

# WitchCamp Council News

## February 2016

The WitchCamp Council serves the web of Reclaiming WitchCamps. Guided by the Reclaiming Principles of Unity, we provide a forum for information sharing that enhances the health and growth of the unique individual camps and the collective web of camps. We meet two times a year online and once every two years in an in-person/skype meeting that involves representatives from camps and guilds in Europe, North America, and Australia. At our last in-person meeting in November 2015 we engaged in conversations on many diverse and rich subjects. This newsletter has been created in order to share some of these discussions with the many camp communities that make up our flourishing web.



*getting things ready the night before (L to R: Max, Walker, Orion, Hawthorn, Paul)*

### Nov 2015 Meeting Participating Camps and their Reps

*Aurora Borealis Witchcamp, Central Alberta, Canada:*  
Jane Pawson and jenika juxtaposed  
*BC Witchcamp, Southwestern British Columbia, Canada:*  
Ten Crows and Hawthorn  
*CloudCatcher Witchcamp, New South Wales, Australia:*  
Jane Meredith and Susanne Rae  
*Dragonrise Witchcamp, UK:*  
Raven Edgewalker  
*Earthsong Witchcamp, Melbourne, Australia:*  
Sue Dunwoody and River Fireseed  
*Free Cascadia Witchcamp, West Coast of US:*  
briar sparkle sparkle sparkle  
*Phoenix Witchcamp, Northern Germany:*  
Cassandra and Shira

*Spiralheart, Artemas, Pennsylvania:* Orion Watersong  
*Tejas Witchcamp, Wimberly, Texas:* Morgana  
*Winter Witchcamp, Western Wisconsin:* Max Gries and Paul Eaves

### Guilds and their Reps

Heretics Guild: UK, Europe and US: Fortuna  
PORTAL, Portland, Oregon: Dawn Isidora  
Reclaiming Teachers in Training and Service (RTITs) Eastern US: Chelidon

### Continuity Rep

Walker

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### Grace for WitchCamp Council

I'm an organiser of a fairly new camp. For the last few years since applying to be part of the greater Reclaiming web of WitchCamps, I have been involved with the WitchCamp Council. My first introduction to WCC was the Grace, the liaison for new camps and guilds. The Grace helps clarify the intentions of the new group and weave them into the WCC. When I applied, Grace Sandra Lacey from Australia replied to me and led me through the process. Email conversations ensured that the plans for a northern Canadian witch camp was in line with the PoU, that we had some background with Reclaiming, we had the capacity to create the camp and we were

meeting a need in our community.

As a Reclaimer from a fairly isolated part of the world, it's so important to feel connected to the greater community. The Grace role helps to meet that desire to be welcomed not only with status on the WCC website, but into WitchCamp Council and the benefits of learning from each other, sharing challenges and best practices and building relationships with witches around the world. I have received real support and inspiration overflowing! I value the role of Grace and I'm glad to be trying it on. I see the role as a sort of gatekeeping, where I am honoured to help lead the way in and shine a light on the magic of WitchCamp Council.

New camps and guilds as well as those in existence that would like to join the WCC are welcome to email me at [jenika.earthwalker@gmail.com](mailto:jenika.earthwalker@gmail.com)

- jenika juxtaposed  
Aurora Borealis Witch Camp

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*CloudCatcher 2015 floor altar*

## A Witchcamp Profile: CloudCatcher

At each of our meetings the WCC shares heaps of information through camp and guild check-ins about each participating group. To give a sense of the scope and richness of our wider camp community, we wanted to share a longer profile of one camp each newsletter as well as snippets from the rest of the camps and guilds.

This issue's camp profile is of CloudCatcher camp written by Jane Meredith.



