magic within me that most wants to be shared with the world, in my role as a priestess of Avalon, of Camelot.

In the old stories, to truly name a thing was to know it and have power over it. I look around and see

"But the full moon is insistent, and her challenge won't be denied. 'What aspects of magic do you hold within you,' she asks, 'and which of them asks to be shared with the world?'"

Continued on page 6

us all here, a circle of men and women, each of whom holds the full moon, full of our own acknowledged strengths, initiated into the Isle of Apples and Avalon by having named the magic we each carry within. I am astounded by what I see - by your beauty and power, and my own. Surely there's nothing such powerful beings cannot do. And I suspect that's why I found it so easy to envision Igraine, or you, holding the moon, and found it so hard to envision it in my own hands. What excuse do I have, now that I've acknowledged my own magic, for not doing everything I feel called to do? To find compassion within myself after all, and patience as well? To trust that the unexpected may hold more promise, more wisdom, than anything my own tendency to over-control would deliver? I must even believe it is possible to learn, at last, when facilitating trance, to drum and walk and talk, all at the same time....

The Diana's Grove leadership guidelines speak of the interrelatedness of power and responsibility and, now, holding the full moon in my hands, I see how the two are tied. Acknowledging Igraine's power, and yours - that's easy. Acknowledging my own opens the door to the responsibility to live up to my gifts. The moon in my hands shows me how. Cycling from full to new to full again, she shines and then turns again toward darkness. These are luminous gifts that I hold. But it's OK if I don't shine with them all the time. They, and I, will have our time in the light because magic, once acknowledged, won't be denied. And then they, and I, will darken, and have our time in the shadow and the silence as well.

Power and responsibility, waxing and waning. I'm grateful to the moon for her gifts of magic, and for her gift of showing me, by example, how I can live with the power and responsibility those gifts impart.



sisalfish is a writer and editor living in San Antonio with her husband and a neurotic sheltie named Chee. This is her fifth year as a Mystery in the Diana's Grove Mystery School, where she is currently participating in the Grove's Initiatory Priestess Program. She works as an editor and writing coach for poets, fiction writers, novelists and writers working with spiritual subjects. You can contact her at sisalfish@satx.rr.com.



Interview with a Mystery: Deb Kohler, Scarabella *By Shaun Moffitt*

Last January, Deb Kohler (Scarabella), poet, drummer, photographer, and bona fide New Orleans Renaissance woman, flew from her home to Tulsa and spent the night with me in Bartlesville. The next morning we drove to Diana's Grove for the opening Mystery School. Our return journey was full of ice and snow, and Deb (on right) seemed fascinated by it, taking photos and keeping up a calm, steady stream of conversation while I maneuvered the roads. When we finally got to clear pavement, Deb said, "You know, I was terrified back there." Read on to find out more about this lovely woman.

How long have you been in Mystery School and what keeps you coming back?

Year 2005 marks my fourth year of Mystery School. I am in Mystery School because its tradition has led me to a greater spiritual growth and self-understanding. I am not the same person I was before joining Diana's Grove Mystery School. I know that we

Continued on page 7

Interview... Continued from page 6

all change over the years, but I truly believe that the Grove, the people, and the philosophy all had a hand in my transformation of becoming more of who I truly am.

During my first year as a Mystery, I was experiencing a very difficult situation at work that seemed to have no solution. There had been a personnel change that brought about personality clashes between a close co-worker and me. I consciously started living by the wisdom of Diana's Grove cornerstones, a philosophy that we all have "a choice to think well of ourselves, to think well of others, to honor our sacred wounds and to provide stewardship of self to our community." Within the year the unpleasant situation had been resolved.

What brought you to Mystery School in the first place?

Well, we've all heard the saying that "some things are meant to be" and I believe it. My introduction to Diana's Grove came at a perfect time in my life when I was open to taking the next step in my self-discovery journey. One of my friends had just become a Mystery and during her first year, she shared her experiences with me. The following year I became a Mystery. The next few years, my friend and I traveled together, much like pilgrims on a quest, to events at Diana's Grove. With each visit I added several layers of magnificent experiences and self-discoveries, as well as meeting new and fascinating fellow Mysteries.

What can you tell us about your magical name?

Scarabella means "beautiful scar" in Spanish; it is my magical/spiritual name that I took after my first year attending the Grove, to honor the "sacred wound" from the cornerstones philosophy. An artist friend started calling me Scarabella after I had surgery in 1999. And I took it as my magical name in 2003.

What kind of child were you?

As a child I was very inquisitive, strong-willed, adventurous, fun loving and liked to be around people and animals - much the same as I am today. I enjoyed making things. I recall fabricating a space ship in the back yard with a 50-gallon drum, various tin cans and boxes. It was a vehicle for my imaginary voyage to outer space with a neighborhood friend. Playing with dolls and guns both appealed to me. Later on, I liked to build models, make holiday

ornaments and take pictures with my Brownie Hawkeye camera.

What is your profession and what do you enjoy/dislike about it?

I have been a media and public relations specialist for the past 29 years. There are more aspects of my profession that I enjoy than I dislike. I enjoy the diversity of working with various department heads and media outlets, in addition to writing, using photography and advertising. Having the opportunity to meet interesting people and tell their success stories drives me. The one thing that I dislike is working under pressure, but the deadlines are a necessity to keep me on track. Also, I recently started teaching college again in addition to my full-time job. And with retirement in sight, I plan to continue teaching part-time. I enjoy teaching because it gives me the chance to pass on my experiences to others. I also hope to spend more time enjoying and further developing my interests. Gardening, photography, pottery, beading, writing, drumming, ritual work and networking with fascinating people are my main interests.

Who is your favorite writer and why?

Well, I cannot say that I have just one favorite writer. I have three! They are Emily Dickinson, Eudora Welty and Sue Monk Kidd. Not only do I admire each one of these writers for their work, but also I find that they are interesting people - each in their own way.

Last year I picked up Sue Monk Kidd's first novel, "The Secret Life of Bees," and I couldn't put it down. Kidd wove an interesting story with such vivid characters. A young girl's life is transformed when she encounters beekeeping sisters while on the search for the truth about her mother's death. Kidd had previously written non-fiction books about her own spiritual awakening and feminine spirituality

In addition to being an acclaimed writer, Welty was also an accomplished photographer. She focused on the people of the rural South during the Depression and captured aspects of their lives that may not have been seen by the masses if it was not for her work. It is amazing to me how Dickinson, who lived much of her life as a recluse, had such insight to life and that her poetry and letters were not discovered until after her death.

Both Dickinson and Kidd use metaphors in their works. Dickinson's use of gardening metaphors,

Continued on page 8

Interview... Continued from page 7

especially flowers, and Kidd's bee metaphors truly speak to me. Both Dickinson and Welty were devoted to gardening. In fact, Welty's garden in Jackson, Mississippi, has been restored for visitors, and recently there has been a scholarly text written about Dickinson's garden. It's been said, "Gardeners have hope." It's an exercise in hope to put a seed in the ground and wait for something to grow. Maybe I am drawn to these writers because I sense their hope when I read their works. I continue to be fascinated as I discover more about their lives and means of expressions.

When did you start writing poetry? Why do you write it? Would you share one of your poems here?

Originally I wrote poetry in high school when I felt the need to express my feelings. Then toward the end of 2003, I felt the spark to write again. The words just flowed out on to the page once I began. Even though words and writing are an important part of my day-to-day work, I felt that when it came to expressing my feelings it was as if I had lost my words. Recently, it is as if I have gotten my words and voice back. To me, poetry is another way of capturing experiences and feelings much like I use photography. The process is very personal, yet I delight in sharing what I feel and see with those interested.

Are the Mystery School 2005 Arthurian characters calling to you? What are they saying?

