



PROMOTING A
PAGAN FRIENDLY WORLD

Carolina Spirit Quest Summer 2004

Looking Forward—Spring Quest 2005 Becky Starr & Cynthia Campbell

As Spring Quest 2004, “Our Magical Paths, Our Sacred Community,” comes to its final conclusions; we are left looking at the journey we have made to get here. In the past year, we have followed the twists and turns of the labyrinths of our own individual paths. We have journeyed back and forth, twisting to and fro, to find ourselves coming back to the center – back to the connection that we have with each other. Coming back not only individually, but collectively to the center of our community – CSQ’s Spring Quest event. We celebrated together! We sang and laughed and drummed together. And we partook of the joy of friendship and the comfort in family of both blood and sacred kin.

Now we must look at this sacred community that we have built and ask, “What will we do with this in the future? How can we use this precious thing that we have created together to build something greater?”

Cynthia and Becky pondered that question one evening not too long ago and realized that in this community our greatest gift is

ourselves! And our greatest joy can be found not only celebrating in that, but in using this gift for the betterment of our community and our world! The theme for Spring Quest 2005 was born – “With Our Hands, and With Our Hearts...” With our hands, we can shape our community. We can shape our future as earth-based spiritualists. And we can give back through service, not only to each other, but to the community at large. With our hearts, we can heal! We can heal ourselves and each other. And we can heal the planet, by giving back of our love and energy.

Plan to join us next spring, as we gather again in our sacred community to celebrate “With Our Hands, and With Our Hearts...” and to explore the many possibilities for love, service and healing.

Possibilities for Creativity

The Quest staff for 2005 is in search of a logo! With such a great theme, the possibility of wonderful art is wide open. The creator of the selected design will win a

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Winter Quest 2005: Behind the Mask

Amy Brann

In the long hot days of a Carolina Summer, it is hard to imagine the chilled short days of winter. But the wheel turns continually, and just as winter fell into summer, summer will, in turn, give way to winter.

January 28-30, 2005, Carolina Spirit Quest will host its third annual Winter Quest event at Fairy Stone State Park in Stuart,

VA
(<http://www.dcr.state.va.us/parks/fairyst.html>).

Continuing along the lines of looking inwards in the wintertime, the theme for the upcoming Winter Quest event will be “Behind the Mask - Our Inner Spirituality.”

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- *Financial Update—see page 4*
- *Next Board Meeting—11/19-20 at One Spirit Sanctuary—Pittsboro, NC*

*Under the full moonlight we dance!
Hand to hand we dance,
Heart to heart we dance,
Soul to soul rejoice!
Karen Beth*

Ritual Wrap-up from Spring Quest 2004

Cynthia Campbell

This year the ritual team for Spring Quest thought long and hard about what they should craft for “Our Magical Paths, Our Sacred Community”. Should they call different pantheons, should they have people group together according to their individual paths...how should they bring multiple paths into one ritual? The simple and elegant solution was to blend the energy of everyone in attendance into one communal whole.

Each person was invited to paint a symbol of their path on a rock and place it in a cauldron. During the Main Ritual water was poured over the rocks and stirred so that the paint, and the energy, intermingled. Then everyone chose one of the rocks and a vial of water from the cauldron to carry a piece of the community home with them. The directions also spoke and called to everyone – their wisdom is shared below.

Our thanks go to each person on the ritual team: Danny Moses, the fearless leader and ritual master of ceremonies; Dan, the Lone Drummer and co-fearless leader; Sundance at East; Tammie at South; Becky at West; Andrea at North; Don at Above; Cynthia at Below; and Lisa at Center.

East: Text not provided.

South:

Lava ribbons shape the landscape
Flickering tongues of flame dance higher
While drummers and dancers move as one
Embers glow as they burn away decay
Ashes nurture new life
Fire sparks our passion
Khundalini flows eternal
To kindle our desire within

West:

Cleansing, Purifying, Healing...
The gentle trickle of a stream,
The rush of the ocean waves on the shore.
Compassion, Love, Peace...
The healing power of the Mother's arms,
The tides of emotion that ebb and flow in all of us.
Sunset, Endings, Calm...
The peace of letting go,
And the cauldron of rebirth bringing us back to renewal.