CloudCatcher WitchCamp takes place for four days every year over Easter in the hinterland of south-east Queensland, Australia, on the rim of the ancient volcanic caldera of what is known as Mount Warning, Wollumbin or CloudCatcher. 2016 will be our fifth year. We consider ourselves a young and vibrant Camp, with an emerging community and a strong relationship to this particular place. Geographically we call on three areas to make up our community: Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Northern New South Wales.

Our community is quite diverse, with the two main groups of people: young (under 30) coven-style ritualists and older (50s and 60s) solo practitioners or non-magically identified people. Elements is taught in the community twice a year (or more) in both Brisbane and Sydney, as a direct 'feeder' into Camp. Our five Organizers are spread geographically and we also attempt to balance age and gender within the Organizing group. There is a three-year term for Organizers. We have up to sixty Campers, in three paths; all co-taught by a full and a student teacher. We do not have a continuity teacher but the role is taken informally by Australian teachers. For the last three years we have had one US student teacher on the team.



*CloudCatcher stars and ritual beauty*

Some of our innovations include: the Organizers create a magical year-long working between themselves to create the container for Camp; we run a four-month community-wide magical working in the lead up to Camp focusing on our chosen story; we blog from Camp (<http://cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au/blog/>); and we have a special 'youth price' for 18 – 23 year olds. Other aspects of Camp are: we run a Bower focused on full-camp accessibility and participation, we conduct an open community day each year to dream up next year's theme and story, and this year for the first time we have offered a fully-funded Organizer Scholarship for an Organizer from

another Camp to attend. Our website is: [www.cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au](http://www.cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au). This year's story is Tamlin with the theme of "Through the fiery dance of poison and nectar, we trust the darkness, and re-join the chorus that colours the dawn."

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*The gold dragon grinning in the sunlight: Winter Witchcamp labyrinth*

## Camp Briefs from Around the World

**Phoenix Camp** in Northern Germany: The "Friends of Phoenix" Community Gathering was birthed. It's a community gathering for everyone who is close to Phoenix camp and includes magic, maypole and socialising.

**DragonRise in the UK:** 2015 was their fourth camp on an every other year cycle. The story was a local one, of the mountain Plynlimon and his daughters the rivers Severn, Wye and Rheidol. They're an all-ages camp -- babes in arms, teenagers, etc., that has been a really great experience having kids and adults at the same camp.

**British Columbia WitchCamp (BCWC):** the 28th camp occurred at Evans Lake north of Vancouver, BC, Canada. The 91 campers were the most BCWC has had in several years. Working with the story of Artemis and Orion, the 2015 intention was; "Here, between ancient stars and breathing Earth, we embrace our Wild Nature and nourish our tribe, replenishing our anarchist hearts".

**Earthsong:** Earthsong magic occurs in late September near Melbourne, Australia. The last Camp had 41 campers, of which 17 were new to Earthsong with one camper traveling from California and another from Jakarta, Indonesia. In 2015 they worked with Athena and Medusa and the intention was; "We step into the flame and claim our energy, our anger, our passion. In the fire we craft our tools, and emerge having transformed passion into action."

**Winter Witchcamp:** An apple-shaped island surrounded by a frozen lake is the venue for this camp in mid-February in western Wisconsin, USA. Camp usually fills with the maximum number of campers being around 60 and an additional 22 staff members of organizers, teachers, kitchen witches, bower priestesses, and a joybligations volunteer coordinator. The story for 2016 is "Edgeriders: Age of the Hags" and the 3-year theme is "Pentacle of the Great Turning." There is an original graphic novel for the story, co-written by a group of campers, orgs, and teachers that can be found on their website (<http://winterwitchcamp.org/>).

**Spiralheart Witchcamp:** Camp is 6 days and was hosted at 4 Quarters Interfaith Sanctuary in Artemas, Pennsylvania. Spiralheart has developed their own model for organizing camp an example of which is that the path facilitation teams only do path and are not responsible for ritual. There is a separate group who plans the rituals for camp. 2016 will be their 24th camp and the story is Medusa, as Athena's shadow self with the theme of, "We seek the Monster's Unflinching Gaze. We are willing to Look, and risk the Seeing. Striving to hold the divine and monstrous both, we turn the gaze outward. We listen deeply as allies, and work together to dismantle Privilege and Oppression."

