



Carolina Spirit Quest Summer 2001

Quest: Blood, Stones & Runes

There's a new Carolina Spirit Quest event developing!

Quest: Blood, Stones and Runes began as an item in a long list of items on a flip chart at a Carolina Spirit Quest Board meeting. I took to the idea immediately and knew that I wanted to make it happen. This concept is new to CSQ. A one-day set of three of our most popular and requested intensive Workshops aimed at a small region of the area CSQ serves. Judging by the enthusiasm and interest it has generated, I am willing to say that it will be a successful experiment.

Some participants wanted to sign up before we had even confirmed a place or date!



From the comments, this event has appeal on several different fronts. Some have stated that since it is a local event, it is easier for them to attend. Also, because it is only one day and not the

whole weekend, it is possible for others to fit it into their busy schedules. Still others stated that they were ready for a more intensive, focused event. Q:BSR serves our Pagan community's needs very well.

This will be a trial event for CSQ. It is new and has never been tried before. Basically, this will be a template for other events to follow. We can make many more people aware of

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*Quest: Blood,
Stones & Runes
October 13, 2001
UU Congregation of
Hillsborough, NC*

Leadership Change for 2002 Spring Event

It is with mixed emotions that the board reports a change of co-directorship for the Spring Quest 2002 Event.

Zomar the Grey has been relieved of all du-

ties, both as Trustee-at-Large and Co-Director for Spring Quest 2002, so that he may attend to matters in his personal life. Zomar has made many contributions to the Carolina Spirit Quest organiza-

tion over the past several years, including presenting workshops, implementing the masquerade ball, and serving on the board and staff. Zomar was instrumental in bringing Isaac

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Special points of interest:

- *Contest for CSQ 2002 Logo—Deadline October 20—See page 2.*
- *A Meditation on the Number Seven, by Blake Davis—See page 7 (where else?).*
- *Susan Hill's "Black Madonna" Trip Report to France—Page 9.*

Bring Home the Magic - Quest 2002 Staff

By the time you read this article, a wondrous thing will have occurred. Congratulations people. You have reached the median, the center, the great Cosmic Half! Most people devote their entire lives in order to achieve this and you have done it by picking up this Pagan Rag and reading this Revelation. The point to all of this is...

Achieving center. You see it has been about 6 months since you attended the last Quest, and it will be about 6 months before the next one rolls around. So you see, you are sitting right smack in the Middle. So, now that we've got that settled, readjust your cushions; take a recess; grab some popcorn and listen up:

We need your help! We still have some awesome positions available with your name on them. The coming attractions include:

Communications Manager: Now that Lance has stepped up to Co-Director, we need someone to fill his

shoes. The ideal candidate will be able to communicate effectively. This position is responsible for all aspects of communication for the Spring event: the catalog/registration packet, the registration process, electronic communications, and publicity. The Communications Manager works directly with the Co-Directors.

Program Manager: This position is responsible for all programming during the event: workshops, rituals, children's programs, and other programs such as Bardic Circles, Drumming Circles, etc. The Program manager makes sure that every scheduled event for the weekend actually takes place in an organized and efficient manner, and has an entire Staff to aid in this endeavor. The Program Manager works directly with the Co-Directors.

Children's Program (4-12): This year we are expanding the Children's program into three programs covering 0-4, 4-12, and 12-16 years of age. The 4-12 year old program coordinator position is still open. If you like work-

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August Newsletter Delayed

Due to the rapidly changing status of available staff positions for Quest 2002, the busy lives of Board members and a few oversights, I made an editorial decision. I decided it was in everyone's best interest to delay the publication of the newsletter to allow the contents to be as up to date as possible.

We delayed publication of the August CSQ newsletter for the following reasons:

- The announcement of the CSQ 2002 logo contest needed to be in this issue.
- The CSQ '02 staff was rapidly being completed, but still needed a few people. There is an advantage to having the announcement be as complete as possible.
- The Board's action on the CSQ '02 budget greatly shapes the event. That information was available only after the August

10-12 meeting.

- If the Board decided to provide funds for Triangle Pagan Pride, it should be publicized before the event.

This delay does not effect the planned dates for the November issue. Copy deadline is **Friday, November 2, 2001**. It should be mailed on November 19.