I look forward to re-hearing the legend of Camelot as it relates to and addresses our own lives and times, in a way that only Cynthia can re-story. The idea of destiny and fate is very intriguing to me. Camelot is a sort of "in-between" place that exists in a different time - a place of what might be...if we all answer the call to be a hero. When a fellow Mystery told me that the four major characters relate to the four elementals, the story started to take on a different meaning for me.

The characters' struggles call out to me now. Am I worthy? Do I have the strength? Will I accept the challenge? What will I manifest? How is Justice served? By what means do I influence events? By what actions do I motivate reactions in others? How will I see through deceit and know the truth?

Symbols Abound

by Scarabella

Symbols abound
Around every corner
Feathers on the ground
Egg for rebirth
Parthenon Park planting
Medals made of metal
Oriental robes
Hearts to hold in hand
Eternity etched solid
Eraser to honor mistakes
Tree limb stripped of layers
Eleven becomes Two
Black jet beads for journey
Moss green agate for growth
Malachite for rock solid
Copper to conduct energy
Bee's wax to burn
In the New Year
Earth embeds in heel
Then embeds in toe
Heel, toe, heel, toe
The dance begins
On the Eve of the last Eve
Upside down frog
Brings new perspective
Uncontained flame



Shaun Moffitt is a lifelong Okie, a teacher and writer, who enjoys a good merlot, speaking with her teenage son when he still allows it, sitting on the porch, and writing poetry about driver's ed students parallel parking in front of her house. She can be reached at okieload@aol.com.

My Favorite Places: The Dishwashing Station

By Jennifer
Wilson



This column is devoted to the special spaces at the Grove and the ways in which they teach, touch or inspire.

When I was a child, my imagination was swept away by stories in which people lived beyond the confines of regular, everyday houses. From the Swiss Family Robinson's elaborate compound in the jungle canopy, to Tarzan's more modest platform and hammock, to *The Boxcar Children* and their cozy self-made refuge in an abandoned railway car, I imagined an adventurous life for myself in spaces and places open to the elements, out of the ordinary, in which even the most mundane tasks would seem exotic. When

"Doing dishes is a pleasure in the open air, and knowing that I'm contributing to the operation of a community by doing my share makes it sweeter."

the children washed their found pitcher, plates and mugs and placed them back on the shelf in their tidy boxcar, it sure didn't sound like a chore to me.

This same feeling of happy adventure sweeps my heart when I do my dishes at the Grove in the warm weather months. When the temperature rises and the pipes aren't in danger of freezing, we leave the indoors and take our plates and glasses out to the Dishwashing Station. Now, I admit that it's not the most

romantic of names, not a name with a seductive ring like *trailhead* or *outpost* or *wilderness*. But it does call to the child in me who placed planks in the vees of tree limbs, secreting away feathers, pretty stones and a rusty jackknife in a hidden tin.

The Dishwashing Station is a small wooden structure with a shingled roof and rafters laced with ropes of white lights that create a warm, welcoming glow. When I step into this space, just at the tree line and open to the elements on all sides, I feel as if I've climbed up to my childhood hideaway again. The two facing sinks are ingeniously designed to free hands for washing. Foot pedals, two on each side, are what start the flow of just-right hot water. After scraping, washing, rinsing and



The Dishwashing Station was built by Patricia Storm and Jim Carey.

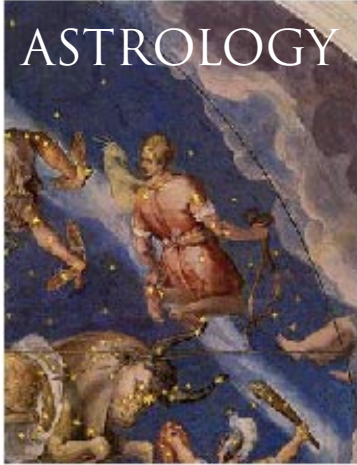
dipping my dishes, comes my favorite part - each dish gets put away to dry in a cleverly designed wooden rack that has slots just the right size for small bowls and large bowls, round plates and oval plates. The boxcar children would approve.

Doing dishes is a pleasure in the open air, and knowing that I'm contributing to the operation of a community by doing my share makes it sweeter. Just like washing up with my Grandma in days gone by, dishwashing just isn't the task it seems to be at home. I've observed that jokes are told, songs are sung, and laughter rings out more often than not over the sinks. I feel as if I'm joining in a community ritual - like wash day at the river - when we gather here, in one of my favorite places.



Jennifer is a member of the Diana's Grove staff. Her passions include exploring the land with a dog or seven, tarot, hand drumming, and group facilitation. She is an educator from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is available in person or by phone for tarot readings or life coaching.
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PATTERNS OF CHOICE: ASTROLOGY FOR THE JOURNEY



BY
TERI PARSLEY STARNES

Once there was and there was not a tower at Camelot, where on a clear night a hooded figure could be seen looking up and around at the stars spilling across the black sky. This magician held a scroll in his palm. Looking up at the stars and then down at the paper, he compared and pondered. This moment, captured in the pattern he held in his hand, held destiny. This moment, captured in a pattern he held in his hand, held eternity. The man wondered, observed, dreamed, and planned. Choices were presented, decisions were made, a destiny was created. The stars formed this pattern and became an ally of this destiny.

For me, the stars are a means of holding the pattern of my world in my hands - not to control that world, but to fully engage in the wonder of it. I invite you to hold this wonder in your hands as well.

This year, my column will be about using astrology as a tool of choice for our day-to-day lives, as well for the important journeys, on which each of us will seek to discover our destiny. My favorite argument against the validity of astrology is that it supports fatalism.

If the stars tell us who we are and what will happen to us, then where does our free will come in? I

completely agree! Who would want to be told that we have no choice? Astrologers have been thinking about this issue for a long time. Paracelsus, a 16th century astrologer/chemist described the stars' influence this way, "The stars incline; they do not compel." In my mind, the stars show me a web of connection, a relationship between the seen and

unseen. The art of astrology helps me to use this web of interconnection to find out more about my essential nature, and it enables me to make choices about my own destiny.

I will be talking a lot about energy, lessons, and allies in this column. Although the stars do not compel, I do accept that astrological events seem to influence energy. Much of my use of astrology is about noticing the pattern of energy when an astrological event occurs - such as a relationship forming between two planets (aspects), or a planet entering a new sign, or a planet changing the direction of its motion

(retrograde or direct stations). My relationship to the mystery of astrology is based on the idea that the archetypal energies of the planets, which include the Sun and Moon, are teachers and allies of our choices. I choose that I want my life to be about personal and collective potential, and I agree to be in relationship with these archetypal forces. I am a student of these forces and a collaborator with them in creating the world that I envision. I invite you to see astrology as a steppingstone, as we move from fatalism to destiny, from powerlessness to possibility, from isolation to connection.

I've thought a lot over the past few weeks about what astrological event would best inform us, at the beginning of our journey this year through the stories of Camelot and Avalon. Astrology acknowledges that beginnings are very important. The energy present at a beginning will set a pattern. After all, this is exactly what a birth chart is. We take a breath at birth, we enter into the energy of that moment, and eternity opens. That pattern will influence our lives. As astrologers, we become

"In my mind, the stars show me a web of connection, a relationship between the seen and unseen."

students of that moment. We also can choose to work with the patterns by choosing a time to begin a project, to hold a ceremony, or to begin a year-long journey of self-discovery. What energies would you like to have present for your journey? Which teacher

Continued on page 11

would you like to govern this pattern? Which ally would you request accompany you? One goal of astrology is the study of finding the best moment to engage these energies.

*"I do not want a fate;
I want a destiny.
I want a destination
that is worthy of my
potential."*

There are many important astrological events that happen in the first month of Mystery School, but the event that pops out for me is the Sun in Capricorn opposing Saturn in Cancer, which will be exact on January 13. This event is fleeting; it will not last long, but it is significant because this transit highlights important energies. During the first month of Mystery School, the Sun travels through Capricorn. The predominant energy of Capricorn is toward building something of lasting value. This cardinal earth sign aids us in laying down foundations. We make new goals and new resolutions during this astrological month, thus it is good to acknowledge the Sun as an ally of setting goals for our Mystery School journey.

