

A person is walking away from the viewer on a railway track that runs through a stone archway. The archway is made of dark, textured stone. The track leads into a dense, lush green forest with tall trees and a clear blue sky visible in the distance. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

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Letter from the Editor

Briana Taylor - San Diego

Aaaaand we're back. Woohooo! I can't tell you how excited I am about this year. It's going by way too fast, but what else is new.

As winter's grip loosens, in lands with four seasons, and the earth awakens from its slumber, we find ourselves at the threshold of a new season: the vibrant and transformative Spring. The world around us bursts forth in a kaleidoscope of colors, echoing the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth that is central to our beliefs.

Even here in San Diego, where the frost giants don't generally attack at all, a wet year like this one brings with it a massive wildflower bloom in the deserts of Anza Borrego.

Springtime, with its promise of renewal and growth, serves as a poignant reminder of the interconnectedness of all beings and the intricate web of wurt that binds us together. It is a time for cleansing, both of our sacred spaces and our inner selves, as we prepare to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In this season of renewal, we invite you to join us on a journey of exploration and discovery. Our pages are filled with folklore and modern takes on the observances of the season, the creatures we honor during these times and new ways to look at our lives based on a complex combination of our ancestral knowledge, modern interconnectedness and our evolving values. Whether you are a seasoned Urglaawen or new to the path, there is something here for everyone to learn and appreciate.

I am excited to embark on this new season with you, my dear readers, and look forward to sharing in the wisdom, camaraderie, and community that our path offers. May your Spring be filled with joy, growth, and abundant blessings!

Hail to the gods and goddesses, hail to the spirits of the land, and hail to each and every one of you who walks this path with courage and reverence.

What We've Been Up To

- **In our community**

- Shep Glennon dropped some etymology nuggets about the names of some of our deities in the Facebook Group.
- Rob shared some information about culinary practices for Ziegdaag in both the main Facebook group and the Culinary Guild - the sharing of sourdough recipes from far and wide then ensued.
- Distelfink's public Oschdresege and Frouwasege observance was held in New Jersey.
- Stacey Stewart (the Accidental Urglaawer) released a rad line of Holle statuary.

Upcoming Events and Observances

DER ZIEGDAAG

It literally means “moving day.” April 1 is the traditional date for tenant farmers to relocate, just prior to Spring planting. If a business were relocating, April 1 was also the traditional date. This observance pairs nicely with April Fool’s Day and the unpredictable weather of this particular time of year.

Exceptions to the April 1 date included:

1. When April 1 fell on a Sunday; this was of importance to the Christians due to the significance of their sabbath.
2. Christians in the past viewed Friday as the unluckiest of days, and there was a belief among many of them that to move on a Friday would result in a short stay or in bad luck.
3. For people who held to old Heathen ways, Friday (Freidaag) was the luckiest of days for Ziegdaag to fall on, and the connection between Freidaag and the goddess Freid is well established. What better time to relocate than on the day of the week that is named after the goddess most closely associated with the peace and security of the home?
4. While Friday is a good day for the move of the home, it, along with Monday and Wednesday, was considered to be an inauspicious day for cattle driving. Thus, you will find references saying to send cattle early (Thursday is particularly auspicious for cattle movement) or after (Tuesday is also a good day).
5. Monday was viewed by anyone with superstitious leanings as a bad day to move either items related to the home and business (the belief was that finances would become thin) or cattle (the belief was that the integrity of the herd or the output of beef and milk) would be greatly reduced. So we end up with this:

Sunday: Home and Cattle, fine for Heathens; Inauspicious day for Christians due to their sabbath.

Monday: Bad all around for the movement of the home and of cattle, regardless of religion. I cannot pinpoint the origin of this, but it even today does affect cattle driving in the Deitscherei.

Tuesday: For everyone, this was a good day for the move (association with Ziu may play a role in the syncretic/Heathen practices).

Wednesday: Home and cattle, fine for Christians. For Heathens, it was fine for the movement of the home but not for cattle, yet relocating horses it is considered auspicious. This appears to be rooted in the attributes of Wudan. The horse movement makes sense, but pinpointing the origin of the aversion to moving cattle on Wednesdays due to something related to Wudan is still a half-baked notion that I am not ready to present this year.

Thursday: For Heathens, a fine day to move the home or business, and the ideal day to move cattle. This, of course, stems from cattle being associated with Dunner and also Dunner being a deity who is concerned with people and their everyday successes. For Christians, the day is neutral in regard to moving.

Friday: For Heathens, a poor day to move cattle (exact reason undetermined) but the ideal day to move the home or business. The latter is due to the association with Freid (and, possibly, the Frouwa also, particularly in the business aspect).

Saturday: For Heathens, a good day to move either home/business items or cattle. For Christians, it is considered inauspicious (exact reason not determined, but maybe the Jewish sabbath?) to move home or business items, but moving cattle is fine.

Bonus tradition: If a stray cat approaches your home within a week of moving in, one is to befriend the cat and to consider the property to be where the cat belongs. This is, quite possibly, a nod to Frouwa and, possibly it is a shred of Frouwa's lore that is not associated directly also with St. Gertrude. There is a similar superstition about not taking a cat to the new home on the day of the big move, and there is a Friday exemption in syncretic practice).

These cattle-driving traditions are still alive today, though their origins are not likely known to most of the herd workers. The cattle-driving superstitions, though, began to impact the actual date of Moving Day less and less because, as time moved on, contracts became less fluid and more litigious, so the Moving Day became set in more firmly as April 1. Within my lifetime, Moving Day would be a time of great motion and flitting, though many of the older traditions have been reduced or lost due to the need for expediency.

The Processional

Keep in mind also that, in the elder Deitsch traditions, there were land-taking practices and other traditions that were featured as part of the move. Among the most difficult of those traditions (which is nigh impossible today for most people) is the practice of a carefully staged progression from the old property to the new property in order to bring the luck from one location to the next.

Prior to the “official” beginning of the move, there were some items placed in the destination home as soon as it was available. Bread, salt, and often water and vinegar were frequently left behind by the departing family as a boon to the arriving family (I personally find this to be a beautiful expression of hospitality, particularly since the wish behind the items is never to know hunger nor thirst and that the family will find prosperity (salt) and protection (salt) long into the future (vinegar)).

In some areas, the arriving family would send ahead, often at dawn, a broom from the old location, and one of the family members (traditionally the eldest daughter who will reside in the home) would sweep all of the thresholds and entrance areas. Since the departing families usually would sweep the home prior to leaving, there seems to be a ritual element to the practice. The sweeping started from outside of the new home and worked its way inside, beginning at the main threshold into the home, where the sweeper would begin to “claim” the house, threshold by threshold. Accumulated dust and dirt would be disposed of, as needed, by leaving the broom in the claimed area and taking the dirt through the unclaimed area to a bin placed by the exit from the home closest to the last area that was to be claimed, which was usually the kitchen.

