

MAGAZINE



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A supplement to Sidelines

Faces, places and issues of interest to MTSU students

Volume two - Issue three November 1997

Know Thyself kocal Wiccans bridge the mystical mundane

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Someone sent me a letter that I thought I would share. It's about a student travel writing contest for Transitions Abroad magazine.

I'll give you all the specifics first. The winner gets \$250 and their article published in the March 1998 issue of the magazine. Entry deadline is Dec. 31, 1997.

Submissions should be original non-fiction that provide current, practical information and ideas — based on

From the Editor

personal
experience —
about immersion
travel, work, study
or living abroad.
The winning
article will be
published in the
"Student to

Student" section of the magazine and must be of practical use to other students wishing to learn from or replicate you travel experience.

Transitions Abroad began in 1977, when Clay Hubbs, and English professor and international studies adviser at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., began publishing a magazine on overseas educational travel.

The magazine in bimonthly and copies should be available at most campus libraries, study abroad offices and newsstands.

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 1,500 words. Entries can be sent on disk or emailed as well. Include a legible note with your name, college, address and phone number.

Send disks to Transitions Abroad, P.O. Box 1300, Amherst, MA 01004-1300. Title email submissions "Student Contest" and send to trabroad@aol.com.

A copy of the magazine can be obtained from the above address for \$6.25, and writer's guidelines can be requested, also.

Heather Hybarger

Submission Guidelines

The first thing you need is an idea.

Then you can figure out how you want to write it all down. You decide who you are going to talk to, and see if they are willing to talk to you. Then talk to me.

We will discuss things like what kind of art we have to go with the story, how long the story should be and when the story should be due. Remember, **PM** is almost a monthly publication. December and March **PM** is not scheduled for production.

Now the tricky part — how to reach me. There are several ways, and one of them will work eventually, I promise. Call me at home, 904-0234. Email me, m_c_00b1@frank. Mail me,910 S. Tennessee Blvd. Apt. D-5, M'boro TN 37130; or MTSU PO Box C-949, M'boro,TN 37132

Now you have no excuse.



Know Thyself

Local Wiccans bridge the mystical & mundane

by Christi Underdown

* Please note that some participants in this discussion are not completely "out of the broom closet."

These individuals have chosen to use names that are neither mundane or Craft to protect their identities.

ithin the garage, two tables are laden with food and drink for the feast to take place after the worship service. Pumpkin bread, baked beans, Kentucky Fried Chicken, potatoes and chocolate cake tempt small children and eager adults, who sneak small bites when others are not looking. Small groups catch up on personal news, hug, kiss and fellowship while they wait for the signal.

Finally in the yard, the drum begins to beat steadily, calling the congregation to the service. The priest and priestess wait in the center as the group forms a Circle. The solemn silence is mixed with the laughter of young children and the continuous rhythm of the drum. The priestess walks clockwise around the Circle binding the shape so that no excess power will spill and escape. The priest begins to call the spirits of the four elements - Air, Earth, Fire and Water - to aid those who have gathered in their communication with the God and Goddess.

Thus begins a worship service of a Wiccan coven.

People have the misconception that witches appear only on Halloween and are old, bent-over women with green skin and warts whose only purpose in life is to steal and eat innocent children. In actuality, "witch" derives from an Old English word "witan," meaning "to know thyself." Witches or Wiccans have practiced their spirituality for centuries. Wicca is a balance between religion and magick. The magickal arts or the control and alteration of mysical and physical energies are seen as a joyous lifeaffirming part of religion. Each individual witch forms his or her own way to worship, based on the foundation statement "The Law of the Craft is Love." Disrespect for any individual's spiritual path, the forcing of others' beliefs and proselytizing activities are not tolerated.

Despite the differences in individual beliefs, Wiccans do hold a few ideas as common ground. They gather together to worship, celebrate and perform magick through timely

rituals that coincide with the phases of the Sun and Moon, three-dimensional symbols of the God and Goddess.

The afterlife is not the ultimate goal of Wicca. After death, souls are reincarnated back to the Earth. Thus, the environment and animal rights are a major concern of the community. The Earth is seen as an embodiment of Deity and a sacred gift from them.

"We have alternative views of reality," says LadyHawk of SerphantStone, a Murfreesboro priestess and teacher. "We believe there are several different levels upon which one can perceive reality - emotional, mental, physical and spiritual. If you can keep those in balance, then you can do what you want. We use magick to affect energies on any level."