Dick Merritt, Editor

Lost: The CSQ 2002 Logo

Reward: One CSQ 2002 T-shirt

We've lost our logo for Carolina Spirit Quest 2002 and want you to help us find it! These elusive creatures come in many forms, colors, and shapes. Specimens have a uniformly friendly disposition and well-shaped designs in both small and large sizes. They don't bite at

all so please don't be afraid to approach these fine examples of color and black-and-white logos. The best of the breed will respond to the call of "Bringing Home the Magick" and have "Carolina Spirit Quest" markings displayed on their bodies.

Please, if you've seen our logo take a quick pic of it and send it to Blake

Davis <fraterbad@hotmail.com> and Lance Brown <labrown@nc.rr.com> by October 20, 2001. The winner will be announced at the November 16th, 2001 CSQ Board meeting and in the Fall CSQ Newsletter. Contact us if you have any questions about this contest.

Pagan College Scholarship Offered

Last year Tim Woody, who was on the Carolina Spirit Quest, Inc. Board at the time, suggested that some day CSQ, Inc should subsidize a college scholarship. It was made along with many other suggestions, most of which were about fundraising. The idea stuck with me, however. Being a High School teacher, it was a very interesting possibility.

At the May 2001 Board meeting, I brought the subject up again. The seed that Tim had planted had sprouted into an enthusiastic little seedling. The Board watered it and fertilized it (won't tell ya what the fertilizer was, but it was organic!), encouraging its growth. Now it is a healthy young plant, reaching actively towards the sun. It is still far from producing its fruit, however. More growth needs to occur.

A CSQ College Scholarship Committee has been created. There are currently four members on it: Steve Connor, Al Dunmore, Tim Woody and Gryphon Rosemead. We are very busy working on all the sundry details. Criteria have to be developed to judge the applications, applications must be put together, public acknowledgment of the recipient needs to be decided (boy, is THIS point a sticky one!) and a budget for the CSQ College Scholarship must be approved by the CSQ Board.

So when will it all come together? We are shooting for this coming school year, 2001-2002. Just picture it—the first ever Pagan College Scholarship. This will provide an entirely new light to Paganism. People never before aware of Paganism will be introduced to it in the form of a grant to further education. Others, who may have a somewhat questionable view of Paganism, may have to reevaluate their beliefs.

And, more important, some where in NC, SC or Virginia, a young person will have not only a few bucks to help defray the enormous cost of college, but a validation of her or his Spiritual path.

If you would like to contribute to the CSQ College Scholarship fund, please specify College Fund on your check (to distinguish it from the Bart Wendel Scholarship Fund that is given to folks to help them pay to attend Quest). Ideas or questions? Contact me at gryph@pobox.com and I'll try to answer whatever questions you may have.

And watch, as the CSQ College Scholarship grows over the years into a strong, tall, healthy tree flourishing in the sun!

Gryphon Rosemead

CSQ Corporate Logo Adopted

Carolina Spirit Quest, Inc. now has an official corporate logo. It appears in the upper left corner of the front page of this newsletter. The symbol is basically the CSQ monogram. The "S" is reminiscent of the snake, ancient symbol of the Goddess. The center of the "Q" contains a five-pointed star and is similar to the common Pagan symbol, the pentacle. In its colored version, it contains yellow, red, blue and green, representing the four primary elements, air, fire, water and earth. T-shirts with this logo will be available soon.

A black and white version of the logo is immediately to the right. →



PROMOTING A PAGAN-FRIENDLY WORLD

The purpose of CSQ shall be to devote its resources to religious and educational activities; and to sponsor a program for adults and children, to be held each year in the Spring; and further, the purpose of CSQ shall be to encourage networking and the building of community spirit among Pagans in the Carolinas and the surrounding area.

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Blake Davis Durham, NC
Dick Merritt Hillsborough, NC
Gryphon Rosemead
Credmore, NC



Pagan Pride Project

Pagan Pride Project is a series of international events that Carolina Spirit Quest has chosen to support. It is aligned with the same goals as our organization. Several Board members are giving Workshops creating Rituals or doing other tasks for their local Event.

What is the Pagan Pride Project about?

Job discrimination. Difficulties with landlords or neighbors. Harassment up to and including assault and battery. Parents disowning their children; family members turning away. Awkward pauses in conversations. "Why don't you ever come to the office Christmas party?" Sound familiar? Unfortunately, it does to many people. And each issue listed above is too often faced daily by people of "different" sexual orientations, and "different" religious beliefs.

The Pagan Pride Project is a non-profit organization. The primary pur-

poses of this corporation are the advancement of religion and elimination of prejudice and discrimination based on religious beliefs.