The ritual sweeping would then go throughout the home, always claiming an area of the threshold into the room but then sweeping outward. An exception would be if the room had two thresholds. In that case, the sweeping of the first threshold would be inward, claiming the room, and the second threshold would be outward, in order to claim what is on the other side.

If the house had only one threshold to the outside, a way would have to be devised to have the final inside area be as close to that door as possible (note that this conflicts with the superstition that it is bad luck to enter the house through one door and to leave through another). If it had more than one threshold, then one was to be chosen (preference going to the kitchen, if possible) to be the point of disposal outside of the home.

Interestingly, although one can see clear ties to other forms of ritual sweeping to remove unwanted energies (and that always plays a role, at least as a subtext), the most commonly cited purpose is to ward off homesickness or other senses of loss that might result from the move.

The processional from the old property to the new usually would start as soon as daylight would be sufficient, with the managing of the processional so that the lead wagon crossed onto the new property just as the last wagon was departing from the old property being key. Although the first thing to be moved out of the old home was the oven, it was considered bad luck to move the oven into the new home first.

Traditionally speaking, the first item to be removed from the old home in order to be set in the new is the broom used in the ritual sweeping. The first item to be removed from the processional would be a kneading trough, or, in the absence of one of those, the oldest kitchen tool that is being transported (if one had a tool that had been passed down from prior generations, the continuity added an extra oomph to the luck).

URGLAAWE PERSPECTIVE

This observance is about physical relocation, but, in the current era, it is also about change, transition, transformation, and growth in all manners of speaking. If

the year were to represent a lifetime, this is the entrance into the teenage years, which are a time of often clumsy growth with lots of magnified tribulations that commonly accompany that phase of one's life.

For many, a big move was scary and stressful, hence the elaborate rituals of the sweeping of the home, leaving items for good luck to those who follow, and the processional to bring luck with them from the old property. Akin to the fear is the presence of numerous "superstitions" that serve as advisories on how to prevent loss, whether of livelihood or of life, through the transition process. Transitions often also open new doors, so, of course, proper planning and diligence can prepare us to walk through those doors and to embrace new opportunities.

All of that sounds wonderful on paper, but transitions are often painful and occasionally life-scarring. There is a grittiness to the Ziegdaag observance that should not be ignored. Whether one is facing a simple transition, such as the eager acceptance of a new job, or one more complex, such as embracing one's true gender identity, the emotions involved in decision-making and turning the thought into word and deed are often mixed. These are often the matters for which we turn to friends, ancestors/forebears, or deities for clarity or assistance.

In the lore of the Deitsch alone, we can often find mirrors, parallels, and perpendiculars to our individual experiences that can help us through the struggle. Sometimes we don't get what we want, and that can result in grief and turmoil. Other times, we are successful. Occasionally, what we think is a victory can be Pyrrhic ("winning the battle but losing the war"). Sometimes a failure results in an ultimate win. How we handle these trials and realities can affect our lives. We're never guaranteed happiness.

I personally believe that most people try to do the right thing most of the time but that conflict arises from different interpretations of what the "right thing" is. There are, however, times when we all screw up; that does not automatically make us "bad people." What we do with the errors matters.

The personifications of the struggles of change are the trickster figures, the Giants, and the shadowy figures that line the lore of the Pennsylvania Dutch, and of

cultures all around the world. Since this is an Urglaawe post, I'll focus on some of the characters from our lore.

Within the stories of these beings, we see many of the causes of pain in struggle: unrequited love, victimization, lack of purpose, failed endeavors, physical and mental challenges, and more. Ziegdaag is the observance at which we are to recognize the struggles, the pains, the limitations as well as the opportunities, the gains, and the transformations that take place in our lives. May we all find strength and purpose as we emerge. May we learn the lessons of the past and work together in the present to build a better future!

CHARACTERS

Unlike the Norse lore with Loki, Germanic lore does not have one particularly prominent agent of change. Instead, our folklore is riddled with innumerable characters, some of whom may be rooted in real people, others who have their origins in Heathen lore, and yet others who are entities whose lore we are still picking apart. This year, we will again focus mostly on the Mountain Giant known as Rips, whom people will know better by his unwanted nickname, Riewezaahl. We will look at a few others as well.

Der Bariyeharr - Rips:

NOTE: Do not address him directly as Riewezaahl, Riebzaahl, Rübexahl, or anything similar. The term of respect is Der Bariyeharr or the Mountain Lord, but he calls himself Rips when in human form.

This Giant, whose nickname means “turnips count,” is known in the lore of both Germanic and Slavic cultures. During an interview with a Hexerei practitioner, the topic of the Frost Giants' Wonnezeit attack came up, and the elderly women asked me if I knew much of Riewezaahl (“turnips count”). I had not heard of this being prior to this conversation, and she told me she remembered from her youth her mother talking about Riewezaahl. She said that her mother described Riewezaahl as an irritable Mountain Giant who has a strong ability to bring about unstable weather and would occasionally simply cause trouble because “that is

what Giants do." Since that time, I have come across a few other references to him, including him causing squalls and sudden windstorms, earthquakes, and more.

Rübezahl appears in many Silesian legends, and there is a strong historical Silesian presence among the Deitsch in the particular area in which I was doing interviews. Although some of the information I am coming across treats him like a god, even more information indicates that he is not a pleasant spirit and has more attributes that would place him among the Giants, specifically a Mountain Giant.

The lore emanates mostly from the Germans and Slavs of Silesia and Bohemia. Grimm (Volume II, p. 480) refers to him as a wood-sprite and has some notes regarding him that may link him to Knecht Ruprecht, but there is not an ample description there.

There are tales in which Riewezaahl is a helpful trickster and a shapeshifter (the theme of transforming turnips into people or vice-versa comes up occasionally in Germanic lore). Folks may be interested in checking out this article:

<http://www.heathenhof.com/rubezahl>

Further readings into Silesian lore turn up a very complex Giant who is capable of meting out his own forms of justice. In the book, *Silesian Folk Tales (The Book of Rübezahl)*, by James Lee, M.D., and James T. Carey, A.M., we see the following:

- He is a Mountain Giant with trickster and shapeshifter characteristics.
- His stories frequently involve people in motion, people moving, people in need of change, etc., and he captures the spirit of the Ziegdaag "moving day" features in many ways.
- He appears as many different types of beings, including men, women, etc.
- He aids people who try to improve themselves or to help others.
- He is not to be messed around with, or one will find oneself being beaten to death and hanging from a tree or being rooted firmly into the ground in the middle of a busy marketplace.
- His stories feature a lot of common tasks, including herb collecting, spinning, etc.

