

Mysterious Ways

A newsletter for Pagan men who love men.

Winter / Spring 2020
Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome to the Mysterious Ways

Welcome to the very first issue of Mysterious Ways. This will be a newsletter-type publication for Queer Pagan men. The reason I've decided to start this is the same reason I've started other things in the past like my "Discovering the Male Mysteries" podcast that I started over a decade ago. I went looking for a needed resource in our community and couldn't find it. I also want to help build and empower our small niche community that doesn't always have a proper place in either the LGBTQ or the Pagan communities. Many of us cross over into both communities (and maybe others), but never feel entirely at home in either. At the moment, I'm hoping this "newsletter" is something that will come out twice a year with a winter and summer issue. I've decided on a PDF format because it seems the most versatile. I can make it available on my webpage, share it in online groups and social media, and even print copies to share in real world LGBTQ and Pagan spaces. I hope to share news, knowledge, events, and other resources for our community. For this to work, I need your help and support. This isn't really a community publication if I'm writing all the articles and doing all the work. At the very least, I hope folks will submit articles, reviews, artwork, poetry, and listings for your groups and events. Thanks so much for reading and sharing! — Mel Mystery

Theme this Issue: "Empowering Queer Men's Spirituality"



An effigy of the Greek god Pan created at the 2019 Arcadia Camp OUT in Cumberland, Virginia.

Pan is the lusty and horny god of wild places, shepherds and flocks, nature, rustic music, sexuality, and fertility. His mythical home is in the region of Arcadia in ancient Greece.



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Special points of interest

- Discovering Arcadia: An Eden of Male Love
- Why Visibility and Representation Matter
- Think Globally, Support Locally

Retreats and Gatherings

Arcadia Camp OUT Held for Queer Pagan Men



Arcadia's "Pan at the Disco" lights and disco ball at night.

Pan at the Disco featured disco, pop, and dance music around a Pagan fire and dance circle.

The first annual Arcadia Camp Out was held October 9-12, 2019 at Bear Creek Lake State Park in Cumberland, Virginia. The campout was conceived to provide an East Coast / Mid-Atlantic gathering for Pagan and Hellenist men who love men. The theme for the first event was "Discovering Arcadia – Empowering Queer Men's Spirituality." The patron deity for the gathering was the Greek god Pan, the lusty horned and horny god associated with the historic Arcadia region of ancient Greece.

The camp out included workshops, hiking, a nighttime spirit walk, crafts, drumming, and rituals. One of the unique highlights of the weekend

was a social event dubbed "Pan at the Disco." The event involved a disco ball; a fire circle; and a mix of disco, dance, and Pagan-esque music. The fusion of music typically heard at gay nightclubs taking place at a Pagan fire circle was pleasantly surreal. The best part of the event was the opportunity to make new friends with other gay Pagans in the region and to share ideas and common experiences.

The next retreat is already being planned. The theme for Arcadia 2020 will be "The Space Between Us – Making Connections Across the Void." This will include making personal connections in the real world

(Continued on page 3)

"Those who dwell in Arcadia seek out that secret Eden because of its isolation from the troubled world and its safety from the arrogant demands of those who would deny freedom, curtail human action, and destroy innocence and love." - Byrne R.S. Fone

Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat Announced

Brotherhood by the Bog is a Pagan men's retreat held at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The event is a continuation of spring retreats originally hosted by two Pagan men's groups – Exploring the Primordial Male (a Pagan men's group for men of all paths) and Order of the Stone Circle (a men's Druid order). The original retreats were held from roughly 2002 until 2011. While the original hosting groups no longer exist, the retreats were revived and rebranded in 2016. The event is organized by many of the same people. In 2019, another men's group – The Tidewater Spirit Coalition Men's Group – came onboard as a co-host. Retreats have most often taken place in the cabins at First Landing State Park though some years the event has been held as a camping retreat.

The 2020 Brotherhood by the Bog will take place the weekend of March 20-22, 2020 in the cabins at First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia. This year's theme is "Peering through the Veil: Divination and the Masculine." The event is open to Pagan men of all paths, orientations, and backgrounds

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>



Photos

*From Arcadia Camp
OUT 2019*

- Disco Ball
- Green Man Masks
- Fire Pit

*From the Brother-
hood by the Bog 2018*

Retreat participants Roger, David, Charles, Michael, and guest presenter Eric Eldritch hold up a pirate flag. The retreat theme was "Lost Boys and Neverlands: Creating Magickal Connections in a Mundane World."