The mission of the Pagan Pride Project is to foster pride in Pagan identity through education, activism, charity and community.

At a minimum, the Pagan Pride celebration involve three main activities: a public ritual, food drive and press releases. Along with these three primary activities, many areas have chosen to add other events and make the gathering a full festival, with merchant booths, music, book-signings, workshops, and other activities. Most of us wish we could be more open about our spiritual path. We want it to be a non-issue, just like anyone else's beliefs, and for various reasons it's not. We are not a few isolated wackos, but are a growing congregation of people who adhere to a faith that, while different, is as valid as others.

Here's the core of the problem, essentially- the general public thinks they understand Pagans and know what we do and what we believe. That's not a criticism - they've got 500 years of superstition and legend surrounding the word "witch". They've got preachers in the pulpits who sincerely believe in their good and honest hearts that we need saving. And recently popular culture has created "pagan-chic"-- it's now cool to be pagan and you can't walk through a bookstore, open a women's magazine, or watch prime time television without seeing someone's idea of what "magick spell" or "wicca" means.

People aren't necessarily going to go out of their way to find out if their preconceptions are right. It's our responsibility to get accurate information out there, and make sure the public learns what we really believe and how we really practice our faith. It's what I call the "See, we're

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Triangle Pagan Pride Day

Pagan? Proud of it? Want to meet other area Pagans? Curious about Paganism?

Come to the First Annual Triangle Pagan Pride Day

- When: Sunday September 16th from 10 AM till 8 PM rain or shine. Indoor space is available in case of inclement weather.
- Where: LR Harrill Youth Center at the NC State Fairgrounds (Gate 6) in Raleigh
- Admission: One can of food or dry goods for donation to the North Carolina Food Bank

Pagan Pride Day is an event that celebrates who we are and strives to educate others on the nature and practice of our beliefs. Visit the

website of our sponsor organization: www.paganpride.org

This family-friendly event includes: Workshops, Children's activities, Music, Food, Networking, Vendors, Entertainment. There is also special guest author Patricia Telesco who will speak on coming "Out of the Broom Closet"

Members of the Carolina Spirit Quest community are taking leadership roles in making TPPD happen. Gryphon Rosemead has gotten the workshops together. Bill Elston will run the food service. Lance Brown is leading the main ritual. Ginger Rain, Tamia Buckingham, Dick Merritt, Tim Woody and Sundance are leading workshops or children's

programs.

Members of the Carolina Spirit Quest Board are creating the Fall Equinox altar for the Pagan Holiday Altars Display at this event. The vision for the altar is to have a stand-in for the ancestor bowl - with a description of how it is used, a hand-woven cornucopia with wheat and grapes spilling out to a chalice of wine and loaf of bread. The inclusion of an athame next to the chalice would complete the great rite in symbolism.

Look at our Workshop Schedule at <http://trianglepaganpride.org/>. Questions? Check our FAQ

Surfing Your Surveys 2001

By Tammie Ward

People. Community. Energy. Connections. Drumming. Workshops. Rituals. Networking. Relaxing. Taking Care of Myself.

Those are some of the positive comments about Carolina Spirit Quest 2001.

I believe Quest is finally comfortable in its own skin. We had talented, dedicated staff that started working on Quest much earlier in the year. We were familiar with Millstone. Bill Elston, our head chef, spoiled us. The weather was beautiful. It seems the biggest issue for most people was choosing which workshops to attend. We did a lot that was "right" this year.

We received minor complaints about bugs, lack of lights on paths, the gunfire at the nearby firing range, and dirty cabins and bathrooms. Some of these things are beyond our control. Some things are individual responsibilities, like

bug spray and flashlights. Remember to look at the list of things to bring. Unfortunately, the nearby firing range is an issue we cannot control. We are the first group to use Millstone in the Spring. Naturally, the bathrooms and cabins are a bit dirty when we arrive. We can address this issue. The bathrooms are easier because they are not as many. The cabins are a bit more difficult because there are so many more of them.

We received criticism about one workshop in particular and we are addressing it with the workshop leader. We take your feedback seriously.

Other feedback concerned people being too tired to attend events and feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities. Part of attending Quest is taking care of you. Listen to your body, mind and heart. Give yourself what you need. Sometimes this means saying no before you attend Quest. You don't do yourself or anyone else attending Quest any

good by taking on too many responsibilities. Fun is an important part of the Quest experience.

