

WITCHCAMP COUNCIL NEWS

FEBRUARY 2017

The Witchcamp Council serves the vast array of Reclaiming Witchcamps and Guilds. 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 on-line and once every two years for an in-person/skype meeting that involves reps from camps and guilds in Europe, UK, North America, and Australia. At our online meeting in 2016, November, 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.

Participating Camps and Their Reps

Aurora Borealis Witchcamp, Central Alberta, Canada: Jane Pawson and Jenika Juxtaposed

BC Witchcamp, Southwestern British Columbia, Canada: Ten Crows, Hawthorn (rotating off)

California Witchcamp: Phoenix LeFae

Cloudcatcher Witchcamp, New South Wales, Australia: Jarrah and Susanne Rae. Jane Meredith (rotating off)

Dragonrise Witchcamp, UK: Raven Edgewalker

Earthsong Witchcamp, Melbourne, Australia: Sue Dunwoody and Fiona Mariposa

Free Camp Witchcamp, West Coast of US: Briar Sparkle Sparkle

Redwood Magic: George Franklin

Spanish Spring Camp: Miguel

Spiralheart, Artemas, Pennsylvania: Orion Watersong and Babka Stu

Teen Earth Magic: George Franklin

Tejas Witchcamp, Wimberly, Texas: Morgana and Wren

Winter Witchcamp, Western Wisconsin: Max Gries and Carey

Maine Witchcamp: Simon Beckford

Guilds and their Reps

Heretics Guild: UK, Europe and US: Fortuna

PORTAL, Portland, Oregon: Dawn Isidora

ROOTs, Province of Ontario, Canada: Kim

CRAFT: Bay Area, California: Phoenix LeFey

Continuity Reps

Raven Edgewalker

Paul Eaves (beginning mentoring year as new CR)

Contact

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or the Witchcamp Council, please email us at <witchcouncil@gmail.com>

WITCHCAMP MUSINGS

Australian Safer Spaces Policy

In January 2016, Australia held our first Dandelion Gathering in Minto, New South Wales. At this gathering a Safer Spaces Policy that would cover Reclaiming Camps, workshops and rituals Australia-wide was conceptualized.

Inspired by the Policy created by Spiralheart Witchcamp, representatives from the CloudCatcher & Earthsong organising collectives present at Dandelion held a meeting to discuss the prospect of having an Australian Safer Spaces Policy.

A draft was adapted from the Spiralheart document for perusal by the organising collectives of both Camps. The final document was a collaborative effort by the Organising Collectives of CloudCatcher & Earthsong.

The Australian Safer Spaces Policy was implemented for the first time at CloudCatcher in March 2016 and then later this year at Earthsong in September. Each camp made the necessary geographical and environmental adjustments to the document to suit, but in essence it is the same Policy.

The Organising Collective of both Camps have made a commitment to conduct an annual review of the Policy together in June each year. This was done in 2016. Within this forum discussion of any feedback received from campers and teachers, incident reports, adjustments required and whether the Policy complaint processes were implemented.

Since implementing the policy no complaints have been received and there have been no further incidents which inspired our desire for a clear Safer Spaces Policy to replace our previous code of conduct. The community have welcomed the Australian Safer Spaces Policy.

To read this policy go to:

www.cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au/index.php/safer-spaces

Blessed be,
Sue Dunwoody, Earthsong
Susanne Rae, CloudCatcher

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A Brief History of Tejas Web WitchCamp

Compiled by Morgana

In March 1994, several WitchCamp enthusiasts, some of whom had been to Michigan Camp and some who knew Starhawk, organized the 1st Tejas/Southwest Intensive with the theme *Demeter and Persephone*. Three teachers from the Reclaiming Collective came to Central Texas, and as we raised a kick-ass cone of power, the threads of Tejas Web stretched out across the starry night sky. We began to call ourselves Tejas Web and to create public rituals, classes, weekend gatherings, and annual WitchCamps. For six consecutive springs (95-00), we created camps: *Dismemberment of the Goddess*, *Twelve Wild Swans*, *Tam Lin*, *Baba Yaga*, *Bridging Past, Present, and Future*, and *Inanna*.