LadyHawk established her own coven, or Circle (a small group that gathers to worship, study and perform magick), to teach the Craft in Murfreesboro five years ago. She began her own study after her divorce, when she was 30 years old. She was suffering from a low self-esteem when she was introduced by friends to her teacher, Serphant.

"He taught me that I had to face myself and respect myself," LadyHawk says. "I had to see the good in myself and take of care of it. You can't pour from an empty pitcher."

In addition to her teaching and working as a representative on the council of elders within a Nashville coven called Ravenfain, LadyHawk is also in the process of publishing her book titled "Becoming the Magus"- a guide for teachers and students learning about the Craft.

LadyHawk says she has been very lucky in that she has not had to suffer many consequences since her "coming out." Neither her in-laws nor her ex-husband agree with her beliefs, but her children are exposed to both their Wiccan and Christian backgrounds without bias.

"The word 'witch' has such a negative connotation," explains LadyHawk. "It isn't about being evil or selfish. Wicca is giving-oriented. You don't have to be afraid of it."

Wiccans, no matter how diverse their paths, adopt the general rule "Harm none and do what you will." This statement of respect is tied to a third, "you have a responsibility for yourself and to your community," which forces new students to realize the obligation to which they must be ready to commit.

"Wiccans hear the word 'need' differently," says LadySpring, another Murfreesboro teacher and priestess, as well as Ravenfain elder.

If a person calls for a need, a Wiccan is obligated to reply as much as he or she can. They cannot solve all problems and should not try, but when called to help with a genuine need they try to listen and do what they have in their power to do.

"Some come to the Craft with rebellion, power and ambition in mind," says Lady Web, another Murfreesboro priestess and teacher. "It is an art. It's dangerous. You can hurt yourself and hurt others."

She cautions those who want to "play with magick" to stay away.

"If someone can't handle the mundane world, they can't handle the magickal." says LadySpring. "There has to be a balance. One has always got to distinguish between reality and magick."

The purpose of the practice of magick is to control mystical and physical energies, in other words, how people, places and things react with one another.

"Magick is a little like prayer, except most people don't realize that their words are those with intent," says Jokkar, a student of LadyHawk. "That's what magick is - words with intent, words that have all your will behind them. Some people just say the words when they pray, we try to make reality happen. We try to change reality. It isn't this Hoccus-Poccus and twitching the nose stuff on television."

LadySpring explains the steps of answering need magickally as the following: consciously identifying the need and considering the effects that one's actions will have on the need; performing a ritual, which in its simplest form is a request posed to Deity for help; and lastly doing everything in one's power in the mundane or non-mystical world to make sure the need is fulfilled.

"That means if the need is for money, then somebody's got to get off their butt and get a job," she says. "The Christian sentiment, 'The Lord helps those who help themselves' is exactly right in this case. The Lord and Lady just pave the way to answering the need."

"When there is a need to change reality or the perception of reality, you can conform reality through the will of Nature and the Lord and Lady," says LadySpring of magick.

With Wicca's reputation of establishing open-minded, open-armed communities, it could be perceived by outsiders as a pathering for misfits.

"We may study the same books, do the same activities and attend the same classes, but if you talk to 10 different witches, you'll get 10 different religions," says Witness, another elder of Ravenfain.

"We are finite beings in a infinite universe," says LadySpring. "Everybody's wrong. Everybody's right."

"The relationship between Deity and the individual is personal," says LadyHawk. "We probably have the most intellectual and compassionate people, but sometimes we get more than our share of flakes and nuts, because we'll take anybody.

"All paths are sacred. There are as many kinds of witches as there are people. It's human nature. It's the personality people have."

Wicca accepts individuals, but it is not accepted in the mainstream world of religion. Through the fight against prejudice and stereotypes, more and more Wiccans have become public. The Nashville store Magical Journey is owned and operated by Ravenfain members, who represent many other philosophies including Christianity within their merchandise. Other members of Ravenfain have made webpages on which they openly identify themselves and their beliefs. At Middle Tennessee State University, a student pagan organization has begun to organize. On the other hand, many are still forced to exercise their First Amendment rights behind closed doors.

"We weren't afraid of death during the Burning Times," says LadySpring, referring to the Salem Witch Trials. "Our fear came from the regret that the Craft wasn't passed on. The Craft must survive."

"How I live my life reflects who I am," says Lady Web. "If people know me as a fair person, they know Wicca. We have chosen to be free in our religion, and although we are not slaves, we must pay prices."