Saturn stands out this month because as far as the astrological teachers go, it may be the best. This planet teaches us by giving us lessons in reality. Sometimes reality is hard but, ultimately, Saturn lessons are the most satisfying. Saturn teaches about accountability and responsibility. Saturn is always the teacher. The sign Saturn is in will tell us about the lessons. Saturn's Cancer lessons have been about the issues of safety and defensiveness, about accountability for our emotions, responsibility for taking care of what we cherish, and dealing with feelings of abandonment - issues important to Cancer. Saturn is in Cancer only once every 30 years, for a span of two years, and astrologers claim Cancer in one of the most challenging signs Saturn can be in. Saturn has been in this sign since June 2003. It will

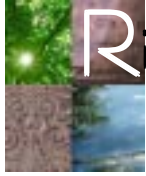
leave Cancer in July 2005. Right now, we are still in the process of learning these Saturn lessons.

The Sun brings illumination. Once a year, the Sun will illuminate Saturn in just this way. What illumination would you like to receive about emotional responsibility? As we set our intentions for this year during the time of Capricorn, we will be helped by Saturn if we remember the tenderness we all feel as we confront our insecurities. Can the world we create acknowledge our frailties and honor our desire to nurture and nourish? Can we accept this frailty and desire in others?

New Moons are good times to set intentions. The New Moon of January 10, when the Moon will be joining with the Sun, is very near to being exactly opposite Saturn as well. If these Saturn lessons speak to you, then you may want to use this New Moon as a time to make changes, or see with new perspective. I admit it, my inclination at the beginning of a year devoted to Camelot and Avalon is not to think about Saturn lessons. There is a temptation for me to drift into fantasy; quite the opposite of Saturn's energy. Yet, there is something important here for me to learn. It is easy for me to avoid thinking about my own responsibility, and find a way to blame my environment, my culture, even my ancestry for my fate. I could also blame Saturn and be stuck with a fate given to me by a star. But I do not want a fate; I want a destiny. I want a destination that is worthy of my potential. At this beginning, it is Saturn's voice that speaks to me. I believe that, if I listen, I will be able to create lasting change in myself and, perhaps, I will be able to acquire some of Saturn's wisdom. I invite you to make an ally of this teacher on your journey as well.



Teri Parsley Starnes is a consulting astrologer and Diana's Grove Mystery. To reach her for appointments or questions, please email her at: tpstar@mninter.net.



Ritual Artistry By River

Welcome to Ritual Artistry! This monthly column explores the nuances and facets of Ritual Arts from design, to facilitation, to impact. This month, we dive into the mystery behind the Grove's annual ritual format changes, including why we do it...and what to expect this year.

January is here, a new Mystery School year begins, and it's time to change the ritual format! This change is something that we consciously make every year. Our reasons range from offering ritual that fits with the story or theme of the year, to upholding our community values for inclusion and vitality. We will still uphold the structure of the ritual – from gathering and grounding to casting to invocations. However, there will be a shift in form and approach. There is a method to our madness...and this month I'll attempt to explain why we make this shift every year and how we'll do it this year.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the ritual style that we work with at Diana's Grove, we are an ecstatic ritual tradition. By ecstatic, I mean that we strive to create an environment that engages the participants on several different levels – physical, emotional, and spiritual. My favorite definition of ritual comes from Cynthia Jones, one of the co-founders of the Grove: "Ritual is a multi-sensorial prayer that allows us to lay new patterns in our soul." We take the multi-sensorial part seriously, using movement, song, speaking from the heart, and sacred play to invoke a sense of mystery. No ritual is ever the same twice and, indeed, even the form of our rituals shift from year to year.

The first reason for the shift is to uphold one of our strongest community values – inclusion. When we change the ritual format each year, everyone coming to the Grove is placed on equal footing, whether this is their first or fiftieth time at the Grove. Everyone will have the same amount of information about the group "norms" in ritual. All starting from the same place, we can go farther as a community. There are a number of ways we make the shift, from teaching the chant before dinner so you know it thoroughly and can sing it comfortably at the evening ritual, to stating the intention, telling you what to expect, and giving you plenty of context. We try to give your rational, intellectual brain enough fodder in advance to keep it busy, so the rest of you can enjoy the multi-sensorial experience of an ecstatic ritual without continually asking, "Now, what am I supposed to do again?"

Another reason to change ritual format is to rekindle the vitality and life force in a practice that can become stale. If magic is "changing consciousness at will," as Doreen Valiente said, then I want to be a part of a ritual that changes my consciousness. I find value in repetition, and I find vitality in finding new ways to engage my senses and my interest. Each Mystery School year has a definite "feel" to it for me, and that keeps me inspired.

Inclusion and vitality are certainly key goals for our ritual format shift and, perhaps, the most important reason for this shift is to match the

"Rather than simply invoking Air, we will also acknowledge that point where Air meets Fire. We will invoke the sense of exquisite tension where Fire and Water embrace for the briefest of moments. We will stand on the shoreline where Water meets Earth. Contrast. Border places. Flux."

Continued on page 13

story of the year. Those of you who were with us during the year we explored the "Shaman and the Wolf" may remember that we called Breath, Blaze, Blood, and Bone, rather than Air, Fire, Water, and Earth when the elementals were invoked. That was a story that required the sense of a visceral, physical connection to all creation...and that was how we chose to do it.

How will we step between the worlds this year? As the staff began to work with this story, we realized that the story of King Arthur's Camelot is one of contrast. This story tells of a time of great flux, where the boundaries and edges are blurring and shifting. For me, the most obvious example is the transition from Paganism to Christianity. The ways of the Old Gods are stepping back in face of the influence of the Church. Magic, while still present as a major force throughout the story, is historically giving way to a more rationalistic paradigm. Other border pieces are...well...borders. The disparate kingdoms that Arthur's father unsuccessfully tried to unite under one crown are now in the process of coming together to support Arthur. Where his father failed, Arthur will succeed, and this is a time of transition. Arthur will also introduce the Round Table, a marked shift from absolute hierarchy to egalitarianism.

Contrast. Border places. Flux. This is what we will ritualize as we create sacred space during the coming year. When Starhawk started adapting permaculture principles to ritual and magical work, she noted that the most vital and active places of the garden were the places where diverse species meet. This year, we will experiment with that concept, and ritualize the moment between breath and flame, the moment when the heat of the sun evaporates the ocean into steam, the moment when the rain feeds the land, and the place where the earth rises to meet the sky. Rather than simply invoking Air, we will also acknowledge that point where Air meets Fire. We will invoke the sense of exquisite tension where Fire and Water embrace for the briefest of moments. We will stand on the shoreline where Water meets Earth. Contrast. Border places. Flux.

Perhaps ritualizing these places of natural transition is how we can embrace the magic needed to face the transitions of our own communities – in our families, personal relationships, country, or the world itself...which brings us to the invocation of the Center of the circle. In the Mystery School

tradition, the Center is often the place where we acknowledge community and the support we gain from each other. In addition to contrast, this year's story is also about leadership. In the Center, we will invoke the Round Table – where all of us have an equal place when it is our time to step into service to both our community and ourselves.

"Magic is strong enough to uphold itself regardless of the form that we mortals impose upon it," says Cynthia, and I agree. We do not change the structure – we

simply change the form. Can you feel the difference? Admittedly, the difference is very subtle. The ritual *structure* remains the same; we will still ground, cast, and acknowledge the Elements. And, we will re-ignite the vitality that is the hallmark of an ecstatic ritual tradition by shifting the *form* to meet our yearlong intention. Whether you are part of a Mystery School weekend or are doing ritual in your own living room, I invite you to step into the in-between places this year, and see whether you can sense the dynamic tension of the times – both King Arthur's, and our own.