Teachers were selected with the support of the Reclaiming Collective and later, the Guidance

Council. Tejas student teachers and teachers taught alongside experienced Reclaiming teachers and student teachers from other camps, usually on teams of 6. The organizing cell shifted from year to year and was usually 7-10 people. Organizers included witches from Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Arkansas. We had camps at five different venues around Central Texas.

In 2001, with many families needing a more inclusive camp experience and so many children in the community, the Spring camp became a family camp, the first of its kind. Spokes Council even tithed a small amount of money in support of this new model. Village Camp's theme was *The Castle and the Village*. Despite efforts of organizers and parents, the second year of this camp was cancelled and did not recur.

The adult camp moved to Fall that year with a Samhain camp over Halloween with the theme: *The Witch's Journey*. It was 2001, and 9/11 had happened just the month before. The word went out on the Reclaiming wind, and dozens of witches from all over the country descended on our camp to manifest potent magic, making that year our largest camp ever. It was a wild ride as we had some of Reclaiming's most notable witches as "campers" all together in one place.

Our Samhain camps (2002-05) continued with the magic of *Isis and Osiris*, *Rhiannon*, *The Mysteries of Lilith*, and *Dancing with Dionysus*. In 2007, Tejas Web moved camp to Spring with a radical re-visioning of *Snow White* with *The Dwarves and the Dreamer*. After 18 months of careful planning, publicity, and magic, we once again did not have enough campers for that camp, and we decided that it was not financially sustainable to continue to create WitchCamp. At that camp we placed all of our camps into the earth to compost, but when it was time to dissolve the organizing cell, it became clear that the work was not finished. In October of 2009, we entered *Cerridwen's Cauldron* for one more small and powerful camp.

Over the next six years (09-15), we built the Tejas Web community. We became the largest Guild in WitchCamp Council, continued tith-

ing, and remained engaged with the international community. While it was common perception around Reclaiming that because we were not making camp, there was no Tejas Web, we organized public rituals, classes, Wildflower Gatherings, and weekend workshops including *Dancing with the Fae*, *Divination Restorative*, *Samhain Awakening*, and *The Pentacle of the Great Turning*.

After many conversations, meetings, and field trips to find a new venue, we moved forward with a plan to make a new camp. In 2014 we manifested a large, successful Regional Dandelion Gathering as a stepping-stone to a new WitchCamp. In 2015, Tejas Web WitchCamp returned with *Through the Looking Glass*. Currently rotating between a family-inclusive shorter Dandelion event and a week-long WitchCamp, in October 2017 we will meet *Hekate*.

Tejas Web incorporated in October 1997 and received 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit status in March 1999. Tejas Web hosted Spokes/WCC meetings in 1998, 2001, and 2009. In 2003, after a very rainy and communal camp the year before, Tejas Web created the "Bower" as a private place for sacred sexuality at Camp. This concept spread quickly and widely throughout Reclaiming and has become an important cultural offering in many camp communities. In 2004, Tejas Web, with the support of Vermont, Spiral Heart, and other camp communities, hosted the first Dandelion Gathering for the greater Reclaiming community.



Suzanne and Morgana, Tejas Web organizers.

CAMP NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Compiled by Paul Eaves, Continuity Rep

Dragonrise Witchcamp's fifth camp will take place from 25th July 2017 to 30th July 2017. They will be returning to the venue of the last 2 camps - a druid owned venue in Shropshire. Dragonrise is anticipating a full camp of around 35 including organisers and campers. Dragonrise has 5 current organisers who meet via Skype for planning sessions. They are currently in the process of teacher selection - we will likely be hiring a team of 4 - either 2 or 3 full teachers and 1 or 2 student teacher.

Maine Witchcamp is an emerging witchcamp that recently joined the WCC. We will gather together in October 2017, as Maine's activity slows down and our colors come out. Our camp will be weaving together our local values of deep rooted nature connection and the defense of Earth. We are committed to making camp physically and financially accessible, with no one turned away for lack of funds. We look forward to coming together as a community of witches and welcoming in those from farther away. Path Facilitation applications will be sent out in the coming weeks. For more info see mainewitchcamp.org

Aurora Borealis theme for 2016 was Fire and it was our 3rd Camp. Registration was really low with 10 people total that is including weavers/ orgs. and teachers. They adapted their event from a camp out to an urban workshop in the scenic Riverdale neighbourhood on the banks on the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton Alberta. They did a little better than breaking even this year! There is a mix of mostly younger people (20-30's), women and gender queer folk. Most are lower middle class or leaning toward poor. There was a weaver of colour and an indigenous weaver. They are in the middle of a five year Elements theme, having just completed Fire camp. Jane anchored the visioning for Fire Camp. Thibaut and Jenika Juxtaposed were the teachers, leading us

through the 5 Fires. Next year will be Water. Due to small numbers, they have learned that community teaching is more sustainable than hiring teachers and paying for travel expenses.



