

The Grey School



of Wizardry

WHISPERING GREY MATTERS



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Plus the usual assortment of Dover Clip Art...

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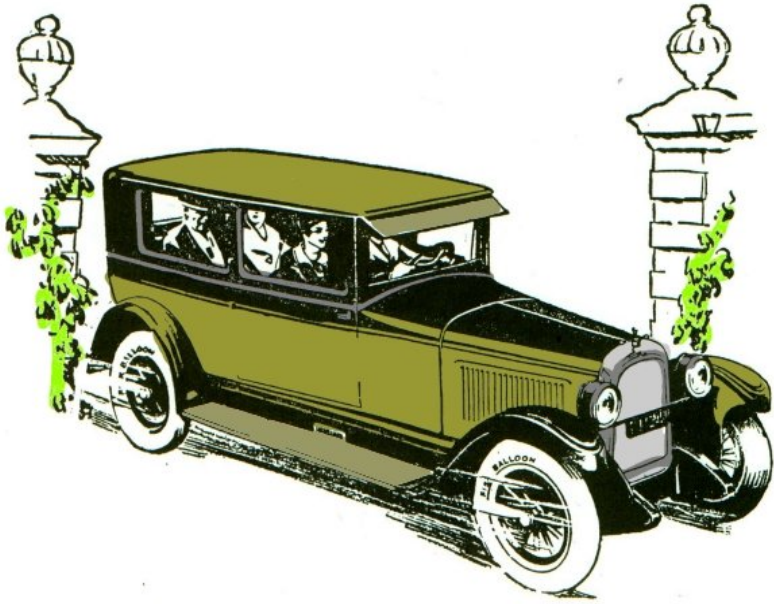


HAVE FAMILY, WILL TRAVEL

By Kristalbrooke, Order of the Dancing Flames

With the winter season here and in full swing, we all have our family traditions. Some of us have the annual decorating of the Christmas Tree while others may have the seasonal burning of the Yule Log.

As a child, we always got to open a present on Christmas Eve. We would wake up on Christmas morning, open presents and head to Grandma's house around noon. My grandma would already have opened all of the gifts on Christmas Eve and gone to Church before meeting us at her house for lunch.



The one constant we all have is family gatherings. Some of us travel long distances to spend a few days with loved ones while others may drive two miles across town on Christmas morning and return home in the evening. In my family, my younger brother and sister both have children under 2 years old. We all live within 30 minutes of one another so trying to make it easier on my siblings became an issue.

Maybe next year, we will decide to change the "Meeting House", but for this year, we will all meet at Grandma's house for food and gifts! I even hear that this year, they have a family game planned. I can't wait!

Where and with whom do you meet up for Christmas?



Merry meet, students! The previous WGM Advisor, Kristalbrooke, has been waylaid by mundane responsibilities, and so I have stepped back in to fill her shoes. We've ended up with several technical and staff glitches in getting what should have been a Yule edition of the paper out, and we apologize for being tardy. But the staff has really pulled together, and I think you're going to enjoy what you see.

We're currently restructuring the WGM Newsroom a bit, and still have many positions to fill-for both Editors and Staff Writers, as well as staff artists. Watch the "WGM Newsstand" site for details, or feel free to email me directly (Moonwriter@greyschool.com) if you are interested.

*Many blessings,
Prof. Moonwriter*

Introducing the GSW Marketing Committee

By: FrogsDancing

The Marketing Committee is a new group to GSW. It needs your help. It needs your passion and drive for this school and its continued success. It needs your belief in all things magickal. It needs for you, all students and faculty to share your imagination, ideas and thoughts on this school. It needs you!

A Marketing Campaign is beginning. Our advisor Helega De Grey has set an ambitious goal of having 1000 students enrolled by the end of March 2007. We need your help to achieve it. Do you think you have what it takes to help us achieve this goal? Then join us on the Marketing Committee.

YULE LORE

By: FrogsDancing

Yule (EWE-elle)

Northern Hemisphere – 12/21

Southern Hemisphere – 6/21

It may also be known as: Jul; Juletide; Festival of Sol; Yuletide; Alban Arthan; Feill Fionnain; Sun Return; Pagan New Year; Saturnalia and Great Day of the Cauldron.

Yule is a celebration of the winter solstice. It typically falls on December 20 or 21, but it may occur as late as December 22 or 23. It is a solar festival. Fire is often incorporated in the celebration. It is when the dark half of the year yields to the light half of the year. It is one of the eight sabbats or solar holidays.

Yule is a festival that predates Christianity. It began in the northern European lands. Midwinter in these lands is a time of short days, long nights and little light. The festival hoped to encourage the return of the sun. It was a time of feasting. Crops and trees were 'wassailed' with toasts of spiced cider to ensure fertility and abundance. The festival often included the sacrifice of a pig to the god Freyr.

Solstice Night is the longest night of the year. Starting a sunrise the next morning, the sun climbs just a little higher and stays a little longer each day. The waxing sun overcomes the waning sun.

Wiccans celebrate Yule as one of their four minor sabbats. They illustrate this time with the story of the Holly King's (old year and shortened sun) death. The birth of a son or successor, the Oak King (new year and the new sun begins to grow) occurs at this time.

Christian missionaries were encouraged to provide a Christian interpretation of this popular feast. Remember the pig sacrifice? That is where our traditional Christmas ham comes from.

People unfamiliar with pagan traditions often are not able to distinguish between Yule and Christmas. *Yule* and *Yuletide* are archaic terms for Christmas. Most dictionaries still give *Christmas* or *Christmastime* as a definition for Yule or Yuletide.

Yule Symbolism

Traditional Symbols: Yule Log, evergreen boughs, wreaths, holly, mistletoe hung in doorways, gold candles, baskets containing clove studded fruit or pinecones, a pot of wassail, poinsettias and Christmas cactus

Herbs for Yule: Bayberry, blessed thistle, evergreen, frankincense, myrrh, holly, laurel, mistletoe, oak, pine, sage, yellow cedar, bay, ginger, cinnamon and valerian.

Incense for Yule: pine, cedar, bayberry, cinnamon, frankincense and myrrh.

Colors: red, green, gold, white, silver, yellow, orange

Stones: rubies, bloodstones, garnets, emeralds and diamonds

Goddesses: Brighid, Isis, Demeter, Diana, Gaea; The Great Mother

Gods: Apollo, Lugh, Mabon, Odin, Ra, The Oak King, The Horned One, The Green Man, The Divine Child

Animals: stags, squirrels, wrens and robins

Mythical creatures: phoenix and trolls

The Science of a Solstice

The seasons are caused by the 23.5 degree tilt of the earth's axis. The earth rotates like a top, maintaining a fixed direction continuously. A point in space near the North Star is the focus point. The earth also revolves around the sun. During half of the year, the southern hemisphere is more exposed to the sun, than the northern half. The next half of the year the reverse is true. Noontime in the Northern Hemisphere the sun appears to be high in the sky during the summer months and low in the sky during the winter. The time of the year when the sun reaches its lowest elevation occurs around December 21 and is known as the winter solstice. It is the first day of winter when the night time hours are at the maximum.

Source list:

http://www.13moons.com/index.php?main_page=document_general_info_&products_id=6...

<http://www.wicca.com/celtic/akasha/yul.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yule&printable=yes>

Danish December Traditions

by Memsev



There are a multitude of Danish Christmas Traditions that we follow in my home. Many of them have a pagan origin.

On the first of December most Danes hang a 'Christmas star,' also known as an 'Advent star' in our windows. It is a large orange/red five-pointed star to symbolise the sleeping sun, and/or the star of Bethlehem. It has an electric lightbulb in it that is lit every night through December. This is also the day that my family has chosen to decorate our home.

On the first Sunday of December, a wreath of hay, completely covered with shoots of silver fir and moss, is hung or placed somewhere in the living-room. This is called 'Adventskransen' or 'The Advent wreath.' It is decorated with red and gold ribbons and there are four candles (red or white) placed in each direction (North/south/east/west) on the wreath, usually tied down with copper thread, or attached with copper spikes through the bottom of the candles. Each Sunday, one of the candles is lit, so that on Christmas day, (and Yule on some occasions) there are four candles lit. Even if Christmas does not fall on a Sunday, all the candles are lit that day (24th December, which is the day we celebrate Christmas.)