"Magic is strong enough to uphold itself regardless of the form that we mortals impose upon it,"
Cynthia Jones



River lives her passion every day by designing and teaching workshops in ecstatic ritual throughout the country. For more information on her classes, travel schedule, and past articles on ritual arts, visit her website at www.rivermagic.org. She lives in Chicago, Illinois with a roommate, cat, and (at last count) thirteen drums.



Labyrinth Journey By Canyon

Welcome! This new monthly column in *Between the Worlds* will summarize concepts and activities from my book in progress, *Labyrinth Journey: Seven Paths to Living Fully*. The two core premises of *Labyrinth Journey* are, first, that all of us adults are emotionally or psychologically wounded by our childhoods - but may not know it - and, second, that those wounds are not what keep us from full and productive lives as adults.

The strategies we've adopted to cope with our invisible wounds are the true barriers to our productivity, our effectiveness, and our creativity; even to happiness in our relationships.

Most of us may not identify as victims of child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or alcoholic or toxic parents. Yet, many such "un-victims," despite what we think of as normal childhoods, still struggle with maladaptive and ineffective patterns of living, which affect our work, family life, friendships and romantic relationships. And many of us who clearly were victimized in childhood are still lost in pain, even after years of therapy and other efforts to recover from these more visible wounds. Regardless of our histories, this monthly column will provide tools for adaptive strategies that will make us more productive in all arenas of our lives.

These columns rest on one of my core beliefs, that who I am - who you are - does not need to be confined or defined by the events of our life

time-lines. We can go beyond those events...and we are meant to go beyond them. Now, as we find ourselves facing a vastly more complex and stressful world, it is time to find a way to live beyond those wounds of childhood and the coping strategies that keep us ineffective as adults. Now, when we must live productively in a global community of rapid change, the time has come for human connections that take us beyond shared pathologies. Now is the time for something new. This monthly column is that something new for readers of *Between the Worlds*.

Incorporating the best principles of psychological health, such as development of boundaries, the identification and release of maladaptive roles, and use of effective communication, *Labyrinth Journey* will offer

creative activities within a spiritual - but not religious - context. I will invite you to draw, write, move, imagine, and otherwise reflect upon aspects of healthy adult living; we will lay new patterns in our souls. Together, we will develop new patterns for living beyond the wounds of our childhoods, and beyond the ineffective ways we have been coping with those wounds.

Labyrinth Journey will not be therapy, but will be therapeutic.

While self-help books often focus on a particular type of wounding experience (e.g., sexual abuse, narcissistic parenting, alcoholic families), *Labyrinth Journey* acknowledges that all childhoods may result in wounds that affect success in adult living. Also, while other approaches focus on the effects - the symptoms that result from those wounds - *Labyrinth Journey* engages each of us in our own solutions, in the creation and practice of new patterns for living more effectively.

"Who I am - who you are - does not need to be confined or defined by the events of our life time-lines. We can go beyond those events...and we are meant to go beyond them."

Continued on page 15



But the most refreshing and exclusive feature of *Labyrinth Journey* is its journey into the wisdom of an ancient universal pattern, the seven-circuit labyrinth and, thus, into the depths of our own souls. This year, I will take us on a journey into and back out of the seven-circuit labyrinth. The first journey inward connects us to ourselves in a seven-step pattern of personal development. The journey outward asks us to connect those selves to the world that surrounds us, to all that is not self.

And why should you care what I think about all this? I have been an observer, student and teacher of human development for over 27 years. I earned my MA in Human Development and Family Life in 1979 and my PhD in Developmental and Child Psychology in 1995. Both degrees were awarded by the University of Kansas, where I learned from and was mentored by internationally-respected leaders in the study of human behavior, child development and psychology. I have directly observed and experienced the development of hundreds of children from the varied perspectives of teacher, teacher educator, administrator, and consultant. I have published over a dozen articles for parents, teachers and other professionals on topics ranging from children's learning styles to the prevention of sexual abuse. But I acquired my knowledge - about childhood wounds, their

adult effects, and the development of alternative patterns for effective living - not just through academia and professional application, but personal experience, too.

It was personal experience, primarily, that took me beyond the results possible in excellent therapy...to something more. In 1984, I began the work to heal from my own childhood wounds. Seven years of individual and group psychotherapy, along with work in peer support groups that I founded and facilitated, provided me with new perspectives on human development and childhood wounds, which I integrated into my professional work. Years later, seeking ways to continue moving into a life beyond wounds, into a life of wholeness, I found the nationally-renowned Diana's Grove Mystery School.

This program of personal growth, grounded in the use of classic, multi-cultural mythology, became the primary driver of my own healing work starting in 1998. After completing their leadership development program, I became a member of the Diana's Grove staff in 2001. My online and on-site courses in emotional and psychological healing began in 2003 and continue to take other members of the Mystery School beyond their childhood wounds and into the mysteries of living fully. My knowledge of the labyrinth as a pattern for the evolution of human potential, likewise, comes through personal experience as a member of the Diana's Grove community and staff, where this pattern was developed and is used in Mystery School.

I welcome you to this *Labyrinth Journey*, which will begin in the February edition of *Between the Worlds*.



Canyon's life mission is to offer others opportunities that enable them to step into their destinies. Her programs and publications support you as you strive to become who you truly are, who you were intended to be. Canyon is a staff member at Diana's Grove and is currently writing a book, [A Labyrinth Journey: Seven Paths to Living Fully](#).

Destiny

by Arden Goewert

I wrestle with the idea of destiny. Did I make some agreement with the universe before I was born? Did I promise to become what I am becoming and to experience what I am experiencing? Was my every action pre-ordained? Or do I have a greater purpose that I have not yet fulfilled? Am I meant to become another Mother Theresa or King Arthur, and have refused the calling? Born in this time and place, is my life fated? And if I have no destiny, what is the meaning and purpose of living?

What helps my resolve these questions is thinking about my grandmother. She was born in the late 1800s, a woman of her times. Had she been of my generation, she might have become a feminist political activist. Instead, she went to college, got married, and had children. But her destiny was not just to garden and play bridge (although she enjoyed these activities). Her destiny was to promote women's causes. She helped establish the League of Women Voters and the Campfire Girls in her town of Springfield, Missouri. She worked at the county welfare office, assuring that families received the assistance they needed. In her 70s, she would go to the bus station to pick up young women bound for the Job Corps, take them to her home for the night, and get them to the train station the next day. She was not a Betty Friedan or Gloria Steinem, but she lived a life of service to women.

So perhaps that's the answer. Destiny isn't a specific fate. Rather, it's a theme of a life. I am not destined to be a psychiatric nurse or a priestess,

but to be an explorer into the depths of the human psyche, and one who acts as a healer. Destiny is not fate; not the story of a life pre-written and immutable. Life's random events intervene sometimes. Illness, accident, and death happen, and a destiny fails. A child is not destined or fated to die or suffer abuse. Bad things occur in our random and chaotic world. Destiny is a set of possibilities and promises. Like an astrological chart or the temperament we are born with, destiny creates possible outcomes and the focus of individual strivings.

Destiny is not fate. Having a particular destiny does not guarantee we will live it out. Perhaps unfulfilled destiny is, in part, the cause of

bitterness and resentment. Mark Twain told the story of a fellow who went to heaven and asked to see the world's greatest military general. He was shown a man he knew. "That man," declared the fellow, "isn't the world's greatest general. He never went into the military. He's just a poor, unhappy dirt farmer." He was told that all he said was true but that, if the man had chosen to join the military, he would have been the greatest general ever.

Wouldn't it be nice if we were born knowing our destinies? We would be certain of what we were meant to become and could make the correct choices to bring us there. We would not need to have destiny thrust at us, nor would we need to worry about selecting the proper paths to take, to arrive at the "right" destiny.

