

ACRIMONY

December 2003

\$3.00

*Arizona
Witches Ball
2003*



*Also in this
Issue:*

*The Ankh
Theban Script
And Much More!*

Kara of Reliquary

Reporting on the Alternative, Gothic, and Paranormal Scenes
<http://www.Acrimony.org>

Acrimony

December 2003 - Volume 1 - Issue 5

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From the Editor:

There was an error in the November 2003 issue of Acrimony. The story, "Creepy Errie Places" by Atreyana Star should have cited the photos belonging to Dark Passage at www.darkpassage.com. Acrimony apologizes for the oversight.

To the Editor...

It is unfortunate that the once popular event GothCon has degenerated into what it has now become: a theatre of goths unable to get along or agree. Art imitating Life.....

Jason Westmore

Yes, it is unfortunate. The future of GothCon is uncertain, however there are a multitude of other Gothic conventions across the United States and the world - many of them with less *Acrimony*.

Hunter's Moon was good! Acrimony has a good mix of fact and fiction.

Jennie Ashton

Send your email and comments to editor@acrimony.org

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DARK DECADE

The Poetry and Prose of Dan Shaurette

Arizona Witches Ball 2003



by **CT Thompson**
ctthompson@acrimony.org

It had been several years since Phoenix, Arizona hosted a Witches Ball. Balls in the eighties and nineties did well in Arizona, but in recent years attendance declined sharply at similar events due mostly to infighting within the Arizona Pagan community.

I was pleasantly surprised to see almost 400 people in attendance. I was expecting far fewer, somewhere in the range of 150. The ball was held at the luxurious Crown Plaza Hotel and the \$35 per person



Attendees of the Witches Ball at the Crown Plaza Hotel

ticket included dinner, dancing, and entertainment.

The evening started a little late, but that is nothing new to these events. Crowd members joke about the organizers being on PST (Pagan Standard Time) and that everything will be running 20 to 30 minutes behind. After everyone settles into the hall, Barbara Brown takes the stage and opens the evening. Her vocal talent is immense and it is a pleasure to listen to her sing as we wait on our waitress.



Vocalist Barbara Brown

There were only 2 choices for dinner, Chicken Asiago or Pasta Santa Fe (a vegetarian dish). I opted for the chicken. Drinks weren't included with dinner and that perturbed me more than a little. Drinks at the bar were \$4.

The meal was fine, or at least it wasn't bad. I was expecting a little bit better. By this point the belly

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dance troupe *Egyptian Cartouche* had taken the stage. They were very fun to watch. A good belly dance performance is always a treat.



Egyptian Cartouche

The final entertainment act was the Phoenix band *Reliquary*. I had never heard this group before but after they were onstage I recognized two of the band members: Loki and Surreal from another Phoenix band *Paris Burning*. Later investigation revealed these two have several projects and like to keep themselves busy.

Reliquary was good, very gothic in tone and lyric. Kara fit the gothic bill and my only criticism is that she had very little stage presence. She moved very little from her position behind the microphone.

It has now been about an hour since I have finished dinner. Looking relentlessly for a waiter to no avail, I finally find one and order a cup of coffee. A DJ takes the stage over and dance music begins.

I was disappointed in the lack of ceremony and ritual. I was expecting far more from a Samhain event. The evening had been promoted in the following manner:

It is our goal to provide an elegant event and celebration of Samhain for Arizona Pagans, Practitioners of Magick and those walking the Old Path. We hope to honor the Ancestors



Reliquary

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through the spiritual celebration of Samhain while also providing dinner and entertainment. We are committed to do this at an affordable price for those attending in a non-profit support of the Pagan community.

I didn't feel the organizers lived up to that promise. Dinner was okay. The stage performers were a little better. The DJ music was poor. There was nothing ceremonial about the evening. My group grew tired and we left early.

Based on the turnout at this year's event, I am confident there will be another ball next year. Hopefully

the organizers will build on what they did this year and create a better overall event.



Official websites, credits, and stuff:

<http://www.azwitchesball.com>

Morgiana
Director of Egyptian Cartouche
(480)967-8031 or (480)363-0521

<http://www.reliquary.org>

All Photos by CT Thompson

The Ankh



by **Dan Shaurette**
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<http://www.ShauretteNet.com>

Since my early childhood, I have been fascinated with the ancient Egyptians. The grandeur of the pyramids, the mystery of the Sphinx, and the secrets of the hieroglyphs. The symbol that is the most fascinating to me is the "ankh". I have been collecting ankh pendants for about a decade now. I have included some photos of the most unique in my collection. I also always wear one around my neck.

The ankh itself has an interesting history and there is much debate over its symbolism and meaning. The design of an ankh is that of a tau cross (from the Greek letter "T" it resembles) with a loop at the top. Traditionally that loop is egg-shaped, but often in modern artwork the ankh's loop is styled into a circle. It is also commonly known as an "Ansaté Cross", which derives from its Latin name, *crux ansata*, or "handle-shaped cross". Its various names and shapes make it difficult

to trace all origins of the ankh because there are other symbols that look like an ankh but are different. The astrological female symbol for example, which is a perfect circle with a "+" cross beneath it.