Angels are a big thing during the Christmas month, here in Denmark. We are a mostly protestant country, so the Angels are only really visible during December. They are everywhere, in store windows, on candles, in ads, in television, etc. The same is true for Nativity-scenes.

At work, or school, it is normal to arrange a Christmas Lunch, where you eat all sorts of good Christmas food, and get quite drunk on schnapps and Christmas-beer. These lunches are held from the end of November so late January.

Foods that are usually served are 'Smørrebrød'. Literally translated, smørrebrød means "spread [on] bread", and the "spread" is generally laid on to a piece of buttered rye bread (rugbrød), a dense, black bread with many seeds. Pålæg, the topping, then among others can refer to commercial or homemade cold cuts, pieces of meat or fish, cheese or spreads.

This is essentially the base on which the art of the

famous Danish open sandwich, smørrebrød is created: A slice or two of pålæg is placed on the buttered bread, and then pyntet (decorated) with the right accompaniments, to create a tasty and visually appealing food item.

Some traditional examples include:

- * **Dyrlægens natmad** (translated, Veterinarian's midnight snack) -- On a piece of dark rye bread, a layer of liver paté (leverpostej), topped with a slice of corned beef (salt kød) and a slice of meat aspic (sky). This is all decorated with raw onion rings and cress.
- * **Eel** -- Smoked eel on dark rye bread, topped with scrambled eggs and sliced radishes.
- * **Leverpostej** -- Warm rough-chopped liverpaste served on dark rye bread, topped with bacon, and sauteed mushrooms.
- * **Roast beef**, thin sliced and served on dark rye bread, topped with a portion of remoulade, and decorated with a sprinkling of shredded horseradish and toasted (ristet) onion.
- * **Ribbensteg** (Roast pork), thin sliced and served on dark rye bread, topped with red sweet and sour cabbage, and decorated with a slice of orange.
- * **Rullepølse** (Spiced meat roll).
- * **Tartarmad**, raw beef mince with salt and pepper, served on dark rye bread, topped with raw onion rings, grated horseradish and a raw egg yolk.
- * **Laks** (Smoked salmon), slices of cold smoked or cured salmon (gravad laks) on white bread, topped with shrimp and decorated with a slice of lemon and fresh dill.
- * **Stjernesud** (translated, Shooting Star) -- On a base of buttered white bread, two pieces of fish: a piece of steamed white fish on one half, a piece of fried, battered plaice or rødspætte on the other half. On top is piled a mound of shrimp, which is then decorated with a dollop of mayonnaise, red caviar, and a lemon slice.

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Another Christmas tradition is the Christmas Calendar. In Denmark, we have paper calendars with 24 small pictures/gifts/chocolates, one for every day to Christmas. I think you have these in America as well, called Advent Calendars? We also have the Televised Christmas Calendars, an episode every day, and one for each network, usually ending in a double-length Christmas episode.

Another, very pagan tradition, is the Straw Goat. It was originally made to honour Thor, but no Danish home is ready for Christmas without one of these goats, made of straw and bound in red ribbons.

KravleNisser is another tradition that is very widespread in Denmark. They are small paper 'nisser' (they look somewhat like a mix of garden gnomes and Santa's little helpers) that are made to look as if they are climbing up something, or otherwise interacting with something (e.g., a Nisse that is sitting on a swing) You tape the 'ropes' of the swing to the bottom backing of a frame.

St. Lucia day, 13th December, is a tradition that celebrates the martyr Lucia that died (ca year 304) during the Diocletian persecutions in Sykarus. She is celebrated, mainly in school and institutions, by a parade led by the Lucia bride, a young woman dressed in white with a Advent Wreath on her head. She leads a parade of young people dressed in white, each carrying a lit candle in folded 'praying' hands, while singing the Lucia song.

Here follow the songs: (Please note that the song texts are not identical from danish to English.)

Santa Lucia sangen. (Dansk)

Nu bæres lyset frem
stolt på din krone.
Rundt om i hus og hjem
sangen skal tone.
Nu på Lucia-dag
hilser vort vennelag
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia.

Her ved vor ønskefest
sangen skal klinge.
Gaver til hver en gæst
glad vil du bringe.
Skænk os af lykkens væld
lige til livets kvæld,
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia.

Sul mare luccica / l'astro d'argento
plasida é l'onda, / prospero é il vento.
Venite all'agile / barchetta mia
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia.

Klart månens stråler
havet beskiner.
Vandspejlet kruse
venlige vinde.
Stig i min lette båd,
sagte den gynger
medens jeg synger: Santa Lucia.



Song for Santa Lucia. (English)

Nightly, go heavy hearts
Round farm and steading
On earth, where sun departs,
shadows are spreading.
Then on our darkest night,
Comes with her shining light
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!
Then on our darkest night,
Comes with her shining light
Sankta Lucia, Sankta Lucia.

Night-darkling, huge and still.
Hark, something's stirring!
In all our silent rooms,
Wingbeats are whisp'ring!
Stands on our threshold there,
White clad, lights in her hair,
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!
Stands on our threshold there,
White clad, lights in her hair,
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!

Darkness shall fly away
Through earthly portals.
She brings such wonderful
words to us mortals!
Daylight, again renewed
will rise, all rosy-hued!
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!
Daylight, again renewed,
will rise, all rosy-hued.
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!

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Christmas celebrations start on the 23rd December, which we call 'Little Christmas.' This is when we put up our Christmas Tree, (Silver Fir) and decorate it. Then on Christmas Morning, which in Denmark is on the 24th, presents are given, though some families like to spread the giving of presents throughout the day, or completely save it for evening. This is the evening where we eat our Christmas Feats, usually Pork, Duck (my favourite,) Goose, seafood, and/or

Lamb, followed by the traditional Risalamande (ris a la mande, rice pudding with chopped almonds.) There is a 'almond gift' for the one who finds a whole almond in their pudding. Rice pudding is usually eaten cold, with hot cherry sauce.

This will occasionally be followed by a trip to the midnight mass if you are particularly Christian. The 25th is a 'clean-up' day, where everyone usually sleeps in and lazes about eating leftovers.

And that is the end of Christmas in Denmark.

The Forgotten Goddess of Christmas

By Ausar Sa Aset

In this day of Santa, presents and food, it can be easy to overlook one of the most important characters in the Christmas story, and that person is Mary. In this article I thought I would examine Mary's role in the Christmas story as well as discussing how modern pagans relate to her.

Mary was, and always has been, an important figure in the Catholic Church, but lately she has also been gaining prominence in the Pagan and Wiccan religions. According to the Bible, Mary was 15 when the Archangel Gabriel visited her and announced that she would become pregnant and had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus. A law at the time said that every man had to return to the place of his birth to be registered for the census, so Mary accompanied her husband, Joseph, to the town of Bethlehem. It was there in a stable that she gave birth to her child.

Now, why is all this important to pagans? Because the story of the Nativity follows the pattern of many pagan myths and legends that talk of the virgin Queen of Heaven, or Earth Mother, giving birth to the savior child of the sun in a cave. In Ancient Egypt and the Middle East, at midnight on the 24th of December, the priests would come out of a cave or dark room and proclaim, "The Virgin has bore a child." Much celebrating, feasting and gift giving would follow the next day. Another reason is that for many, Pagan or Catholic, the Virgin goddess aspect shines through the face of the Virgin Mary. After all, all Goddesses are one Goddess.

What many people seem to forget is that if it wasn't for Mary, Jesus would never have been born at all. So in some ways I believe that Mary is one of the most important people in the entire new testament. For many years people have worshiped Mary as the Theotokos, the mother of God incarnate, but she is more than that, as she is a Goddess in her own right. Some people think that the spirit of Shekinah descended on her, or that she is an incarnation of Binah, the cabalistic mother-goddess.

A ritual that you can perform for Mary on Christmas Eve is to light a blue candle, burn Jasmine and Frankincense, then repeat the time honoured call of *Ave Maria, gratia plena, dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulierbus*, which is not so different from the common Wiccan practise of 'drawing down the moon'.