The attendance fee continues to be an issue. \$87 covered food, housing, renting Millstone, Isaac Bonewits' contract, mailings, catalogs and many more things. However, \$87 is more than some people can afford. The Board is sensitive to this and the Co-Directors are aware of it. We will all strive to keep the attendance fee at the same level while continuing to present a great festival. More people took advantage of the scholarship this year. We learned a lot and are working hard to improve the request procedure.

I believe Quest 2001 was a huge success. As always, please email Co-Directors Blake and Lance any suggestions you have for Quest 2002.

Have a great summer everyone!

Carolina Spirit Quest Board Members and Their Terms of Office

Asherah - Director Emerita (term ends after Quest 2002)

Blake Davis - Co-director 2002 (term ends after Quest 2003)

Dick Merritt - Member at Large (term ends after Quest 2003)

Gryphon Rosemead - Director Emerita (term ends after Quest 2002)

Lance Brown - Co-director 2002 & Member at Large (term ends after Quest 2003)

Steve (Gandolf) Coenen - Member at Large (term ends after Quest 2003)

Susan Hill - Treasurer - reappointed year-to-year - term ends August

2002

Tamia Buckingham - President & Member at Large (term ends after Quest 2002)

Tammie Ward - Vice President & Member at Large (term ends after Quest 2002)

Please note - it took nominating three men this year to achieve gender balance on the board!

The Board elected Tamia Buckingham the current President at the February meeting as required by our bylaws. They selected a Vice President and a Secretary at the

May meeting. The Board also appointed Susan Hill as Treasurer who serves until August 1, 2002.

The Board needs to appoint Co-directors for Spring Quest 2003 as early in the process as possible so that they can work alongside and learn from Blake and Lance. It has proved important that co-directors have staff experience prior to their appointment. If you are interested in leading a CSQ event, get involved on the staff. Give your suggestions to any member of the Board.

Blood Stones & Runes

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CSQ by "going on the road" and having Unitarian Universalist churches (and other places) in SC and Virginia host an event like this. I keep suggesting to the CSQ Board that we REALLY need to target places like Hawaii and the Bahamas, but I just can't get approval of this—yet!

Although this event takes three Workshops that have been done at Quest and allows the participants to go deeper into the material and experience of them, other events are being discussed. Perhaps a day of workshops that have never been offered at Quest or a psychic fair would be interesting. What are your ideas?

Yep, that's right. The event is what the Director makes it. This may mean that there are many different types of events in many different areas (Greece...?) on the horizon. Have any ideas yourself? Send them to the Board.

In the mean time, come join in magical community Saturday, October 13, 2001 in Hillsborough, NC at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough for Quest: Blood, Stones and Runes. Each participant will sign up for one workshop and continue the same workshop throughout the day. The following will be offered this time:

- Circle of Stones, Presented by Brydie Fyredragon
- Yggdrunar: Runes of the Ecstatic One, Presented by Danny Moses and Dan Campbell
- Sacred Blood, Presented by Tammie Ward and Gryphon Rosemead

The day will start with Registration at 9:00 and the Opening Ritual at 9:30. Participants will then begin

their intensive Workshop and continue (with a break for lunch and one other break) until the Closing Ritual at 5:30. The registration fee is \$20.

You can bring your own lunch or order one made by Bill Elston (the most excellent chief from Quest!) for an additional fee of \$6.

There is a downloadable catalog and registration form for this event on our website.

Gryphon Rosemead,
Director, Quest: Blood, Stones and Runes 2001

Leadership Change

(Continued from page 1)

Bonewits to Spring Quest 2001 and launching the Friday Intensive concept. We wish Zomar and his family the very best and hope to see them at a Quest event in the near future.

The board felt that it was imperative to fill the Co-directorship with a partner for Blake Davis. It is our great pleasure to announce that Lance Brown has accepted the appointment to Co-director for Spring Quest 2002. Lance brings outstanding computer and communications skills to the event leadership, in addition to many years of planning and implementing pagan activities. The board had been considering Lance as a potential Co-director of the Spring 2003 event and is delighted that Lance was willing to step into the void for the 2002 event.

In conjunction with Lance's new position as Co-Director, Lance and Blake are looking for a Communications Manager to replace Lance on staff. The board will be announcing a new Board Communicator in the near future, as we are able to transition these duties.

Pagan Pride Project

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not as weird as you think" factor. That's why the Pagan Pride Project exists.