(Continued from page 2)

and online; connecting with your "tribe"; and connecting with deities, spirits, and ancestors. It is often hard for gay men to connect with other men on a personal level; our tribe of Pagan men who love men is often spread out across various distances; and our deities, guardian spirits, and ancestors are across the veil. This event is all about making these connections. The patron deity for 2020 will be the Greek God, Hermes.

The event will take place the weekend of October 8-11, 2020 at Arcadia Sanctuary in Amherst, Virginia. Long-term goals for the event include highlighting Greek gods related to the mythical Arcadia for the first four years and then branching out to other pantheons; and hosting the Arcadian games (the Arcadian version of the Olympics) every four years. These games will be accessible to folks of all fitness and skill levels and will likely include fun games like Discus throwing using Frisbees or other flying discs; three-legged races, possibly some bawdy games, and other competitions.

To find out more about the Arcadia Camp OUT, please visit:

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

Brotherhood by the Bog

"Peering through the Veil: Divination and the Masculine"

A retreat for Pagan Men

March 20-22, 2020

Virginia Beach, VA

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat

Between the Worlds Review

I tried to reach out to the Between the Worlds folks through the contact on their website in hopes they'd do a write-up on the event. I did not hear anything back from them in time for this issue, so I've decided to include my own review from when I attended in 2017. - Mel Mystery

I attended the Between the Worlds Gathering for Queer Pagan men the week of September 11-16, 2017. Although I've known about this event for a long time, this was the first time I've actually attended. 2017 marked Between the Worlds' 16th gathering. Somewhere between 80 and 100 people attended.

Between the Worlds is held at Wisteria campground in Southern Ohio. The campground itself was very nice. It had a labyrinth, stone circle, faerie shrine, ancestor mound, and other similar land features. The campground runs a coffee shop and provides meal plans to the Between the World community. The food was decent and they offered vegetarian options. The only real complaint I have about the campground itself is the lack of toilet facilities. Like many Pagan campgrounds and gatherings Porta-Potties were the only amenity for doing your business. I was happy though that the campground did have shower facilities with hot water. The availability of showers made the outdoor experience bearable.

Between the Worlds is hosted by the Green Faerie Grove of Columbus, Ohio. Green Faerie Grove is a Pagan brotherhood of Queer Men that provides a safe place for gay, bisexual, and transgender men to explore alternative spiritual beliefs and traditions. In addition to the Green Faerie Grove, a group known as the Brotherhood of the Spectrum Blade provides security, health, safety, and counseling services at the gathering.

Every year, a different deity is chosen to be the patron for the gathering and each year offers different guest presenters. This year's patron deity was Agni, the Vedic and Hindu god of fire. Agni is represented as fire, lightning, and the sun. Keynote speaker for the event was Kirk Thomas, former Archdruid of the Druid organization ADF. Thomas was a delight. He brought his knowledge, experience, and wit to the gathering. In his keynote speech, he talked about fear and how we live in a culture of fear. He challenged folks to confront their fears and even provided an activity to allow folks to confront a fear.

Because of the size of the gathering, the community has separated its camps into groups that reminded me of cabins at a summer camp. The most prominent of these groups is called BOOF. The name is an acronym for Brotherhood of Old Farts. This is the party camp for folks over 40. They are big on champagne. BOOF hosts an annual cocktail contest and they were also the primary group involved in the production of the Between the Worlds Players' annual play.

The second major camping group is called the "Zoo." This is the place where those with animal totems or other animal associations camp. Apparently, there was once a long lost third camp that no longer exists at the gathering.

The men attending Between the Worlds were of all ages, paths, body types, and varying degrees of masculinity and femininity. There was also some representation of folks of color and non-European ethnicity. Some of the attendees were non-Pagan partners and boyfriends of Pagan men in attendance. Rather than calling them mundanes or muggles, Between the Worlds has affectionately termed these non-Pagans as "Derwoods" – a nod to Darrin from the television show *Bewitched*.

Activities included a "No-Talent Show"; a Dionysian ritual / party known as Komos; and the Between the World Players production of "Butt Pirates of Zika Island." The play is alleged to be a lost work of Gilbert and Sullivan. The play was both a comedy and a tragedy of epic proportions. Keynote speaker, Kirk Thomas, was the star of the show in the role of the Pirate Queen. The story involved wayward pirate women, a cabin boy dressed like Jack Sparrow, a curse, mutant babies, a giant mosquito, and mutiny.