So this Christmas, in the midst of all the presents and food, let's honour Mary, because we should not forget that Christmas was, and is, a religious festival to both the pagans and Catholics. So Light her a candle, read the Nativity story and remember our forgotten Goddess of Christmas!



Family Togetherness & The Joy of December

By *Laneth*, Order of the Dancing Flames

If there's anything that can be said in favor of Christmas, (ignoring the commercialism and the amazing stress levels involved, of course), it's that it brings people together.

In the stories that surround Yule and the earliest Christmases, considering it began in the Northern Hemispheres like quite a lot of world-wide traditions and holidays, this was a time of blistering cold. Oppressive winters took hold of the land, forcing a lot of villages and communities to take refuge in their homes and halls, banding together to carry each other through the harsh extremes.

Stories, food and drink was shared with old and young alike, each person as important as the next, with everyone watching out for everyone else. This was the living embodiment of the word "family".

Family - [Origin: 1350-1400; ME *familie* < L *familia* a household, the slaves of a household, equiv. to *famul(us)* servant, slave + *-ia*] - Whilst this paints an almost negative expression of the word, it does serve to point out the fact that each member works for the others, seeking to make everyone as comfortable and safe as they can be.

With the evolution of mankind, the coming of the Industrial Revolution, and the eventual Women's Liberation movement, our communities (or "Families") began to dwindle in size so dramatically that we went from sharing our world with neighbours & friends, to just those related by blood. And now, the standard family consists of Parents and Children and sometimes, maybe, the Grandparents.

Families are not limited to this small number though, as exhibited at such occasions as Weddings, Funerals and of course, Christmas.

Christmas brings the sense of giving & sharing out of people, and often results in family "gatherings", where the extended members of the family all gather together to share in the festivities and joy. Gifts are given to each other to symbolise the love we have for each other. The cousins play together and the adults sit around and share stories and smiles.

This is what Christmas is to me, and what it had always been. A number of years ago, I left home and didn't celebrate that Christmas with my family.

It had to be the worst sort of sadness I've ever felt, because it felt like I was truly alone. I did spend it with me (then) girlfriend's family, however it didn't feel the same.

Five years have passed now, and I have become accustomed to not being with *my* family, but rather enjoying the family that has presented itself to me. My partner Merka and I are doing the run-around Christmas that so many people around the world do each year; Driving from one to another family lunch and dinner, beginning on Christmas Eve and ending who knows when!

When Christmas comes for ye this year, where will ye be? It is my sincerest hope that ye will be with Family in the true sense of the word. I hope that ye will see Family, Friends and others in your community and spread between ye the cheer of the season.

And if ye do not celebrate Christmas, and don't partake of any of the traditions involved, just remember to think of your Family & Friends, because that's the main undercurrent of this season: Togetherness.

Show some random acts of kindness to your friends, members of your family whom ye might not get to see. Send an email to someone ye've not spoken to in a while, just to surprise them with the joy of this time of year. After all, this is the time of giving!

Merry Christmas, Happy Yule or Litha, Happy Hanukkah and may ye all have a wonderful New Year!



Yule in the United Kingdom

By Garwulf

In the UK, no sooner has Hallowe'en passed than the shops begin to put up Christmas decorations and the TV begins to play endless Christmas adverts. The coca cola adverts all include snowfield landscapes, and Santa in corporate colours appears daily on our screens. Christmas is coming!

Late night shopping becomes commonplace and Advent calendars filled chocolates and small toys go up everywhere. People try and be nicer and politer and schools begin to collect toys for children who have little and food parcels for old people who find Christmas difficult. Primary schools (schools for those children aged 3-10) begin to practice the nativity and church attendance goes up at least until January arrives.

With growing numbers Pagans in the United Kingdom make ready for Yule. Some will make their way to important pagan sites whilst others will gather in parks, halls or with small groups of friends and like-minded people to enact rites in keeping with their own vision or version of Yule. Without realising it or simply not admitting it both groups will suspend their normal activities to join with others in love and friendship. One group will have brightly coloured Alters the other nativity scenes, one group will don robes another group dress up in fancy dress or a Christmas characters.

One thing many Pagans and members of mundane society will do is visit the theatre in order to watch this years Pantomime: will it be *Cinderella*? *Babes in the Woods*? *Sleeping Beauty*? Most people do not care. These children's plays with their careful mix of childish fun, Christmas cheer, and adult innuendo appeal to many.

I am lucky that I celebrate both and roll it all up into one big party festival. In the UK the real Christmas spirit begins when schools break up around the 20th of December. On Christmas day houses all over the Kingdom will go through a similar ritual. Kids will awake and discover brightly covered stockings with oranges, sweets and nuts maybe even the odd toy within at the ends of their beds or above the fireplace. Parents will be awoken and then presents under the decorated Christmas trees will be opened. Next comes the arrival of other relatives or visits to the homes of friends and family. Then the big meal, Christmas crackers are pulled, paper hats worn and jokes told as people tuck into turkey, stuffing, and

roasted vegetables with gravy. Wine is drunk or maybe a brandy, cherry or shandy for older members of the household.

After this meal Christmas pudding with the odd coin hidden within is served and sometimes set alight. Then in many households the older relatives and the man of the house will fall asleep while the children play with their new toys. Tea (the evening meal) will be a buffet made up of leftovers from dinner, crisps (potato chips), nuts, cold meats, cheese and crackers as well as cocktail sausages on wooden sticks.

As evening arrives family games will be played and hot drinks offered around whilst the TV plays repeated programmes from years gone by. After eight, mints and chocolate oranges will be handed around. Christmas cheer will last until boxing day when more family get-togethers will be had and the corporate powers-that-be will get ready for New Years. Christmas and Yule is over for another year!

Christmas This Year

By Belenus

Christmas this year,
Is not about gifts, but the giving,
Not about getting, but the living.

Christmas' past,
Had their meaning,
Stereos - bikes that was the feeling.

To get what you want, the world stands with a fist,
To want what you have, now that's a new twist.

I worked real hard,
But alas, I see,
I didn't change Christmas,
Christmas changed me!

QUANTUM PHYSICS AND MAGIC

PART I

-- Jymi X/O

"Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it." -- *Niels Bohr*

"I think I can safely say that no one understands quantum mechanics." -- *Richard Feynman*

"I don't like it, and I'm sorry I ever had anything to do with it." -- *Ernest Schrödinger*

What *is* Quantum Physics, anyway? What makes it different from its predecessor, Classical Physics? Why is it so exciting to scientists and spiritualists alike, and why do so many people make *that face* when you start talking about it?



Quantum Physics refers to the rules governing very small things – Isaac Newton's Classical Physics rules work fine when you're talking about things you can see, but when you start trying to study the world of the atom and subatomic particles, Classical Physics just doesn't work anymore. For example: electrons exist in "shells" around the atomic nucleus. There are any number of possible shells, but each one is a specific distance away from the nucleus, and represents a particular amount of energy held by the electrons within it. The farther away from the nucleus the shell, the higher the amount of energy held by the electrons within it. When an electron loses energy, it jumps down to a lower shell. So far, so good – right? But here's the trick: the electron is either in one shell or another. It doesn't make a smooth transition between shells, like a car moving from one parking spot to another. An electron may have, lose or gain a very specific amount – or *quanta* – of energy: no more, no less. Until it reaches that amount, it stays in its original shell, and when it has exactly enough energy, it essentially *teleports* to the new location!

The Law of Conservation of Energy states that energy is neither created nor destroyed, but just changes form. When you push the pedals of your bicycle, you're turning the energy stored in your body into kinetic energy (energy of motion) and heat. What happens to the energy emitted when an electron loses enough energy (or *de-excites*) and 'jumps' down one or more shells? It becomes a *photon* – a particle of light! (Particles that behave like waves...sometimes...)

The electron, as one of the most common subatomic

particles, is at the heart of quantum physics. Most of us can carry on a halfway intelligent conversation about electricity, but what, exactly *is* an electron?