In the simplest terms, the ankh is the Egyptian symbol for Life. But to simply define it that way leaves it to be just as vague as the word "life" itself. Many have defined it as either the essence of life, or as broadly as eternal life, or immortality. Many paintings in Egyptian tombs depict their gods and goddesses holding anks. For the gods,





it would seem to represent their immortality. Ankhs were also inscribed on many Egyptian sarcophagi, especially among the pharaohs. For the Egyptians, who were obsessed with the afterlife, they may have considered it a physical key to the underworld.

When you examine the shape of the ankh, it is easy to see that it was also a fertility symbol. The egg-shaped loop represents a woman's womb. While the T-shaped cross is a phallic symbol of the male sexual organ. Their combination represents the union of the male and female and is a blessing for fertility.

Fertility does not simply apply to the Egyptian population themselves. They saw the great Nile River as their source of life. Prayers for fertility of their crops were blessings of the Nile, and ankhs were chiefly used in those practices.

Besides being carved or painted on walls as a hieroglyph, there has been speculation that ankhs were carved from wood or

stone and used around the home. Perhaps they were a blessing for a long life, good health, and happiness. Some scholars have suggested additional uses. Ankhs may have been used when taking an oath, such as we swear upon a Bible today. Another theory was that they could even have been used as a spindle for primitive kites!

One thing is sure; it has become a sacred symbol and is common throughout the world.





Alchemist texts often depict a staff with an ankh at the top. I have seen caduceus drawings, the serpent en-

twined wings of medicine and health, where the ankh bears the wings itself.

The ankh has gained popularity in modern gothic circles thanks to Neil Gaiman's depiction of Death of the Endless in his tales of the Sandman. Also the very popular story-telling role-playing game system Vampire: The Masquerade by White Wolf has given it new life as well. (Dare I add that a bat-winged ankh of my design is featured on the cover of my novel, LILITH'S LOVE?)

Such a potent symbol still finds use today, thousands of years after its initial use. What else would you expect from a symbol of enduring life?



All Photos by Dan Shaurette

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Teachings of the Major Religions



by **Michael Ramses**
ramses@acrimony.org

Without a doubt, humans have been searching for the reason of their existence since humans could think and ponder. While science attempts to explain away the wonders of the Universe, theologians and men led by their faith have for several millennia put divinity to the test. Today many would argue morality and the worship of the creator are declining, yet these religions have held followers for centuries.

Hinduism

Hinduism has had several incarnations throughout its existence. Classical Hinduism (the most current evolution) started approximately 3500 years ago. Hinduism teaches that all people have souls and these souls are endlessly reincarnated. The reason for this is karma. Karma is penance for the

misdoings of the soul. It is the duty and purpose of the soul to escape the chains of karma by emancipation. There are three paths and requirements for this emancipation:

The Path of Duty

This is the erasure of emotion and self. All is sacrificed for duty. Man walks throughout life serving his family, social, and economic obligations.

The Path of Knowledge

This is the use of meditation and yoga to gain a true, unobtrusive, clear insight to one's relationship with God.

The Path of Devotion

This is a life-long devotion to the worship and service of God. Physical objects are rejected and total subservience and reverence of God are the goal.

Hinduism teaches that the only true reality is one's inner reality. Sin is not looked upon as evil, but rather distraction or pollution that needs to be cleansed.

Buddhism

Buddhism is approximately
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2500 years old. Buddhism differs from Hinduism views in that Buddhism teaches there is no soul. There is no internal reality. Buddhism is an emptying process. The end result is a state of nonbeing. Buddhism holds four Noble Truths:

1. All existence is subject to misery.

2. Misery originates from our inner desires. We seek pleasure that reinforces being instead of nonbeing.

3. Cravings of pleasure can be eliminated.

4. By understanding the true nature of man's psyche, man evolves by adhering to the eight tenants: right seeing, thinking, speaking, acting, living, effort, mindfulness, and meditation.

Nirvana, the ideal state of Buddhism is achieved when man totally escapes the confines of his mind and ego. When this is achieved, he is freed from the cycle of reincarnation.

Christianity

Christianity is approximately 2000 years old. Modern day Christianity does not teach reincarnation yet examples of karma can be found throughout the bible.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:7-8

In this letter to the Galatians, Paul furthers the Hindu and Buddhist belief that materialism and the flesh lead to corruption, but the nonmaterial leads to eternal life. Sin and evil are conquered through confession, atonement, and repentance.

Islam

Islam is approximately 1400 years old. Islam began with God's creation of the first man Adam. The meaning of Islam is submission and obedience to Allah, the Creator of all. Islam believes in the soul, but not in karma or reincarnation.

Man must resist his urges and temptations and serve only God. Everything than comes from within man is evil. Only Allah is good. Man's evil has rippling consequences that affect everything on the earth. For this reason, all men must serve Allah and only then will widespread good be seen.



The Christmas Tree

I
stand
decorated
externally, only
outwardly putting
on the front of joy and
glory but underneath it all
I just want to be left alone
and lately, I feel artificial
but still, I stand there quietly
wearing your gaudy decorations
your flashing, cheerful lights and
hoping that I can be part of something
that might bring joy to your family
if
I
can

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Poem excerpt from the upcoming collection, DARK DECADE. Visit <http://www.dark-decade.com> for more poetry and prose by Dan Shaurette.