Destiny calls, a door opens, an opportunity presents itself. How many times has each of us turned away from the door into destiny? How many times have we made a particular choice and found ourselves on the right path, becoming who we are destined to be?

"Destiny is a set of possibilities and promises. Like an astrological chart or the temperament we are born with, destiny creates possible outcomes and the focus of individual strivings."



HOUNDS OF THE HILL: LEO

As a puppy-dog, I sure remember those old tales of that mighty Irish warrior Cuchulain and his hounds - these humongous and beautiful black dogs that ran with their human buddy through the woods of Ireland. They were leading him around as much as he did the leading.

Even though I was barely weaned I knew I could be one of those hounds. Now it's true I'm from Missouri, not the faraway Emerald Isle, but I'm hound just the same. Those hounds had a life all jumbled up with Cuchulain's. They gnawed at the same bone, and at night around a fire, they plopped down next to each another, each facing the fire, each seeing another face across from that fire. Damn, those were some good stories. That was some life.

I think about other stories, too. I still can see Merlin turning into all those animals. He was good at that and mighty clever. He knew that it was important to show Arthur what it was like to be a dog. The saying is true: don't deny us. We can be the best friend but, listen, don't neglect our ability to bend your ear either. I think when Cuchulain was just nodding off to sleep, the hounds would be circling his bed and slipping in a little advice here and there; just kind of whispering it in his ear without really waking him up.

And Arthur's dogs - what did they whisper in his ear? What did Merlin hear when he sat in his cave on a long winter night - his only company the company of my old ancestors? What do any of us hear in the night when folks are sleeping and animals are restless? I think about meaty bones.

I think about friends I've lost that wander into the woods and never come back out. I think about when

the next batch of folks is going to show up here for the weekend and pet all the hair off the top of my head. But mostly I think about meaty bones.

Sometimes I see myself back in some misty old time. I am surrounded by hounds - some yellow like me, some black as the gullet of a chicken. We race across a field and out into the boonies, out into endless time.

I hear a lot of talk about destiny when I'm sitting around up here on the hill. I'm not quite sure about that word. I know a lot of words. Fact is I know all the darn words I need to know. It's the actions that screw me up sometimes. Cuchulain and Merlin, Arthur, Morgan, Gawain, Galahad - all those guys just seemed to know exactly how to act in the particular situation. (Notice I left Lancelot out of that line-up.) Something needed to be done and they just up and did it.

Now sometimes I up and do something, but sometimes...well, I just find myself stopping and looking around and wondering what I'm doing. Mainly I wonder, what now? Down to the creek? Back up the hill? Time for dinner yet? What's that smell on the wind? Is that the trash truck coming?

What if I start out in one direction and end up going another one? It's all about going, isn't it? Merlin walked out of his cave in the morning and the dogs followed, and they walked to the creek and drank some water. Merlin squatted down and petted them and told them what they were going to do that day. And then he listened to them.

I know what they said. Do you? They said, "Let's go. We can feel it in

the air. We have things to do. We're going together. You don't have to lead. Let's go alongside each other. The path is wide when we make it together."

When I go down a path I've been down a million times before, I don't even think about it. Maybe that's what destiny is: getting used to a pattern...or maybe just seeing it. Now, being an ornery hound, I sometimes zig-zag off an old path to make a new one. I get burs stuck in my belly hair, but something good always seems to come of it. Flushed out a fine share of rabbits that way.

I figure Merlin learned about trusting instinct, staying low to the ground, and using more of the senses than just eyesight from those dogs. I suspect



Continued on page 18

the dogs learned from Merlin how to be a bit patient and think half a minute, before reacting; to smell the strange bone before you grab it and run.

What did Arthur feel when Merlin turned him into a dog? What did he hear and smell and taste? And what was it like to be a human again? Somehow we start out on a path, get transformed, take another road, start again, get a new hitch in the getalong, start again, make a new path. Maybe the only regular thing about the whole deal is that we're never alone, though we're always alone.

Those stories I remember are all about paths - the ones we choose and don't choose, the ways our lives are arranged by chance or by fate. It is hard to know... a hero probably doesn't even have a clue. When he was a boy, one hero was out in the woods where he had never been. He killed a vicious animal in the night when he couldn't really see what he was battling. When a man, Cullen, discovered that the boy had killed his prize guard dog, he was in a bad place. Cullen had no other dog, just a pup a few weeks old, to guard his house. So the boy said he would be the hound of the house and would train the pup to take his place when he was old enough. "Chu" means dog or hound. So he became the Hound of Cullen or Cuchulain.

When I was a puppy, one of my brothers - he was always getting phrases jumbled (he thought four-story houses had a lot of books in them) - told our ma when we were getting ready to go for a walk, "Are we going together or in pieces?"

My ma said something that at the time I thought was darn peculiar but seems to make mighty good sense now. She said, "Both."

Imagining Real Toads: Poetry Class Online

by Shaun Moffitt

I am honored to be conducting an online poetry class for Diana's Grove this year. This class will involve exercises, feedback, discussion, and posting of poetry. Class poetry will find its way into this magazine each month, as we address the Mystery School themes. What follows is a description of and welcoming to the class, which will begin on January 7th.

Welcome to Imagining Real Toads, a year-long journey with the imaginary gardens of poetry. Marianne Moore's famous "Poetry" defines poems as "imaginary gardens with real toads in them." To cultivate the garden in our imagination, we will look for real toads (and a host of other 'things!') to describe and bring into being through words. This class on writing poetry is for those who have never written a poem, as well as for those who write poetry on a regular basis. Our work will be to use and hone our imaginations to honor our visions and the poetic magician inside us all.

Of course, I don't think that Moore said all there was to say about poetry. This was her view of its importance and a little of what poetry does - brings out rawness, brings out the genuine. I certainly agree

with that. When I first started writing poetry as a child, it was so raw no one was allowed to see it. My genuine self came out on the page.

Though I grew up with three siblings and many cousins and friends to play with, I also was a fairly solitary child. I enjoyed the solitude because I created a lot of poetry in it. This poetry was like a diary because it expressed my very personal feelings; however, it was not like a diary in that I was very conscious of the way in which I was writing. Without any awareness, I think I was melding art with craft - the art of creativity and expressing the imagination, and the craft of putting that creative imagination into its most powerful form with words and images and line length and all that other poetic stuff.

Anyone can be artistic - the ability lies in all of us because being artistic is the same as being truthful. Deeply, no-holds-barred, damn-the-consequences truthful. So truthful it hurts. So truthful it alienates. So truthful your heart feels like exploding. And when we are that deeply truthful about ourselves, we create art. Emily Dickinson said of poetry that if the poem made her feel as if the top of her head were coming off, then that was poetry. Deep truth makes my head feel the same way.

Also, the skill of craft lies in all of us. We are all craftspeople of one thing or another, and I believe the craft of poetry can be learned by anyone. Anyone who is truthful. Anyone willing to work at it like any craft - carpentry, jewelry-making, bread-baking. There

Continued on page 19

are tools, techniques, and tricks to each of those crafts - as there are in the craft of poetry.

I didn't wake up one morning in my childhood and decide I was going to be a poet. Poetry just happened to me, as it happens to most children, who create rhymes and songs and sayings and jokes. I remember when I was intern-teaching with sixth and seventh graders, I visited their art class and was amazed at how good all of the students were in their various ways. When we are children, we are all artists.

So I also believe, as Saint-Beuve said: "There exists in most men a poet who died young, whom the man survived."

We are all poets. Some of us just haven't seen our poet-selves since childhood! Here's to a year of retrieving lost poets.

Like Moore, many poets and critics and such have tried to define poetry. I'm not sure it's quantifiably definable. However, the following statements are some ideas that I have about poetry. Each is followed by a quote to help explain it.