Between the Worlds offered a wide variety of workshops. Topics included herbalism; sex magick; connecting with ancestors and deities; leather mask-making; hula dancing; tarot, runes, and other divination practices; polyamory; meditation and daily practices; flying ointments; Norse Seidhr oracles; Faery traditions; symbol and sigil design; and much more.

Other activities and rituals included a fire-lit labyrinth walk; a midnight meeting at the faerie shrine; a rite of passage for gay elders; a pirate themed ritual; fire divination; and a ritual to Hekate.

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Stone and Stang Announced for Spring

Stone and Stang is a spiritual gathering for Pagan Men Who Love Men. The event is hosted by the brothers of the Unnamed Path, a shamanic path for men who love men.

The gathering will be held May 7-10, 2020 at Circle J Ranch in Eustace, Texas. Previous gatherings have been held every other year in California. This year's theme is "Dancing the Wheel." According to their website "Dancing the Wheel is about bringing our community together and celebrating our tribe. We come together to connect with each other, the Land, Ancestors, Spirits of Nature, and the Gods."

Stone and Stang is a private event and all those who attend must pre-register before the event. In order to attend, you must be age 21 or older and identify as a man who loves men. This includes Trans-men so long as they identify as men who love men. The event is open to those who are Pagan or of other alternative spiritual paths. Lodging options include camping and bunks in the lodge. Lunch and dinner will be provided. The weekend will include workshops, presentations, rituals, and performances.

FMI: www.stoneandstang.com

I reached out to the Stone and Stang folks to write up something about their upcoming event, but did not receive anything by the submission deadline for this issue. So I've written a brief blurb using information from their website.

(Between the Worlds continued from page 4)

Overall, my week was a very enjoyable experience. There were a handful of folks I knew from other gatherings and I was also surprised that two of my friends from Virginia Beach decided to attend. I also made new friends. Everyone was friendly and Between the Worlds encourages folks to leave the bar attitudes at home.

For more information on Between the Worlds, please visit: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org/>



Above: Jesse Walker, Shariff Burgos, and Mel Mystery attend the 2017 Between the Worlds.

Below: A view of the Stone Circle at Wisteria.



Arcadia 2020

"The Space Between Us—Making Connections Across the Void"

A Camp OUT for Queer Pagan Men

October 8-11, 2020

Amherst, Virginia

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia

Discovering Arcadia: An Eden of Male Love

What is Arcadia? Arcadia was an ancient Greek city with its own mythology and patron deities, but it was also the ideal of a homosexual utopia in European Renaissance literature.

Historic Arcadia was a region located in the central highlands on the Peloponnese peninsula in Greece. The Arcadian tribe that originally settled the area is considered one of the oldest tribes to have settled in Greece. Because it was a remote, mountainous place, Arcadia was a cultural refuge. Its language and culture remained unique. Arcadia had numerous towns in both the mountains and in its fertile valleys. The landscape included mountains, forests, pastoral land, and rivers.

Arcadia was named after its first King, Arcus, who was a son of Zeus and Callisto. Both Arcus and Callisto are associated with bears and eventually were placed in the heavens as Ursa Major, the Big Bear, and Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. Arcadia was also the mythical home of deities such as the lustful Pan, the trickster Hermes, and King of the Gods, Zeus.

“Arcadia was a metaphor for what homosexual life could be without the stigma and constraints of mainstream heterosexual society.”

During the European Renaissance, Arcadia emerged as an ideal of unspoiled, remote, wilderness. It was further idealized by Uranian (their contemporary term for homosexual) men as a homosexual Eden or a utopia of male-male love. To these men, Arcadia was a metaphor for what homosexual life could be without the stigma and constraints of mainstream heterosexual society. They pictured Arcadia as a hidden and isolated leafy grove, a remote pastoral land, or even as an island far from the hustle and bustle and everyday cares of the mundane world. For them, Arcadia feeds the homosexual spirit. The love of men for men is natural there. It is even divinely sanctioned as a means to understand all that is good and beautiful. In Arcadia, homosexual love and sexuality is the ideal. It is noble, inspired, virtuous, and spiritually uplifting. Arcadia features untrodden paths, secluded spots, and hidden waters. There are rivers flowing through the land and the element of water purifies and enhances the innocence of the place. Rites of the sea, purification, and transformation by water are central to the rituals of life in Arcadia. Symbolic sexual consummation takes place in or near the water. These rituals celebrate male friendship, our mythologies, the union and consummation of lovers, coming together in a loving and sexual fraternity of men, and washing away any sense of guilt brought on by society at large. These rites often include offering gifts from nature and purification by water. The men of Arcadia are naturally nude, or at least they wear skimpy clothing. The climate is such that this is comfortable.