Cover art and symbols bySilver RavenWolf & Tom Grewe



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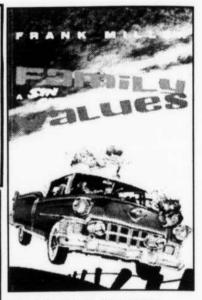
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"Sin City: Family Values" is published by Dark Horse Comics, runs 126 pages and sells for \$10.



Miho, an Asian assassin on roller-skates.

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Bill Bacon's Review

"Sin City: Family Values"

A good crime story has to be cathartic. If you don't feel for the characters and the story, then you are wasting your time. An absence of emotion isn't something you have to worry about in a Frank Miller book.

The newest entry into Miller's "Sin City" series, "Family Values" is the story of a mob-hit gone wrong and the people who take revenge for it.

Miller revives two of his most popular characters, Dwight McCarthy, a dapper killer, and Miho, an Asian assassin n rollerskates. In the story they are hunting the men who killed a local hitman turned city-councilman. The hit was botched though and an innocent woman died in the crossfire. It's Dwight's and Miho's job to find out who did it and make them pay.

Miho and Dwight find the killers and take their revenge. Miller shows some of Miho's personality as she cattily toys with one of them before killing him. Miller even makes something as laughable as an assassin on rollerskates believable.

This book brings Miho to the foreground and establishes her as a major character, even though she has yet to have a word of dialogue. Her actions speak for her, and Miller's impeccable art delivers all the insight into her mind that the reader needs.

One thing that serves to set Miho apart from the rest of the story is the way that she's drawn. While everyone else is rendered with heavy shadows, Miho is done with no shadows at all, making her stand out in sharp contrast to the rest of the characters.

"Sin City" is an ominous twin of the world of Dick Tracy. Inhuman looking characters proliferate the landscape, which is portrayed in sharply contrasting blacks and whites. This is a world of violence and debauchery and clearly defined good and evil.

Basin City is its real name, but it is known as Sin City by its inhabitants. It is a town ruled by organized crime, but the real draw is Old

Old Town is the part of the town ruled by the ladies of the night. In Old Town, not even the police have jurisdiction. It is the girls of Old Town that Dwight and Miho work for.

"Family Values" is done in the same hard-hitting style that Miller fans have come to expect.

The art is a classic Frank Miller, with heavy use of shadows and dark areas. Miller uses India ink as few can. Each page is carefully organized and designed to heighten the effect.

Miller is known in the comic world as a master storyteller. He gained critical appeal with his book "The Dark Knight Returns," which told the story of an older, grimmer Batman, and it is counted among the classics of the comic book medium. The book helped redefine the image of the superhero as a more realistic person.

This is the only "Sin

City" book to be initially released as a tradepaperback, but with its carefully crafted, fast-paced story it would have been difficult to split it up into individual issues.

One way that this book could have been improved is by Miller spending more time developing a background story, with some subplots. The main story is good, but it needs a little more development, like Miller's other work.

While this book's story is not as deep as earlier "Sin City" stories--"That Yellow Bastard" and "The Big Fat Kill"— it is better than almost anything else on the market. If you liked any of his other work, you will like this one. Artistically, I think this is one of his best books.

Fans of classic detective stories and police dramas should enjoy this book, as should anyone else who wants to read a stylishly drawn, well-written story of revenge.

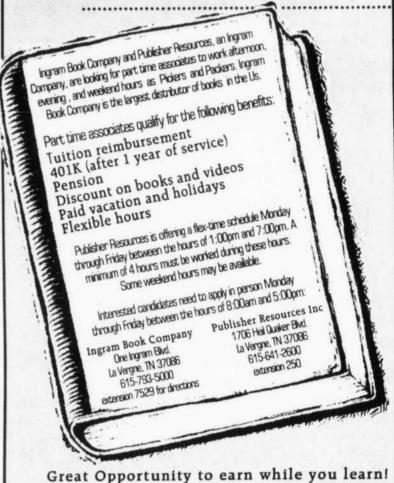
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Natural Lesson

NOLS takes class outside

By Stephen Baker

Earning college credit is an entirely different experience when you enroll in the National Outdoor Leadership School.

As an instructor begins class without books, desks or walls, it is apparent that NOLS is a far cry from conventional schooling. The streams, mountains and forests become the classroom, and Mother Nature the teacher.

In 1965, mountaineer Paul Petzoldt established the NOLS in Lander, Wyo. He felt offering individuals an opportunity to ace realistic situations in some of the world's most captivating wilderness regions would provide them a level of education that was both valuable and unique.