- Blue cornflower, already connected to some long life and other magical concepts in Deitsch lore, turns up in at least one of his myths.
- Dreams and dream states turn up in quite a few of these stories, which reminds me more than a bit of Schlumm.
- He plays a prank on an abusive husband that changes the domestic situation in the house (although I think the husband deserved more punishment than he got).

So, in the context of the Ziegdaag observance, focus on this trickster figure's ability to bring about change through appearing as common folk but performing uncommon tasks. One may also want to consider that he can be capricious; he starts off disliking some people he encounters but a curious aspect to that person may cause him to give that person a chance. If you irritate him, it is at your own risk.

How He Got His Name

He is also lovelorn. He knows the aching pain of unrequited love all too well. His nickname, Rübzahl, originates in a story about how he had taken the form of a peasant named Rips and had proven himself a fine worker. He worked as a farmer, but the landlord was a spendthrift. He worked as a shepherd, but his master was a miser. Then he worked as a constable under a corrupt judge. He enjoyed enforcing the law properly but refused to be a part of injustice, so he was thrown into jail himself. As a shapeshifter, he was able to escape prison by jumping through the keyhole. He returned to the summit of Riesengebirge (Giants' Mountain) and wondered why nature was so kind to creatures like humans.

In a nearby kingdom, the king had a daughter named Emma. Rips set eyes upon her and fell in love, so he appeared as a prince from the East and asked the king for the princess' hand.

Unfortunately, the princess was already engaged to another prince. Here's where Rips acts poorly: He creates a castle and transports Princess Emma to it. Here he held her prisoner until she agreed to marry him.

She became lonely, so he gave her a magic wand. With that wand, she would be able to turn turnips into anything she wanted. She used the wand to turn

turnips into people, animals, and many other things. She took some comfort in this, but she had it in her mind to escape.

Rips kept a large field of turnips so that she always had a supply. One day, Emma agreed to marry Rips, so she asked him to count the number of plants that had sprouted so she would know how many people would come to their wedding. She said she needed an accurate number because even a small mistake would cause her to change her mind. Rips counted the number of sprouts twice, but the counts did not match. So he counted again, and the number was still off. While Rips was busy trying to figure out the number of turnips in the field, Emma used the wand to turn one into a horse, and she rode away. Since that time, Rips has yearned for her.

Thus, he earned his nickname because he was counting turnips while his unrequited love slipped away, using his own gift as a tool for her escape.

There are multiple lessons in this simple tale... Many of us have experienced unrequited love or have been the objects of love or infatuation that we did not share. Particularly in one's youth, one may try to find ways to hold onto love that are inappropriate and damaging to both parties. Sometimes, though, even after one learns (hopefully) some lessons and finally accepts that the relationship was not meant to be, the sting of unrequited love remains. Such is the case with Rübezahl.

He appears to have learned the lesson and has let go of Emma, but, every time he is called by his nickname, the memory returns. He manages to overcome some of his pain and helps a human female, whom he initially disliked because of his experiences with Emma, to change the circumstances with her abusive husband.

Throughout some of these stories, Rips shows the need for change, the fear of change, and the outcome of painful change.

Very much akin to the observance of Ziegdaag.

Schadde

Schadde (sometimes appears as Schaade) is a trickster figure in a Deitsch story in which he manipulates Schlumm, the blind god associated with sleep, to blow darts that knock out Sunna and Muun. The full story may be found at:

<https://deutschmythology.blogspot.com/2021/04/schadde-un-schlumm.html>

Till Eileschpiggel

Perhaps based on an actual human, the stories of Till are widely known in the German, Dutch, and Flemish cultures. Till is a true trickster in many ways. He thinks outside the box, engages periodically in buffoonery, and has a knack for overturning conventional wisdom. His name reflects the latter; "Eileschpiggel" translates to "owl mirror," with the owl representing wisdom, and the mirror symbolizing the reflection or the opposite of that wisdom. In some sense, Till is an anti-hero, but, at this time of year, it is worthy to consider the wit and out-of-the-box thinking that are the inspirations for this character.

Elwedritsch

Known by many name variations, including Elwedritsch, this is a trickster figure in Deitsch lore, most innocently as the target of snipe hunts. In journeywork, the Elbedritsch can mislead the worker or the client. In these circumstances, the being is considered to be a form of Elf (Elbe and Elwe both are names for elves). The name literally means "elf twitch." Also, on the Muunraad, should a thirteenth new moon occur after Oschdre (the spring equinox), it is called the Haas (Hare) or the Elbedritsch moon.

DIE WONNEZEIT

1.-12. Wonnet

Sunset April 30-May 12 (sunset)

This is most "hexich" of Urglaawe observances, with the possible exception of Berchtaslaaf at the end of December. Urglaawer do not use the name "Walpurgisnacht" because St. Walburga was a saint who had features of the goddess Holle grafted onto her identity. We use our native Deitsch terms: "die Hexenacht" ("Night of the Hexe") and "die Wonnezeit" ("Time of Joy" because the Hexe, led by Holle and Berchta, dance winter away and reawaken the land).

This is the observance of Holle's return to Mannheim and the end of the Wild Hunt! It is the spiritual touchpoint of the beginning and end of the life cycle.

die HEXENACHT, Part of die WONNEZEIT

Hexenacht begins at sunset on April 30, which is 1. Wonnet on the Urglaawe calendar.

APPROPRIATE OFFERINGS/ALTAR DECORATIONS: Dried plums or other dried fruit from last year's harvests), branches or flowers of sacred trees, libations made from last year's harvests, seasonal flowers (especially those that can be transplanted).

WONNEZEIT TREES, SHRUBS, PLANT BLESSINGS

Wonnezeit is an observance of the fertility and fecundity of the land. We tend to focus on particular annual milestones, such as Wonnennacht and the Frost Giants' attack, that mark the beginning of the season and reference points in lore. We focus on the Gwetschebaam (roughly a Maypole) and on the general awakening of the land, but, within these overarching themes are smaller, more localized events and observances that form the building blocks of the celebration.

For instance, why do we call our cognate of a Maypole a Gwetschebaam? A Gwetschebaam is literally a plum tree. Plum trees bloom in winter and are among the earliest trees to bear fruit here in Pennsylvania, and very likely the situation is the same in the lands whence our forebears had come. Rituals of honoring and blessing of fruiting trees have been conducted by Germanic tribes since times immemorial. The legacy of these practices includes common Apple Blossom and Cherry Blossom festivals, but they are an echo of the rituals of the past. Other traditions survive in May Day customs; for Deitsch folks, this comes down to the ritual honoring of the plum tree (Gwetschebaam) as a focal point of Wonnefescht on the first day of May.