More information on the Pagan Pride Project, including a listing of local Pagan Pride Day activities, can be found at <http://www.paganpride.org>.

There are four Pagan Pride Project related events in our tri-state area that we know about:

- Triangle Pagan Pride Day, Raleigh, NC at the NC State Fairgrounds on September 16. See article in this newsletter.
- Crystal Coast Pagan Pride Day, New Bern, NC at Lawson Creek Park on September 22. See www.crystalcoastpaganpride.freeservers.com for more information.
- Witches' Ride: A Pagan Pride Parade, Asheville, NC on October 27, 2001, presented by: Coven Oldenwilde. Key Contact: Lady Passion, HPS (oldenwilde@aol.com)
- Third Annual Virginia Pagan Pride, Charlottesville, VA, September 22, 2001. For more information see <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atrium/9066>.



A Meditation on the Number Seven

By Blake Davis

I went to see my Guru today. He told me to bring this message to you concerning the number seven and how it relates to this year's Quest.

This is the Seventh Carolina Spirit Quest. Seven is an important number! There are seven days in a week and there are the seven seas. What of the meaning – won't you say, please?

Seven is unity and seven is perfection, sayeth the powers that be. But why? The seven oceans cover the nakedness of the Earth but they don't understand their boundaries. I mean, there are five divisions of the body. Match them on the pentagram and see for yourself. Now then, do you see the divisions, the boundaries, the separation when you look at yourself in the mirror? Just as the five become one upon sight, so does the seven into one. That is Earth.

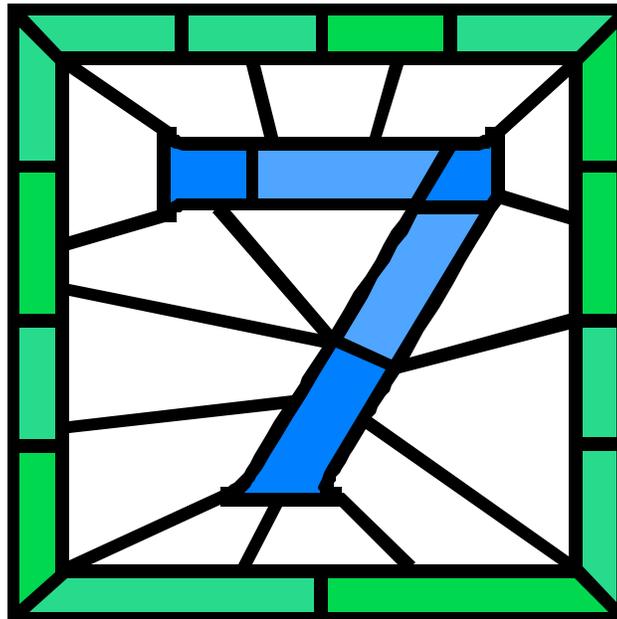
Ah Earth, great cosmic egg. But you are hatching. I see the 7 cracks on your surface. What will be when you come into two? The cell swells, and cracks. Then it divides and creates company.

Quest 2002 is the 7th Quest. It grows, I see its cracks. Does it split into a separate, a new piece? Will the ideas of the cytoplasm in our group create schism and "Other"? No. A circle grows at Camp Millstone and it will now grow in you, within your home.

Can you see a cane in its shape? 7. Turn it aright and you have a sword – Man's weapon. Slice and slash and stab. This is your intellect. Quest having been born, and having become self-sufficient, is now awakening to its own Ideas. Your ideas. What are your ideas for this organization?

Ahoy! Can you see the periscope as it emerges from the sea? 7. What do you see? The sea is Understanding. Or is this the Loch Ness, with its curved back emerging from the water? What monster awaits? What are we allowing to lurk beneath? 7.

The number seven is the number of Venus. Do you know the symbol for Venus? Let me help: O 7777 Now put them together. Do you see the four sevens, making the cross? They come from the Circle above. Hey, Isn't this the Cross of Calvary inverted? Could it be the Sword in the Stone? With only its hilt visible? Its blade travels deep within; high above it.



Where is our Arthur? And what if you could draw the Sword from the Stone? How would you reign in this Kingdom?

Finally, in the Tarot, 7 relates to The Lovers. The 2 become 1. Don't worry, we won't explore these two new shapes and their meanings. What shall happen to you this year at Quest? What will you become upon leaving?

The Zells are coming this year - Oberon Zell and Liza Ravenheart.

The Zells are the founding members of the Church of All Worlds.