The existence of electrons was proven in 1897 by JJ Thomson, in his experiments with the cathode ray tube. They are negatively charged particles with a *rest mass* of 9×10^{-31} kg (that's a decimal point followed by thirty-one zeros and a nine. Pretty small, but measurable nonetheless – at least when the darned things stand still enough to be measured). Electrons aren't so much *objects* as they are *potential*. Werner Heisenberg showed us that when you look at an atom with its electrons buzzing around in the surrounding shell, you cannot know both the position and the momentum of the electron. The more precisely you know one, the less precisely you can know the other. Electrons provide the links by which just about everything is put together: atoms of various elements form molecules when the electrons in their shells form bonds with those of other atoms. These molecules then form chemical compounds, tissues, crystals, and numerous other familiar objects.

Though we know its rest mass (the mass can change when it's moving, though!), no one has yet succeeded in measuring the size of an electron: "All the known properties of the electron are consistent with the assumption that its radius is zero."¹ Most people probably think of the electron as a little sphere...and they're sort of right...in the sense that a non-dimensional point would probably be spherical, if it had any shape at all.

Like the photons it emits, the electron can behave as if it were a particle in some situations, and a wave in others.

Now wait a minute. How can something be a wave and a particle at the same time, and how can something with no dimensions be a major constituent of our three-dimensional world?!

Next issue:

THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVATION...

...WATCH THIS SPACE! (So it doesn't disappear!)

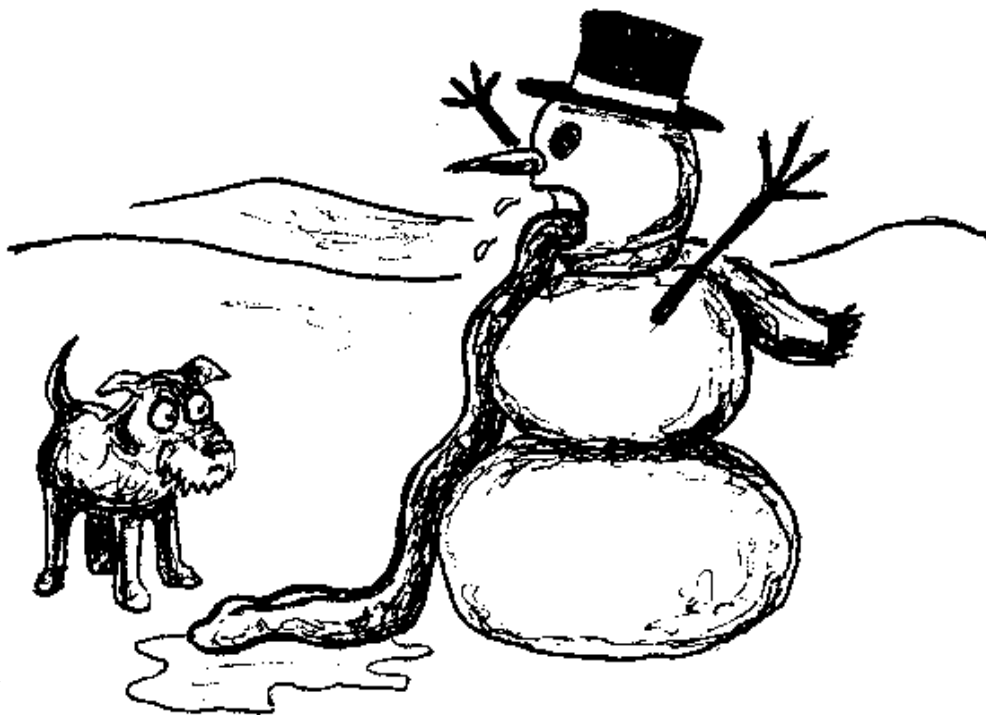
SOURCE:

¹<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/on-line/electron/section1/properties.asp>

Joyous Yuletide, How do we get there?

By Areeya,
The Circle of the Standing Stones

Okay, how do we throw off the Samhain transitional challenges and get to the Yule joy? I don't know about you, but for myself, it can involve some serious reprogramming. Like any good challenge, the time before Yule can be seen as a tough season without the sun and growth, rather than a necessary time of stillness. Hopefully we realize it's our time to lie fallow and make the necessary adjustments of spirit to be reborn into a new evolution of self at Yule. I for one, am not always ready to go down that road gracefully.



Alright, where and when do we start, on our road from a fallow seeming season to joyous Yule? For me it is a time of reflection that I start in my home, which leads to my heart and spirit.

Before I can really participate in my Yuletide festivities, I must reflect. Taking a moment here and there between the holidays to pull off to the side of our great nations speedway of commercial holiday goop. In my moments of reflection, I look at where I've been, what I've accomplished, and I also take a good hard look at what possible (almost inevitable) baggage I have picked up along the way. What, if any, little nasties I could be carrying (i.e., unhealthy eating habits, slacking on keeping one of our greatest gifts -- the body -- fit and bursting with wellness).

I contemplate if I have picked up über-vices (i.e., depression, esteem issues or any self deprivation of the stagnant sort). Enough I say! Time once again to dump that which is no longer necessary in the cycle of self evolution. So as I make my list of holiday feasting, I take the time to make a list for feeding the gestating spirit (i.e., candles, an obsidian egg, perhaps a few new smudge sticks).

I clean and sweep out my house, rearrange the furniture and put up decorations. These very mundane-seeming actions can assist me in sweeping out impurities of the mind if I only focus on that idea while sweeping the floor and air: cleansing the environment in preparation for a new season of rebirth. Then too, perhaps a bit of yoga, or any type of moving meditation that not only keeps the body fit in Mundania, but aligns the body with mind and spirit while releasing of their toxins.

Transitions may not always be pleasant, but living the Wheel of the Year brings joyous understanding of the beauty of laying fallow then gestating before rebirth. Once again transitioning from Samhain to Joyous Yuletide! But that's just this writers opinion! How do you do it?



"Eir and the Rune" by Tyrssen



The Holidays are a great time to have the family get together and relax. A great way to relax is to watch a holiday movie. I would like to share my personal favorites with you.

Let's go with the Classics first:

1. *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946) – What list of holiday movies would be complete without this all time favorite. Frank Capra's and Jimmy Stewart's story of George Bailey. George learns the true meaning of Christmas from an angel.
2. *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947) – This is the original and in my mind the best version of this story. Edmund Gwynne plays Kris Kringle. Maureen O'Hara is the store employee and mother that does not believe in Santa. Natalie Wood is the daughter who learns to believe in Santa. The 1995 version with Mara Wilson as the daughter was just too cute for my tastes, but my kids enjoy it.
3. *Holiday Inn* (1944) – Stars Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire with music by Irving Berlin. Crosby and Astaire are of course song and dance men who run an inn that is only open on holidays.
4. *White Christmas* (1954) – Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney, with Irving Berlin's music. Crosby and Kaye are two war buddies, who start a song and dance team. They go on the road with a sister act and find an amazing challenge at a Vermont hot spot.
5. *A Christmas Carol/Scrooge* (1951) – My personal favorite of this story. I think that Alastair Sim plays the perfect Ebenezer Scrooge. No one else has ever performed or understood Scrooge so well.

Now something for the kids and the kid in all of us.

- 1.) *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (?) – What list of children's Christmas movies would be complete without this one. Snoopy and the gang celebrate Christmas. You know you all rushed home to catch this one on TV before video and DVD was around.
- 2.) *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966) – This is the original cartoon version with Boris Karloff's narration. The 2000 version stars Jim Carrey in the title role.
- 3.) *Frosty the Snowman* (1970) – Jimmy Durante tells the story of the snowman accidentally brought to life.
- 4.) *Frosty's Winter Wonderland* (1976) – Andy Griffith tells the story of Frosty's return and his taking of a wife.
- 5.) *Annabelle's Wish* (1997) – Annabelle gives her Christmas voice to Billy, a boy who can not talk. Randy Travis narrates.
- 6.) *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) – The Muppets do Dickens. Sir Michael Cain helps out by playing Scrooge. This is a fun version of the classic.