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Once in a Blue Moon



by **Dan Shaurette**
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As the song goes, "every once in a blue moon, I do something right." I imagine we all feel that way sometimes. But have you ever wondered when you can expect to find a blue moon (so you'll know when you can expect you'll finally get it right?) Well guess what -- we can't even seem to get that right!

There are two known methods for determining a blue moon. One is quite old and is the one that purists prefer (but as you will see is confusing). The other is quite recent and is most commonly known probably because it is fresh in our collective memory from a reliable source.

It's the time of the season (for confusion)

The Maine Farmer's Almanac is credited with printing the original definition in 1937, although research shows earlier uses of the term at least another 100 years prior

to this. There are normally only 12 full moons in a year. This means there are normally only three full moons per season. But a rare occurrence happens when a season can envelop four full moons.

Due to the fact that the first, second and last moons in a season have definitions and names (primarily for religious or calendrical purposes) it is *the third full moon out of four in a season* that is rare. When the compilers of *The Maine Farmer's Almanac* would list when the full moons were going to be, they used a colored symbol for each one. The third full moon of four during a season was colored blue in print, and this is one story of the origin of the term "blue moon".

Because this will only happen during seasons, the months that can have such a blue moon are February, May, August and November. If we use this method of calculating a blue moon, then there was one on February 19, 2000. The last one was either in August or November of 2002. There was some uncertainty because of when the seasons begin according to different sources.

The earth's orbit around the sun is elliptical, which gives us seasons of unequal length. Spring and summer last slightly longer than autumn and winter in the northern hemisphere. Because of this, an astrono-

mer is likely to observe that a blue moon would occur in spring or summer because the odds of one of these seasons bounding four full moons is higher.

On the other hand, *The Maine Farmer's Almanac*, defined the start of each season according to the "Right Ascension of the Mean Sun". This is a system that averages out the amount of time during the earth's orbit, simplifying each season to equal length. Truly these systems only differ by a few days, but a few days difference between starts of seasons can change where the full moons appear during that season.

Because of their equal length season rule, *The Maine Farmer's Almanac* said that the 2002 Blue Moon was November 19th. However, astronomical research based on the U.S. Naval Observatory data showed that the 2002 third full moon of four was during the summer on August 22nd, so that would have been the proper Blue Moon.

September's full moon, which landed on the 21st, was the point of contention. Astronomically speaking, the Autumnal Equinox did not arrive until September 23rd, so September's full moon was the last one of the summer of 2002. *The Maine Farmer's Almanac*, listed the first day of autumn as Sept. 21st derived that they occurred on the same day, and therefore this was the first full moon of autumn 2002. This in effect extended autumn to be large enough to hold four full moons, asserting then that November's moon

would have been the third of four.

Sky & Telescope magazine confused things even more

Thanks to a misinterpretation of this rule published in the March 1946 issue of *Sky & Telescope magazine*, and then repeatedly used afterwards, we have a new (and completely different) rule. An article was written that attempted to explain when a blue moon would occur. Instead of giving the rule, the author attempted to observe when it fell. (Seeing how much confusion we have with when seasons start, I can understand why.)

As a result, he determined that the *second full moon in a month* was considered a blue moon. This tends to happen about as often as determined by the original rule, except about a year earlier! Not only that, but following this rule, you can actually have two blue moons in one year. Moreover, confusion will set in over which months have the blue moon because of when a moon is "full" in which time zone.

Following this second rule, 2001 had a blue moon. But depending on which time zone you lived in, you would find it in different months. Specifically, if you lived in the USA, between Chicago and the West Coast, we enjoyed the blue moon on October 31st. Folks between New York and Moscow found it to be on November 30th. Should you be further east than Moscow, the blue moon was on December 30th. This tricky calculation comes from the fact

that you have to determine when the moon is "astronomically full".

Here in Arizona, there was a full moon on October 2 and October 31st. But that moon on October 31st here wasn't "full" in New York until after midnight their time. Therefore it was not the second full moon of October, but the first full moon of November. Since it looks full on October 31st and November 1st, it probably makes no difference. Most calendars and almanacs are printed assuming Eastern Standard Time, so they marked the full moon on November 1st and claimed the November 30th moon to be blue.

Don't let these rules make you loony!

So when is the next blue moon? If you were an astronomical purist, almanac farmer or follow ancient rituals, you would probably agree it is on August 19, 2005. If you read Sky & Telescope, or just want the easiest most common rule, the next one will be July 31, 2004. Personally, I say celebrate them both!

The following table lists all of the full moons for the next few years. The full moons listed in bold are blue moons based on the above rules. The times of day given in the table are in "Greenwich Mean Time" (GMT), also known as "Universal Coordinated Time" (UTC), or "Zulu Hours"; so don't forget to adjust for your time zone and Daylight Saving rules. In the U.S. this is the following:

Eastern (EST) = GMT-5, Central (CST) = GMT-6, Mountain (MST) = GMT-7, and Pacific (PST) = GMT-8. Arizona is always GMT-7 and Hawaii is always GMT-10. Daylight Saving Time adds one hour and starts on the first Sunday of April and ends on the last Sunday of October. In practice, we "spring forward and fall back" at 1:59 A.M.