Here is a starter list that was derived from the input of quite a few sources. Not every region has all of these items, and there are many other plants and trees local to all of us (regardless of where you are located on this great planet) whose forms and spirits must be honored.

These dates are general because they are derived from a temperate climate which can result in wide variations of the appearance of blooms and blossoms from year to year. To make these rituals more meaningful in function and purpose, they should be adjusted to meet local trees and plants blossoming, blooming, and harvesting dates. Other trees might be honored by different growers and orchards based on the stage they are at during Wonnezeit.

The Urglaawe community is still pulling things from notes and from research, but the blessings of fruit-bearing trees is actually an ongoing cycle, perhaps with its beginning point being, depending on the year, between September and November for trees for which it is advantageous to be in the ground six weeks before the first signs of hard frost. It is hard to predict a moving target six weeks in advance, so this brings us back to the old topic of using animal behavior for prognostication. In the Fall, it is more the fox that is looked to for an idea of when the first hard frost will strike. The thickness of the fox's fur is used to predict whether that frost will hit in October, November, or December, and then the depth of the den and the distance from water are factors that observers use to predict the date of the frost. Unfortunately, this facet of lore has not been as well preserved as Groundhog Day, so we are still doing some research on this.

Trees are again honored at Yuul in December and end with the harvests the following autumn. Conifers are honored in December and January. Birch in February, and Oak and March.

The more practical (and somewhat common) ways to honor fruit-bearing trees includes straw in the following manners: 1. tying straw around its trunk; 2. strewing straw among its branches (which I think is a contributor to tree garlands); 3. tapping the trunk of the tree, particularly toward the base, with wisps of straw. I have used option 3 during Wonnezeit in the past.

One of the most common means of honoring orchard trees, even today, is New Year's shot into each. I am not personally a fan of this practice, but it is common and an established tradition. It is our cognate of wassailing, and people do greet their trees with New Year's wishes. Bows and arrows would also work.

Hanging iron or stone from tree branches is believed to increase the bearing of fruit. This is likely a contributor to the modern Yule/Christmas tree ornament. The same also applies to the egg trees that are uniquely Deitsch and that we see at Oschdre and Easter.

This old tradition one is a little macabre: A lamb (or kid) that has dropped dead or died while very young is hung up in a tree with thorns, though any fruit-bearing tree will do. This hearkens back to older traditions of hanging animal skins in trees.

As the Urglaawe community strives to produce a ritual format (and it will be simple) for the honoring of trees in their bud, blossom, bloom and fruit stages, I'd suggest option 3 of the straw wisps for Wonnezeit.

Below is a starter suggestion list for dates to honor particular trees, shrubs, or plants if you have them. Plums on May 1 are fixed as the Deitsch cognate of the Maypole is the Gwetschebaam, which is literally a plum tree. Linden has been moved from May 12 to May 5 as a tip of the hat to Gedreier Eckhart, who sleeps inside the bark of a linden tree as the Parade of Spirits heads toward Hexenkopf. The linden tree is said to be on Hexefeld in Lancaster County, which occurs in the earlier part of Wonnezeit. This means the Urglaawe date of May 4 is more suitable for linden blessings.

The reckoning below pairs the solar and lunar calendar. The first date should be read as "sunset on May # is Urglaawe May #." For example, in the first entry, sunset on April 30 is Urglaawe May 1.

April 30-May 1: Plum Blessing and Harvest

May 1-2: Dogwood Harvest - Since today is May 2, let's also note that Dogwood is a medicinal tree that is one of the Nine Sacred Herbs of Braucherei, hence also of Urglaawe.

May 2-3: Pawpaw Bloom and Blessing

May 3-4: Linden Bloom and Blessing [observing Gedreier Eckhart at Hexefeld]

May 4-5; Crabapple and Apple Blossom / Apple Tree Blessings

May 5-6: Hawthorn Bloom and Blessing

May 6-7: Magnolia Bloom and Blessing

May 7-8: American Chestnut; also Blueberry and Huckleberry Pruning and Honoring (second-year plants have all budding flowers cut back.

May 8-9: Blueberry and Huckleberry Blossom - all remaining blueberry and huckleberry bushes are blessed [Observing the Hexedanz at Hexebarrick]

May 9-10: Cherry Bloom and Blessing

May 10-11: Serviceberry Bloom and Blessing

May 11-12: Strawberry Bloom and Blessing; Asparagus Harvest Festivals

SUNSET MAY 12 (beginning of 13. Wonnet) IS THE FIRST ATTACK OF THE REIFRIES (Frost Giants). A separate post will be made on this topic.

HALLICHI WONNEZEIT!

OBSERVANCE OF THE DESECRATED SHRINES

June 4th at sunset marks the beginning of the Observance of the Desecrated Shrines. This observance is in honor of those deities whose shrines were destroyed, damaged, and disrespected through the actions of missionaries and zealots. The lore of many of these deities was lost in the persecution of those who held to the old ways, and there may be many more deities who are now completely unknown to us.

June 5 is the feast day of the Christian missionary Boniface, who destroyed the sacred oak of Dunner and desecrated the shrines of Jecha, Stoffo, and Lohra/Lare. We hold our observance on this day to renew our ties to our deities and to assert our sovereignty of conscience and our right to religious freedom.

This is a pan-Pagan observance, and people of all traditions and backgrounds are invited to take part in the observance, honoring their deities in the manner to which they are accustomed.

Animal Husbandry: Wildlife: die Katz (Cat)

Storm Smith - Columbus, OH

Contributor - Chimene Loncher



While often depicted as aloof creatures, cats have had relationships with humans for at least as long as we've been farming. The earliest evidence of a human-cat relationship is a burial from about 10,000 years ago in Cyprus. The most prevalent theory is that wild cats discovered how easy finding prey around our food storage (especially grains) was, the farmers realized how helpful that hunting was for us, and our cooperative relationship began. Over the centuries cats continued keeping out vermin from our homes, distilleries, and made their way all over the world hunting on ships. Ridding our buildings from rodents is not only convenient, but helps with cleanliness

too. The most pronounced example of this is how the widespread killing of cats in Europe during the Middle Ages, due to their association with "witches," was a major contributor to the spread of the plague from infected rats. (Mitchell)

This prejudice against cats, black ones in particular, due to their association with witches has led to their mutilation for folkmagic (see Folklore section) and even death. Unfortunately still today many cat shelters have more difficulty adopting black cats. Research was actually done on "black cat bias" and it was found that "the more superstitious people were, the more they found the black cats to be aggressive, unfriendly, and unadoptable" (Hart). Which means "compared to cats of other colors, black cats are both slightly less likely to be adopted and slightly more likely to be euthanized." (Wu).