**Free Cascadia Witchcamp:** FCWC transpires in various locations on the West Coast of the US. The camp is 100% donation and generally attracts about 150 campers. The mainstream of this camp is 20's and early 30's white queer folks and with a number of families with kids from infants to teen, though not many teens. They have about 5 cells and 30 plus people who organize. Last year's theme and story was "the song of the mountain - a trophic cascade."

**Tejas WitchCamp:** Tejas held their first camp since 2009 in early November 2015 in the hill country near Wimberly, Texas. The intention for 2015 Tejas camp was; "we step through the looking glass, expanding and deepening alliances, to manifest transformation in the worlds." Tejas is planning to alternate years with an all-ages Regional Dandelion Gathering which helps them stay connected with families and people with small children who want to work magically in community.

**Aurora Borealis Witchcamp:** They had their second camp North of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on Treaty 6 land. They aimed for a "Slow Camp" with open luxurious mornings to do free activities like go canoeing, or for a walk, or engage in a spontaneous discussion or sleep in. This allowed folks time for connecting with the place. The afternoons were for workshops with rituals in the evening. The overall camp theme was Air with a deeper look at sound, breath and song, communication and ritual creation. The story was "Millicent and the Wind" by Robert Munch.



A WCC Guild is a self-defined group formed of five or more WitchCamp teachers (which maybe teachers in training, student teachers or those that are considered to be experienced or "full" teachers) to support and share ideas with each other, with a strong focus and involvement with witchcamps. Here is a profile of the Heretics Guild.

### **A Nice Global Guild: Meet the Heretics By Fortuna**

The Heretics Guild is an official Reclaiming Guild currently consisting of five Full Teachers/Orga who also teach and facilitate Reclaiming Style Workshops online and in person:

Suus Oudbier (NL)  
Susan Moonroot (UK)  
Raven Edgewalker (UK)  
Fortuna (NL)  
Chelidon Silvertongue (US)

You can read more about us at [www.heartofthewitch.eu](http://www.heartofthewitch.eu). Our members have taught or organised for such camps as Avalon, CloudCatcher, Dragonrise, Earthsong, Lorelei, Phoenix, and Tejas in the past. It is important to acknowledge two earlier members of Heretics Guild, Cassandra and Margit, whose energy and intention helped form the Guild.

Small Guild. Big world. Factoid: Unlike PORTAL or RTITS, we're almost never F2F as a group. One great exception was Dragonrise Camp 2013, in which we were all present in one capacity or another!

Our geographic and cultural diversity has led to many deep learnings about the essence that unites all Reclaiming Witch Camps around the world. Here's our secret knowledge, codified for future Orga:

Biggest Secret of Multi Culti Witch Camps: Get the food right. Honestly. We've all experienced food ranging from the sublime to the inedible at camps. The significance of camp food gets kicked up a notch when regional expectations are challenged, and regional differences get challenging. Just ask an American and a Brit what a 'flapjack' is.....

Especially breakfast. Morning is a tender time. The basic cultural assumptions we make – that a toaster is a wholly unnecessary item (NL), or that tea is perfectly normal when served with milk (UK) – lead to real disagreements and disappointments (and sometimes Mr. Yuck faces), particularly around breakfast. Here's an example: The Dutch and Germans disdain each other's bread, but DO prefer salt for breakfast – cheese, cold cuts, peanut butter – while the English and Americans often want something sweet. Aussies? Vegemite please. Oh, and warm-weather people need fruit and even green salad and lots of it, which is just weird in Northern Europe. How to cope:

Heretics' Shopping List: Global Breakfast Must-Haves for a fine Witch Camp Breakfast Anywhere in the World:

- \*coffee, tea (and a place downwind for folks who smoke cigarettes)
- \*hardboiled eggs – Paleo, gluten free, grain free folks can survive
- \*bananas and apples – vegans, gluten free and grain free folks can survive.
- \*Vegemite (in a pinch Marmite) – although you need toasted bread to make it really delicious, so –
- \*toaster
- \*large-size jar of Nutella; honey, golden syrup, jam, maple syrup
- \*soft smushy bread; sturdy brown bread; rice cakes for wheat-free folks
- \*Insert regional preferences here.

