

Psychic's energies revel at witching hour



By CHRIS DOLGENOW
For the Emerald

Shakespeare's witches prey on man. Cunning sorceresses conjure spirits, stir cauldrons, and cackle. On Halloween Eve when the harvest moon shines bright against the pot black sky, black witches take off astride broomsticks with capes flapping against the wind as they cast spells, here and here. Or so the legend goes.

Norma Cordell of Eugene dispels these myths. She's not a witch, but she still adheres to some of the rites of Halloween celebrated by true witches.

Often, on Halloween, Cordell leads rituals in her home. She says these ceremonies are performed "to center yourself." They consist mostly of lighting a candle and reciting a benediction. Energy is the key, says Cordell, a bioenergetics and gestalt therapist at the Oregon Institute of Holistic Health.

During the ceremony, she draws energy from everything, particularly the earth.

"There is a certain realm of spirituality with everyday living," she says. "The limits are unknown."

Witches have recognized the potency of nonphysical energy for 6000 years. The witches' Sabbath Halloween marks crucial agricultural and astronomical turning points in the season. Witches, whose practices reflect naturalism, find Halloween among the most propitious times to practice magic.

Witches conduct rituals on Halloween and other times of high energy. Covenant members form a circle and raise a "cone of Power" through dance, chant or meditation.

Four elements, air water, earth and fire are essential. Incense and wine represent the former two. Witch Marion Weinstein, in her

book "Positive Magic," describes the mood as one serious but "joyous" that "the continuity of life has been so deeply affirmed."

While Cordell feels tremendous energy at Halloween, she is not a witch and does not necessarily celebrate with ritual. Vivid dreams often precipitate the holiday for her.

"If I were a witch," she smiles, "that would have been our signal." This year promises to be more conventional. Tonight she will take her four-year-old trick-or-treating.

Cordell became interested in witchcraft and folklore as a means of understanding herself. She possesses "certain abilities" that have been with her "for as long as I can remember." Her keen sense of intuition and accurate predictions prompted a quest for a "separate reality."

At one time, drawing energy was out of her control.

"You're conditioned to believe that those things (extra sensory powers) do not exist. If you do find them, you think you're going crazy. It took me years to separate the two."

Halloween is dedicated to the realm of eternal life. The departed who live in the Invisible World transcend death and join witches in the physical World of Form in worship and celebration. Magic is in the air. Witches combine natural forces, including invisible ones, with what Weinstein terms "heightened use of human energies" to create witchcraft. A vindictive witch is fearsome, but self-destructive.

Witches beware the Three-Fold Law. She who casts a spell to harm a farmer's crops will three times suffer the blighted crops caused the farmer. Yet if she blesses his crops, she in three ways gains prosperity equivalent to that of the farmer's. Witches' magical number three symbolizes the process involved. The spoken spell is sent into the Invisible World; it re-

turns to the World of Form to manifest in the desired way; finally it reverberates in the witch's life.

Cordell is skeptical of witchcraft, but she adheres to naturalistic laws. She believes we are all

capable of "drawing energy and heightening our awareness of the

non-physical world." If she's right, Halloween is not just a witches' holiday.



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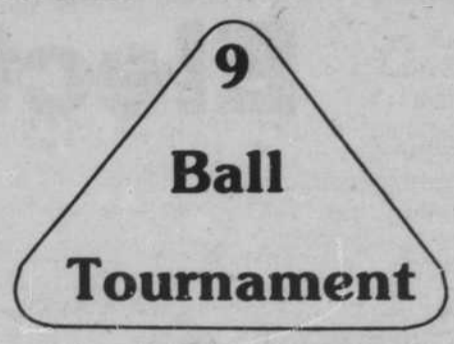
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Stress management will be the focus of a Community Health and Education Center course to begin Wednesday.

The course, one of three offered by the center this fall, will cover the impact and identification of stressors and ways to deal with them.

The class will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays and the fee for the six-class series is \$25.

An eight-class series on Swedish massage and breath will be held on Tuesdays from 6:30-9 p.m., starting Nov. 7.

For \$25, participants can learn to give a full Swedish massage with emphasis on relaxation and breath.

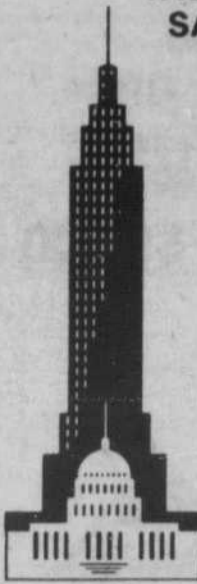
A senior growth program, designed to be a positive approach to growing older, will be held on

Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon starting next week.

The stress management and Swedish massage courses will be held at the center's new location at 433 W. 10th. The senior growth program will be held at the Central Presbyterian Church at 1475 Ferry St. Preregistration is required for all courses and it can be done by calling 485-8445.

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