California Witchcamp labyrinth at Mendocino Woodlands. First created by CAWC's Earth Path taught by Starhawk in 1996, the labyrinth has been tended and upgraded by witchcampers, witchlets, and other Woodlands visitors for 20 years.

California Witchcamp takes place this year from Sunday June 25th through Sunday July 2nd at Mendocino Woodlands in Northern California. The story is Ariadne and the Minotaur.

CAWC 2017 Paths are:

- Elements of Magic, Entering the Labyrinth
- Into the Labyrinth: Working Magick with Myth and History; Story and Science
- Magic Spells: Poetry in Action
- Healing in the Temple - The wounds reveal the cures
- Diving Into the Mazes and Labyrinths of Our Ancestral Legacies

CloudCatcher WitchCamp always occurs over the Easter weekend, in the beautiful hinterland of the Queensland Gold Coast, on the northern rim of the ancient Wollumbin Caldera. The 2017 camp will be working with the evolving history of this volcanic land through a story crafted by community

members, read it at Cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au/index.php/cloudcatcher/theme-and-story>. The 2017 camp theme, dreamed by the Community Visioning day in June, is: "Cradled in the arms of our mountain, we turn deep within. Vital forces rise. Labouring with our familiar shadows: fierce feelings and gritty parts, we flow into a song of synthesis. Reforged, our tempered dark hearts become our armour of love".

CloudCatcher is excited to expand to offering 4 paths this year, opening camp to all-ages. A flourishing Bower is held in the heart of camp. CloudCatcher blogs from camp, offering a personal perspective of each path and the evening rituals. Check out past years, or join them live this year: Cloudcatcherwitchcamp.com.au/blog/

CloudCatcher has 5 organisers who serve for 3 years before rotating off, holding a magical working between them for the whole of each year. CloudCatcher has a fully-paid scholarship for an organiser from another camp, still available for 2017. They continue to work with their evolving Safer Spaces policy in collaboration with their sister-camp Earthsong.

Earthsong Witchcamp is held in Victoria, Australia about an hour from Melbourne. The dates for the 2017 camp (our 6th) are Friday 29th September to Tuesday 3rd October.

We will be working with Horus and our intention is " We enter the Eye of Mystery; seeing our full selves, we meet naked hearted and cultivate the power of community".

We have an Organiser Collective of 6 members from our Community who offer their service on a 3-year rotation. We are currently in the process of Teacher Selection. This year we will have a teaching team of 6, offering 3 Paths. Our Teaching team includes a Continuity Teacher who holds that position for 3 years.

Earthsong is a camp for those over 18 years of age. We welcome new campers who usually make up about 1/3 of our total, averaging each year at around 35. Our scholarship program offers anywhere from 8-10 scholarships

each year, sometimes a few more which can include an Organiser exchange scholarship. We offer a Bower at camp and five nightly all-camper rituals.

In collaboration with our sister camp - Cloudcatcher, we have created an Australia-wide Safer Spaces Policy for our camps and any Reclaiming workshops held in Community. This policy is reviewed collectively each year.

Spiralheart Witchcamp's 2017 Story is: Janet, Tam Lin, & the Faery Queen (story will be available by Jan. 1st at www.spiralheart.org/story). The 2017 Year Long Intention: "Listen. In holding the change, we are changed. For Love, we move the mysteries. For Love, we accept the consequences. We do what must be done. Listen." Camp was hosted at 4 Quarters Interfaith Sanctuary in Artermas, P.A. as it has been for the past 6 years intend to continue there. The numbers have been slowly but steadily on the rise. In 2015 there were around 58 campers, and in 2016 had about 62 total (including orgs/teachers/rats, etc.).