The '70's gave us "claymation" and "stop-motion animation". Who can forget the following?:

- 1.) *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* – Burl Ives narrates this tale of misfits.
- 2.) *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* – Fred Astaire tells the story of how Kris Kringle got his start.
- 3.) *The Year Without a Santa Claus* – Santa feels forgotten and decides to cancel Christmas. My favorite characters in this one, Heat Miser and Cold Miser. Mother Nature is pretty neat too.
- 4.) *Rudolph's Shiny New Year* – The Baby New Year disappears. Rudolph got to rescue him in time for New Year's Eve.
- 5.) *The Little Drummer Boy* – Greer Garson is the storyteller for this one. An orphaned drummer boy learns how to give.
- 6.) *Jack Frost* (1979) – Of all the films presented, this one has the most pagan feel. Buddy Hackett narrates this one. Jack Frost falls in love with a human girl, Elisa. Jack becomes human to try and win her heart.

I am sure that you all have your own favorites. Enjoy them with your family this holiday season.



Tai Chi Chuan



By Belenus

In one of my first courses at the Grey School, I was asked to explore meditation, a wizardly practice if ever there was one. I chose to focus on Tai Chi Chuan, which has become in vogue with today's baby boomers, always looking for ways to stay young and healthy. As a method of meditation, the Chinese martial art form, Tai Chi Chuan incorporates bodily movement, breathing and focus as a way to calm and focus the mind, relieve stress and improve health. Although many of the schools today, purport to teach traditional Tai Chi Chuan, they have, in reality, removed one of the basic cornerstones to the practice, the martial aspect. Tai Chi Chuan appeals to me because it combines many of my interests and addresses many issues that I no doubt share with vast numbers of other humans today.

"The Mandarin term "Tai Chi Ch'uan" translates as "Supreme Ultimate Boxing" or "Boundless Fist." It is an art form said to date back many centuries," (Wikipedia, 2006). Traditional/orthodox Tai Chi in its martial aspect, teaches how to change or adapt in optimal ways in order to render an attacker harmless. This would seem to relate to the Wiccan principle of "harm to none," as one could presume that self-defense, even by use of force, would hold up to this ideal. It is interesting to note that the symbol of the yin and yang, which has been adopted by many in the magickal community, has its origins in Tai Chi Chuan. In fact, this symbol, the circle with one half dark and the other half light, with a small aspect of the other in each half, is the Tai Chi Symbol! This reinforces the nature of attack and defense as a major aspect to Tai Chi. Tai Chi training might also include weapons training, two person tournament sparring and breathing exercises.

"Following the principles of Taoist 'internal alchemy', the goal of Taoist Tai Chi is to return the body and mind to its original pure and healthy state. (This relates to the magickal community, as alchemy is a goal of many wizards and magickal practitioners). "Emphasis is put on being kind, generous and helpful to others and releasing one's own stress and worries. Taoist Tai Chi has been described as a form of 'meditation in motion' where the continuity of its

movements, combined with the devotion of one's undivided attention, heal and revitalize both the body and mind" (International Taoist Tai Chi Society, 2006). Again, this is in keeping with some of the basic goals of a wizard.

Tai Chi has a "practical connection to and dependence upon the theories of Sung dynasty Neo-Confucianism (a conscious synthesis of Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian traditions, especially the teachings of Mencius) is readily apparent to its practitioners," (Wikipedia, 2006). Some major health benefits of practicing Tai Chi consistently over time are becoming apparent. These include, "favorable effects on the promotion of balance control, flexibility, longevity, cardiovascular fitness and reduced risk of falls in elders. Also reported was reduced pain, stress and anxiety in subjects, as well as benefits for those who suffer from heart failure, high blood pressure, arthritis and multiple sclerosis. It has also been shown to reduce the incidence of anxiety, depression and overall mood disturbance," (Wikipedia, 2006).

In the Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard, Oberon Zell-Ravenheart states, "Meditation is the most important foundational skill (for the wizard) to learn, as it will help you be able to do many other things... What you are trying to do in meditation is to completely "center" yourself into a still and focused place where you are perfectly balanced and in tune with your body and your surroundings. From this center point, you will then be able to move in any direction in mind and body -- even through time and between dimensions." Tai Chi Chuan, which trains one to begin with movement and then bring one into center and stillness, is a viable meditative technique for use by a Wizard or other magickal practitioner. Tai Chi Chuan will calm and focus the mind, center the life force and allow for the heightened awareness that a Wizard needs to practice magick, commune with the unseen, or by applying the martial aspects, show heroism and mercy by defending someone who is helpless. Think of Gandalf defending the fellowship and keeping the forces of Mordor at bay (Tolkien, 1954). Here was a wizard who was put in a situation requiring force as well as magick and wisdom.

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Try to Remember Others

By Xyaida, Order of the Dancing Flames

At this time of year we find ourselves more and more in a hibernation stage. The world outside is dying in front of our eyes and decaying into the fertile earth we'll need in the spring. The holidays come flying in with the celebration for the darker part of the year.

In the past, households were made up of generations. The young were watched and cared for by the elderly, while the middle ones were out doing the chores or earning the money. With the lifestyles changed to such to an independent mentality, where families have no intentions of staying unified, we have lost a lot of what family really is.

I am a firm believer that it takes a community to raise a child. Since the division of family in a generational environment, we need others besides just family to help raise our children. The teachers who have them during the weekdays, their friends' parents, their parents' friends, the coaches, crossing guards, bus drivers, neighbors and all those other outside influences...all these people help make up what our children learn and experience.

Society has also helped take from the parental abilities to be more active in teaching and raising their children. Most households have both parents working outside of the home. Children are often guided to being independent as well in environments where it is normal to see adults so intensely busy with so many responsibilities. Families able to have at least one of the parents home are lucky to be able to share their experiences with their children a bit easier.

At this time it is nice to reflect on those who have helped us to become who we are. There used to be a time when a story from Grandma's past would be more entertaining than any cartoon just because it was from Grandma. To see the past through her eyes was a way to learn about your own family history. You can learn from their life lessons and figure out what you can take from it yourself.

Taking a moment to catch up with an elder, a neighbor you haven't really had time for, a child who you'd like to have a memorable moment with for you both to remember; this is the time for that. Take a moment to try to unite with the ones who have been involved with your life and should be remembered. If you live too far, pick up the phone or actually write a letter. If your family is gone or you aren't close, find that tie that still binds you to home and have a moment of remembrance. Maybe even take a moment with one of those elderly people who you know has been left alone for the most part.

Often around this time of year we tend to reflect on ourselves and what our lives have in store. Others do

the same thing as well, even in the mundane world. If we all took a moment and put in some effort to acknowledge those to whom we normally give little thought, all involved will feel better. The elderly usually have some pretty cool stories to share and most tend to enjoy being able to, if they have someone sincerely listening to them.

So during this Yule-tide season see if maybe you can make a difference in someone's life. A few minutes of your time can make a huge difference in someone else's life and you never know what you may learn.

Happy Holidays Everyone!



HERBAL SPOTLIGHT

By Kahulawe

Mistletoe

For small children decorating the Yule Log and would-be lovers secretly hoping to steal that first kiss, for all who celebrate this season of renewal and promise, Mistletoe is an enduring symbol of love and rebirth.

In Norse mythology, Mistletoe is associated with Frigga, the Goddess of Love. The Vikings believed it possessed the power of resurrection. Frigga's son, Balder, the God of Peace, is murdered by Loki, the contriver of all fraud, in a fit of jealousy. Loki tricks Balder's blind half-brother, Hoor, into shooting Balder with an arrow made from mistletoe. Overlooked because of its smallness, Mistletoe was the only plant that had not promised to never hurt Balder; the dart kills him instantly. When, after ceaseless entreaties by Frigga, Hermod, the God of the Underworld, restored Balder to life, the delighted Frigga blessed the mistletoe and kissed all who passed under it.

Mistletoe was especially venerated by the Celtic Druids, as well: they believed the herb could perform miracles. On the sixth night of the new moon following the winter solstice, the High Priest would cut mistletoe from the oak with a golden sickle. The Druids believed the precious mistletoe would be contaminated if it fell to the ground, so they carefully collected it in a special white cloth. The Priests then sacrificed two white bulls, prayed, and distributed sprigs of the cherished evergreen to the people to protect them from evil spirits and storms. Both cultures thought Mistletoe a sexual symbol and aphrodisiac; they oft included it in love and fertility rituals.