Full Moons	2004	2005	2006	2007
Jan	7th at 15:40	25th at 10:32	14th at 9:48	3rd at 13:57
Feb	6th at 8:47	24th at 4:54	13th at 4:44	2nd at 5:45
Mar	6th at 23:14	25th at 20:58	14th at 23:35	3rd at 23:17
Apr	5th at 11:03	24th at 10:06	13th at 16:40	2nd at 17:15
May	4th at 20:33	23rd at 20:18	13th at 6:51	2nd at 10:09
June	3rd at 4:20	22nd at 4:14	11th at 18:03	1st at 1:04 & 30th at 13:49
July	2nd at 11:09 & 31st at 18:05	21st at 11:00	11th at 3:02	30th at 0:48
Aug	30th at 2:22	19th at 17:53	9th at 10:54	28th at 10:35
Sep	28th at 13:09	18th at 2:01	7th at 18:42	26th at 19:45
Oct	28th at 3:07	17th at 12:14	7th at 3:13	26th at 4:52
Nov	26th at 20:07	16th at 0:58	5th at 12:58	24th at 14:30
Dec	26th at 15:06	15th at 16:16	5th at 0:25	24th at 1:16

More lunacy from naming the moons

For your reference, I have assembled a list of the common seasonal names for each full moon. Remember, many religious holidays (like Easter) and festivals (like Mardi Gras and Carnivale) depend on seasonal moons. This is by no means the "correct" list of names for the moons, as many different regions and cultures have their own names, sometimes associated by the calendrical month not the season.

Some almanacs conflict on naming conventions even with regards to the seasons; take the Harvest Moon for example. Some say it is the first full moon of autumn; meaning on or after the autumnal equinox. Others claim it to be the full moon closest to first day of autumn; in other

words, it could come days before the autumnal equinox.

Table of Common Seasonal Moon Names

Winter 1st - Moon after Yule
Winter 2nd - Wolf Moon
Winter last - Lenten Moon

Spring 1st - Egg, Easter, or Paschal Moon
Spring 2nd - Milk Moon
Spring last - Flower Moon

Summer 1st - Hay Moon
Summer 2nd - Grain Moon
Summer last - Fruit Moon

Autumn 1st - Harvest Moon
Autumn 2nd - Hunter's Moon
Autumn last - Moon before Yule



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Table of Starts of the Seasons

These dates and times are the astronomical observances in GMT, so again please adjust for your time zone and daylight saving rules as above.

Year	Eostara	Litha	Mabon	Yule
2003	March 21 01:00	June 21 19:10	Sept. 23 10:47	Dec. 22 07:04
2004	March 20 06:49	June 21 00:57	Sept. 22 16:30	Dec. 21 12:42
2005	March 20 12:33	June 21 06:46	Sept. 22 22:23	Dec. 21 18:35
2006	March 20 18:26	June 21 12:26	Sept. 23 04:03	Dec. 22 00:22
2007	March 21 00:07	June 21 18:06	Sept. 23 09:51	Dec. 22 06:08
2008	March 20 05:48	June 20 23:59	Sept. 22 15:44	Dec. 21 12:04
2009	March 20 11:44	June 21 05:45	Sept. 22 21:18	Dec. 21 17:47
2010	March 20 17:32	June 21 11:28	Sept. 23 03:09	Dec. 21 23:38



Did you know?

Hawaii is the only state in the union that uniformly chooses not to observe Daylight Saving Time.

While the state of Arizona does not observe DST, the Navajo Nation in Arizona DOES. This is due to its large size, which locates it in three states, so they chose to observe it throughout their sovereign nation.

Central Indiana does not observe the change and always remains under Eastern Standard Time. This is because the western portion is in the Central time zone and does observe DST, so when it jumps ahead it is the same time as Central Indiana. The eastern part of Indiana observes it, so when it sets the clocks back, it matches Central Indiana (back to Eastern Standard Time.) This gives many people the illusion that Indiana changes time zones.

The territories of the U.S. that do not observe the change are American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

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Theban Script



by **CT Thompson**
ctthompson@acrimony.org

Three Books of Occult Philosophy by Cornelius Agrippa. Published in Antwerp in 1531, Agrippa wrote that the alphabet was attributed to Honorius.

Today, Pagans of all kind use Theban Script to encode text in their Books of Shadows. Witches also use this alphabet to create amulets or talismans by carving symbols on various items such as stones or wood.

Theban Script is an alphabet with no associated language. The origins of its creation are unknown. It is theorized that it was created as a cipher for Latin sometime prior to the 11th century. This makes sense, as each symbol corresponds with a Latin letter.

During the middle ages occultism and witchcraft were highly taboo. Magicians of the time would have wanted to hide their writings, and it is thought that Theban Script served this end.