Their camp community has a large contingent of folks who are mobility impaired or altered which means they focus more on physical accessibility than perhaps some other camps need to. For elders and those susceptible to heat stroke, a cooling pool in the upper bath house (small kiddie pool, really, but it does the trick) provided. There are solar powered lights along pathways at night to aid those with failing vision. Tent sites closest to the center of camp, and the bottom bunks of the dorm, are preserved for those with mobility challenges.

Reclaiming Spain facilitated a Samhain camp that took place at Tierra de Gredos, in the mountains of Avila. Almost 20 people attended 60% women, 40% men, from 30's to 60's with people from Spain, Peru and Venezuela. This year all was free except for 40€/person that was paid to the venue. The advertising of the camps was by Facebook and personal groups of Reclaiming members.

British Columbia Witchcamp The 30th Anniversary BC Witchcamp takes place August 27 to September 2 at Evan's Lake, British Columbia on unceded Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Territory.

80 people attended the 2016 camp, where fundraising efforts culminated in our Thursday night talent show being auction free for a second year in a row. Our POC campers, org cell, and teachers, stepped through requests and mistakes, revealing all-camp meetings, and powerful vulnerabilities in our hive building magic. That camp bonded our hearts and called us to this year's intention and magic:

“In slow time and deep earth we dance with ancestors near and far as learn to decolonize and reweave cultures of compassion and justice.”

Ongoing magic from our Earlier Visioning is blooming into story selection and fervently wise racial justice and decolonization discussions at many of our social web sites. You can follow at groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/bcwitchcamp/info and facebook.com/groups/bcwitchcamp/.



Teen Earth Magic, now in its 10th year, brings together Reclaiming youth for a week of magic, community building, and fun in the woods. TEM welcomes visiting youth.

Teen Earth Magic holds our tenth annual youth intensive this June 17-22. It will be our first year at Mariposa Institute near Ukiah CA. We expect about 20-25 young people plus about eight teacher-types. Teachers and older

youth double as organizers. The camp is organized via a series of in-person meetings through Winter and Spring, with a final all-day path-planning session before camp. We do most ritual planning at camp, as a way to include more young people.

Youth age 19-up become mentors/student teachers if they continue to come to camp. We usually have about half-dozen mentors, who assist with path, rituals, kitchen, etc. Some mentors also attend Witchlets and Redwood Magic family camps and co-teach younger paths. Fees this year start at \$229 for the five-day camp. We depend on some folks paying higher on the sliding scale, and on donations from the wider community. TEM is a shoestring operation!

Info and reg brochure at TeenEarthMagic.org
Contact: <teenearthmagic@gmail.com>

Check out our TEM Book-In-Progress - 300 pages of youth voices, exercises, ritual skills, etc: <TeenEarthMagic.org/TEM-Book.pdf>

Free Cascadia Witchcamp. 2016 Camp was in July on wild private land outside of Ashland, Oregon without existing infrastructure. The theme and story was Caring for the Waters of the World, which was, as our custom, a co-created original story based on the water cycle.

We had about 140 people at camp this year with a long waiting list. We again prioritized enrollment for POC, elders and families.

As a camp community we are in a long deep process of investigating the ways racism, eurocentrism and anthropocentrism are playing out at camp. We are discussing who is camp for? What ways can camp culture shift to center other voices and bodies? What ways can camp culture be more transparent to reduce harm?

We have decided to limit 2017 camp to 80 folks, not including kids, and are moving towards an invitation based enrollment process (for this year only) that will likely not include public registration. This year we intend to delve deeper into core camp questions in a strong container.

Winter Witchcamp is hosting their 15th camp on Feb 16-20, 2017 at a YMCA camp known as Camp Icaghowan. It is located on an apple/spade/heart shaped island amidst frozen Lake Wapogasset in west central Wisconsin. They are in the final year of the 3-year theme "Pentacle of the Great Turning" and the story this year is "We are telling our story: a World Tree Journey with Freya".

This year is a major change in how they approach money and registration costs of camp on a one year trial basis. There is a pay as you can model with a suggested sliding scale of \$0 to \$600 based on the approximate cost per person at Camp being \$300. This is an effort to bring witches to Camp who might otherwise be unable to attend or for whom attendance is a financial hardship. They see the shift of their relationship to money as a powerful act of magic and trust in the abundance and communal values of our community. As of early November WWC has reached 85% of their budgeted goal with additional pre-camp fundraisers planned.

