

UP FRONT

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Winter Solstice: A Universal Holiday

The winter solstice, a natural holy day, begins the solar year. Since ancient peoples became aware of the sun's role in the changing of seasons, the winter solstice has been celebrated as the rebirth of the sun from the underworld or womb of the earth. At this time we in the northern hemisphere perceive the sun as dying, sinking lower and lower into the southern sky. Nights lengthen and days are brief, until finally on the day/night of the solstice (Dec. 22), the sun has reached its nadir and must begin to rise again.

With the solstice being the end of the sun's year, we mortals have a chance to withdraw into our own darkness to await the birth of a new light of our own. I like to think of this new light as being the sacred child of our Self, the birth of our new understanding of our own life's cyclical, ongoing process. It is the time of the year we can experience our own psychological death and rebirth, a part of the natural cyclical rhythm of the solar system. Awaiting rebirth we can let go of all the pain and pleasure of the past year, accept success and failure, and open ourselves to who we are becoming.

In ancient times the solstice celebrated the birth of the sacred child, long before the Christians claimed it for the Christ Mass. You are probably aware that Christmas comes a few days after the solstice, a political maneuver to get pagans to recognize this Christian holiday. Indeed, Christ came to represent the sacred child as the old pagan tradition was incorporated into the Roman church. Still the older cultures of Sumer, Egypt, and pre-Hellenic Greece always recognized the sacred child,

often the son, born to the Goddess, as the one who insured fertility of the earth and the continuance of the natural cycle. Often too this sacred child symbolized the sun, love, harmony and the open heart.

In some traditions great bonfires were built on hilltops during the solstice night. In others, celebrants leapt over smaller fires signifying letting go of old ways, purifying in preparation for the new year to come. If you're not feeling so athletic and your living room is not built for fires, you can list on paper all the things you want to let go of and burn it. Lighting white candles to illumine the dark night represents the return of the light and can represent what qualities you want to bring into your life. You can make up your own tradition around the solstice, which will enrich you and make it a meaningful holiday. I find it very important these days when I need to affirm the cyclical nature of our life here on earth. The solstice celebration can be an alternative to or an enlargement of the usual fuss around Christmas.

—Mitzi Linn

Parenting

The League of Women Voters of Central Lane County is doing a study on the teaching of child development and parenting in public schools. If you took such a class, the League would like to talk to you! Please call Nan Kennedy, 747-8242 or Carol Ward, 343-9562.



The Tuba Christmas Concert will include more tubas this year than last—and is scheduled for the 17th at 1:30 pm on the Downtown Mall. Apparently there's only one other group of this kind and they are in New York City!

This Week's Entertainment at the Old Oregon Christmas Fair:

Thursday, December 15

3:30 p.m. Paul Owens: Original piano compositions

Friday, December 16

12 noon Richard Crandell and Bill Bartels
3:30 p.m. Windsong and David: Heartsong vocals
7:30 p.m. The Tree People

Saturday, December 17

12 noon Rainy Capers Morris Dance Team: English ritual dance from Portland
2 p.m. Laurie Brown & Rob McIntosh
4 p.m. Rainy Capers Morris Dance Team
7:30 p.m. Wyld Thyme: Progressive Celtic music

Sunday, December 18

12 noon Godfrey Warner: Storyteller
2 p.m. The Skinner City Cloggers
4:30 p.m. St. Mark's Gospel Choir

Monday, December 19

12 noon TBA
3:30 p.m. Chris Sorenson: Solo classical guitar
8 p.m. Jane Van Boskirk: Excerpts from "Northwest Woman" and "Prodigal Daughters"

Tuesday, December 20

12 noon Akrowabi: Afro-Cuban rhythm ensemble
3:00 p.m. Chris Sorenson and Friends: Jazz Quartet
7:30 p.m. Big Sue, Uncle T and Johnny

Wednesday, December 21

12 noon TBA
3:30 p.m. Chris Sorenson: Solo guitar
8 p.m. Jane Van Boskirk



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SATURDAY MARKET

Open 10-5 p.m. (rain or shine)

Featuring:

- Santa Claus • Food Booths
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Entertainment:

Saturday Raney Capers Morris Dance Team,
Dec. 17 English ritual dancing, at 2:00; Wolf
Creek at 11:00; Craig Soreth, folk
music, at 2:00; and the White Tones
singing with Santa Claus at 1:00.

Located in the
Park Blocks,
8th & Oak Streets,
Downtown Eugene, 686-8885