Theban Script is also sometimes referred to as the Runes of Honorius, the Witch's Alphabet, Witch Writing, and Witch's Runes. Some modern-day witch covens proclaim that Theban Script is intertwined with witchcraft throughout the ages. The first known appearance of this alphabet was in the book, The

Ū A

Ÿ B

Ŵ C

ᄁ D

Ŷ E

Ƶ	F	ƹ	O
ƶ	G	ƹ	P
Ʒ	H	ƹ _h	Q
U	I	ƹ _h	R
U̇	J	ƹ	S
ƹ	K	ƹ _h	T
ƹ	L	ƹ	U
ƹ _h	M	ƹ̇	V
ƹ _h	N	ƹ	W

Uⁿ X Λ 7

W_{hm} Y 8 8

W_h Z 9 9

1 1 0 0

Z 2

3 3

4 4


5 5

6 6



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Calendar

December 1st Kalends of December, Poseidon, Cromniomancy

Today is the Greek festival of Poseidon - god of earthquakes, the sea, and rebirth.

The rite of Cromniomancy may be performed by young women on this day. It involves discerning the identity of a woman's future husband by divination through onion sprouts.

December 3rd Bona Dea, Cybele, Rhea

Today is the Roman festival of the good goddess. It's traditionally celebrated only by women.

In ancient Greece, today was sacred to the goddess Rhea, or Cybele.

December 4th Pallas Athena

Today is the festival of Pallas Athena. Athena is the goddess of wisdom and of the arts.

December 5th Nones of December, Lucina

Lucina, a pagan goddess of light and childbirth, is honored on this day.

December 6th Thor, Nicholas

Today is the festival of Nicholas, an aspect of Odin - leader of the hunt who rides the heavens on a chariot drawn by reindeer. Nicholas has become the contemporary Santa Claus.

In Gnostic tradition this is a day to attain a higher spiritual dimension through sexual experimentation.

December 7th Haloia of Demeter

This day marks the Greek observation Haloia of Demeter. Demeter, the mother goddess of all things, had a beautiful daughter Persephone. Hades carried Persephone off to the underworld, and Demeter wandered the world for nine days in grief for her lost child.

On the tenth day, the all-knowing sun told her of the abduction of Persephone. She made the earth barren in her anger and threatened to destroy mankind by starvation until Zeus permitted Persephone to return to stay with her for part of the year.

December 8th Astraea, Full Moon in Gemini
Today is sacred to Astraea, the Greek goddess of justice.
The Moon becomes full in Gemini at 3:37 p.m. EST.

December 10th Lux Mundi, Liberty
Today is the Roman festival of Lux Mundi, the light of the world.
Today is also the observance of the French goddess Liberty.

December 11th Arianrhod
This day is sacred to Arianrhod, the Celtic moon goddess.

December 13th Ides of December, Runic Half-month of Jara begins
The rune Jara is of completion and union between spiritual and temporal elements.

December 14th Nostradamus
Today is the remembrance of the French mystic and seer, Michel de Nostradamus. Nostradamus was born in Saint Remy de Provence on this day in 1503 AD.

December 15th Alcyone, Beginning of the Halcyon Days
Today is the festival of the Greek goddess Alcyone, the first of the halcyon days, when peace reigns.

December 16th Sapientia, Eve of Saturnalia
Today is the festival of Sapientia, for the goddess of wisdom. Tomorrow is the first day of Saturnalia.

December 17th Saturnalia
The Roman festival of Saturnalia begins today, a time of sexual license, extravagance, and general debauchery.

December 18th Epona, Second Day of Saturnalia
The Celtic goddess Epona, the patroness of horses, is honored on this day.

December 19th Opalia, Third Day of Saturnalia
The festival of Opalia, in honor of the Roman goddess Ops, is celebrated on this day. Ops is a goddess of the abundant harvest.

December 20th Mother Night, Fourth Day of Saturnalia
Tonight is the Norse festival of mother night, 'Modresnach', when dreams are prophetic. It is traditional to decorate pine trees on this night to represent the tree of life.

December 21st Yule, Midwinter, Alban Arthuan, Fourth Station of the Year, Fifth Day of Saturnalia

Today is the Druidic festival of Alban Arthuan, Arthur's Light, when gifts are bestowed on those less fortunate than ourselves. It is the birthday of King Arthur.

The Yule log is lit from the remains of the old year's fire today, a symbol of the commencement of the journey from winter's darkness back into the light of spring. On the evening of Yule, young women seeking lovers can announce their intentions by standing beneath a sprig of mistletoe.

The Fourth Station of the Year is a time of enlightenment, when light is reborn in the womb of darkness.

December 22nd Winter Solstice, Celtic Tree Month of Ruis ends, Sixth Day of Saturnalia.

Winter Solstice occurs at 2:04 a.m. EST. This is the shortest day of the year.

December 23rd Secret of the Unhewn Stone, End of Saturnalia, Acca Larentis, Hathor, New Moon in Capricorn

Today is the only day of the Celtic calendar not ruled by a tree.

Today is also the Roman festival of Laurentina, the goddess of the dead and of seed corn, patroness of the year and life to come.

The Egyptian goddess Hathor was honored on this day.

The Moon becomes new in Capricorn at 4:43 a.m. EST.

December 24th Celtic Tree Month of Beth begins

The month of Beth, the bitch tree, is a time of purification and birth.

December 25th Goddess Month of Astraea Ends, Dies Natalis Invicti Solis

Today is the Roman celebration of 'Dies Natalis Invicti Solis', the birthday of the invincible sun.

Several Teutonic legends include witches who appear on this day, Lutzelfrau and Perchta.