They are full for Feb 2017 with 82 people registered, and we have a waitlist of 35. There are folks from all over the US and Canada, with 16 states and 3 provinces represented: WI, MN, IA, IL, OH, MO, VT, ME, PA, MD, VA, AR, TX, CA, OR, WA, Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia. (If we also look at the waitlist, add NC, AK, IN, DC, and Manitoba.

Redwood Magic holds our fifth annual family camp this August. Our camp is once again immediately following Witchlets in the Woods and just down the road in another site at the Mendocino Woodlands, allowing some folks to attend both camps. Our camp has grown from about 42 to about 64 people, with a site-limit of about 80. Last year we were emergency hosts to the displaced Teen Earth Magic. This year we return to holding just one camp at a time!

Families from around CA and the upper West Coast are our current base. The theme this year will be Spider, details TBA. Our fees are set in conjunction with Witchlets, starting around \$300 for adults and \$175 for youth under age

26. Both camps support diversity and young adult participation by keeping fees low. Organizing team (Weavers) meets monthly, usually via skype due to distances. About 6-8 people are on the team, including two non-parent allies who do a lot of the logistical organizing.

We welcome visiting families!

Contact <RedwoodMagic.org> or email <redwoodmagicfamilycamp@gmail.com>



Redwood Magic Family Camp is a sibling camp of Witchlets in the Woods, and is usually held right after WITW so some folks can attend both camps.

Campfire Chants: new album benefits Redwood Magic!

Campfire Chants, featuring 17 classic Reclaiming chants written by Starhawk, Suzanne Sterling, T. Thorn Coyle, Alphonsus Mooney, and more.

Performed in a warm, engaging "campfire" style by a mixed chorus plus conga, guitar, flute, fiddle, and more. Album benefits Redwood Magic.

Great songs for rituals and classes – and for singing along. Kids love this album!

Free Lyrics & Lore booklet: CampfireChants.org

Downloads and streaming at all sites – listen free at youtube – Spotify is also free with FB login

"It sounds like witchcamp!" – Milo/Witchlets

OMG! The WCC Meeting Has Started!

By Fortuna

WCC meets online twice year and here is one reps experience with a recent meeting.

I wake up with that faint tugging on my consciousness, that sense of some kind of important seasonal shift. It's...November, right? My eyes still shut, my sleep-weary brain blunders about. Searching. Searching....

Oh, yes! It's the Witch Camp Council meeting. Crap – I've got a cold and I'm getting a divorce and I have a meeting at 11. (Deep breath. Gratitude. We can do this.) Time to grab a cup of coffee and check in to Loomio... Oh Gods, what am I wearing?

WCC Meeting: Hacks for tough times

Frankly, even after several years of representing Heretics Guild, the WCC meeting always comes as a mild surprise. Like, 'Oh oh – have I missed the first two calls to action?' because 'I'm on super triple deadline for this enormous project AND I've broken my leg AND...'

One thing is certain: The twice-yearly cadence of the WCC Meeting points out that as humans and witches, we are always in transition. Looking back, I don't think there has been one meeting that didn't have a birth or death, a major move or a big storm, a wedding or an accident or some other big human issue affecting one or the other of the reps. 'Insert life change here.' And yet, we show up.

How to represent your camp or guild in times of personal travail? When your bandwidth is narrow and every addition to your agenda feels like a milestone around your neck?

Have coffee. Or tea. Or wine. Or whisky.

Log into Loomio. Do it at the same time every day. Take 20 minutes. No more.

Personal and camp/guild check-ins – do them.

What are you wearing? Tell the people.

Ratify the Minutes of the last meeting.

Keep up with voting.

'Like' comments that you...like.

Write a nice thank you to the group at the end of the meeting.

For more information on the Witchcamp Council, check out:

- website at witchcamp.org
- Witchcamp Council Facebook page
- WCC Grace; jenika juxtaposed at 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

Contributors to this issue: Fortuna, Sue Dunwoody, Susanne Rae, Paul Eaves, Morgana, and the time and energy of members of the Witchcamp Council.