The Zells are also responsible for the founding of the Green Egg.

The Zells will be teaching us about "Bringing Home the Magick".

And how is that, you say? We will be learning about intentional community and responsible, ethical, and safe relationships. We are a community that is growing. We are the teenager that seeks exploration of ourselves through the interaction of others. 7 is the number of The Lovers. And we are a Community in Love. Do you know just how you will bring home the magick this year? You don't need a cup. You don't need a camera or a bag. Pound your chest right at your solar plexus. That is what we're trying to stimulate here. That is what we all seek in the end right? To love and to be loved. Come live the Unity of 7 with us this year, from April 12-14, 2002. Help us grow and we'll return the favor. Blessed Be.

Quest 2002 Staff

(Continued from page 2)

ing with 4-12 year olds and want to contribute to CSQ, here is your chance! This position works with the other Children's Programs coordinators and the Program Manager.

Other Programs Coordinator: This position is responsible for the Bardic Circle, Drumming Circles, and other miscellaneous activities that take place during the week end. This position works with the Program Manager.

Lifeguard: We have received many requests from CSQ attendees to be able to swim and/or canoe, but Camp Millstone requires a lifeguard be on duty for these activities. Please contact Lance or Blake if you are a certified lifeguard and would like to help provide these activities at the CSQ 2002 event! The lifeguard works with the Other Programs Coordinator.

Working on the CSQ Staff is a wonderful, hard, intense

task that brings a whole new level of joy and wonder to the CSQ Spring Event experience. We hope you will consider taking on one of these jobs and look forward to working with you! Please know that Staff positions are filling up quickly. To grab one today, put down the newsletter and email either Lance at labrown@nc.rr.com or Blake at fraterbad@hotmail.com.

If email isn't your thing, then you can write to us or grab us at the next ritual, or even send a message using smoke signals. Either way, come join our Team. We're having a lot of fun this year and wanted to give you a chance to get in on the action. No action = no reaction, and you pass up your chance at having a cool T-shirt and playing with a walkie-talkie. Call now, operators are standing by...

Your Co-Directors,

Blake Davis <fraterbad@hotmail.com>

Lance A. Brown <labrown@nc.rr.com>

Spreading Our Feathers

At Spring Quest 2001, we practiced Spreading Our Wings in a very literal sense by charging and posting feathers in each Quarter of Millstone during our opening ritual. At the close of our magical weekend, we brought the feathers back to the center of the community and empowered folks to carry them even further afield.

Susan Hill took the East feather with her in anticipation of her trip to France. Roger Dinger volunteered to carry the West feather with him on his trip to Mongolia. Mi-

chelle Brewer committed to take the North feather to the Great Lakes area. And Silhouette agreed to take the South feather to Key West.

Susan and Roger have provided details about the placement of their respective feathers. We hope to bring you Michelle and Silhouette's articles in upcoming issues of the newsletter. How gratifying to know that our long-wing feathers are circling the boundaries of the earth.

West Feather Flies to Mongolia

On July 16, 2001, while on a spiritual journey in Mongolia I placed the west (blue) feather from CSQ 2001 at an ovoo at Bayan Davaa Mountain pass east of Ulaanbaatar. An ovoo is a shamanist shrine found in many places in Mongolia and consists of a pyramid-shaped rock cairn with a wood pole in the center wrapped in blue scarves and ribbons. Ovoos honor resident na-

ture spirits where heaven and earth touch, usually mountain tops. I walked the traditional three times sunwise around the ovoo before attaching the west feather to the center pole. A prayer and offering were made to eternal blue heaven for the success of Carolina Spirit Quest.

Roger Dinger



Roger Dinger placing blue feather in Mongolia

Yellow Feather in the East

By Susan Hill

At the closing ritual of Quest 2001, Danny Moses asked for volunteers to take the feathers that marked the four directions as far in their respective directions as possible. I volunteered to take the East feather to France on a trip to visit sites associated with Mary Magdalene and Black Madonnas.

My trip began on June 15 with a day in Paris where I visited the modern art at the Pompidou Center, ate at one of my favorite restaurants and walked along the Seine. Our official trip began with a visit to the cathedral at Chartres. Chartres has a black Madonna and of course the wonderful labyrinth on the floor of the cathedral. The labyrinth is in chains so to speak since it is covered with chairs most of the time. The church was not crowded when we arrived, however, and I was able to trace the labyrinth through its winding path in and out around the chairs. It was a grounding experience and in recognition I added a new labyrinth charm to the necklace I wear. Chartres is built on an old pagan sacred site; in the crypt, there is an ancient well that I could imagine as the scene of sacred rites long before the church pre-empted the site.