Though the juice from Mistletoe's berries is toxic, even deadly to small children and animals, this parasite nonetheless boasts several medicinal applications. *Phoradendron Flavescens*, American Mistletoe, should **never** be used internally, however, its European counterpart, *Viscum Album*, is beneficial in the treatment of both circulatory and digestive system disorders. Both varieties are effectively used in compresses for leg ulcers and varicose veins. **DO NOT USE:** If pregnant, suffering with protein hypersensitivity or have a chronic progressive infection like TB or HIV.

Masculine Mistletoe is widely used in protection magick. Also known as Herbe de la Croix, Witches Broom, and Donnerbesen, Mistletoe can aid in conception, capture immortality and open locks. Beneath your pillow it will bring restful sleep and sweet dreams. "Wear it around your neck to attain invisibility." Hang the Mistletoe, light the Yule log, and mind your manners. Yes, there is etiquette to be observed. While the kiss yet lingers on the lips, the man must pluck a single berry from the plant above; when the berries are gone so is the Mistletoe's power to bring love. And a damsel who desires to wed must be kissed below the evergreen, or yet another year will pass before a wife she'll be.

Wishing all a season overflowing
with joy, promise and love.

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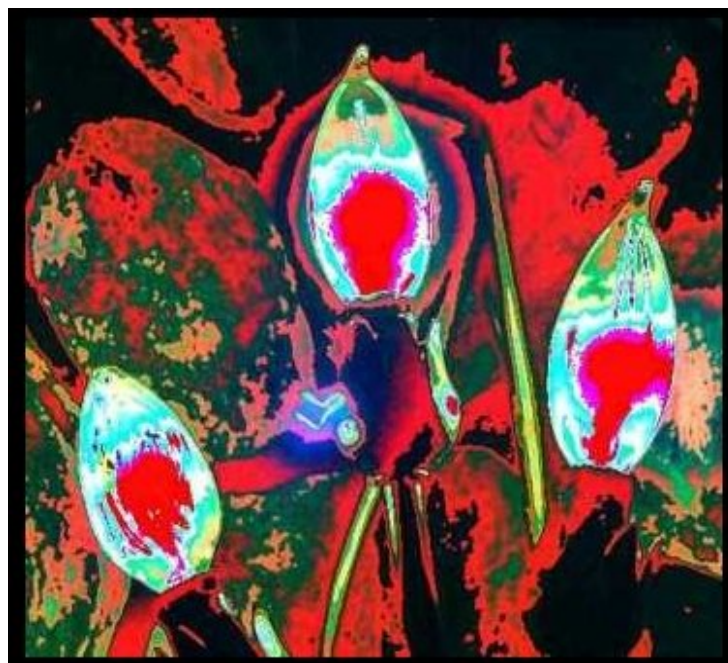
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THE MUCH MORPHED MYTH OF THE YULE SPIDER

By Kizzandra

I started this story with a very clear thought in my mind. I wanted to share a rather beautiful story of the Ukrainian Yule Spider, which has been accredited as being the inspiration of tinsel.

My Nana used to tell me this one at Christmas time as a means of seeing nature's wonders for what they are. It runs like this:

A poor family does not have enough money to decorate their tree at Christmas. Lacking any other form of adornment, they clean the house well, removing all dust, bugs and spiders. When they come down in the morning, they find that the spiders have returned and have spun small webs all over the tree, which are trapping the frost. In the morning light, these webs are sparkling and shining in gold and silver, which restores their spirits. In memory, Ukrainian trees proudly carry spider webs. Inspired by these webs, tinsel was invented in Germany.



<http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-LZKLBFA5dKsXz.ftsC0Gjho2EQ--?cq=1>

Not quite remembering all the details my grandmother told me, I jumped online (GOOGLE is my co-pilot) and was amazed to find how many times this story has been morphed depending on what the story-teller was trying to say -- for example...

- The spider is ani-morphed and 'feels sorry for the family and wants to help' or is 'so excited *she* accidentally ruins the tree' by leaving webs all over it.
- The spider is personified by transformation into a winter spirit who decorates the tree before turning back into a spider before morning.
- Some stories have a winter king, or winter spirit, who changes the web into gold and silver thus solving poverty as well as hope and beauty. Some stories change this winter king to Santa, St Nicholas, the Christ child or Jesus – who blow magic kisses.
- The words *Yule* and *Christmas* are used interchangeably
- The tree is inside or outside, or is an evergreen, or is bare. It is *always* a tree, through.

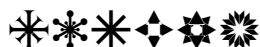
Personally, I like this plain, unvarnished story as it reminds me to see the everyday magic – little miracles of nature that can form the pattern of understanding and recognition of our world.

Which one do you like?

GAMEROOM

Who am I ?

I am pleasantly plump.
 I am worried about global warming.
 Jimmy Durante narrated my Tv special in 1969.
 There is a song written about me.
 I carry a broom but don't sweep the floor.
 I never walk around without my hat.
 I use coal, but not to heat a house.
 I have a cute button nose.
 I am a jolly happy soul.
 I am made of snow.



Complete this code sequence by adding the missing number.

3 5 9 ? 33 65



Who/What am I?

Sometimes I am one before I'm one.
 When I'm under one I, and others are given the same name. Males and females have different titles.
 When I am over one but remain young these names change.
 Between the ages of one and two males and females can also be given the same name.
 When I am fully grown I am called another name.
 All through my life people give me a name that is personal to me.
 I am 8 and a male.



ANSWERS ARE ON PAGE 25!

Word logic

What word has a similar meaning to the first word and rhymes with the second word?

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|------|
| 1. Fruit | ----- | Gate |
| 2. Stopper | ----- | Fork |
| 3. Sphere | ----- | Wall |
| 4. Instrument | ----- | Carp |
| 5. Groove | ----- | Blot |
| 6. Price | ----- | Lost |
| 7. Lean | ----- | Shin |
| 8. Link | ----- | Fond |
| 9. Face | ----- | Tile |
| 10. Loan | ----- | Send |



Food Recipes

By Xyadia

Vegan:

I got this recipe from a family member who tries to eat extremely well balanced meals. She uses this as a veggie dish so I thought this would be good here.

Beans and Greens:

4-5 leaves of Swiss Chard (reg. or red)
 1 small bundle of dandelion leaves
 ½ bag of fresh spinach
 1 can of Butter beans
 1 can of Navy beans
 1 small onion, diced
 2-3 tomatoes, diced
 ½ t. crushed garlic (sometimes more, depending on taste)
 1/8 t. – ¼ t. oregano and basil

She starts out with a little olive oil in a frying pan and sautés the onions and greens until the greens are very limp and the onions translucent. She then adds the tomatoes and beans with the rest of the spices.

(This would make it non-vegan but she has used chicken broth in this recipe as well and skips adding the tomatoes; it really tastes good like that too.)



Vegetarian:

I got this recipe from a seasonal camper at Brushwood who makes this a lot for our pot luck dinners.

Corn Casserole:

1 can of whole corn, drained
 1 can of creamed corn
 1 16 oz. container sour cream
 1 box of corn muffin mix
 1 stick or butter

Mix all ingredients together and put into a small casserole dish. Bake at 375 for 35-45 minutes. (I have had this with sautéed onions in it as well and it was pretty good.)

Omnivorous:

I have been making this for so long I don't even know where I got it from.

Landmines:

2 *thin* round or chuck beef steaks
 1-2 packages of bacon (depending on how thick and how much steak)
 1 packet of Mushroom and Onion Lipton soup mix (maybe two, again depending on how much steak is being used)
 1 small onion, largely diced (optional)
 ½ of a small package of fresh mushrooms (optional)
 toothpicks

I personally find this best made in the crock-pot but I have also made it on the stove top in a Dutch oven.

With a meat tenderizer, pound the steaks even thinner than they come. Once pounded out, cut the meat into 1" strips and wrap bacon around each one to form a pinwheel effect. Put 2 toothpicks in each one to hold them in place and toss them into the pan. Add the soup mix and appropriate amount of water as per package directions. At this time I add the veggies.