Water flows around us and through us...
In our blood and in our tears.
Water is the life blood of all that is.
And it is our path, back to wholeness.

North:

Merry dancing peridot
deep grassy emerald
darkest serious coal
the Blood of garnet sings in my soul

Out of the darkness
Out of the night Mother
a seed is born and sprouts anew

Dearest one, this seed is you.
In the stillness of my cave may you form your foundation
Body of stone with mountain spine
Strength of bone come and be mine
Forest and tree, I call to thee
Valley and grove my treasure trove
Field and plain of golden grain
Garden and glade all were made
For our bodies and minds to flower.

Kneading Dark rich soil
like bread dough in my hand,
I call now on fertile land
Grounding beneath us,
nourishing our deep tree roots
Enriching our bodies and minds with harvest aplenty
Fruits of our labor, beauty from our hands

Stagnant marsh, bog, and fen
Sometimes mires the mind of Men
Grow strong! Find inside
your will of Iron
And your path will shine anew.

Earth! Be with us tonight and lend your strength and abundance to this ritual.

Above:

Spirits of Above we hail. Though we sleep, our dreams are alive.
Powers of light, through us you sail. Despite our eyelids shut, you thrive.
To a world of wonder we awake. A mirror adds to what we see.
Aware of suffering, fear, and hate. To be with us, I call to thee.
Insights and ideas we see. Imagination in us lives.
Revelation, clarity to our lives great meaning gives.
Dear wise one of radiant white, we thank you for your gift of sight,
ask you to be with us tonight and to this ritual lend your light.

Below:

The realm of Below now calls.
It is always with us, beneath our feet, behind every action, hidden in shadow within us.
The well beneath the great tree stirs, raising up all that we have tried to hide.
The gate to the underworld stands open, waiting for us to bury what we need to be rid of.
The realm of Below is beautiful, terrible, unknown.
Look deep beneath the roots of the great tree...deep within yourself...and find mystery.

Center: Text not provided.

Elemental Dream Catcher, created by Lisa Sibley, was a representation of the main ritual at Quest 2004 containing the four Elements, Above, Below and Center.



CSQ, Inc.

Annual Meeting Minutes

CSQ President, Dick Merritt, called the meeting to order as scheduled after lunch on Sunday, April 18.

The following two-year trustee nominees to the Board were announced for election: Tim Woody from Hurdle Mills, Raven from Raleigh, and Christine Ahrens from Fayetteville. With whole-hearted support from the members, all three were approved by acclamation. Welcome Tim, Christine, and Tim!

The change to section IV.4 of the Carolina Spirit Quest bi-laws was then presented for confirmation by the members. This states "Each voting member of the board shall reside in North Carolina, South Carolina, or Virginia upon initial election or appointment to the board". After some discussion, the bi-law change was approved by acclamation. This means that if a board member moves out of our area, they may now still fulfill their obligation and finish the rest of their term.

Tamia then made her final speech as director of the spring 2004 event. She presented two outstanding volunteers with Quest t-shirts: Bill Elston, for his generous help in the kitchen; and Sherri Woody for her time and talented work with the children. Tamia also thanked all her staff for their hard work and support. She then introduced next year's co-directors, Becky and Cynthia, and retired. Thank you, Tamia, for a wonderful event and for working so hard on behalf of Carolina Spirit Quest.

Our new co-directors announced their theme "With Our Hands and With Our Hearts" and extended their invitation to attend next year. They are looking forward to hearing from those interested in volunteering for staff positions and to seeing logo ideas from all our talented artists!