Now, while climbing a snow-topped mountain peak in Alaska, you can earn credit hours for college. Or perhaps you would prefer your classroom to be the Sea of Cortez in Mexico. Whatever you desire, NOLS can probably accommodate it.

Tom Reed, director of NOLS publicity and management, describes the school as "a wilderness-based program that focuses on outdoor skills and leadership training."

Reed, who is also an instructor with NOLS, says Petzoldt felt "there was a need for people who were trained in outdoor skills and common sense."

More than 30 years after Petzoldt's idea was set in motion, NOLS has grown to encompass eight branches on five continents. North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia all play a part in the school's course offerings.

Some 40,000 students have enrolled in courses ranging from water training and horsepacking to winter wilderness and mountaineering.

Many courses offer the option of gaining college credit in biology, environmental ethics and several other offerings.

"If the University of Utah gives you credit for the courses, if they are the sending institution, then a student must transfer courses through U of U in order for MTSU to accept them," explains Jana Hill of the MTSU transfer and evaluations department.

Most courses that NOLS offers are 30 days long. The application for acceptance stresses the physical demands of the school. Total commitment mentally, emotionally and physically is required to insure success of each course.

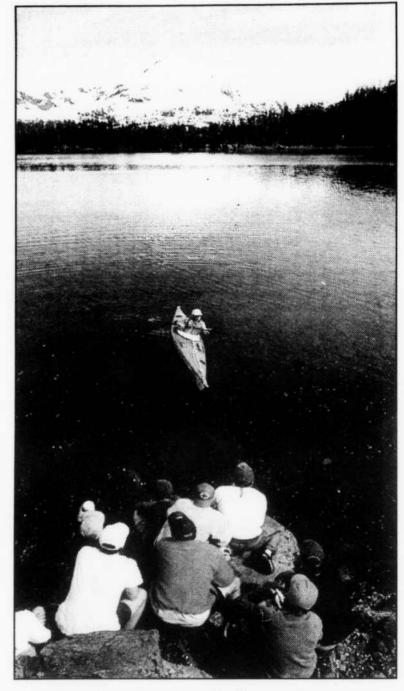
This school is not designed for people who just want to get away for a while. It is meant for those individuals who wish to learn and have fun while respecting the environment and fellow students through constant teamwork.

While teaching about the beauty and dangers in the environment, NOLS operates with a hands-on approach. The school provides the necessary tools and instruction to be successful in nature. These skills and tools are brought together as students are given the freedom to utilize them.

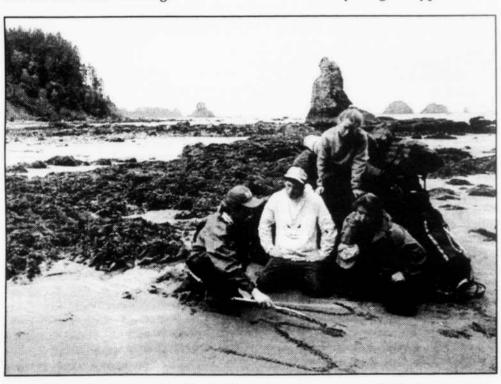
The ability to scale a rock face, negotiate a sea kayak through harsh Pacific Ocean surf, or simply stay protected in frigid winter conditions are but a few of the skills taught at the multi-faceted school.

Tuition for NOLS ranges from \$80 to \$90 per day. There can be additional expenses depending on the course you desire to enroll in. Spending money, transportation and individual special needs all involve extra costs.

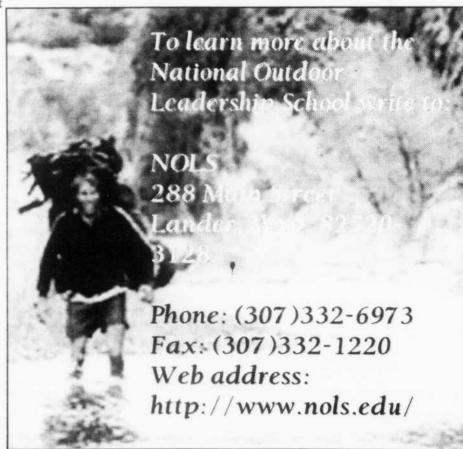
The National Outdoor Leadership School is based on the belief that nature is the best teacher. Whether scaling on Alaskan mountain, or traversing the forests at the tip of South America, this school is anything but typical.



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Jan. 13	Men vs Tenn Tech
Jan. 14	Women vs Tenn Tech
Jan. 15	Men vs Austin Peay
Jan. 17	DH vs Tenn St
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