I had been thinking about where the feather should be left. Initially I thought that it would go in one of the churches we visited but very early in the trip, I realized that an active Catholic church was exactly the wrong place for this feather to go. There was too much sense of the Goddess being in chains, too much history of persecution, too much misogyny associated with these places for one of them to be the right place for the feather to rest.

From Chartres, we journeyed to Vezelay, south and east of Paris. Madeleine Basilica in Vezelay is a

pilgrimage church perched on the top of a steep hill with the town around it. It has some Mary Magdalene bones and a statue of her holding the grail. The church is very austere but there was a kind of creepiness that made it an unwelcoming place for me. The town, however had some lovely shops,



1. Susan With Saint Sarah

great views across the valley and friendly people. It was there that I bought a lovely soapstone disk necklace of the Chartres labyrinth that I wore the rest of the trip. In the little town near Vezelay where we stayed, I had the best meal of the trip. The place was about the size of Ellerbe but had a wonderful restaurant where I had a great 5 course meal with wine for about \$40 dollars.

Up until now the weather had been cool and rainy. Now in Provence, the temperature became warm and the sun came out. Our plan in Provence was to visit St. Baume, a grotto on the side of a mountain where Mary Magdalene lived her last years. It was unfortunately closed for renovation but we saw some more body parts in a nearby cathedral at St. Maximin. This was the farthest point east in our journey but not the right place to leave the feather.

Les Sainte Marie de la Mer was our next stop. This is beautiful marsh country with wild horses,

lots of birds and beautiful sunsets. This point of land west of Marseilles was the place where St. Maximum, Mary Magdalene, Martha and her brother Lazarus, Mary the mother of James and their servant Sarah landed after being set adrift in a boat without sails or oars from the Holy Land after Jesus died.. In the church in Sainte Marie, there is statue of Saint Sarah. [pic 1] She is well loved by the gypsies (she was mentioned in a recent article in National Geographic about the gypsies of Europe). Each spring the gypsies converge in large numbers on this little town. They take Sarah out of the church down to the sea where they wash her. The rest of the year she is clothed in finery and is surrounded by candles. While I liked Sarah, this was still not the place for the feather.

Then it was on to the Pyrenees, the mountains that form the border between France and Spain. Here we stayed in a creepy old abbey that was part of a small walled town. On first day of touring there, we visited Rennes le Chateau, another of those towns built on the top of a hill. The church there had been built by the Templars who were reputed to have buried treasure in the church. In the late 1800's a priest unexpectedly found the money to restore the church (many people believe he found the Templar's buried treasure). The church is now a museum owned by the city. There is a wonderful statue of the devil [pic 2] that guards the entrance of the church and there is a small museum and the priest art deco house to visit. The hillsides and



2. Susan with the Devil at Rennes le Chateau

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Yellow Feather in the East

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valleys surrounding the church were in full bloom with flowers in my favorite shade of yellow.



3. Into the Hills

After we left Rennes le Chateau, we drove into the hills where we stopped to admire a large rock formation across the valley. [pic 3] We wandered around a dry pasture with wild thyme and prickly plants. I found myself in the shade of some trees admiring the view. As I stood there alone in the heat, I realized that I needed to take off my clothes and let the breeze blow across my body so I did. As I stood there with my arms outstretched, listening to the birds sing and with the insects buzzing around, I knew this was my real church - this was my sacred place. I stood there for about 15 minutes enjoying the atmosphere. When I got back on the bus, I realized I forgot the feather and that maybe it should have stayed there but it was too late.

The next day we went to Montsegur, another ruin on the top of a hill. [pic 4] This place was the last stand of the Cathars, a 12th century heresy that was destroyed by the inquisition. All the guide books describe the



4. Susan Hill at Montsegur

climb up to the ruined castle as difficult and steep, and it was. I had brought the feather with me since this seemed like the right place to leave it [pic 5]. It was very hot (over 90 degrees) and I climbed the trail very slowly. It was lined with boxwoods, rocky with occasional steep wooden steps. About 3/4 of the way up, I realized I didn't



5. Yellow feather before the climb

care if I got all the way to the top. I spotted a shady place to sit on the edge of the trail overlooking the valley. My sitting place was a large rounded rock which I straddled comfortably. I was surrounded by boxwoods with their distinctive smell. As I settled against the rock, legs spread apart, yoni pressed to the earth, I knew this was the right place to leave the feather. I buried it by my left side, under a rock, in the roots of the boxwood.[pic 6]

Montsegur was a place where people died for religious freedom, the right to worship and believe what seem right to them. I made this climb on Sunday, June 24, close to the solstice and the Sunday that my UU church remembers the Stonewall Riot which began the gay rights movement. So it seemed very appropriate.

