



Youth

What Is Magic?

Reclaiming's next generation weighs in on our question of the quarter

Magic is a way of connecting more deeply with the Earth and with people around me. It's something I can use to empower and inspire myself and others. — Hilary

Magic is a vehicle of change. It helps me come to terms with myself. — Ingrid

Magic to me means the mystical — and it gives me a large community that I love a lot. — Aidan

Magic means the world to me because the world is magic. — Carly

Magic is the divine force that guides us. Without it we would accomplish nothing. — Maya

Magic means putting your will into an intention to make it reality. — Robyn

Magic means my life to me. I'm not always thinking about it, I'm not always in ritual or in trance, but it's always there. I always hold space for it. — Sarah

Magic entails knowledge and use of science, universal laws, art, and mystery. Magic is wisdom and love woven into an art form of personal development and transformation.— Max

Magic is a connection between yourself and different natural entities and spiritual deities. The practice of magic means using the combined energies of yourself and a deity or natural entity to manifest something. — Sequoia

Magic is the ability to look at everyday things in a different light, and see ways that I can change things or that they can be different. — Simon

Reclaiming youth are involved in several Witchcamps, including Vermont, Free Activist, Wild Ginger, Witchlets in the Woods, and Teen Earth Magic. For more information visit Witchcamp.org or email quarterly@reclaiming.org

Submissions for the Youth Pages can be sent to quarterly@reclaiming.org

Painting by Sequoia

Youth

A Muggle-Born Tells Her Tale

By Meagan Fischer

I recently (jokingly) realized that I am Muggle-born.

I was raised as a liberal Christian, interwoven with an acknowledgment of life and Earth as sacred. I didn't grow up doing magic or ritual. I didn't learn the Wheel of the Year until I was a teenager, and I still know only a few traditional Pagan myths and deities.

At twenty years old, I am coming into being a young adult. It seems to me that part of my journey at this time should be learning how to mentor and teach. I am in an awkward position in the Reclaiming community though, where there are many people younger than me that have been raised as Witches, while I am new to the community. (I've been a Witch since I was 15, but I've only been involved with Reclaiming for a year and a half.)

At Teen Earth Magic last year, I sometimes felt embarrassed for not knowing about things that others much younger than me were familiar with, and guilty for asking lots of questions that may have seemed obvious to those who have grown up with Reclaiming in their lives.

Nevertheless, going to Teen Earth Magic (TEM) was a wonderful experience for me. I didn't go to camp when I was younger, due to coming from a poor family, and I probably wouldn't have enjoyed going to a Christian or secular camp full of heteronormativity, lots of rules

(instead of agreements), unhealthy food, and who knows what else.

At TEM I made authentic connections and felt honored as a person, and I saw those younger than me being honored as well, in ways that more conventional youth activities in our society never do. I appreciate the respect that I feel and see between different generations in Reclaiming.

If I were to change a few things regarding youth in Reclaiming, I would relax the separation of sleeping quarters by gender at camps (although I know this has a legal basis). I think it perpetuates blockages between those of different genders, and I would like to see us all feel more comfortable and safe around each other, regardless of our bodies or identities.

I would also like to see more empowerment and freedom for youth to do activities on their own. At TEM I wanted to go on hikes by myself in the morning, but this wasn't allowed for minors. Technically I could have since I was legally responsible for myself, but I felt guilty taking advantage of the privilege when others there were not allowed to do the same.

I recently attended a gathering where very young children were entrusted with more autonomy than I have seen even in Reclaiming, and no one was hurt or lost. I think the danger to youth doing things independently is less than is often imagined. I'd like to see more discussion about strategies for dealing with this, with the full voice of youth taking part in the decisions and believing in our creativity enough to find a way through perceived obstacles, such as legal liability.

I think Reclaiming teachers are doing their best to juggle the value of equal treatment for all ages with personal and legal obligations to protect and keep safe the youth in this community, and I applaud them for their dedication to finding this balance. Thank you!