While humans benefit from our cats' hunting prowess, each year outdoor cats are a huge disruptive force in local ecosystems. In fact the domestic cat (*Felis catus*) are classified as an invasive predator and, "are listed among the 100 worst non-native invasive species in the world by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). [...] A study published in 2013 estimates that domestic cats kill between 1.3–4.0 billion birds and 6.3–22.3 billion mammals in the U.S. per year; making them the largest human-influenced source of mortality for birds and mammals in the country. Globally, domestic cats have caused the extinction of several mammals, reptiles, and at least 33 bird species" (The Wildlife Society). [Also see Franzen and Spalding in Also Recommended section.]

This issue should be taken seriously as a part of our responsibility within die Zusaagpflicht--"the sacred promise/duty" from Braucherei that emphasizes reciprocity of care for the natural world (Urglaawe). "Catios" (enclosed patios), appropriately topped fenced areas, or a harness and leash/long line are all ways we can give cats outdoor enrichment while keeping the ecosystem, as well as our feline friends, much safer.

Folklore

"It was a popular belief that with the 6th and 7th Books of Moses witches could turn themselves into almost any type of animal. Particularly widespread is the belief that witches turn themselves into cats and roam the countryside" (Shaner).

"Well, now, I'll tell you a story that happened to me when I was a boy. I lived on a farm with a man by the name of John Sponseller. And neighbor boys and me, used to go and play cards at night. And I was always told, that where the cards was, the Devil (portrayed as a large cat) was. So this night we was away playin', over there below a place called Hunterstown, at Mose Gould's, where he kept bachelor's hall there. So we went over there and his sister had baked us some pies and some cakes and we had a nice time all evening, playing euchre, what they called euchre.



"So me and my neighbor boy started home, I guess it was about 11 o'clock at night. Come up through the fields and come on down to the end of the road, where I went up where I lived and he went home to his place.

"So I went in, and took my shoes off, went up stairs, and opened the bedroom door where I slept. And when I did, here set a big cat- looked like a cat, but it was twice as big as an ordinary cat- big fiery eyes, settin' right aside of my bed. I opened the door and tried to chase it away and it moved under my bed. I had no light, so I went and I got a lamp- searched the room, couldn't find

nawthin'. I got in bed, and I just thought, Well, there's the story that my mother told me many a time. Now I've met it. And that's the last time I'll ever play cards. I'll never play cards no more I my life. And I never did" (Yoder).

"A miller who lived and who ran a mill up in Roaring Creek could not keep any of his hired men more than a few days. He could not induce them under any consideration to stay after they once made up their minds to go. He began to inquire of these men why they would not stay. They told him that at a certain time at night a large cat, a black cat, would come in the mill and attack them and under no condition would they stay there.

"This mill worked night and day. The owner of the mill would work in daytime and the hired men would work at night. This miller had to travel far toward the last to get men as he had all the millers close at hand employed at one time or another.

"So one day a traveler came along and asked the miller for a job. The miller told him he could give him employment, but there was some trouble; no one would

stay more than a few days, owing to a large cat coming in the mill at night. This new man said he would stay. All he wanted was a sharp hatchet. The miller procured a good sharp hatchet for the man.

"He went to work that night, and about twelve o'clock comes this back cat as usual. It made a spring for the new man, and he grabbed the hatchet and aimed for the cat and cut the cat's right forefoot off.

"The next morning the miller's wife would not get up. He went to the mill and told the new man his wife was sick; that he had to make breakfast and that he would be late to relieve him. The new man told him to go to his wife, and ask her to pull her arms from under the cover. He went to her, and she would not do it.

"He then went to the mill again, and told the new man that she would not take her arms from under the cover. He told the miller to go back and pull them out, which he did, and, behold, her right hand was cut off at the wrist.

"[This story was told me with much earnestness, that is was true, as his grandfather told him it was true.]" (Robacker).

"The White Cat:

"There are several versions of this story, one of which was published by Brendle and Troxell in 1944. The outcomes are similar but as with every oral narrative the details often differ. This story is set in Schuylkill County.

"There was a farmer on Lizard Creek, Melchior Rausch by name, whose hired hand was discovered dead under mysterious circumstances. The young man had been given his quarters in an old summer kitchen in the yard beyond the garden and had only worked for Rausch two days. On the morning of the third his body was discovered in horrible condition, as though attacked by a wild animal. Since he was a foreigner without family, the man's body was sent to a nearby church where he was buried among the poor.

Desperate for a replacement, Rausch spent several weeks looking for another work hand. When he finally found the man he wanted, he told him about the fate of the first one, and that there may be a wild animal in the neighborhood.

"Mach's nix aus (not a problem)," replied the fellow, "I always sleep with my rifle." But he too was found dead in bed on the morning of the third day of his employment.

Melchoir sent for the sheriff because when he picked up the man's gun, it would not fire. "What do you think?" he muttered, "something fish is going on."

"The sheriff tried to fire the gun. "I'll tell you what, this gun has been charmed. You need to see a Braucher." With that the dead man was buried beside the other and Rausch decided not to hire another man lest the same thing happened to him. All the same, farmer Rausch remained puzzled. How could anything get into the kitchen when all the doors and windows were closed?" He studied the fireplace. Perhaps something is coming down the chimney, but it could not be large enough to kill a man. Perhaps the sheriff was right, a visit to a Braucher was in order, but he put it off since there was wheat to harvest.

"A few days later, while he was working in the fields, a stranger walked down the road nearby and hailed him. "I hear you need help with that wheat. I would be happy to work for you, if you will have me."

"Can't do that," muttered the farmer, "my other two men died in bed. No telling what sort of curse is on the summer kitchen."

"I am not at all afraid," replied the man. "I already heard about them, and that is why I have come to you. Just give me some boiling water and a sharp knife, and I shall be fine, only tell no one about the water and the knife."

"Rausch finally agreed to the arrangement and the new man slept two nights in the summer kitchen without incident. On the third night, about midnight, a huge white cat crawled through a tiny knot hole in the wall. No normal cat could fit through that hole, so it was obvious that this particular cat was imbued with the stange powers of movement. The cat glared at the the man and hissed. He yelled at it: "Get out, or it will be the death of you, not me!" With that he tossed the boiling water on the animal. As she tried to escape back through the hole he cut off a front paw with the knife.