Cynthia Campbell, Secretary

New Board Members

Christine Ahrens was born in Frankfurt Germany. She grew up outside of El Paso, TX in Chaparral, NM. She was raised in a Christian home with "pagan tendencies" so when she read an article on paganism when she was 12 years old she knew that this is what she was. She began reading and doing research and hasn't stopped since. When she was 16 years old, she dedicated herself to the Goddess and Wicca. She was a solitary that included the study of philosophy, psychology, anthropology and other world religions into her path work. She got married and became an Army Wife. It was this reason she was brought to North Carolina. She started attending the Open Circle on Ft. Bragg. She joined Sacred Well Congregation (SWC) in 2002. In 2003 the Circle's leader was deployed and Christine assumed the leadership role. After 18 months of study, in March of 2004 Christine was ordained a Deaconess in the SWC. Even though her studies are mostly concentrated in the Greencraft tradition she is very eclectic. She is also the mother of twin daughters and a son. Christine strives to "give back" to her community by aiding others in their journey on the pagan path. Christine hopes that through hard work and prayer that in the future there will be less discrimination from uneducated forces. Christine was elected to the board at the Annual Meeting at Spring Quest 2004.

Tracy Britto (Aurora) follows an eclectic Wiccan path. She has been involved in the Raleigh Pagan community since 2000. A transplant from Massachusetts, she has been studying Paganism for over 11 years. Aurora is currently a member of Sacred Spiral, Eclectic Arcanum and co-founder of Sisters of the Enchanted Circle. A math teacher by profession, she is interested in numerology and tarot. She was a representative at the North Carolina Pagan Leadership Conference in Jan. 2003 for Eclectic Arcanum and

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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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Board Members

Dick Merritt, President, Hillsborough

Becky Starr, Vice President, Durham

Tamia Buckingham, Treasurer, Hillsborough

Cynthia Campbell, Secretary, Hillsborough

Christine Ahrens, Fayetteville

Tracy Britto, Wendell

Liz Grimes, Jamestown

Raven, Raleigh

Tim Woody, Hurdle Mills

(Continued from Spring Quest, page 1)

free tee shirt with their artwork on it! So, pick up your pen, paints or crayons and start drawing up a winning design!! (Deadline for submissions will be November 30!)

Possibilities for Teaching

Learning Circles are the heart of our weekend – a chance to share what you know and to learn from each other in a sacred environment. We are looking for people willing to share their love, skills and knowledge with the community. Teaching experience isn't necessary (just ask some of this year's first time presenters!!) If you would like the opportunity to share with the community, please email Tim (ravenswood98@yahoo.com) or Christine (adratica@aol.com).

Possibilities for Service

Becky and Cynthia are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to fill staff positions! No experience is necessary, just let them know what you are interested in and they will find a use for it! Several brave souls have already stepped forth to offer their services in making this a wonderful event (And we love them for it!!) The staff so far:

Co-director: Becky Starr—lukystarr@aol.com

Co-director: Cynthia Campbell—moonfire@nc.rr.com

Communications Manager: Open

(Continued from Winter Quest, page 1)

Masks hold many magical mysteries in a variety of worldwide cultures throughout time. Utilized in many ways, masks are used in religious workings to invoke the powers of deity and to offer protection for mankind from fearsome powers. They can be used to change personas or to hide or replace one's identity. But beneath the mask, the person is still a person, with his or her own unique face.

We each wear our own masks. If we are in the broom closet - from choice or necessity - we wear them to protect ourselves. We also can wear them because we are afraid of letting others, or ourselves, know what is inside. Beneath our masks lie awesome powers, an awesome spirituality.

This Winter Quest we will look at what lies beneath our masks. What is our inner spirituality? That core of divinity that rests in all of us that makes us who we are? Looking beneath the protective barrier we wear - to protect ourselves from others or protect others from ourselves - will open a door of possibilities. And in the tranquil and enchanted winter wonderland of Fairy Stone (we've been blessed by two snowfalls in previous years) we will have a safe haven to glimpse beneath the mask and leave the weekend knowing that what is beneath is so precious it should be gazed upon more often.

In the upcoming months, information will be mailed and posted to the website. Also, if you are interested in leading workshops, please contact the Winter Quest Director, Amy Brann, at ymasen@bearcircle.net.