If in the crock-pot, cook on low for about 6-7 hours. If on the stove top I cooked it on a low flame for an hour and half or so (basically until it was cooked thoroughly.)

I suggest having this with mashed potatoes and a side salad. The juice can easily be thickened into gravy.

Food For Thought

from Skye

NAIL IN THE FENCE

-- Author Unknown

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say 'I'm sorry', the wound is still there."

FALCON

By Belenus

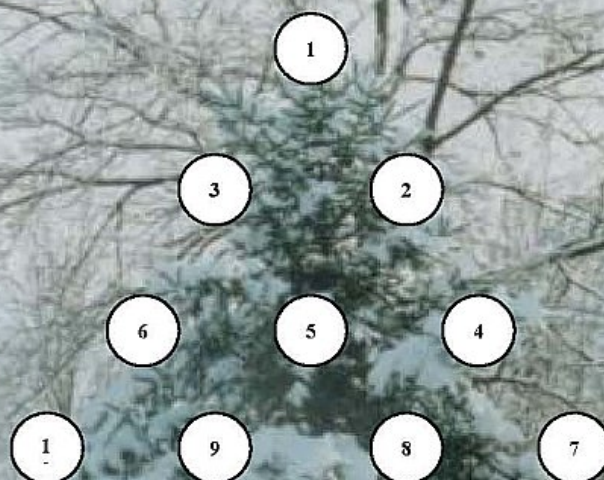
From the mist, gracefully he lands
My outstretched arm, his perch
My old friend's come back
It's been more than years
Lifetimes, yes, lifetimes have passed

Waves of delight return
Good to be reunited
Such peaceful days remembered
Reminded by my friend in a final goodbye
Then away he sores, beyond the shore
Fading into grey



The Opportunity Tree

An original Tarot Spread by **Kizzandra**



Welcome to the Yule Tarot spread

In the midst of winter, Yule is a celebration of life and family. Good food, love and laughter are everywhere yet, it is also a season that takes it's toll on the frail of mind body and spirit.

A central image for me at this time is the pine tree. An evergreen, the pine is prolific and reminds up of the hope of the sun and warmth to come. Pine has correspondences with Magical energy, protection, purification, daring and endurance. The spreading branches carry many cones, just as our lives carry many opportunities. Just as the near future is easy to see, the distant future is shrouded with the branching probabilities.

Sometimes the biggest learning is the result of overcoming obstacles!

The Spread:

This is a long read, and can be done with a partner or your family. It takes 73 cards from a 78 card deck so you'll need a big table to lay them out.

Shuffle the deck using your preferred method. If you are new to tarot and don't have a preferred shuffling method, try shuffling the deck and fanning them out on the table. Then select the cards at random from the fan.

Start at the top of the "Tree". Place the first Card at the apex in position '1'. In the next row, place a card each in positions '2' and '3', and so on increasing by 1 card each row. I haven't shown all rows in the illustration – you will need to lay out 12 rows for the 12 calendar months of the year.

The Read:

Let's look at the basic format using cards 1,2 and 3. Card 1, is where you stand now. Cards 2 and 3 represent 2 opportunities that your present position may lead you to next month. Did you get two 'good' cards? Or is one or both less than appealing to you? Sometimes we let fear stall us or prevent us from looking at the ultimate benefits to be gained from taking a hard road. Don't give up! Think "What if?" and lay out the next month.

For each triangle of 3, the apex card will lead you to the opportunities held in the adjacent base cards. They in turn become apex cards to lead you to more opportunities throughout the year. They overlap and multiply just like the branches of the tree.

Can you trace the path you want to take through the year to come?

THE WIZARD'S DUEL

By: *FrogsDancing*

Once upon a time, there was a Wizard's duel. It is a tale of two countries, France and Algeria. It is the tale of two religions, Christianity and Islam. It is also a tale of two wizards, Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin and Zoras-al-Khatim.

Following in the footsteps of the Spanish and the British, the French were seeking to become a major colonial power. They became interested in the North African regions bordering the Mediterranean Sea, partly because of their own coastline between Italy and Spain that also bordered the Mediterranean Sea. The regions also shared active roles in the Crusades and both had at one time been incorporated into the Roman Empire.

The French sought to convert their new colonies into citizens of the French Empire. They hoped that these citizens would understand and use the ideals that French civilization had to offer. This included the French religion or practice of Christianity. French imperialism at this time was an effort to regain lost power.

The first Algerian kingdom was believed to have been created by the Berber chieftain Massinissa, between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Numidia, as this kingdom became known flourished as part of the Roman Empire.

In the 5th century AD, after the Romans leave, the Donatists-a North African Christian sect, were able to establish a short-lived independent state.

Algeria was invaded and conquered by the Vandals a little later in the 5th century. The Vandals maintained control of Algeria for approximately 100 years. Emperor Justinian's Byzantine army drove out the Vandals.

Justinian had planned on restoring the Holy Roman Empire to the region. The expansion of Byzantium was stopped by Arab conquest and the spread of Islam during the 7th century AD. These changes changed the character of the North African regions.

The Berbers, had initially resisted the Arab invasion, but eventually surrendered to it. They quickly embraced Islam and formed their own Islamic government in the 8th century.

Once the powerful Berber empires collapsed, it created a power vacuum in the region. With no one power in control piracy rose in the area that would become known as the Barbary Coast. From 1400-1830 coastal cities, like Algiers would hire fleet corsairs to seize merchant vessels.

North African piracy forced the Spanish to occupy and blockade several ports that were believed to be pirate friendly. These ports were forced to pay tribute to Spain. This Christian occupation forced the Muslim populations to seek help from the Ottoman Khalif. The Khalif responded by sending a strong naval fleet, that was able to drive out most of the Spanish.

Khayrad'din Barbarossa became the sultan's official representative in Algeria in the year 1518. The Algerian corsairs, with Ottoman protection were able to dominate the Mediterranean Sea for centuries.

In 1684, Louis XIV ordered the city of Algiers bombarded in order to retrieve Christian slaves believed to be in the city.

The British and the Dutch combined forces in 1816. With their combined forces they were able to almost totally destroy the entire Algerian fleet.

Since 1815 when peace had been restored and piracy stopped, relationships between Christian France and Muslim/Islamic Algeria remained very tense, to say the least.

French consul Pierre Deval reported to his king an insult that he believed that he had suffered at the hands of the Dey. Hussein, the Dey of Algiers, had struck the consul with his fly whisk in response to a statement made by the consul regarding the repayment of a debt owed by his country.

Charles X, king of France, is believed to have used that insult to the French consul as one reason for his invasion of Algiers. The French were able to take and occupy the city quickly. French troops reportedly raped, looted, desecrated mosques and cemeteries.

These acts ignited a resistance movement against the French. Resistance was especially noted in the Algerian desert areas. Two wars were fought between the French and the rural Algerians between 1832 and 1837. The Berbers united under the leader Abd-al-Qadir.

A third war was fought in 1840-1841. When the French were unable to defeat the Berbers under al-Qadir, they began to use terror tactics. These tactics included the destruction of wells and crops. In 1847 al-Qadir finally surrendered.

Algeria had been annexed to France, despite intense resistance at home. The French chose to use land ownership incentives to draw French citizens to the colony. They also attempted to 'modernize' their new colony. The colonials were encouraged to exploit Algeria's agricultural resources for France.

Officially, the Algerians were French subjects. Citizenship was denied to them, unless they renounced Islam and converted to Christianity. The French colonials believed that the Muslim populace was inferior. It believed that it was an underclass that needed to be tightly, very tightly controlled for everyone's sake.

Muslims were not permitted to hold any public meetings. They could not bear arms. They were not able to leave their villages or own districts without government permission. This brutal, racist regime alienated the majority of the Algerians.

Marabouts, Muslim holy men, members of an Arabic sect, were actively stirring up dissent, in the 1850s. Marabouts combine Sufi mysticism and the Sunni intellectual concepts into one practice. They are seen as a unifying cultural and religious group. It is believed that the Marabouts contain "baraka", a supernatural power or gift. Marabouts were able to blend Islamic beliefs with pre-Islamic religious ideas. Marabout can refer to any religious leader or even to a religious leader's grave.