These Renaissance men idealized Arcadia as a place where homosexual sensibilities, love, and sexuality can be practiced without fear or punishment. In Arcadia, it is safe to come out and to be gay. In this Utopia of male love and sexuality, gay and bi men are free from the stigma and the “outlaw” status that society confers on us.

Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is May 15, 2020.

Please consider sharing your articles, reviews, poetry, art, events, and announcements.

E-mail these to Mel at knightsofmatrix@gmail.com. Please put “Mysterious Ways” in the subject line.

Empowering Queer Men's Spirituality

Why Visibility and Representation Matter

This past summer I hosted a discussion about Queer Pagan Visibility in my local community. The question posed was why there isn't a more active Queer Pagan community in Southeastern Virginia. Our collective region is made up of over 1.7 million people. We have an active LGBTQ community and our Pride festival is one of the largest events in our city. We also have an active Pagan community with our own annual Pagan Pride Day. While there are LGBTQ Pagans who attend both LGBTQ and Pagan events, there's rarely any obvious representation crossing these two distinct lanes of existence and identity. The one major exception is that there's an Interfaith event during our annual Pride week and Pagans are actually represented even though it is only once a year. That is rather significant since most Interfaith events tend to be exclusively or near-exclusively Christian and would be better characterized as "Christian interdenominational" events.

"Showing up for groups and events is over half the battle."

In our discussion, we talked about why our region doesn't have a more active Queer Pagan community. Beyond logistics like travel and transportation roadblocks, the four major things that stood out were that: 1) LGBTQ institutions are on a decline or at least a major transition. Gay bars, bookstores, and publications are largely on the decline – replaced by social media and online groups. While general LGBT events are popular, in most cases they don't require any personal investment more than showing up and maybe paying a cover charge. 2) There's also no local Pagan paper, though there are many Pagan shops. This limits the expression of Pagan ideas and sensibilities (including that of LGBTQ Pagans) to what the shops themselves are doing and most aren't focusing on LGBTQ Pagans. 3) Apathy and a lack of unity and cohesion among LGBTQ Pagans was also mentioned. And 4) Some folks pointed out how difficult it is to be visible in a hostile culture and environment.

Other than inclusion at the already mentioned Interfaith event, folks didn't feel there was much visibility or representation of Pagans within our local LGBTQ community. Even at our LGBTQ Pride Festival, there are tables upon tables of LGBTQ Christians but not even one single Pagan table. In the Pagan community, there was a feeling that most Pagan groups and covens had at least a token LGBTQ person, but that Paganism is generally accepting of LGBTQ folks so there isn't the same struggle we see among Christians looking for acceptance and belonging in their faith. Folks also felt that coming out of the "gay closet" and coming out of the "broom closet" are two different experiences. Many found it harder to come out as Pagan because there's less acceptance and more misinformation out there about Paganism. Folks felt there was no major outreach across the LGBTQ and Pagan communities. The two communities tend to remain separate and divided from each other even if some individuals identify as LGBTQ Pagan. Some LGBTQ Pagans compartmentalize these aspects of themselves as separate and distinct, while others take a more holistic approach by integrating these aspects of their lives.

After discussing some of the challenges to queer Pagan visibility and representation, we talked about why visibility and representation are important. Visibility and representation help break down misconceptions, misinformation, and negative opinions. Folks can meet these people, see they aren't scary, and ask questions. Visibility and representation help create safe spaces where folks can be who they are. Visibility and representation help marginalized communities to be taken seriously. Being visible lets other non-visible and questioning folks know they have options and that they aren't alone. One example is that many LGBTQ folks have always had this feeling they were different but didn't always know there were others like them. Being visible and represented helps people to come to terms with who they are and what they believe by seeing that there are others like them and that it's okay. Visible folks provide role models to the greater community. Sometimes it takes people to step up and to be an example in order for others to step up to follow or lead themselves.

So, what needs to be done to build a stronger, more visible and represented Queer Pagan community? Showing up for groups and events is over half the battle. Not showing up is the exact opposite of being represented and you can't be visible if you're quietly blending in. It's important to put your time and energy where it's needed, sometimes even if you'd rather stay home. It's important to confront ignorance and misinformation and to be a good role model. LGBTQ Pagans need to push for representation at LGBTQ events – especially Pride events and Interfaith events. We also need to be visible and accessible in our Pagan communities. There are different kinds of visibility. Visibility isn't just wearing a t-shirt or pin. It's also what you say and do.