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Security & Safety Coordinator: Open

First Aid Person: Open

Financial Update

Tamia Buckingham

Carolina Spirit Quest began the fiscal year with minimal funds – and seriously considered whether the organization could continue to survive in the tight economy. By consolidating the assets available and drastically slashing costs, CSQ was able to proceed with the Winter and Spring events. Winter Quest (2nd year) was held at Fairy Stone State Park as it had been the previous year. Spring Quest (9th year) was moved to Camp Laphio at Umstead State Park as a cost-saving strategy. Both events were successful financially and programmatically. The success of these events allowed CSQ to continue its support of a first year initiative – the Pagan Leadership Skills Conference – a joint venture with three other pagan non-profit organizations (DC Radical Fairies, Open Hearth Foundation, and Paganet, Inc.) This program generated successful results as well and is poised to become a recurring summer event.

In short, CSQ not only survived the year, but thrived in the face of adversity. The current cash position is sufficient to seed the 2005 event schedule and to reinstate the production of the newsletter.

Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2004 have been presented to the Board for review and acceptance at the August 2004 Board Meeting. The statements will be posted to the web-site shortly thereafter.

Spring Quest Magical Auction—or “Here Kitty, Kitty...”

Becky Starr

What do a Dream Catcher, 2 Cloaks, a wooden Box named Tim and 7 kitties have in common? They were all part of this Quest’s Magical Auction! Over 30 items made their way to Quest this year to become part of the magical auction. And with those items, over \$650 was raised to fund the CSQ Scholarship Program and other various programs this year.

There was an amazing array of items offered over half of which were donated by Kathy Sage in a house cleaning effort! (Thanks Kathy!!) Included in the unique offerings were:

A beautiful wooden box that may have been an old tool chest. The bidding was fierce for the large box, especially between Tim W. and Tim M. As it came down to the end of the auction, Tim M. discovered that the beautiful box had a brass nameplate on its lid with scroll letters. The letters spelled simply “Tim”. The two Tims were in a bidding war over a box with their name on it! The winner, who took the lovely box home with him: Tim M.!

A huge basket of magical items, donated by Gryphon, also sparked a bidding war as participants upped the price for the basket over and over again. The reason for the increasing bids? A cute little 4” black cauldron! There were several requests for the cauldron only, but alas,

it was available only in the set. The winner: Liz for \$31, who out bid at least 4 other people.

Items left over on Saturday night with no bids were considered “orphans” and went up in a live auction. Among these items seven cat statues donated by Kathy Sage – 5 ceramic, 1 glass and 1 red wooden one from Indonesia. The 7 kitties caused quite a ruckus during the bidding when RJ, a self-proclaimed dog lover, bid for the cats as he announced his intention to feed them to his dog! He taunted the cat lovers over and over again raising the price on the not-so-furry felines. His winning bid for the kitties: \$10. But that wasn’t the end of it! Sunday morning, the cats showed up in RJ’s vendor tent, one hanging from a noose, with a sign proclaiming “Save the Kitties”. For a \$5 donation per cat to Quest, a kitty could be saved from certain death at the jaws of RJ’s dog. Concerned cat lovers “rescued” 4 of the 7 cats at \$5 bucks a pop! The grand total on the “orphan” item - \$30 due to RJ’s creativity and rabble-raising efforts!!



Princess, “rescued” by Becky, enjoys her new home and loving treatment!

Winter Quest 2004— a Success

Dick Merritt

So many of us have jobs that don't allow us to listen to the cycle of the natural world, particularly in the winter when Nature's message is one of rest and renewal. On January 23-25, 2004, 17 participants gathered at Fairy Stone State Park, Martinsville Virginia ,to listen to the rhythms of Nature and to do quiet reflective and nurturing rituals and activities. The event, like the first one in 2003, followed a pattern similar to that of a Spring Quest - but on a more leisurely pace and scaled back participation.