Zoras-al-Khatim was just one of the Marabout leaders pushing for a revolution against the French. The Algerian wizards were considered to be among the most highly accomplished. It was believed that they could eat glass without injury, cure wounds miraculously and even defy death. Anyone who could command the power and respect of a Marabout would be obeyed.

What was France to do? France desperately wanted to avoid conflict. Its army was exhausted. It could not afford the loss of life, or the financial burdens that quelling a rebellion would bring. But, it did not want to give up its colony.

Napoleon III knew that something needed to be done. But what to do? He and his French Foreign Office came up with a plan. Why not fight fire with fire, so to speak. They called Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin out of retirement to provide a command performance, for a gathering of superstitious Arab chieftains.

Who is Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin? He is considered by many to be the "Father of Modern Magic." Robert-Houdin was a clock maker. He had always had a keen interest in magic. He became a working magician at age 40. He was considered to be very good.

He was known as a true innovator. He was one of the first magicians to perform in theaters or halls. He also performed in evening clothes, tuxedos for example. In making these changes, he managed to bring an air of respectability to the art of magic that it did not have before. If he wanted an effect that

did not exist, he would often create or if he had to, invent it. He was using electricity and magnetism long before these new sciences became common place outside of a laboratory setting. He continually pushed the current known technologies to their limits. He was using electromagnetism, when it was only in its infancy in some labs. He was able to see connections that could be made between science and magic and the benefits of both.

Robert-Houdin was always quite clear about what he did. He described himself as a conjurer. He never claimed to have or possess any genuine, supernatural power.

The French government was hoping that Robert-Houdin would be able to prove that the Marabouts had no real power and remove their influence from the chieftains. It was hoping to avoid war.

Robert-Houdin arrived in Algiers on September 27, 1856. It was a time of festivals and fetes in the country. He had about a month to set up the theater, to practice and to prepare. His first performance was scheduled for October 28, 1856.

The French wizard had planned a series of tricks that he hoped would appear like miracles to the Arabs. He started with small tricks, so as not to frighten his audience too much. He would produce coins from thin air and then send them flying over the audience to land in a crystal box. As the performance progressed, each trick became bigger, seeming to require more of the wizard's power. When he pulled a cannon ball from his hat, this appeared to give his audience pause. They may have been thinking, if the French had wizards that could pull ammunition out of thin air, could they win the coming war? Would their Marabouts be able to do the same? But we will never know for sure. The show went on.

For his next trick, he walked down the center aisle of the theatre producing sweetmeats in a silver cup that had been empty. Once the cup had been emptied and refilled a number of times, he emptied it one last time and then waved his hand over the empty cup and it revealed to be filled with hot coffee. This trick was repeated numerous times to satisfy the crowd.

The French wizard had held back three tricks, that he hoped would startle or maybe even terrify his audience. He was here after all to demonstrate his 'supernatural' power.

He called for the strongest man in the audience to come forward to the stage. He had taken out a small box with brass handles. He asked the strong man to lift it. This was easily done by the strong man. The wizard commanded the man to try and lift

the box again after casting a spell on him. The strong man was unable to lift the box.

At this point, the strong man became very upset. He continued to pull at the box with all his strength. With a wave of the French wizard's hand, the man's legs buckled. The strong man fell to the floor screaming in agony. The wizard walked over and picked up the box as if it weighed nothing at all. The crowd sat in awe. The strong man fled the theater in shame.

I am sure that you have guessed that the French wizard used electricity and magnetism to pull off this trick. The box contained a metal plate. A very strong magnet had been placed under the stage. Once, the wizard flipped a concealed switch, the box became "glued" to the floor. By having another switch flipped, an electrical charge had been sent through the brass handles, to bring the strong man to his knees.

For his next stunt, Robert-Houdin claimed that he had a magic item that would protect him and make him invulnerable. This claim was too much for one of the Marabouts. He charged the stage intent on killing Robert-Houdin. The wizard gave the Marabout a cavalry pistol and ammunition to inspect. He asked the Marabout to mark the bullet in any way he felt like, so that it could be identified. The Marabout was then asked to load the pistol.

The wizard placed an apple on the tip of a knife, while standing a few yards away. He instructed the Marabout to aim for his heart and then waited calmly. The shot rang out. The French wizard showed the audience the apple. It contained the bullet. The Marabout was invited to inspect the bullet. It was the same one he had marked. He grabbed the apple and refused to return it. He was convinced that he now had an item of great power.

The audience was beginning to believe in the French wizard's powers. It was at this time that Robert-Houdin broke the cardinal rule of all magicians. He had the interpreters that had been placed in the audience explain how each and every trick was done. He emphasized that it was skill and deception not supernatural power.

One more test awaited our French wizard, before his

trip to Algiers would/could be considered successful. He was summoned/invited to be a guest of Sheik-Bou-Allem-ben-Shenfa-Bash-Aga. The sheik was known and regarded as a great desert warrior. The sheik's Marabout, Zoras-al-Khatim wanted to prove the French wizard a fraud.

Robert-Houdin delighted the Sheik, his family and other guests, with sampling conjuring tricks over dinner. Making coins appear and disappear was a favorite and often requested trick. At one point, he was able to make it seem as if he had made the Marabout's watch disappear and reappear. These tricks and the Sheik's obvious delight in them only angered the Marabout further.

Zoras-al-Khatim could contain himself no longer he challenged the French wizard to a duel. He believed that the wizard was unprotected, because his magic apple had been taken from him in the city.

The Sheik was angry that a guest of his should be challenged so, but the wizard said all would be well. He requested six hours in prayer to prepare himself. It was granted.

At the appointed time, the wizard and Marabout loaded their pistols together and paced off. The Marabout, turned, took quick aim and fired. When the smoke cleared, the wizard smiled calmly and broadly to reveal the pistol ball caught in his teeth.

Now the wizard aimed his pistol, at a wall near the Marabout and fired. The Marabout was puzzled by this, at first. The wall was dripping blood! He went to the wall and tasted it to be sure. It was blood. The Marabout hung his head in utter defeat.

Robert-Houdin defeated the Marabout and averted a war for France. Not bad for a wizard.

That is the story of the Wizard's duel. How did he do the final trick? That is a secret. Remember the cardinal rule of magicians, never reveal your secrets. Alright, if you must know, remember the six hours of prayer the French wizard asked for. Let's just say he didn't spend all of it in prayer. He created two 'bullets' from wax and lampblack. He filled one with blood from his own finger and the other was made hollow so it destroyed itself as soon as it was fired. Pretty clever, huh?

Source list:

http://www.arab.net/algeria/aa_early.htm
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GAMEROOM Answers

Who am I?

Frosty the snowman.

Code: 17. Multiply the number by 2 then take 1 off.

Who am I?

A Stallion.

Word logic

1. Date
2. Cork
3. Ball
4. Harp
5. Slot
6. Cost
7. Thin
8. Bond
9. Dial
10. Lend

Winter Solstice Spell

By: FrogsDancing

Supplies:

Small amount of Holly Berry Oil

Small amount of mistletoe

Small piece of clean, blank paper (parchment is ideal if you have it)

1- Red candle of your choice

1 red pen, colored pencil or even crayon

Small cauldron or other receptacle suitable for holding burning material

To be performed on the night of the Winter Solstice:

On your paper/parchment, write a single word in red. This word should represent a quality about yourself that you would like to enhance with the dawning of the Yule Sun.

Sprinkle the mistletoe into the center of the paper.

Add 3 drops of the Holly Berry Oil on top of the mistletoe.

Twist the paper closed with the oil and mistletoe on the inside.

Light your red candle.

Visualize your quality being enhanced; light your paper package from the red candle's flame.

Place in cauldron or other receptacle.

As it burns envision your wish being fulfilled.

***The Waters***

by Belenus

*The Waters always call
Though I am not listening
I know they're there
Waiting*

*Waiting for my answer
That I will come to play again
For that is what water is for
That is the purpose of the shore*

*No matter how far I wander
I always come back one day
The waters are there, of course
And I play!*



The Magician: Continuance of the Ritual for N.
(circa 1971)

by Tyrssen