Think Globally, Support Locally

The slogan “Think Globally, Act Locally” is most known for its implications to the environment, but it has been used in all sorts of contexts from activism, to education, to business. The idea is to think on a larger scale, but to start your efforts at home. This can mean caring for your own local environment as part of the bigger picture. If everyone did this starting in their local communities, think what a better world this would be. The slogan has also been applied to supporting local small businesses instead of larger chains and corporations. It can be applied to participating in your local community, as well.

How many folks do you know who skip out on local Pagan events and festivals, but they’ll travel out of state, maybe even across the country, to go to one or more large festivals throughout the year? The grass is always greener, and folks often take what’s in their own back yard for granted. How many folks do you know who find their sense of community lurking on social media sites that match their declared identity, but they never show up to real world events for those communities in their own city or town? How many Pagans do you know who raise up the shield of being a “solitary” as a means to isolate themselves from participating in the greater community? Sure, it’s much safer that way. You don’t have to risk putting yourself out there or that people might not like you or that the people in the real world might hurt you in some way. You also risk missing out on personal growth, making new friends, learning from the experience of others, and sharing your magical experiences with folks who actually might “get” you in a way your straight and non-Pagan friends don’t.

*“Without your support and the support of others,
community and institutions die out.”*

Many of us Pagans believe in the concept of reciprocity (give and take, a gift for a gift, building relationships, etc.). We apply this to our deities, spirit guides, and ancestors, but when it comes to our own communities we passively accept or take what is given – that is, if we participate in them at all. How often do we give those communities that matter to us our time, energy, money, or support?

I’ve modified the original slogan slightly for this article by changing out “support” in place of “act.” The original slogan is “Think Globally, **Act** Locally.” The reason I changed this for the article is that I know not everyone is a go-getter, not everyone is a leader, not everyone is an activist, not everyone has a lot of spare time, but everyone can support their local LGBTQ and Pagan communities in some way or other. Often this means just showing up for things that matter. It means showing up to events and getting involved with groups. It means supporting your local Pagan businesses, even if you just need to buy some incense or candles. Sure, you can’t go to every event, join every group, or spend all your money, but you can play a part, even if it’s a small one. Lots of small acts by many people eventually add up.

Without your support and the support of others, community and institutions die out. This might be the festival you’ve been meaning to get to for years that’s struggling for either attendance or for people to help run it. This might be the local Pagan shop that struggles to make ends meet. It could be the gay Pagan group trying to find members. I’d like to suggest that smaller or struggling groups, events, and businesses are the very place to put your energies. Not only are they in most need of your support, but smaller groups, events, and businesses tend to be more personal and have more chances to see that your support there really makes a difference. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy posed a question in his inaugural speech. He suggested, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” The same thing applies to your local community. It isn’t all about what the community can do for you, but also about how you can show your support to your community.

Stone and Stang: “Dancing the Wheel”

A spiritual gathering for men who love men

May 7-10, 2020

Eustace, TX

www.stoneandstang.com

Empowering our Tribe of Queer Pagan Men

The theme of this issue is Empowering Queer Pagan men's spirituality. For me this is all about empowering our "tribe." Our tribe of Queer Pagan Men is made up of Wiccans, Witches, Druids, Norse Pagans, Faeries, Feri's, and folks on many other paths. Some of us are Unnamed Pathers, Minoan Brothers (or is it Fellows now), Brothers of the Phoenix, Brothers of Cernunnos, Radical Faeries, Devotees of Antinous, Green Faeries, or Arcadians. Some of us belong to non-Queer Pagan covens or groups. Some of us are solitary. For some of us our sexuality plays a big part of our spirituality. Others of us keep our sexuality and our spirituality separate. We are bears and twinks, young and old, and everything in-between. Some of us are polyamorous, some of us are pansexual, and some of us are monogamous. Some of us are into BDSM or any number of other fetishes and kinks. Some of us identify as gay. Others as queer. Some of us are bisexual. Some of us identify as Transgender, gender-fluid, gender non-conforming, non-binary, intersex, or some other term. We are many colors, ethnicities, and nationalities. Many of us belong to other communities. Some of us are activists, and others not.