December 26th Hunting the Wren, Goddess Month of Hestia begins, Yuletide, Horus

On this day it is traditionally permissible to hunt wrens, no matter what local laws or custom provide on other days of the year. The tradition is that a captured wren is to be placed in a box, and referred to as a king by passersby.

This is the first day of Yuletide.

The Egyptian god Horus is honored on this day.

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December 27th Freyja

The Norse goddess Freyja is honored on this day. Freyja is a fertility goddess, and is said to be exceedingly fond of cats.

December 28th Bairns Day, Runic Half-month of Eoh Begins

Today is the least lucky day of the year, and no work should be undertaken.

The rune of Eoh signifies the dead.

December 29th Day of Nymphs

Today is the Greek festival Day of Nymphs, in honor of Andromeda, Ariadne, and Artemis.

Andromeda is the daughter of Cassiopeia. Cassiopeia was obliged to chain Andromeda to a rock as a sacrifice to a sea monster sent by Poseidon. Perseus rescued her and took her as his wife. Their wedding was interrupted by Phineus, to whom Andromeda had been promised. Perseus used the head of a Gorgon to transmute Phineus to stone. Athena would eventually place Andromeda amongst the stars.

December 31st New Year's Eve, Hogmanay, Asatru Twelfth-night, Cwn Annwn

Today is the Scottish festival of Hogmagog, the god of the sun. At the last minute of the old year, all doors should be opened to release the spirits of the year gone by and as much noise as possible made to drive them out.

In Welsh tradition, the 'Cwn Annwn' - the dogs of the underworld, prowl the skies on this night looking for victims. They can be driven off by shouting, sounding horns, and banging on pots and shields.

Ask Scarlett!



by **Scarlett Crawford**
scarlett@acrimony.org

Dear Scarlett,

My parents won't allow me to dress in the black and darker colors that I prefer to. To others, this may seem like a trite problem, but when I was forced to start wearing lighter colors, I felt naked. I see the darker colors as comforting and protecting, and also a way to seem closer to mother earth. I got some darker clothes (a few shirts) from a friend and a thrift store, but my mother found these and threw them away. What I think is unfair is the fact she threw away about \$100 of clothes that I had bought with my own money. She says wearing these clothes makes people think I'm "evil", but they know me and were more freaked out when I suddenly started wearing lighter clothes.

Devil in a (light) blue dress,

I say that as long as you are dependant upon another, you must

play the game by their rules. In your letter, you do not state your age, but if you are truly so miserable in your mothers house, then get a job and move out. If you are too young to legally move out onto your own, they pay your own way at home. You will be amazed at how financial independence is equivalent to social freedom. As for your feeling naked in the lighter shades of clothing, I must wonder if this just isn't a manifestation of your need to fit in with your friends. Mother Earth is not all dark colors; think of the beautiful blue of the sky, the fiery orange of the sunset, or the bright green of a blade of grass. It is the common perception of our culture to view dark colors as representing evil. We have phrases such as "the darker side of life" and "good guys were white"

Dear Scarlett,

I am at a total loss. I have been married to my husband for almost 10 years and we have 4 beautiful children. We have problems, but not the usual ones. He is an excellent provider and a faithful man. The issue is that he is emotionally vacant. It feels like I live with a roommate that occasionally watches the kids. His childhood wasn't terrible, yet it lacked emotional bonds, just like his adult life does. He has no friends and isn't emotionally intimate

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with anyone, not even me. This is not the kind of life I want to live. It isn't bad, and to everyone else our family looks fairly idyllic, but I just feel that my children are being starved of "father love", and I am afraid that my son will learn this dysfunction from his father. Maybe I am just over reacting; after all I have a very intimate relationship with the kids. Maybe that is enough and I am just one of those women who are never happy. What do you think I should do Scarlett?

Starving mom,

More importantly then what I think you should do, you need to decide what you need to do. I suggest you take a step back and evaluate your situation. You need to evaluate what your life would be like without this man in it. So he is not perfect. Is there a perfect man out there, does he exist? I don't think so. Is your husband aware of your dissatisfaction? He cannot work to change if he isn't aware that a deficit exists. If he feels that he is intimate with you then you need to show him examples of what intimacy looks like to you, since you two clearly have different pictures of it. Maybe with some guidance he can become all that you want him to be, but then again, maybe not. Change is very difficult to make happen and even harder to maintain. So you need to look at how your life is today with your zombie like husband compared to the other options, of course the option where you meet Mr. Perfect isn't a viable option. You might see that while your marriage isn't what you want it to be, it beats the other

options. So he isn't giving you or the children what they need from him, find a substitution for him. Find a friend to take the kids to the ball field, provide them with an "uncle" type person to help fill the void. You really need to decide if this one lacking factor is important enough to you to change, and risk, everything else you and the children have.

I do not believe in perfection, nor do I hold to the thought of perfect happiness. I believe in life you must choose between the lesser of the evils, for what seems joyous today can seem hellish tomorrow. I suggest that you urge your husband to seek council with a certified therapist to work out some of his childhood issues. You state that he does not have friendships with people; I believe this to be a very telling sign. In order to be a good father, he needs to learn how to connect with his children (and other people) and how to maintain those relationships. It sounds to me as if he simply doesn't know how, and as these are learned skills, the childhood that you describe sounds as if inter personal skills were not valued very highly and therefore not esteemed.