Meagan is a 20-year-old Witch from Chico CA, where she attends college, practices permaculture, and teaches Compassionate Communication for her local Free Skool.

Image by Sequoia.



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Photos by Amy Breeds

More photos at:
Amybreedsphotography.blogspot.com

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Water Witch (noun)

a person who claims the ability to detect water underground by means of a divining rod

By Natalie Mogg

I had been avoiding ancestor magic for a while. History has always been interesting to me, but delving into my own family's seemed a little scary. I wasn't exactly planning on inviting my roots into my life or magical practice. When I looked back, all I could see was bigotry, carpentry, and Jello salad.

But as it happened, my grandmother was embarking on a family tree project of epic proportions, and I got swept up in the tide of recovering old photographs and recounting family stories. It got to the point where I couldn't help but meet some of my ancestors.

If you go back about one hundred years, you'll find Elizabeth Robinson — my grandmother's grandmother, known to later generations as Grandma R.

I had been hearing stories about having a Water Witch in the family ever since I was little, but having a name and a face made the stories suddenly feel real.

The thought of having a magical ancestor fascinated me. It didn't seem to fit with the pictures of my great-great-grandmother in white Victorian dresses, all faint smiles and unstained lace.

So I asked around, trying to create a mental picture of her from the memories of my grandma, mom, and aunt. The more I found out about this woman,

the less I trusted the impression the photographs gave of her.

She lived with her husband and several children in the harsh Mojave desert. She was the traditional caretaker in many ways — cooking and cleaning and shooting rattlesnakes when the need arose. But she was not by any stretch the image of a proper woman.

She had a mischievous (bordering on mean) sense of humor and an air of scrappy independence about her that might have shocked the neighbors, had she lived close enough to anyone for them to notice.

The way I see it, her Water-Witching was a meeting point of those two sides. She nurtured those around her by giving them the gift of water in the desert, while audaciously thumbing her nose at society's attitudes by reclaiming the word "Witch" (before it was cool).

The way she identified as a Witch obviously meant something completely different to her than it does to us now. I think the term was more pragmatic than spiritual. She never revealed her method of finding the water, and I think it's just as likely that she used a practical, scientific understanding of her environment while calling it magic. (From what I understand, she loved an aura of mystery.)

But whether she used intuition or magic or science or some combination of them all, I think she also inadvertently fit our definition of a Witch. She had to know the land's secrets on some deep level for her to find water underground — I believe the way she interacted with the Earth showed great wisdom and respect. If that's not a Witch, what is?

Both of my parents are strongly nonreligious people, and I myself am agnostic. This being the case, I have a hard time feeling comfortable identifying with any one religious tradition, no matter how much it clicks with me.

Having my spirituality tie into my roots was a reaffirming moment for me as a Witch, and also as a member of my extended family. It gave me a sense of continuity and grounding — she is a part of me and I'm just as much a part of whoever comes next.

It's a huge, peaceful feeling of belonging that I never would have experienced if I hadn't overcome my fear of Jello salad.

Natalie is a fourteen year old mostly-poet who plays mostly-classical guitar, reads a little too much and sleeps a little too little. She also writes for BAMboozled.org.

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Waiting

The train comes
the train goes
not really sure what I'm waiting for
I sit
I stand
I lay
nothing can take the pain away
my mouth fills with chocolatey goodness
knowing it is not a cure
the train comes
the train goes
still I wait

by Maya Litauer



Summer

The light breeze creates beaming ripples in the grass
cattails move back and forth
back and forth
hypnotizing the cat lurking in the shade
peace at last.
Sunshine like gold, splatter-painted across the sky
so calm, so quiet
barking
birds chirping cheerily
their playful melody echoes
in the openness of the great beyond
the leaves turned toward the sun
absorbing its full essence —
a typical summer day

by Maya Litauer



Hand-painted boots by Sophia Rosenberg