"That morning, the hired man discovered that the paw had changed into a human finger wearing a ring. He took it to farmer Rausch who immediately

recognized it as his wife's wedding band. Rausch went upstairs to his wife's room and found her in bed complaining of a headache. He tore the coverlet away and saw that her ring finger was missing, her hand wrapped in a bloody cloth. He and the hired man grabbed her, tied her up, and dragged her into the yard. "We shall take her to the raveyard," said Rausch bitterly, "and let the murdered men decide her fate."

As they approached the graves, the minister of the church came running out of the building with a bottle of holy water in one hand. "Stop!" he cried, "Melchior, you cannot bring that man here. I will not allow it. He is a Braucher."

"And my wife is a witch," responded the farmer.

"Liewwer Gott im Himmel," declared the minister. But it was too late. The ghosts of the murdered men rose up from their graves and snatched the woman by the hair. They began to shake her violently in spite of her pitiful screams and shook her so hard that her head came off. As her body slumped to the ground, it shrank into the headless corpse of a large white cat. Pale with horror, the minister threw the holy water on the bewitched cat. It began to steam and gradually faded away.

"The ghosts, satisfied that their deaths had been avenged, tossed the head high in the air until it landed in a nearby tree and hung there by its tangled hair. With that they returned to their graves. The head, half woman half cat, began to yowl and shriek like a dying animal. To this day the witch's head roams the countryside at night, resting on fence posts, perching in trees, crying out in an eternal search for its long lost body, a punishment worse than death" (Weaver).

"An old Pennsylvania Dutchman I knew always claimed that black cats were a symbol of Hexerei, Spookerei and Umglick (bad luck). This, he said, comes directly from the Pennsylvania Dutch Scripture (and I quote): "Un der Solomon schpricht, schwatza katza mausen nicht." (Solomon sayeth, black cats do not catch mice.)

"Now then, he argued, if black cats do not catch mice, as Solomon said, what are they here for? Surely they are unnatural and can not be classed with other cats, all of which catch mice.

"Then he would say that the reason he had such a strong belief in this passage of Scripture derived from an experience he had as a lad.

"He was a hired boy on a farm and was told one day to kill a black cat. The cat was chloroformed and he then cut off its head on the chopping block.

"This he surely thought was the end of the animal.

"But about two weeks later on a Friday night, the 13th of the month, he arose to close the tobacco sheds. In order to close the upper shutters, he used a long ladder. The night was very dark and stormy. "Es wawr im dunkel fum muun." (It was in the dark of the moon.)

"In his hurry to get his work done, he forgot to be cautious and walked under the ladder. Suddenly there was a bright flash of lightning and to his horror he saw the black cat trotting toward the family burial plot and, he claimed, "Sie hot iera kopp im maul katt." (And the cat carried its head in its mouth.)" (Yerger.)

Important Note: folklore, while sometimes holding pearls of wisdom, should not be used as a practical guide. Consult a professional if you need help with your cat.

"A cat lying on its side and turning its face upward fortells stormy weather" (Aurand p.19).

"A person fond of dogs and cats will make a good husband or wife."

"If you touch kittens before their eyes are open the mother cat will let them starve."

"Shoot a cat and your luck is gone" (Aurand p.22).

"A girl should feed a cat from her shoe if she once gets pretty anxious to marry" (Aurand p.27).

"To meet a priest, hare, cat, dog, lizard or serpent on going to church to be married are considered unlucky" (Aurand p.28).

"Keep a stray cat after moving- good luck.

"Don't take the cat with you the day you move; its bad luck. Fetch her later"
(Aurand p.31).

"Black Cat- The black cat is the most prevalent form of a witch. (This is evident today when we fear the consequences which may follow if a black cat crosses our path)" (Aurand p.25)

"If you don't want a cat to run away butter the bottom of its feet" (Davis).

"If the baby gets sore or chafed, one should take a brand new diaper and in one corner put a leg of a bedbug, an owl's claw, and several hair from a black cat's tail, sew it in the corner, the witches will stay away" (Dieffenbach).

"655. A black cat brings bad luck.

"656. A black cat brings luck to the premises.

"If a black cat comes of her own accord to your house, keep her, she is a good spirit; but do not bring her, she must come freely, of her own good will.

"657. Meeting a black cat is an omen of luck.

"If a strange cat comes to your house and remains domesticated it brings good fortune.

"658. A black cat brings bad luck into a family.

"659. A person fond of dogs and cats will make a good husband or wife.

"660. If you touch kittens before their eyes are open, the mother cat will let them starve" (Fogel, 142).

"662. Shoot a cat and your luck is gone.

"663. If you shoot a cat, you will have back luck with your horses.

"664. Seven years of bad luck follow the killing of a cat.

"665. If you boil the dishcloth in coffee and give some of it to dog or cat, they will not stray from home.

"666. The direction in which the cat's tail points when she washes herself on Sunday morning indicates the direction from which visitors may be expected.

"667. The gun or riles with which you shoot a cat wo't kill after that" (Fogel, 143).

"669. When a cat removes her kittens from near the bank of a stream, it is a sign of high water.

"671. A stray cat will not run away, if you rub her pays on the stove.

"If a cat from a distance becomes restless and tries to make her escape, put her into the cold over, for it is said that the effect upon her will be that she will forget her former home as completely as if she had lapped Lethe's water" (Fogel, 144).

"673. Scrape the four corners of the table and put the scrapings into the food of dog or cat and they will not leave their home.

"674. Fetch a cat at night if you would have her stay.

"675. Show the cat her image in the mirror and she'll stay" (Fogel, 145).

"680. Cut some hair from the cat's tail and wear it in your shoe, and the cat will not stray away" (Fogel, 146).

Note: Deitsch folklore includes references to using cats' blood and body parts for charms. While this was practiced in the past, we now know this is unethical. In Braucherei the Zusaagpflicht ("sacred promise/duty") emphasises reciprocity of care for the natural world (Entschanning 6: Die Zusaagpflicht), which goes against needless harm and wasteful taking of life. Notice that even the folklore above includes that killing cats is bad luck!

"Patients tended to improve in order to avoid taking further doses of horrible concoctions exemplifying the old adage, "The more vile the drug, the better the cure." St. Anthony's Fire (erysipelas) was circumscribed by black cat's blood. Hence, there was scarcely a black cat to be seen, whose ears and tail had not been frequently cropped, for a contribution of blood" (Bryan).

"To Make Oneself Invisible: You must obtain the ear of a black cat, boil it in the milk of a black cow, then make a thumb cover of it and wear it on the thumb, and no one will be able to see you. +++" (None cited).

"Cut off the ears (sacrifice of the O.T.) of a black cat, burn them and feed the ashes to the witch .

"When the witch disappears, a black cat appears. (The witch and the black cat appeared in a witch-shooting in Schuylkill county, Penna., some years ago: a bewitched boy shot an old woman, he claimed had him betwitched: Exodus xxii 18, accommodates one with authority for getting rid of witches)" (Aurand p.26).

