

new

# Witch

CUTTING EDGE PAGANISM



p.40  
Scott Helland's Traveling  
Band of Gypsy Nomads

**15** Best  
Days for  
Winter Spellcasting

**4** Steps to  
Developing  
Your Psychic  
Gifts

# Raven Digitalis

*Prince of Shadow Magick*

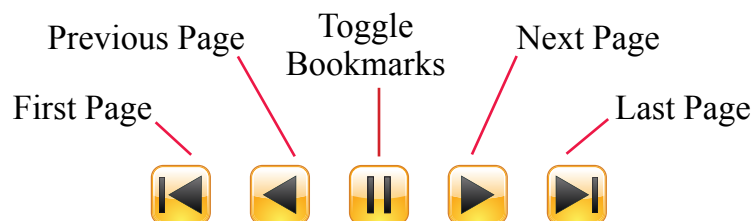


Magazines that feed your soul and liven your spirits.



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# first things first



It's been a long season here at *newWitch*: among the changes since our last issue is that your Managing Editor has married her longtime partner and become almost respectable. (Note to the WeenieGro spammers who keep clogging my inbox: in the future you will please refer to me as "Mrs. Small Penis," not "Mr. Small Penis." Thank you for making a note of it.) Meanwhile, our Editor-in-Chief is packing up her bags and heading to Oregon, where the trees are always green and the sky *is* (occasionally) blue. We've had so much good stuff in our lives that we just had to share the joy with our readers, and so, to steal a phrase from Ed Sullivan, "have we got a show for you."

Samhain has become the Witch's Christmas, New Year's Eve, and Mardi Gras all rolled into one. It's a time when even the most broom-closeted among us can dress as Green Men and Faerie Queens, a time when we can revel at parties and wear our Witchy identity as a badge of honor. Kevin Sartoris introduces us to two of the larger and more well-known Samhain celebrations: the Official Salem Witches' Halloween Ball and The Reclaiming Collective's Spiral Dance — and discusses some reasons why All Hallow's Eve has become the most bewitching of holidays. Should you decide that you want to hold a Witch's Ball of your own in the future, you will need entertainment — and there are few performers on the Pagan circuit as entertaining, and hard-working, as the Gypsy Nomads. I was able to pin Nomads Scott Helland and Samantha Stephenson down long enough to get an interview with them, whilst Lupa puts the "Spotlight on..." the notable Canadian Pagan group Dragon Ritual Drummers.

But with all the celebration comes an air of melancholy. Those summer good times are just memories now, and we face the finality of endings and the insurmountable barrier between That Which Was and That Which Is. It's a time when we can reflect on what we have gained over the past year, and on what it has cost us. In "Playing With Fire," Lupa reflects on the dangers of magic, and on the reasons why it's worth the risk. And sure, taking those risks and claiming your power is scary — but once you've read Corin White's article, you'll recognize that "The Only Authority You Ever Need" is — you. Another reminder

that the power of the Witch is within is Natalie Zamen's delightful guide for all of you out there who think you are psi-blind: "Everyone's a Psychic: Yes, Even You."

There's an element of whistling past the graveyard in Samhain celebrations: we dance with Death to hide our fear at its inevitable approach. But there's also a stubborn celebration of life: in remembering our friends and loved ones, we "speak them back to life." No life ends so long as its impact is felt in the hearts of those left behind. We do not hide from the Shadow; we accept it in all its beauty and terror. Raven Digitalis, whose smiling visage graces our front cover, is rapidly making a name for himself as a chronicler of darkness. He discusses *Goth Craft*, his debut book, and other matters of Witchy Interest with Kohinoor Setora in our cover interview.

If this is a time to pay tribute to those we have lost, it's also a time to recognize those who steadfastly remain. Phil Brucato, Isaac Bonewits, Galina Krasskova, Elizabeth Hazel, Dagonet Dewr, and Sheela Ardrian continue to entertain, inform, and enlighten with their columns, while Kathy Latzoni keeps on showing us the Cargo. We certainly can't forget our greatest blessing — you, our Loyal Audience. You've stayed with us through four years and two Managing Editors; you keep on filling our "Rants and Raves" section (this issue is a bonus-sized one!), you keep on submitting your writing, and keep on reading our publication. Oh, and yes, here's a shout-out to our incarcerated subscribers, who prove that iron bars, guard towers, and concertina wire cannot keep the Goddess away from those who honor Her.

The chill in the air is unmistakable now: the trees are almost bare and the frost glistens like ground glass on the fields where the Holly King has reclaimed his throne. As you batten down the hatches and prepare for snow, we hope you take some time to enjoy our magazine. May we bring you warmth amidst the cold and serve as a reminder that as there can be no light without darkness, there can be no winter without spring.



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CUTTING EDGE PAGANISM

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At an age when most of us were still mastering the fine art of beer-swilling, Raven Digitalis was busy writing books, founding a Pagan tradition, and getting a degree in Anthropology. All that dedication paid off. Today Raven is co-leader of Opus Aima Obscuræ, and author of *Goth Craft* and the forthcoming *Shadow Magick Compendium*. INTERVIEW BY KOHINOOR SETORA.

### **40 SCOTT HELLAND'S TRAVELING BAND OF GYPSY NOMADS**

If you think Ritchie Blackmore's leap from Deep Purple to Blackmore's Night was impressive, you should get a load of Scott Helland. In the 1980s Scott played bass with legendary hardcore punk bands like the Outpatients and Deep Wound. Today he and multi-instrumentalist Samantha Stephenson are Scott Helland's Traveling Band of Gypsy Nomads, performing "NeoMedieval Acoustic Rock." But don't think Scott has given up on making amazing music. INTERVIEW BY KENAZ FILAN.

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The worst thing that could happen to the magical arts would be to establish a codification of their practice. Luckily, Neo-paganism is still too young to have such established authorities: who would dare crown themselves arbiter of who is or is not a mage? Nonetheless, daily I meet both beginners and adepts alike who are seeking validation outside themselves. BY CORIN WHITE.

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### Issue #16 Winter 2008

*newWitch* (ISSN 1546-2838) is published quarterly by BBI Media, Inc., P.O. Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468. Periodicals Postage Paid at Pt. Arena, CA, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *newWitch*, P. O. Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468.

Editor-in-Chief: Anne Newkirk Niven  
Managing Editor: Kenaz Filan  
Cover Design, Art Editor & IT Support: Alan Niven  
Proofreader: Shanti Fader  
Office Deity: Christina White  
Circulation Fulfillment:  
Publishers Data Management Group

*newWitch* Office NEW ADDRESS!  
P O Box 687, Forest Grove, OR 97116  
Customer Service, call toll-free 888-724-3966  
Email: [info@newwitch.com](mailto:info@newwitch.com); order online at [www.bbimedia.com](http://www.bbimedia.com), \$20 per year (\$30 outside U.S.)  
Office hours 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Pacific.  
Contents ©2007 BBI Media, Inc. Printed in the United States on recycled paper.

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