You need to sit down and think very carefully what your moves will be as it is not just your life you are making decisions for, but the lives of the four children that will be greatly impacted by your choices. What will your life look like if you leave your husband? Of course, you can not predict the future completely, but many aspects of it will be apparent. Evaluate your financial situation, as

it will certainly change. If you have to work, then your young children would have to be in day care and away from the only person truly connected to them. Is that what's best for them? There is no easy answer here; you simply have to weigh out the pros and the cons of each possible outcome.

If you have been married for 10 years and you still do not have a relationship with this man, I think you need to take a good hard look at yourself. Why is it that you are willing to settle for this? A relationship like the one you describe is certainly not healthy, and very probably abusive. I believe that emotional neglect is just as much a form of abuse as physical neglect is. I will go out on a limb here and suggest that your father was very similar. I'll bet that your Dad was either not physically in your life, or if he was around that he was just like your husband; just a shell of a person. You need to examine why you are choosing to repeat this pattern in your life. Remember that you are in total control of you, and if you CHOOSE to stay with him the way things are, that is your choice.

Dear Scarlett,

My wife wants kids, I don't. We've been going round 'n round about this for almost a year. Any suggestions?

Condom King,

HELLO!! Didn't you two talk about this BEFORE you got married? If you didn't tell her back then that you had no intention of having children, then you brought this grief

upon your own head.

You did not provide any information at all as to your reasoning for not wanting children. As a female I can tell you that we are hormonally designed to want to procreate... again and again. Especially if we are in a relationship that we feel is secure and will be a good place to raise a family. My suggestion to you is this, if you can afford a child, if you're a both in good health, and if your marriage is stable then explore the option of having a child with this woman. Just remember that a baby will link the two of you together for the rest of your lives.



Scarlett's column is run exclusively in Acrimony. Email your question to her at scarlett@acrimony.org

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Horoscopes

by Michael Ramses



ARIES (March 21 - April 19): December starts out well for the Ram. You'll get a temporary vacation from your duties and responsibilities. You should embrace this freedom as opportunities such as this are few and far between. However by the middle of the month reality sets back in, as a string of inharmonious planetary conjunctions bear down upon you. Your love life will be stressed. Some of this will come from the impending holidays. Some of this stress will come from your lack of patience. As always, your greatest challenge will be keeping a cool head.



TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): This will be a good holiday season for you. Multiple Sextile alignments between your ruling planet of Venus and the Moon, Mars, and Jupiter brings many opportunities for growth and freedom. My only word of caution for you is to be careful not to indulge in excess.



GEMINI (May 21 - June 20): The Twins start December off well. There are a series of favorable alignments between your ruling planet Mercury and the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. This is a very welcome occurrence as December can be a very trying month. The large outer bodies will give you the strength you need to get through the coming days. The end of the month however shapes up a little different. Mercury spins off into Capricorn and lines up negatively with the Sun, Moon, and Mars. The real trials will be around Christmas and New Year's Eve. Don't overreact. Things will get better. They always do.



CANCER (June 21 - July 22): This is it. This is the time. Step forward and enact the changes you need to in order to set your life on the right path. The New Year is coming and it is best not

to drag old problems with you into it. If you procrastinate you'll regret it later. As is often the case with Cancer, family plays an important role this month. You'll want loved ones close to you. You'll feel a bit overwhelmed with all the holiday cheer and you'll find yourself being a little more generous than usual.



LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22): Leo has a month-long Square alignment between its ruling planet the Sun and Jupiter. This is a very negative alignment and will impact the Lion greatly. This is going to shape any changes you were hoping to make in your life. You might feel a little bit like Ebenezer Scrooge and you'll think to yourself, *This is out of character for me*. And it is! You can overcome the negative cloud that has settled over you and have a wonderful holiday season!



VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): The gentle Virgo is looking forward to a wonderful holiday season. Everything will seem perfect and in alignment in the weeks leading up to Christmas. However, right before the festivities begin, things will seem to fall apart. You are strong enough to pick up the pieces and hold everything together for another successful season. Your family and friends will be there to lend the assistance you'll need.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): If you can overcome the normal holiday stresses, this will be a good month for you. The planets are in your favor; you need only follow your instincts and internal intuition. It's okay to lean on relatives if things get a little hectic and you feel overwhelmed. Don't be overly concerned with finances. Things will balance out in the New Year. If you're single, now is a good time to shop for a mate. The warmth of the holidays will enhance the warmth flowing from your heart.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): This is a very unusual month for the Scorpion. It is marked with duality, which is unusual for Scorpio. On the one hand, you'll feel the urge to break free of your constraints and express your freedom, delve deeper into the exploration of your spirituality, and you'll want to help everyone around you as warm holiday feelings settle in. On the other hand,

Mars and Jupiter exert their influence over you and this will bring a short temper combined with feelings of repression. Each day will present a new challenge for you.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): December starts out well. It's a good time to start new projects or finish up old ones that have been setting on the shelf. There is however, the lingering problem of Pluto, which has taken up a Square alignment with your ruling planet Jupiter. Pluto moves slowly and its influence will be long lasting. It will crimp your ability to reach deep down into yourself and find what you need to find. You shouldn't find all of this too depressing. It is a cycle that all people pass through at some point in their lives. It can be easily overcome if you focus. The holidays may bring the distraction you feel like you need.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): Now is not the time to be looking for new love. If you have found someone new, use caution! If you are in a romantic relationship, use caution! Venus has aligned itself in opposition to your ruling planet Saturn. This will negatively affect your love life. Jupiter is in Cancer and this will impress upon you the importance of family. There could be no better time than the holiday season.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): A double Sextile alignment between your ruling planet Uranus and Mercury and Pluto brings a very nice month for Aquarius. Your thinking and communication will be clear. It is also a good time to pursue spiritual endeavors. Open yourself up and fully experience all the holidays have to offer!