I made an offering of some of my precious water to the Goddess on the mountain. I came down slowly, carefully, hot, tired and satisfied.

Our last stop was Montserrat, a rocky formation near Barcelona in Spain. Montserrat has a black Madonna that was found in a cave; she refused to leave the mountain so a basilica was built for her. She's a wooden statue with Jesus sitting on her knee. Both figures face straight forward; she holds a globe in her right hand. She sits high above and behind the altar (about where the baptismal tank sits in many Baptist churches). There are back stairs which lead up to her place and people pass by her in a constant stream touching the globe which is the only part of her that sticks out of her glass case. It's bizarre to sit in the church and watch the stream of people moving past her.



6. East feather's resting place

The whole Montserrat complex is actually quite well organized. The commercial parts are under the church, there are lots of rest rooms, and there are two funiculars and a cable car to take you to various parts of the mountain. I went up the Saint Joan funicular and walked on the trails that cross the top of the mountain. This is an eroded rock formation with lovely, sensual rounded rocks - all breasts

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and tummies and butts, with occasional phallic formations to provide balance. [pic 7]

Long Range Planning Process



7. Montserrat's sensual rocks

I am very happy with the place that I left the feather. This trip strengthens my feeling that the natural world is the most holy place and that we need to honor it. I traveled with some wonderful women that I hope to stay in touch with in the future. I am looking forward to more Spiritual Journeys.

Susan Hill



Planning for the future is the CSQ Board's emphasis during this year. We are looking at our organization's purpose and to see what we should be doing. The CSQ mission statement is:

The purpose of CSQ shall be to devote its resources to religious and educational activities; and to sponsor a program for adults and children, to be held each year in the Spring; and further, the purpose of CSQ shall be to **encourage networking and the building of community** spirit among Pagans in the Carolinas and the surrounding area.

However, many of us feel that the Quest organization has the potential to do much more for our community than just the Spring event. There are other things we can do that can contribute to this goal of networking and building community. We have the talent and resources to try many new things.

The Long Range Planning Committee has been working on this. They believe that an essential part of the planning process is to find out what are the visions for the future that are held by constituents of Carolina Spirit Quest.

The LRP Committee has held a visioning (dreaming) session for themselves. They conducted one for the CSQ Board in August. They are working on plans to get similar participation from Questers and prospective Questers at various locations in the region.

How does this visioning process go? We start by discussing the CSQ mission. What does it mean? What are we doing and what are we not doing. We share some possibilities for doing more to encourage networking and to promote a Pagan friendly world.

Then we sit back and dream. And make notes about that dream. We ask:

If you sit back and dream about our Pagan community, if you dream about what an organization like Quest can do; what picture do you see five years from now? If CSQ is very successful over the next five years in accomplishing its mission of networking and fostering community:

- What will Quest be doing?
- How will we reach more folks on an Earth Centered path?
- How will we expand our geographic reach to truly include South Carolina and Virginia, not just central North Carolina?
- How will we work with other Pagan groups?
- How will we make our presence known to the larger world?
- How can we help make this world Pagan friendly?

The LRP Committee includes Lance Brown, Tamia Buckingham, Blake Davis, Al Dunmore, and Dick Merritt. They are seeking ways to involve all of us in this discussion. If you have ideas about our future or the long-range planning process, send them to Dick Merritt at dickmerritt@mindspring.com or to the CSQ post office box.

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Carolina Spirit Quest 2002
April 20-22, 2001
Camp Millstone,
Ellerbe, NC

Carolina Spirit Quest Calendar of Events

Sunday, September 12—Triangle Pagan Pride Day
(See articles on pages 2 and 7.)

Saturday, October 13—Quest: Blood, Stones and Runes
(See article on page 1.)

November 16-18—Fall Board Meeting

February 15-17—Winter Board Meeting

April 12-14—Carolina Spirit Quest 2002—Bringing Home the Magic

May 17-19—Spring Board Meeting