There's so much diversity, but can we - or even should we - be a unified community. I think the answer is "yes." We don't have to fit a cookie-cutter mold to be a community. Leave those aspirations to be like everyone else to the straight folks, to the Christians, and to the mundanes. We are unique and we have common interests and common threads within our paths, and that is enough. Trying to box ourselves in would only stifle our magick and our charm. In order for us to empower ourselves and our brothers, we need to embrace our differences, not just our commonalities. We all need to follow our own paths and do our own things, but we also need to come together sometimes. This can mean attending Queer Pagan men's gatherings, joining those groups in our community, or even starting one if there isn't one already. Empowering our community is about taking personal ownership and responsibility. It isn't enough to just passively take what's given; we also need to volunteer our time and energy to help build up our community, our groups, and our events. And then, once we've built up our own community, we need to be visible role models -- both for those who are seeking to discover what our community and spirituality have to offer and to be an example to the mundane community about what the world could be like with more love, brotherhood, and magick.

"The world belongs to those who actually show up."

Honoring the Sacred and the Sexual

As Pagan men who love men, we have a dual mission to accomplish in this lifetime. As gay, bi, Trans, and other sex or gender non-conforming men, we've come into this lifetime to challenge the heteronormative institutions of society that enforce strict gender roles, heterocentric relationships, and perhaps even strict ideas of monogamy. As Pagans, we're here to show that there's a better way of spirituality devoid of strict dogma; that respects the individual and values all people and all lifestyles; that honors the old gods and goddesses, ancestors, and nature spirits; and that respects nature rather than dominating it. Sure, this isn't a complete list and there are other missions we may have, but the point is that our sexual lives and our spiritual lives matter to making the world a better place. While we may live in a Christianized culture, Pagan spiritual paths and practices value and honor sexuality and individuality. As Pagans, our sexuality and our spirituality don't have to be separate. They can be integrated as part of the whole that is each of us and all of us.

Gay Gods and Spirits

Pan, the Lustful God of the Wild

Phallic and fertility gods seem to be the favorites of many gay and bi men, whatever their paths. Many Gay Norse Pagans choose the phallic fertility god Freyr in their practice. Among gay Druids and those who follow a Celtic spiritual path, the horned (and horny) god Cernunnos takes center stage. Gay Hellenists frequently revere the ever-erect satyr god Pan or the androgynous fertility god Dionysus.

Phallic worship plays into many gay and bi men's spiritual practices, especially those associated with horned, phallic gods. Many phallic gods have horns because horns are representative of wild, primal virility and sexuality. It is the male of many species (billy goats, rams, bulls, stags, and others) that develop horns, and these are often fully developed near rutting season. This is likely the origin of the term "horny" in reference to men becoming sexually aroused. The Greek god Pan is a satyr. He is part goat and part man. He is depicted with the lower half as a goat, the upper torso of a man, goat or ram horns, and an erect phallus.

Pan is the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks, nature, rustic music, fields, and groves. His home is in the rustic forests and fields of Arcadia. With his ever erect endowment, Pan is associated with sexuality and fertility. Pan was said to lust after and chase nymphs and shepherds alike.

Pan was a mediator between the gods and the spirits of nature. As a wild, rural god, Pan was worshipped in natural settings rather than in temples.

Depending on the story, he may have been the son of Hermes, Dionysus, Apollo or even Zeus. The identity of his mother is also unclear. She may have been a wood nymph, Penelope, Oeneis, or Dryope, among others.

Pan's name means "all" – as in the term pan-sexual. Pan's sexuality is all-encompassing. He lusts after women and men alike. The expression – "to honor Pan" was once used to indicate male homosexual practices. Pan is promiscuous and sensual. He opposes marriage in favor of free love. Pan's shout evokes panic in the hearts of anyone who hears it while walking alone in the wild. Pan's sexual freedom evokes panic in the hearts of sexual puritans.



One of the more famous stories of Pan involves the creation of the pan flute. A pan flute is a musical instrument made of hollow reeds. In the story, Pan fell in lust with an Arcadian wood-nymph named Syrinx. To escape Pan's attentions, the nymph fled to Mount Lycaeum with Pan in pursuit. At the edge of the river, Syrinx called out her two sisters who magically transformed her into a reed. Not knowing which reed was her, Pan grabbed a handful and noticed that when air blew through them it created beautiful music. Pan fashioned the reeds into the musical instrument and was rarely seen without it. Pan was so good at playing the Pan pipes that he even challenged Apollo to a music contest. In one version of the story, Apollo won. In another version it was a tie. Either way, Pan's music is on par with the best Greek deities had to offer.

In another story, Pan seduced the moon goddess Selene by dressing in sheepskin and drawing her down into the forest. Pan is sometimes associated with the goat constellation of Capricornus.

Pan is best known for his ever erect endowment and his sexual powers. Pan is said to have learned the art of masturbation from his father, Hermes. He taught this skill to shepherds.