In Urglaawe lore Frouwa is the Matron of all cats, who is said to have a chariot pulled by two large cats--though unofficial ("unverifiable communal gnosis (UCG) coming from the current era") it is said that,

"the one on the left has been given the moniker of "der Meisfeind" (mice-foe) and the one on the right has been called "die Rosefreindn" (roses-friend). [...] These names, both of current vintage, do reflect why many people keep cats around their gardens. They keep the mouse population in check, which leads to the destruction of fewer plants, such as roses" (Distelfink Sippschaft).

Frouwa and "the sacred nature of cats are celebrated on Frouwasege--also called Katzenacht--in March, when an offering such as white tuna would be most appropriate (Distelfink Sippschaft).

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The Bags we Carry - An Exploration of Personal Finance

Briana Taylor - San Diego, CA

TW - I am placing a trigger warning on this article, because I know many people have experienced financial trauma of some kind and may find this content distressing. Please don't hesitate to reach out for support.



Wow. This is a spiritual publication where the objective is to look at folklore, the natural world and the very nature of our religion... and I want to talk about money.

I know, right?

But yes, I want to talk about money. We all have a complicated, but likely similar, relationship with money in our

lives. It's no surprise when we take a minute to think about all of the different messages we get, both overtly and covertly, about money in our larger American culture.

Most of us, not all but most, were brought up in Christian households. If we weren't brought up in Christian households, we were brought up in predominantly Christian neighborhoods, in a country famously begun by puritans, where people are still asked to swear their truthiness on Bibles in government buildings despite a supposed separation between Church and State.

And the modern political forces pushing theocracy aside, it's pretty much always been a variation of that while the United States has existed as such. There's no denying that the majority of reformation descendants don't harbor the same brand of Christianity that's currently on the world stage, but in my opinion that means that it's influenced Urglaawen more, not less. It's quieter. More insidious.

In our homes growing up, many of us grew up learning that our objective in life *should* be to live as Christ-like as possible. It is generally acknowledged that one of the features of that life is to live as humbly as possible. Indeed, humble poverty is revered in the vast majority of churches around the world, often in the same breath as toxic prosperity gospel drivel. It's an impressive bit of cognitive dissonance.

But most of our families took that to heart. I know mine did. My mother was almost proud of never having very much. "We are wealthy in love and family," is something she said often when I lamented not being able to afford an activity, or an experience as a kid.

The ancestors we often revere the most, as a Pennsylvania Dutch and more specifically Urglaawen culture, are the most extreme protestant groups of the reformation that lived as humbly as possible.

That's not the sole reason we revere them, or even on the list, but it's true.

We revere them because they spent their lives trying to be closer to their spiritual truth, whatever that looked like for them. At the same time, we live entirely different lives than they did. This is primarily because we live in a very different world than the one they lived in. Not many, if any, of us can afford to drop everything and go build a hut in the woods where we can live off the land in perpetuity. We can't afford the land, for one thing. Nor could we afford property taxes if we lived in modest isolation.

The protestant reformation came about for a number of reasons, but the one that's cemented into the minds of every child who grew up and studied Christianity in a protestant church is that the Church had begun to value money more than God and the people. So it's not a huge surprise that we'd inherit complicated negative feelings about money from our ancestors, who rejected a wealthy church.

In modern times, most of us consider ourselves progressive, and as such have developed complicated negative feelings about money because of its role in the rise of capitalism and all of the consequences that have come with that rise. The loudest voices of American Christianity, for example, have abandoned entirely the idea that one should live a Christ-like (humble) life and instead have attributed wealth with blessings from God that a person is entitled to. If someone else is poor, it must be because they don't believe hard enough, or haven't shown themselves worthy enough.



And indeed, because of our feelings about capitalism, colonialism, and the not-so-subtle influence of our protestant upbringing, we do NOT feel worthy of money or anything that looks like material prosperity. We carry a great deal of shame around the idea that we should ever have more than anyone else. We feel compelled to help others as much as possible, in many ways - but often monetarily.

At this juncture I feel compelled to point out that there's nothing wrong with the desire to live frugally, or the desire to help others.

But here's the problem.

We are part of the problem. We hate the concept of money and its power over our lives so much that we avoid thinking about it as much as possible. We don't pay attention to it coming in and out of our lives unless we absolutely have to.

We spend thoughtlessly, and because we can't afford to spend in excess we don't consider that thoughtlessness something to be corrected - or even something that can be corrected.

We give money we don't have to spend. We either end up "nickel and diming ourselves to death" where all our small gifts and expenditures leave us desperate for our next meager income stream, or we find ourselves completely unprepared for an unexpected expenditure and suddenly we are the ones in distress that need to depend on the generosity of someone else to get by.

I've been working on getting my own finances in order for some time, and a mentor who has been helping me along the way pointed out that it is inherently selfish to know that just one unexpected expense would put you in a position where you had to rely on the generosity of others to get by - and to continue to do nothing about it.

It threw me. That moment was when I started the process of unpacking all of this. Because she wasn't wrong. How can we say we truly value Interdependence when we are willing to knowingly put our community in that position? Now, obviously there are times in all of our lives where there are things that happen that exceed the preparations you have taken, and there are times when you are physically unable to prepare for anything. Those are not the times I am talking about when I talk about this type of fiscal negligence.

We have a collective compulsion to offer ourselves to others in ways that come into direct conflict with the first circle of frith. We have been socialized to value Industriousness and Generosity at the expense of other values. We feel shame when we ask for money for anything at all, because we are on some level terrified of what having/accepting money would say about our character. We are more comfortable staying as "without" as possible because then we get to stay victims of capitalism instead of acknowledging our role in it and accepting the responsibility to try and do more about it.

This is also coming into conflict with our goals as a community. We have lofty aspirations for meeting places, safe houses, pools of resources that we can

offer to those who need them. We will never reach those goals if we continue to behave this way, avoid this subject and repeatedly overextend ourselves.

It's bad. I know. I have struggled with this a lot, particularly in the early stages of giving it more of my attention. I have struggled with everything I've already mentioned, and with guilt for not doing anything about this sooner. Guilt for assuming that "because capitalism" it was guaranteed that my children would one day have to assume monetary responsibility for me and that I should just settle for that at their expense.

But it's not all doom and gloom. We *can* do something about it. We *can* start paying attention to our finances. We *can* start having these conversations with our community. It is not only ok but encouraged to take care of yourself, because only when you care for yourself first can you truly provide care for others.