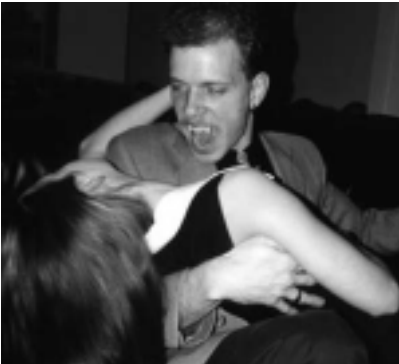
PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): There isn't a lot going on for Pisces this month. You'll just find yourself going along with the flow. At the end of the month there is a solitary Sextile alignment between your ruling planet Neptune and Mars. This is good. It will help you with any stresses that the holidays may present. You'll have control over your anger and have extra energy to accomplish all the little chores that need being done. When you're finished sit back and enjoy yourself!



Michael Ramses has been a horoscope writer for over 12 years. His speciality is personal natal charts. Look for his column right here in Acrimony each month.

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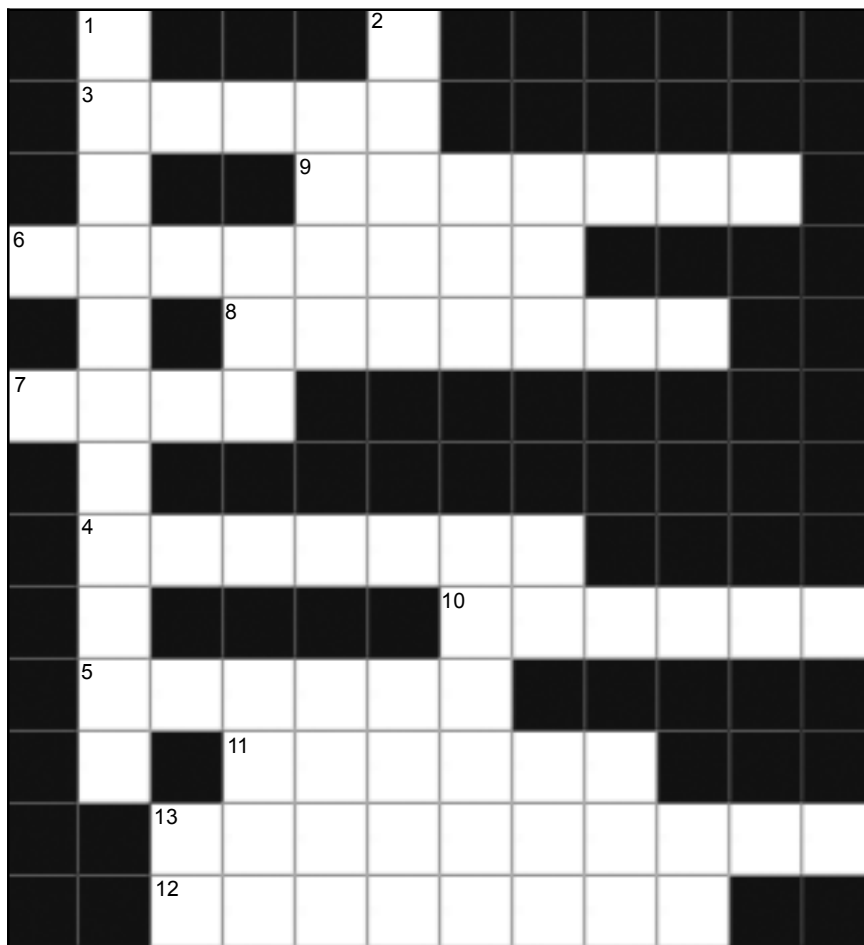
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Gothic Crossword



Down

1. Frankish dynasty that ruled from 5th to 8th century AD
2. The mother of Zeus

Across

3. The city Cain built after being exiled from Eden
4. The big Philistine
5. God of the Dead
6. The Sun stands still
7. It's a wonderful _____.

8. Started in 1966 by LA black activist Maulana Ron Karenga
9. The three-headed guardian of Hell
10. Matrix music
11. Hermetic Order of the _____ Dawn.
12. The Christmas Pagan season
13. To tell the future

The Devil's Panties



by Jennie Breeden
jennie@acrimony.org

<http://thediavilsanties.keenspace.com>

November Crossword

Brain Teaser

Be you ever so quick, with vision keen, by your eyes, we are never seen. Unless perchance it should come to pass, you see our reflection in a looking glass.

What are we?

November Brain Teaser

Grapes



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