1. *Poetry seems truthful.*

The writer Brenda Ueland, whose book *If You Want to Write* is a great motivating tool about the art of writing, said that the writer's task is to "...get out truthfully what is in you and it will be interesting."

This is what I mean about everyone being able to write poetry—we all have the ability to get to the truth about ourselves. Now, that's not easy, of course, but it can be done!

2. *Poetry takes the commonplace and makes it unique.*

VanGogh, talking about the mass of people, said in a letter to his brother:

"They cannot understand that the figure of a laborer - some furrows in a plowed field, a bit of sand, sea and sky - are serious objects, so difficult but at the same time so beautiful, that it is indeed worth while to devote one's life to the task of expressing the poetry hidden in them."

Obviously, VanGogh was talking about the subjects of his paintings - but I love that he used the word "poetry" in this description. I believe that most people who feel a real urge and calling to write poetry probably also understand this

concept - that obvious details of our world are the stuff of poetry. A poet searches to express these details in a way that helps us re-see them.

3. *Poetry is brutal.*

Robert Frost said that "Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat." I hesitate to use violent definitions of poetry, but I deeply feel that poetry is violent; it is brutal. It messes up our insides. It takes hold of us. It turns us into the Hanged Man, seeing life from a new perspective. Even humorous poetry is brutal, since through laughter we tackle some of life's most difficult problems.

4. *Poetry changes the way we feel or experience something.*

W. H. Auden said that second-rate literature leaves us with this thought, "That's just the way I always felt," but first-rate literature leaves us feeling, "Until now, I never knew how I felt. Thanks to this experience, I shall never feel the same way again." When I read poetry, I have the first-rate literature feeling that Auden mentions: I do discover a new way of thinking about a situation. I do feel as if I have had an experience that has enriched me and led me in some way to a discovery about myself, others, and how we live.

5. *Poetry puts into words what we keep hidden or cannot discuss.*

Wallace Stevens said that "The poet is the priest of the invisible." I interpret the "invisible" as the place without words, the large, unnamed spaces that make up so much of our lives. In an interview with Ravi Shanker, he paraphrased what becoming a poet was like for Adrienne Rich: Since she grew up in an atmosphere where "the way language was used actively neutralized the actuality of experience, finding the words for what was not being said was crucial. To find them was hard, and writing was a form of spelunking, helping what's buried deep, where it is obscure and diffuse and resists expression, find its way out, and in so doing, find form." I don't know why, but whenever I purposely sit down to write a poem, as opposed to a story or an essay or an email, I sense that need to enter into the invisible, to go into the stark darkness of the cave, to shed my light in whatever way I can and tell about the experience.

Continued on page 20

As you can probably tell by now, I'm quite passionate about poetry. It has been a lifelong hobby/craft/vocation of mine. I do think it is a powerful form for all the reasons listed above. I also think it is a wonderful form for just beginning to play with words, to play with images, to exercise creativity. We are all poets if we choose to be. Thank you for choosing to be here this year!

For questions or comments, please email me at okieload@aol.com.



To learn more about Shaun, see the end of her interview with *New Orleans Mystery Scarabella* on page 6.



Going Deeper

By Synnove

Has a question ever lodged itself deep in your soul?

In early 2003, Mystery School posed a question that I carry with me today: "When have I come face to face with my heart's desire and, instead of embracing it, turned away and run in fear?"

I don't remember exactly where the question came from; Mystery School provides such a wealth of information each month. It could have been in the monthly story, the workbook, the newsletter (now this magazine), the *Moon Shadows* book, or even an e-mail message. Today, I only remember the question.

My first answer to that question skimmed the surface, as I thought of dreams I had toyed with and later decided not to pursue. When I started college, I

dreamed of becoming an accountant, thinking that would be a safe job and could even allow me to work for myself. That dream died with the drudgery of working as an accounting intern.

Questioning again, I probed deeper layers. I remembered that in the early 90's, I decided to go out on my own as a consultant. I purchased business cards and letterhead; quit my secure job, worked with a professional coach to lay out my strategies for obtaining work. And then I stopped. I couldn't bring myself to follow through on those calls to businesses. I was afraid to sell myself...ultimately, so afraid of rejection that I did not even try.

This question continues to work me as I explore fear's impact in other areas of my life, and shape slight variations on the original question. How do I run from relationships? When do I run from things that support me to be healthy? What are my typical ways of running? How will I know when I am running? Going deeper allowed me to notice how often I get to the edge...and then run away. With that knowledge, change is possible.

The idea for deepening my personal exploration, and the idea for this column came from my experience learning to rock climb. I began climbing after taking a general mountaineering course in 1993 and loved it. It was my first experienced of being completely focused and present in the moment. The needed skills seemed very easy to learn. Once I had mastered the basics, I focused my attention on building experience by climbing a wide variety of routes. Typically, I would climb a route once and move on to the next route. After about a year, this approach did not help me improve my climbing. I reached a plateau and I could not seem to develop the skills needed to climb more difficult routes.

I signed up for a class on climbing technique. The instructor gave me a series of climbing exercises and asked me to climb each of them a minimum of ten times. Each time I repeated the exercise, I learned something new about technique and was able to reinforce skills.

Since then, I have tended to revisit subjects that touch me deeply over and over again, each time, deepening my exploration. That is why I appreciate the depth that Mystery School offers. There are so many different ways to explore, each addresses the theme in a different way and, so, deepens my experience;

Continued on page 21

Going Deeper... Continued from page 20

- The monthly story asks me to imagine and, in doing so, to learn more about myself from tales of ancient heroes. Each month, I step into a story that is true to the legend and “allows motivation and intention to shift, so that each character has value.” This style of storytelling encourages me to explore my own motivation, both conscious and unconscious. It encourages me to grow.
- The workbook, a companion to the story, helps me make the shift into my left brain so that I can be more conscious in my exploration of the monthly theme with concepts and questions spelled out clearly.
- This magazine combines many voices and aspects of the theme, building layer upon layer of meaning and allowing me to see from other perspectives.
- The *Moon Shadows* book personalizes the story following the rhythm of the year and the monthly rise and fall of the moon.
- E-mail discussion lists and classes connect me to the Mystery School community so that I may reinforce my learning by sharing with others and learning from them.

Going Deeper is an invitation for you to join me and other Mysteries in diving deeper into the theme from a previous month. We will explore these past topics using all of the materials available to us in Mystery School, and follow the ways in which a question can branch off to touch different aspects of our lives in a deep way. Don't worry, you won't need to find an old packet (though you may want to); everything you need will be in the column.

More importantly, *Going Deeper* will invite you to dream, to imagine your life as you would like it to be. And it will provide tools for personal exploration to help you along that path. You choose the destination and the path.

What is your dream for yourself?



Synnove is passionate about empowering others. She has over twenty years of Management Consulting and Executive Management experience with an emphasis on building effective teams. She also teaches rock climbing for Passages Northwest “Girls Rock!” — a program dedicated to inspiring courage in women and girls.



Merlin,” a 1998 made-for-TV movie with an all-star cast, including Sam Neill, Isabella Rossellini and Miranda Richardson, is a good place to begin this year’s series of film columns. As we begin our year with thoughts of history and destiny, this telling of Merlin’s story and the origins of King Arthur provides many opportunities for discussion of what happens when the characters try to outwit their destinies.

As the film begins, Mab, ‘Queen of the old ways’ and sister to the Lady of the Lake, is rather disenchanted with Christianity’s rise in popularity. She vows to create a wizard who will

Continued on page 22

Moving Images... Continued from page 21

help restore a king more tolerant of the old ways back into power. Thus, Merlin is born. He grows and matures under Mab's tutelage.

While Mab may have good intentions, Merlin quickly realizes that the means to her ends may not be the best. She's sneaky and manipulative, often forcing an outcome through subterfuge and deception. Realizing that Mab's not the most ethical of teachers, Merlin strikes out on his own, vowing to find good in the world or, at the very least, to help balance the not-so-good perpetrated by Mab.