It hurts when we have to say no, but sometimes we need to say no. We must examine this shame. We must commit to spending time with our money, and cultivating a healthy relationship with it the same way we would any other resource. We have to talk about money as a community, and start thinking about how stewardship of this resource can support our commitment to stewardship of the natural world and each other.

A Closer Look at Bees

Gretchen Swank - Boalsburg, PA



Bees. Complex creatures that have enamored humanity for millennia. Spiritually regarded as messengers between this world and the spiritual realm, bees buzz with mystery, while maintaining balance in their dutiful, tireless tasks within our earthly ecosystem. Bees

symbolize the accomplishment of the impossible; with wings that are aerodynamically too small for their large bodies, for many years scientists were uncertain how bees were able to fly, only later to discover their ability to fly is possible due to the amount of their effort put forward (their wings moving at such a high rate of speed) that allows them to accomplish pollination of our food sources, and completion of their other roles in the chain of our survival, making them totems of organization, collaboration, and productivity.

Bees have been viewed in many different perspectives across cultures as mythology has weaved its tales, including our own pre-Christian, Germanic lore. With Spring season and Frouwasege upon us, this is the perfect time for us to take a closer look at the spiritual significance of bees, both generally and specifically within our own Deutsch culture.

In Hinduism, bees related to deities, depending upon how the animal was depicted; usually Krishna, Vishnu, or Kama (the god of love). The bee denoted royalty in Egypt, and it should be noted, honey was discovered inside King Tut's tomb upon excavation 3,000 years later and the honey was still perfectly edible. Greece used bees in the symbolism of the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the Celts associated bees with hidden knowledge. One of the most well-known symbols of the bee is fertility, particularly related to the stinger as a phallic symbol, and its primary use in pollination. Bees live in hives/communities which are very organized, and female-driven; the Queen Bee organizes all tasks for the hive, and all work is carried-out by the female "Worker Bees," while the male "Drone Bees" do nothing but attempt to impregnate a Queen Bee that may happen to fly by. The Worker Bees are very good builders. They build honeycombs in the shape of a hexagon, which, according to Ted Andrews in his book, *Animal Speak*, is a symbol of the heart and the sweetness of life found within our own hearts, as well it is a symbol of the sun and all the energies associated with it.

An old German word for bee is Imme, which came from Imbe (swarm), according to B. Schier (1939) in *Der Bienenstand in Mitteleuropa*, its use was confined more or less to the north coastal belt of Germany and the extreme Southwest. The use of the word Imme caught my eye because there was said to be an ancient bee god called Imme in Germany that was worshipped, and his name

was also known to refer to the sacred trees in the forests where bees were kept, according to Beehaven Honey Farm, Sprirt Hills, LTD.

When the body of Heathen Frankish king Childeric was interred in 1653, he was discovered to have been buried in the year 481 C.E. with 300 golden objects considered to be shaped like bees. Such a burial inspired French ruler, Napoleon, who then went on to make bees a royal emblem. Bees are also mentioned in folklore record of poems, charms, and customs, such as that of “Telling the Bees,” as follows: if a family maintains a bee hive, they should inform the hive of important happenings among family members, such as births and deaths (especially deaths), according to mimisbrunner.info.

This same source also made a connection between indigenous concepts of fate, *wyrd*, wherein supernatural female entities have strong associations with death, birth, and other aspects of human life – an person’s *wyrd* – a concept we explore much deeper in *Braucherei* and *Hexerei*. Given the strong, multi-dimensional, symbolism of bees, their female leadership, and importance in the interconnectedness of life, and life-cycles, I see how the author of this source came to this conclusion. I also thought of the synergistics of a traditional *Deitsch* family related to that of a hive. In a traditional *Deitsch* family, the wife/female is generally the “head of the household.” There are important roles to play in these hard-working, self-sufficient families, and the woman generally rule over the household and are the person to talk to about matters happening within the family, underneath the roof, and related to domestic matters; the proverbial “Queen Bee” who keeps everything functional and on task.

The time to honor the bee in our current culture is during *Frouwasege* and *Grumbieredaag*, before Spring Equinox. Known to cultural outsiders as St. Patrick’s Day, our ancestors carried over St. Gertrude’s Day. According to Robert Schreiwer in his *Urglaawe* blog dated February 15th, 2020, this observance celebrates the first day of planting for the year in planting our potatoes in the ground, as well as honoring of *Frouwa*, who presents the attributes of sex, beauty, fertility, fecundity, and cats. St. Gertrude is also the guardian of cats. During the *Frouwasege* Ritual, the following is recited related to bees:



Es fiehrt die Frouwa die Kieh zum
Graut,

die Biene zum Fluck, un die Pferd
zum Zuck.

Which translates....

The Frouwa leads the cows to
fodder, The **bees** to flight,

And the horses to pull.

Bees connect. Us with nature. Our food. Our history... and culture. Other cultures. Shared symbolism. The list is endless. I must confess, my motivation for diving into the spiritual symbolism and cultural bee lore was due to my newfound hobby as a Beekeeper. I find bees utterly fascinating, and I was interested in learning more about them through the lens of my own culture. Much like the bee itself, I learned there are many more diverse connections to be made. In summary, I will leave you with the words of Ted Andrews, who is able to eloquently put words to the all-encompassing spirit of the bee:

“The bee is a reminder to extract the honey of life and to make our lives fertile while the sun shines. The bee reminds us that no matter how great the dream there is the promise of fulfillment if we pursue it. The elixir of life is as sweet as honey, and the bee is a symbol that promises us that the opportunity to drink of it is ours if we but pursue our dreams.”

Resources

Books

The First Book of Urglaawe Myths

Available on [Amazon](#)

A Dictionary of Urglaawe Terminology

Available on [Amazon](#) and [Lulu](#)

Websites

[Urglaawe International](#)

Social Media

[Urglaawe Facebook Community](#)

[Heathens Against Hate](#)

[Alliance for Inclusive Heathenry](#)

[Heathens in Recovery](#)

Blogs and Podcasts

[Blanzenheilkunscht](#)

[Braucherei](#)

[Deitsch Mythology](#)

[Urglaawe](#)

[Holle's Haven Podcast](#) (also available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts)

Regional Groups

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Schwazwald Sippschaft Michigan

[Weisser Hund Freibesitz](#) North Carolina

[Bittreselaatsaame Freibesitz](#) San Diego

Landmarks

[Lüsch-Müselman Graabhof](#) (Graveyard) Pennsylvania

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Submissions for the Spring 2024 issue must be received by March 1, 2023 and may be submitted for consideration to briana@urglaawe.org. Artists retain all rights to their work. By submitting, the artist agrees to allow Hollerbeer Hof to publish their work within one year of the submission due date; after that year, Hollerbeer Hof must reacquire permission to publish.

