

not your mother's broomstick

new Witch

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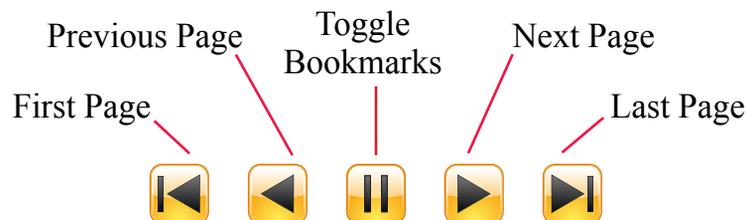


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the Vibe



Hunter S. Thompson is dead and I don't feel so well myself. One of my heroes is gone.

(Now, before we get to the editorial, here's a nice big disclaimer. I am not advocating Hunter S Thompson's lifestyle choices, including but not limited to taking enough mescaline to turn on Ecuador and shooting heavy caliber weapons. If you choose to indulge in either drugs or heavy weaponry, you're on your own. I didn't tell you to, and neither did this magazine.

That said, I must admit that I was pretty bummed out by the death of the Great Man of Gonzo Journalism. There was an energy in his writings, in his ideas, that I think we could use more of today - especially among the witches of the world. Fact is, Hunter was a bit of a witch himself, though I'm sure he'd be pissed as hell to hear me say it. Here's a few reasons:

"If I'd written all the truth I knew for the past ten years, about 600 people - including me - would be rotting in prison cells from Rio to Seattle today. Absolute truth is a very rare and dangerous commodity in the context of professional journalism."

"America... just a nation of two hundred million used car salesmen with all the money we need to buy guns and no qualms about killing anybody else in the world who tries to make us uncomfortable."

"No man is so foolish but he may sometimes give another good counsel, and no man so wise that he may not easily err if he takes no other counsel than his own. He that is taught only by himself has a fool for a master."

If witchcraft is the art of changing reality or the art of revealing the hidden, then

Hunter was indeed a master. The sad truth is, too often in modern Paganism we think that we're the first ones to come along who really understand this. There have been witches

for as long as there have been humans; changers, thinkers, growers, challengers of the status quo; there have been witches as long as there have been heroes. It's only been in the last hundred years or so we've gotten 'civilized' enough that we

don't automatically burn our visionaries and magic-makers at the stake. Sadly enough, it's my judgement that this means we don't honor the visionaries who have gone before us; we have no sense of history. We have no sense of heroism.

I would like to challenge all of you to celebrate Witch History Month, whatever month it is that you're reading this. I want you all to go out and read about rebels, rabble-rousers, whistle-blowers, advanced thinkers, heroes, questioners of established truths, and troublemakers of all stripes. I want you to adopt new heroes.

I'll even be so kind as to provide you with some names.

Major General Smedley Butler. Stacie Neldaughter. Julian of Norwich. William Butler Yeats. Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Dr Henryk Slawik. Deganadiwah. Lenny Bruce. Xanana Gusmao. Daw Aung Sang Suu Kyi. Rigoberta Menchu Tum. Harvey Milk. John Muir. Rachel Carson. Dr Helen Caldicott. Dr Nawal El Saadawi. Sojourner Truth. Anna Mae Pictou Aquash. Richard Feynman. Wilma Rudolph. Roberto Clemente.

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."

— Joseph Campbell

in which your humble editor tells it like he sees it

That should be enough to get you started.

The fact is this; it is a rare hero indeed

who didn't question some sort of status quo.

Heroes are rarely the sort of people who sit around and say 'hey, everything's fine the way it is'. In that, witches are heroes; we rarely sit around and accept. For that matter, you are all heroes as well. And it's only in learning how others showed courage, rebellion, and questioning that we ourselves learn how to be brave, be strong, and to ask questions.

Learn your history. Be a hero. And maybe somewhere in the Summerland Hunter S. Thompson will be briefly amused.



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