When Uther Pendragon's army threatens Lord Vortigern's borders, Mab comes to Vortigern's aid in defense against Uther. Merlin seeks counsel from the Lady of the Lake, and she advises him that he must trust his heart to do what's right, and gives him Excalibur, for only a good man can wield the sword. Feeling very strongly that he must balance Mab's role in the battle, Merlin chooses Uther as his champion of good and, with Excalibur in hand, is able to hand him the crown.

After Uther is crowned, Merlin acts as his counselor, consistently guiding him toward good. When Uther meets the lords and ladies of his land, he's smitten by Cornwall's wife, Igraine and, overcome with lust, vows to have her at any cost. After a lengthy and bloody siege of Cornwall's castle in an effort to take her, Merlin, in the interest of preventing further bloodshed, reluctantly agrees to help Uther have her, on the condition that the resulting child will be Merlin's to raise and teach. In this version of Arthur's story, Merlin also takes Excalibur and drives it into a stone, enchanting it so that only a good man may extract it.

The child born of the union between Uther and Igraine is, of course, Arthur, one of the heroes of this year's story. And Arthur fathers Mordred, whom Mab raises to further her agenda, and whom later threatens to take the throne from Arthur.

Merlin tried to escape his destiny to create a pawn for Mab but, in doing so, he facilitated Arthur's birth and therefore Mordred's. Would it have turned out any differently had he stayed

true to Mab's ideals? Is destiny something we can escape? Are we fated to a particular end, only delaying the inevitable when we stray from our path? How do we affect our own destinies through the choices we've made in the past and the choices we make in the future? These are some of the questions raised by this telling of the Merlin story, and some wonderful thoughts to ponder as we begin a new year.



*Dan Wilson. Milwaukee, WI.
INTJ. Art. Music. Film. Scorpio
Sun, Leo Moon, Scorpio Rising*

The Story's Times: The Dark Ages in Britain

by Arden Goewert

King Arthur and the court of Camelot. The image this invokes is probably one of knights in armor jousting at tournaments while ladies dressed in long robes and tall hats listen to tales of courtly love sung by wandering troubadours. This picture is understandable; the tales of King Arthur were collected and written down during the high Middle Ages, the 12th to 15th centuries, when scenes like this actually took place. Yet the stories of Arthur derive from an earlier time, the early Dark Ages, when the Celtic tribes of Britain banded together to successfully repel waves of invading Germanic tribes - the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes - and the Picts and Scots from Ireland and Scotland.

Nikolai Tolstoy describes the times well in the Afterword of his novel *The Coming of the King*.

It was a time when it seemed that
the worst and last age was come

Continued on page 23

Continued from page 22

upon the earth, mankind was doomed, and the whole of God's creation tottered on the brink of extinction. "It happened only recently, and you heard it yourself," wrote a British monk to a Roman lady. "Rome, the mistress of the world, shivered, crushed with fear, at the sound of blaring trumpets and howling of the Goths."

In August of 410 A.D. (C.E.), Rome, the capital of the civilized world, fell to the barbarians. The Eternal City was given over to pillage. Slaughter, and destruction, and with its ruin men saw the end of civilization itself. Far across the Empire, Roman troops stationed in Britain were dispatched across the Channel in a fruitless attempt to protect Gaul from invasion. Deprived of her once-formidable garrison, Britain was laid open to attack by barbarians from northern Germany and southern Denmark.

There were the Saxons, who, like the Huns, came from remote and inhospitable regions uninfluenced by civilized values. As much at home at sea as on the land, confederated tribes across the turbulent North Sea had come to devote themselves to the cult of a terrifying new war god, Woden, the Hanged God, Lord of the Gallows, from whom their kings claimed descent. To him they would dedicate a defeated army or the populations of a captured town, slaughtering men, woman, and children without exception.

Precisely what occurred over the next century is obscurely chronicled and hard to assess, but it is clear that the provincial authorities in Britain time and time again proved fully capable of inflicting severe defeats on the Saxon invaders in the field. It is a measure of fortitude of the Britons, when the whole world was subsiding beneath repeated blows of the barbarians invaders, that it was they alone who succeeded in sustaining some measure of the old order.

Small wonder that the period of the fifth and sixth centuries came to be regarded as the heroic age of the Britons, or "Welsh" as the

Saxons came to term them.

In 410 CE, the Visigoths invaded the city of Rome. This date marks the end of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Dark Ages. But the Roman Empire gradually withdrew from its furthest outposts, such as Britain, before this time. Tribes of invaders (known collectively as barbarians) moved into these furthest reaches of the empire in the centuries preceding the official fall of Rome.

In the early 5th century, the British had appealed to Rome for help when the island was invaded from the continent by the Angles, Saxons, and, and from Ireland by the Picts and Scots. Rome responded twice with military support, but the third appeal was rejected. The British, they were told, must defend themselves.

Although the fall of Rome sounds sudden and final, the end of Roman rule in Britain, and the transition to the society of the dark ages, were gradual and took several centuries. Remnants of Roman culture, such as governmental structures and social classes, remain until at least the seventh century. Latin continued as the language of the literate. Farming techniques and public architecture followed the Roman patterns. The British imported goods from across the Mediterranean into the sixth century.

This culture was overlaid onto a pagan, Celtic tribal culture. The various British tribes retained their individual identities and leaders during the centuries of Roman rule. Christianity became the official religion of Rome in 380 CE, yet local religions continued to flourish. While the wealthier classes adopted a Romanized life-style, the common people retained the older ways and had conducted some small revolts against the richer Roman-British. Several British leaders or emperors became powerful enough to send troops to Gaul on the continent, to fight against both the Romans and the barbarians.

For over one hundred years after the fall of Rome, the British fought to maintain their borders and culture against various invaders. During this time of intense change, the core of the Arthurian tales arose.

Community Arts: Crafting Relationships

by Cynthia Jones

"The primary concern here is the world we create collectively, for when we commit to bringing our deepest selves to the table, we are transformed by the act of creating something together that we cannot create alone."

From *The Answer to How is Yes* by Peter Block

This year, *Mystery School* asks you to take your place at the table. We ask you to claim your place in a story of changing times. When we come together, before we take our seat, we need to understand how to work effectively together. We need to understand ourselves and, more than that, the nature of that which we create when we come together: a weaving; a tapestry of lives, intentions, and desires. Fine needle point; each stitch is an integral part of the pattern. Threads find stability through union. None alone can be the whole. We stitch our lives together; we craft reality, community, the collective conscious and the collective unconscious. Community arts, this year, will begin with observing and understanding the nature of being together, of being in community.

As we reach for dreams of *what can be...* What we can be, what *groups* can be, what our *relationships with each other* can be; many of us discover that we learned competition, but not cooperation. We learned suspicion, but not the secret of trust. We learned to stand outside of a group rather than how to work within it.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

If that small group is going to find each other and change the world, our first task is to learn

how to get along with each other. Personal work is a process of discovering the old hurts, attitudes and places where I get in the way of my intention, and then finding a way to allow my intention, rather than my wounds, to determine my actions and interactions. A community is a group of individuals and community arts begins with self: self-awareness, self-honesty, and a desire to work well with others. Living effectively with others is a personal practice. Kindness comes from the word *kin*, to treat others as kin, as clan, as family. It means to be invested in the well being of others and in creating and maintaining relationships. These lost arts beg to be rediscovered. Now is the time for community artists to respect their skills and learn their trade.

Community arts is the art of creating a common unity, a sense of inclusion and belonging. Community arts begins with an understanding of that social animal called you...or me. The monthly article will present the ideas that were developed in the *Mystery School Community Arts* path. This path begins with the assumption that we are creatures who want to be with each other. It is our nature to create communities and clans.