Of course there is one universal food: Chocolate. In our experience, campers are extremely good at self-care in this area!

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*Evans Lake, BCWC*

### **WitchCamp Leadership Cross-Pollination**

The WitchCamp Council meetings are opportunities for camp organizers and teachers to share their collective wisdom with each other. At our last meeting, we discussed some of the different means that WitchCamp leadership encouraged and shared this wisdom by attending camps. Some of these ideas follow.

## Organizer Scholarships

CloudCatcher, and Tejas, and Winter Witchcamp offer organizer scholarships to organizers from other camps. The organizer pays travel costs and the camp provides a partial or full scholarship to the organizer. The guest organizer may engage in such things as attend organizer meetings at camp, host a lunch table or optional offering about their camp, or ask/answer questions with camp participants.

## Ambassador Program

Spiralheart offers an "Ambassador Program" where Spiralheart will pay for up to three people from other camps to come to their camp tuition-free. They ask other camps to reciprocate on this free tuition. They'll pay \$314 towards travel expenses for up to three Spiralhearers going to other camps. (This does not have to be one-to-one trade: a Spiralhearer might go to a camp that's not sending an ambassador here, and vice-versa.) They ask that all these ambassadors be hooked into their home camp process closely enough to give useful cross-pollination to the camp they attend (for instance, by giving an afternoon optional offering) and to receive cross-pollination from that camp. They verify this criteria via their WitchCamp Council representative.



## New Camp Organizers

One of the organizers of Aurora Borealis Witchcamp attended Winter Witchcamp on an organizer scholarship prior to AB's first camp. They got time at an organizer meeting, participated in some on the fly discussions, and left with a fistful of helpful notes. They also went to Free Cascadia Camp partly because the organizing is so different from other camps. They had great conversations and got email contacts to follow up on questions.

## Unofficial Exchanges

Free Cascadia Witchcamp does not have a registration fee and operates on a donation basis so any organizer is welcome to attend for whatever they can afford. They're trying to do unofficial exchanges as much as possible, for instance they asked a teacher from Winter Witchcamp to come teach at FCWC. They're interested in doing more of this and supporting people who want to come to their camp.

## WitchCamp Council Tea Parties

WCC reps will be holding Tea Parties at as many WitchCamps as reps attend. These gatherings will be opportunities for reps to talk about WCC, share information about the wider WitchCamp community and answer questions.

## Teacher Exchanges

One great way of giving newer WitchCamp Teachers experience is for them to teach at other camps than their home camp. BCWC and Winter Witchcamp did a student teacher trade -- a BC teacher taught at Winter Witchcamp in 2015, and a WWC teacher taught at BCWC camp in 2015. CloudCatcher Camp has placed a US Student Teacher on their team for the last couple of years.

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For more information on the WitchCamp Council, check out our website: [witchcamp.org](http://witchcamp.org)  
WitchCamp Council Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WitchCamp-Council-367428246608646/>  
WCC Grace: jenika juxtaposed at [jenika.earthwalker@gmail.com](mailto:jenika.earthwalker@gmail.com)

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or the WitchCamp Council, please email us at [witchcampcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:witchcampcouncil@gmail.com)

Contributors to this issue: Paul Eaves, Jane Meredith, Fortuna, Jenika, Luke Brohman, Max Gries, and the time and energy of members of the WitchCamp Council.