Carolina Spirit Quest has decided to call the things formerly known as workshops now learning circles. The idea is to de-emphasize “work” and emphasize “learning.” Well, we had a bunch of fine and fun work . . . learning circles at Winter Quest. They included :

- ·Creating and Walking Your Own Path. - Sharon Hill and Gryphon Rosemead
- ·Basket Making as a Moving Meditation - Tamia Buckingham
- ·Dream Time Pleasures (dream pillows) - Becky Starr
- ·Finding Your Inner Wisdom: Creating a Unique Divination Tool - Becky Starr
- ·"I've got your number!", an introduction to numerology - Brenda Berry
- ·Gift of Pleasure: Hand and Foot Massage - Dick Merritt

The participants and presenters were a wonderfully varied bunch. Besides some of the usual suspects, there was a contin-

gent of the DC Radical Fairies.

The event was successful both financially and programmatically. The budget surplus will pay for a newsletter and our web site for a year.

Snow Sunday. Those headed for the Triad and Triangle of North Carolina ran into treacherous going before they got home. One of the season’s worst storms started soon before we departed Fairy Stone. For 2005 we plan on having the option of staying an extra part day, just in case.



Spiraling Into Our Center
Fairy Stone State Park, VA
January 24-26, 2003

Full circle weekend with CNC-PLC

Christine Ahrens and Amy Brann

On March 12 -14, 2004 Pagan Leaders from the Central North Carolina area came together at Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (Durham, NC) for the 2004 Central NC Pagan Leadership Conference (CNC-PLC). CNC-PLC was planned as a weekend for area group leaders and solitaries to work on finding solutions to issues ranging from building a stronger community to building a regional communications network.

Beginning in 2001, with the National Pagan Summit, the goals of the Pagan Leadership Conference were to establish dialog, network with fellow pagans, share ideas, and build bridges. Following the national meeting, the first Mid-Atlantic Pagan Leadership Conference was held in August 2001 and the first North Carolina Pagan Leadership Conference in January 2002. At the NC-PLC, a decision to split North Carolina into three regions (Western, Central and Eastern) was made with the hope it would foster the goals the National Summit set in 2001. The Central North Carolina Pagan Leadership Conference was the first - in the nation - of these local PLCs to be held. CNC-PLC had representatives from pagan groups from Winston-Salem to Raleigh, from Mount Airy to Fayetteville, as well as solitaries.

The opening ritual was held Friday night – inviting participants to state what they were hoping to gain from the weekend. During the opening ritual, each one of us was asked what we would like to get out of the weekend and how we wanted to see improvements made in the greater community. All were asked to leave something on the altar that symbolized us. Though there was a great amount of diversity within the circle we were all bound by a common goal: each person adding something to reach workable ideas that could be applied towards building up the stronger pagan community.

Saturday started bright and early as we were all split up into three different groups. Each group contained: one facilitator, on average of 9 group members and one or two scribes to keep notes from the group's brainstorming. The format focused on three questions for the participants to discuss - "What are the Pagan Community's Highest Priority in the next few years?", "How can we best meet the identified needs?" and "How can we coordinate our efforts?" Many ideas were generated, and while it shouldn't be a surprise, many of the groups had the same answers to the questions.

After the first breakout session it was clear that though each group had their own view of what order they placed the most important of their ideas, the theme of the ideas were similar to the other groups. Everyone agreed on the need for great networking to expand the public's understanding of paganism as a whole and the different types of pagan subcategories. The groups recognized the need for a web site that had a listing of groups in the area, upcoming events and so forth. There was also an expressed need for some type of guidelines for determining and supporting pagan leadership.

The second break out session proved to be the most challenging to the group as a whole. It showed that even though everyone had the same ideas of what they would like to see come out of this Conference, the road which we should travel to get there was seen in completely different lights. This is one of the beautiful things about paganism: there is no "set in stone" solution to a problem. The solutions to the proposed ideas on how to improve paganism within the Community ranged from a very structured idea to very liberal idea.