Once together, we realize that there is an art to getting along. A community artist is someone who enables relationships to happen between people. A community artist creates a place where people can speak, listen and hear each other. She is aware of the individual and the group. He is aware of the way structures impact the individual and the group. As this path explores the art of creating effective interpersonal relationships, I will share that exploration here. Community arts...art: the act of crafting beauty, of creating beauty; the skill of bringing vision into form.

Cynthia offers the Community Arts path with Elizabeth Wilson, and you will find her in many other Mystery School sessions as well. She will be weaving the Camelot/Avalon stories into philosophy, philosophy into discussion, discussion into challenge and challenge into the stories. Cynthia founded Diana's Grove with Patricia Storm in 1994.



Mystery List Tapestry by Lorely Lather

As each month's *Mystery School* story and workbook are released and then discussed on our Mystery05 email list, it will be my pleasure to bring threads of our Mysteries' insights and conversations out to *Between the Worlds*, our on-line magazine. It will be my pleasure to weave those thoughts and my own thoughts into a small writing sampler of the deeper mystery story.

After all, before I can weave a huge multi-color tapestry encompassing the multiple archetypal meanings of my life and times, I must first create some small handworks. Small woven works test color combinations and clarity of design. Small samplers show me whether and how I can weave the vividness of the Avalon myth into my 21st Century life. Can Merlin's invisible threads bundle other threads together to influence the design, and therefore the destiny, of my life tapestry? Can the rich jewel-tones of Camelot's royalty be woven into my blue-jeans rag-rug weaving of a life?

Can I summarize the words of Mystery List writers in a manner that brings them to *Between the Worlds* in their true colors? I am gathering the materials - the threads and the tools - to weave a story each month of 2005. My story will be woven from the Mystery List interactions. My story will be spun from my personal

interaction to the story and workbook and from random discussions with people all around me. My story-weaving will tell where the Mysteries find threads of Camelot in their lives. My weaving will be the Mysteries' stories.

Tapestries and weaving will serve as my story structure this year for three reasons.

- First, it is fitting, as the Camelot myth brings images of castles to mind - castles decorated with massive detailed tapestries, woven by the hands of many workers over many years.
- Second, using the analogy of weaving allows diverse insights to be mentioned without judgment, much like scraps of old fabric being woven into a rag rug, with no concern for a perfect matching of thickness, texture or color.
- Third, in physical reality, I have a loom. It sits waiting for me a year now. I want to learn to use it. I see it as I walk through my "Loom Room" every day. It calls to me.

So it is that I set my intention to weaving in the Year 2005—on my waiting loom and in my stories of 21st Century Camelot. I set my intention to weaving.

Lonely Hearts: “Never doubt...”

by Cynthia Jones



If you are new to *Diana's Grove* or our on-line magazine, you might wonder why a Dog Rescue page has curled up next to an article on personal development or Arthurian legend. Who better to read about dog rescue, and perhaps adopt a noble hound, than a personally-developed Arthurian buff. Luca licks his lips and says, “Yes. Find me a home where the court dines on venison and tosses the bones over their shoulder.” Such are the dreams of a sleeping dog

If Arthur's story has a message for us, Margaret Mead captured that message in her famous statement, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” It was true for Arthur, but is it true for the rest of us? Yes, it is. I want to tell you about such a group. I don't know who they were or are. I don't know how many people it took or how long, but in 1999, the world of animal rescue changed forever. In 1999, Petfinder, a web based animal placement network, was created. It enables animal shelters everywhere - no matter how small or remote - to find families for rescued pets.

Because of Petfinder, a grassroots animal shelter movement came into being. Diana's Grove is just one of many such organizations. Before Petfinder, we took in homeless dogs...the taking in was the easy part; finding good homes...that wasn't so easy.

Dog Rescue here at the Grove began three months after we arrived in Missouri. Dora, a one year old July hound pup, appeared in our garage. She was so afraid of people that it took weeks to touch her. She hid in the garage - now the Meeting Place - and we fed her three times a day. Eventually she ventured out and joined our four King Charles Cavalier spaniels and Magic, all of whom had come with us to start the Grove. Skippy was the next arrival. She was handed to us through the window of a passing truck. “Dump this

puppy back at the bridge after we go,” a passer-by asked as they drove off. By July, we knew we would have to live up our name - *Diana's Grove* - and our title - *sanctuary*.

For the next eight years, we rescued dogs and placed them with the wonderful people who came to the Grove. Soon, every dog-friendly home that we could find had a dog...or two. The daily cost of feeding and caring for the flux of incoming and outgoing dogs became consuming. We didn't ask for an adoption fee. Dog expense were often over \$1000 a month; our dedication had become a stunning financial burden. It was difficult to care for ourselves and the dogs. We began to fundraise for medical expenses.

I won't tell you all of the crazy solutions we came up with to save the dogs and puppies in our care, but I will say they were wild and costly. Although I knew about Petfinder and the large idea that a “small group of committed citizens” had brought into being, I didn't believe anyone would adopt a dog from a website. Thankfully, I was wrong.

Petfinder is an ideal adoption format. Direct communication with people who find us on Petfinder is better and safer for our dogs that direct adoptions. Rather than seeing a dog in stressful, caged situation, a prospective owner can learn about a dog's *at-home* behavior. Shy and timid dogs have a chance of finding their ideal families. With a promise to accept the return of the dog if it doesn't work out, we find our web-based placements are wonderfully successful.

First, they aren't impulse adoptions. The placement begins as we get to know the interested family and the family gets to know the dog. Thanks to Petfinder, more and more dogs are being cared for in homelike situation. Large shelters are less stressed. Shy dogs like Frodo, this funny fellow who grins with delight when you call his name, has a chance at being loved.



Continued on page 27

Lonely Hearts... Continued from page 26

Petfinder has changed animal rescue. They have enabled countless grassroots shelters like ours to give countless pets a life and a future. We placed over 50 dogs last year. We started a "Give Life a Chance" fund to cover the emergency medical expenses for a litter of puppies that required critical care. In less than ten days after our plea, our community and their friends and families - folks who knew us and folk who didn't - donated just over \$2,000. We covered the \$1,600 emergency care bill and, then, saved Ed, our four-month-old lab mix, from an awful death from Parvo.

Eleven years after moving to the Grove, the number of dogs that we care for is about the same - 25. But, while caring for 25 dogs, many more lives are saved. Due to Petfinder, our adoption fees now cover each dog's standard medical intake expenses. Generous donations have enabled us to feed the pack.

This is thankful work! Thanks to you who sponsored a dog last year; thanks to you who will sponsor a dog in the year to come. Thanks to you who have contributed to the emergency medical fund. Thanks to you who have adopted a dog. You are a part of our "small group of thoughtful and committed citizens." You are changing the world for the creatures in our keeping.

We are one of many independent rescue centers. For Charles, pictured below, and countless other dogs and cats, the world *has* changed.

Here is the New Year's note from Petfinder.com to the shelters that it represents.

"As we prepare to celebrate the start of a New Year, we thought that you would enjoy seeing how we've grown over the past several years.

"In November of 1999, when I joined the Petfinder.com staff, there were 400 Petfinder.com member shelter and rescue groups, with the vast majority of those in New Jersey and the surrounding area. Today, you are part of a community of 8,155 shelters and rescue groups spread throughout all of the United States, the Canadian provinces, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas and Mexico.

"You are a part of the largest single animal welfare community in the world. You have garnered the support of major corporate sponsors, attracted the attention of national and local media, and most importantly, captured the hearts of millions of adopters.

"As you look back over the past year and reflect on the inescapable "coulda, woulda, shoulda" list we all tend to keep, don't linger there. Instead, focus on the great things you've done - your own personal achievements on behalf of the animals in your care, as well as the part you've played as part of this incredible Petfinder.com family. We are proud to continue to work with you on behalf of the pets.

"Have a Happy New Year - and may it be filled with many happy adoptions! - Kim"