In the 18th century, interest in Pan received revived interest among some scholars. In the 1786 book, **The Discourse on the Worship in Priapus**, Richard Payne Knight puts forth the idea that Pan is a symbol of creation expressed through sexuality. By pouring water on his phallus, the organ of generation, Pan invokes the creative power of that organ.

Later on, Pan became relevant again in neopaganism. In the 1933 book, **The God of the Witches**, Margaret Murray equates Pan as an aspect of the Pagan horned god who was worshipped by witches throughout Europe.

Poetry and Art

Dancing in the Shadows

Dancing in the Shadows like a Spirit Untamed
Flames, and your wild mane
Fans and flags, Rainbow Light
Moving in twilight, into Night
Grooves and sings like lost Love found
Music, transcendent blithely Sound
Dancing festive with the Ancestors forever
With sheets and gauze of gayest colors
Smiling Avatar of the Sacred and Profane
Dancing in the Shadows like a Spirit Untamed

By Donald Hua, Brother of the Unnamed Path

Dedicated to John Ravenmoon.

Photos of the "Green Man" by Mel Mystery

This and other photo sets are available for purchase at:

<https://gumroad.com/matrixwerx>



Queer Pagan Chant

We are an Old People.
We are a New People.
We are a Queer People.
Stronger than Before.

Between the Worlds

A Spiritual Gathering for Men Who Love Men

September 21-26, 2020

Pomeroy, OH

www.betweentheworlds.org

Queer Pagan Resources

Queer Pagan Men's Groups

Brotherhood of Arcadia — The Brotherhood of Arcadia (BOA) is a spiritual organization created from the fusion of Hellenist and Pagan beliefs and practices with an emphasis on queer and sexuality positive beliefs, practices, and deities. BOA membership is open to men who love men regardless of whatever personal labels one chooses, and who are also over the age of 18. No one – male, female, or trans – who feels called to join will be turned away.

FMI: <http://www.melmystery.com/index.php/brotherhood-of-arcadia>

Brotherhood of Cernunnos -- A Brotherhood of UK Gay Pagan Men. **FMI:** <http://www.brotherhoodofcernunnos.org/>

Brotherhood of the Phoenix — A Neo-Pagan order for Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender men who love men. We celebrate the Spirit of the Divine within and build community with men who seek positive transformation of self, community, and the world. Together we work to weave the magick that changes lives.

FMI: <https://fellowshipofthephoenix.org/>

Cern'osia -- An eclectic Neo-Pagan faith which focuses exclusively on the veneration and worship of the Celtic Horned God, Cernunnos. Although it could be adapted by anyone who worships the Horned One, it was designed primarily with the needs of a solitary Pagan man in mind. **FMI:** <https://cernosia.webs.com/>

Ecclesia Antinoi — Devoted to the worship of Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Antinous was deified after his death and is worshiped by modern practitioners as a god of gay spirituality, youth, and beauty.

FMI: <http://www.antinopolis.org/>

Gay Druid Brotherhood — An international network for homosexual and bisexual men on the Druidic and Keltic inspired Pagan paths. **FMI:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaydruidbrotherhood/>

Green Faerie Grove — A brotherhood of queer men in Columbus, Ohio. **FMI:** <http://greenfaeriegrove.org/>

The Minoan Brotherhood — A men's initiatory tradition of the Craft celebrating Life, Men Loving Men, and Magic in a primarily Cretan context, also including some Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern mythology.

FMI: <http://www.minoan-brotherhood.org/>

Radical Faeries — Generally we are gay men who look for a spiritual dimension to our sexuality. Many of us are healers of one kind or another. Our shared values include feminism, respect for the Earth, and individual responsibility rather than hierarchy. Many of us are Pagan (nature-based religion). **FMI:** <http://www.radfae.org/>

The Unnamed Path — The Unnamed Path is a shamanic path for men who love men. The path focuses on four main parts—Magic and Prophecy, Shamanism, Energy Healing, and Deathwalking. **FMI:** www.unnamedpath.com

**Looking for a speaker for your next gathering, retreat, or other event?
Check out the Queer Pagan Speaker Directory online!**

www.melmystery.com/index.php/links/queer-pagan-speaker-directory

Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

January 17-19, 2020 — Gay Spirit Visions Winter Retreat at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. This year's theme "Seeing the Unseen: Bringing our Gifts into the Light."

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/winter-meditation/>

March 20-22, 2020 — Brotherhood by the Bog Pagan Men's Retreat at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, VA. A retreat for Pagan men. This year's theme is "Peering through the Veil: Divination and the Masculine."

FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

May 7-10, 2020 — Stone and Stang at Circle J Guest Ranche in Eustace, TX. This year's theme is "Dancing the Wheel." A spiritual gathering for Pagan Men Who Love Men. FMI: <http://stoneandstang.com/>

September 21-26, 2020 — Between the Worlds at Wisteria in Pomeroy, OH. A spiritual gathering for men who love men. FMI: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org>

October 8-11, 2020 — Arcadia Camp OUT at Arcadia Campground in Buchanan, VA. This year's theme is "The Distance Between Us: Making Connections Across the Void." The Patron deity this year is Hermes. A camping retreat for Queer Pagan and Hellenist Men.

FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

Blogs and Podcasts for Pagan men who love men

A Path through the Woods — Blog by a gay, Pagan, polytheist who lives in Chicago — <https://www.adrianmoran.com/>

Discovering the Male Mysteries — Official webpage for Mel Mystery and the Discovering the Male Mysteries podcast for gay and bi Pagan men. — <http://www.melmystery.com/>

Enfolding.org — A blog by Phil Hine to discuss interests including Tantra, Queer Theory, Gender, History, and Occult Practice. — <http://enfolding.org/>

Faehaven — Based in Harrisburg, PA the community is forming in order to create a space where queers and their advocates can explore spirituality of all sorts and have a safe space to share among like-minded independent individuals. — <https://faehaven.wordpress.com/about/>

Horns — A NSFW magazine where erotica meets Queer occultism and Paganism. — <http://www.hornsmagazine.com/>

Transfaith — An online journal for Trans spirituality. Includes a Trans Pagan section. — <https://www.transfaith.info/pagan>

Walking the Unnamed Path — Discusses the teachings and techniques given to us by their Ancestors of MWLM, and laid out by their late founder Hyperion. They also discuss topics and ideas pertaining to queer Pagan men in general. — <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/walkingtheunnamedpath>

Witches Betwixt — Witches Betwixt is a collective of queer witches representing a wide variety of magical practices and spiritual paths. We release a 45+ minute episode bi-weekly in which we discuss various topics relevant to the experience of a queer witch. — <http://witchesbetwixt.buzzsprout.com/>

Mysterious Ways

The Mysterious Ways newsletter is produced and published by Mel Mystery.

Mel Mystery is host of the Discovering the Male Mysteries Podcast for Gay and Bi Pagan Men. He is also author of the book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Werewolves and other Man Beasts" and the upcoming book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Druidry."

You can find out about Mel, listen to his podcast, and find out more about his books at: www.melmystery.com

Archive copies of this newsletter will also be kept on the site.

We need your support!!!

This paper is a community-based project. We're not charging for subscriptions. We're not accepting paid advertising. Those writing articles are not paid for their work. This paper is for the Queer Pagan Men's community and by the Queer Pagan Men's community.

If you think this paper is worthwhile, please consider helping us to thrive. We need folks to submit articles, artwork, poetry, reviews, and other content. We need folks to share this in Queer Pagan groups and social media groups. We need folks to print copies and share them in LGBTQ and Pagan spaces in their local communities.

Thank you for doing your part!!!

Next Issue: Queer Spirituality and Activism

With the 2020 election on the horizon, this seems like an opportune time to discuss the intersection between Queer Spirituality and Activism. Many Queer folks are involved in LGBTQ activism. Many Pagans advocate for the environment. Is there a place for activism in our spirituality and spirituality in our activism? Should spirituality and activism remain separate? What are we doing to make the world a better place?

Please send articles, reviews, original poetry, and other submissions to Mel at knightsofmatrix@gmail.com by May 15, 2020. Be sure to put "Mysterious Ways Submission" in the subject line.

Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions should be of interest to Queer Pagan Men and fit at least two of the criteria—Queer, Pagan, and Men.
2. All submissions (especially photography and artwork) should be rated PG-13 or less. Since this newsletter will be shared in social media groups and in Pagan shops where minors might have access, we'd rather err on the side of community standards—not that we necessarily agree with them all.
3. Most articles should be a typewritten page or less. We may consider longer articles based on relevance and content.
4. You retain ownership and/or copyright of any articles or artwork you submit. We are only providing a venue to share your work with the world.
5. We reserve the right to refuse any content for any reason; to make minor edits such as spelling, grammar, and formatting; or to send the content back to you for revision.
6. We will not accept content that is explicitly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, body shaming, or that otherwise spreads hate, negativity, or misinformation about any population or subculture of people.

Special thanks to David "Nightshade" Coffman for proofing this issue with his infamous red pen of doom.