The third break out session was broken down into the issues that seemed to be the most important to the groups. Members of the conference could decide what issue they thought was the most important to them and form a new group to work out a usable solution. This was a great time for different members from the groups to hear more in depth the ideas of the other groups.

On Saturday evening the main building literally came to life with a Mardi-Gras-themed social which was a truly wonderful experience. The combination dance/social time was a great way to relax after a long day of blending very different points of view into many workable solutions.

During Sunday's wrap-up, consensus was reached to start a mailing list for the attendees and invite representatives from other pagan groups in the area who did not attend, as well as solitaries. Finally, everyone gathered in the grove behind ERUUF for a closing ritual facilitated by the Knights of Herne from Winston-Salem. Coming full circle, at the closing ritual everyone was able to share what they had gained from the weekend.

Becky Starr and Dick Merritt, attended the Central North Carolina Pagan Leadership Conference as representatives of CSQ. Christine Ahrens and Raven elected to the CSQ board at the Spring Event, represented Fayetteville organizations. Former CSQ Director, Lance Brown and Winter Quest 2005 director, Amy Brann attended as representatives of Celebrate the Circle. Traci Britto, appointed to the CSQ Board at its May meeting, co-facilitated the conference with Lisa Lovelace from the Winston-Salem area. Tamia Buckingham served on the staff.

(Continued from Board Members, page 3)

Co-coordinator for the 2004 Central NC Pagan Leadership Conference. Tracy was appointed to an open board position at the May 2004 Board Meeting

Cynthia Campbell is a full-time mom and long-time pagan. She grew up in a haunted house in Knoxville, TN which developed her psychic muscles at an early age. She has always had a deep relationship with the goddess Inanna, but didn't know about modern paganism until she met a Wiccan trad when she was 17. Since then she has been actively pagan first in TN and now in NC, where she meets with Celebrate the Circle in Durham and Children's Circle in Hillsborough. Cynthia lives in Hillsborough with her husband Dan, daughter Jessica, and two cats. She is looking forward to working with everyone in the coming year! Cynthia became a board member with her appointment to CSQ Spring 2005 Co-director.

Raven was born and raised in Florida. He has lived in the triangle area of NC since 1988. He has lived a varied but exciting path and feel a very close and deep connection with the Divine, in all of it's aspects. He enjoys walking and reading, and "fighting for a good cause". Raven is currently learning about the art of the making of fine meade, (or as he says "in my case at least one that passes for drinkable!!"). He feels that whether we believe that "you only go around once" or that this is one of many lives the result is the same. What we *do* has an effect on both others and our world. Ghandi once said, " Be the change you wish to see in the world ". Whatever path we follow, whatever journey we are on, we are a community. What we do then with this gem of knowledge is up to each of us. We should always strive to better this great community of ours.

Raven believes that we must also continue to promote an even greater sense of community: an inclusive and welcoming community where all paths are respected and encouraged, recognizing our differences while celebrating our commonalities. Intrafaith and

interfaith educational efforts must be made to further enlighten both our community and the greater community at large. He is also very committed to the support of our soldiers and their families, especially during this period of lengthy deployments to combat areas overseas. While our military strives to support religious diversity within its mission context and provide for our soldiers, we must also do all we can to help their family members. These same efforts at building community spirit should continue to be fostered within the greater community at large, through continued leadership training and networking within the pagan community.

He looks forward to all the exciting efforts that lie ahead !! Raven was elected to the Board at Annual Meeting at Spring Quest 2004.

Becky Starr considers herself an eclectic Egyptian pagan. She was introduced to goddess spirituality about 6 ½ years ago after reading The Mists of Avalon and finding a cover article in *New Age* magazine entitled "Women's Spirituality Rising". The hunger for information drove her to books and classes, where she was introduced to Isis for the first time in 1998. Becky is an instructor by profession and passion, finding herself a now frequent workshop leader for Celebrate the Circle Learning Circles and Carolina Spirit Quest events. She is a newly selected CSQ board member and is Co-Director for Spring Quest 2005. Becky is a Priestess of Isis, member and frequent ritual team-member of Celebrate the Circle at ERUUF, and lives in Durham, NC with her husband, teenage son and cat, Missy.

Tim Woody was elected to the board at the Annual Meeting at Spring Quest. Tim previously filled an unexpired one-year term on the board back in 2000. A member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough, Tim circles with Celebrate the Circle and Children's Circle. He is married and has three children, two girls and a boy. Tim and wife, Sherri have led the Children's Program at CSQ Spring Quest for the past several years.

(Continued from PLSC, page 8)

would craft an individualized action plan for their home organization.

The PLSC was an historic collaboration among the four sponsoring organizations: Carolina Spirit Quest, Inc.; the DC Radical Faeries, Inc.; the Open Hearth Foundation, Inc.; and PaganNet, Inc. In addition, it was underwritten by CedarLight Grove ADF; the SageFire Fellowship; the Shrine of the Sacred Arts - Correlian Nativist Tradition of Wicca; Church of the Ancient Ways; and Cather and Sunny Steincamp.

Feedback from the PLSC participants was overwhelmingly positive, with those participating offering a resounding "YES" when asked if the conference should be convened again. One respondent said, "This conference was of great benefit and of need to the Pagan community. I recommend the vision of this project and support it fully." Another participant said: "I was impressed with the amount of knowledge that was transmitted. This is applicable to both my Pagan environment and my professional one."

During the final session on Sunday, participants publicly committed to utilize newfound practical knowledge in their spiritual endeavors. Plans are underway for next year's Pagan Leadership Skills Conference. For further information check <http://www.PaganLeadership.org>><http://www.PaganLeadership.org>.



Sharing visions at the closing session of the PLSC.

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Winter Quest 2005
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Fairy Stone State Park,
Stuart, VA

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Pagan Leadership Skills Conference—What's That?

Sunny and Eridanus

Pagan leaders representing communities from New Hampshire to North Carolina gathered for the first Pagan Leadership Skills Conference (PLSC) in Richmond, Virginia. The four-day event, held Thursday, July 15 through Sunday, July 18, 2004, was created through the cooperation of Carolina Spirit Quest, Inc.; the DC Radical Faeries, Inc.; the Open Hearth Foundation, Inc.; and Paganet, Inc., all of whom sponsored the event.

PLSC is an outgrowth of the needs expressed through the Mid-Atlantic Pagan Leadership Conference (MA-PLC) held annually from 2001 to 2003. During that period several other PLCs were organized in North Carolina and the Washington Baltimore corridor. These PLCs have focused on bringing together leaders from diverse Pagan communities for the purpose of finding common ground and common goals.

As a result of these discussions, the PLSC was created to offer practical instruction via five tracks of in-depth training (fifteen hours per track). Pagan professionals conducted interactive instruction sessions for leadership in the following areas: Group Facilitation, Event Coordination, Legal Issues, Financial Management and Library Development.

The conference opened Thursday with an opening ritual and keynote address by Maryam Webster, a professional Energy

Therapist and LifeCoach; she is a shamanic priestess and a founding elder of WyrDWeavers Collective. Her presentation, "Seven Principles of Pagan Leadership," outlined material from her practice and study in the Pagan community.

PLSC planners designed the conference to balance intense education and social interaction within a spiritual context. Evening activities, hosted by the DC Radical Faeries, provided an enjoyable social outlet after each day of classes. Friday, PLSC attendees participated in a Bardic Drum Circle. Saturday, participants danced at Pomona's Ball, celebrating the Goddess of blossom, fruit and orchard. Throughout the conference, participants enjoyed the use of the Faerie hospitality suite.

The educational experience began well before the conference and will continue well into the future. Attendees prepared for the conference by bringing materials from their home organizations: meeting minutes, agendas, by-laws, brochures, legal documents, and financial records. On Thursday after the plenary, track participants shared introductions and expectations for the conference. Throughout the conference, participants learned through a variety of interactive techniques (e.g. role-play, dialogue, break out groups, and class projects). A key to the PLSC success was the expectation that each participant

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