

Witch wants to start 'coven' on campus

By MIKE LEE
Of the Emerald

Robert Artison wants to take witchcraft out of the broom closet.

Artison is a High Priest of the Wiccan religion, an ancient sect of witches that he claims is enjoying a modern resurgence.

And why not? "It's only been legal to be a witch since 1951," he says.

Just to set things straight, "witches" can be either male or female. "A warlock is a traitor of oaths," Artison explains.

Artison is in town to promote the religion and start a "coven" on campus. And though he wants more publicity for his cause, he declines to say how many witches live in Eugene — "it's such a high figure that it sounds sensational" — or list any prominent witches, or even tell his age.

So it's natural to be skeptical about Wicca's true following. But Artison doesn't mind — he says Wicca is the natural religion for skeptics.

"If you know someone who's witty, intelligent, successful, well-read and more than a little skeptical," Artison says, "chances are good they're a witch."

Which means they can manipulate physical environment telekinetically, he says. For



Photo by Steve Dykes

example, if a witch is late to work, he can change stoplights to green merely by concentrating on the switchbox, Artison claims.

"It's no more difficult than making a pair of dice come up seven," he says.

Because of his notoriety, Arti-

son says he served as "Official Witch" to the Los Angeles Dodgers. Years back the Dodgers had a talented pitcher who was suffering a slump, running into all sorts of bad luck. When the local sportscaster asked Artison for help, he complied by asking for a piece of the pitcher's uniform, a baseball pitched solely by him, a lock of hair, and other articles.

On top of that, Artison asked all the fans to burn a green candle — signifying regrowth — before each of the pitcher's games.

"The guy set a number of

records for his career that year," Artison claims. And the pitcher was a born-again Christian.

Besides this kind of "low magick," witches practice a meditative "high magick" directed at making the soul more holy, Artison says.

The result is a deeper appreciation of the earth and nature. "You won't find witches killing off whales," he says. "You won't find witches killing off harp seals."

You will find them criticizing Christianity, Artison says what he calls the male-oriented holy

trinity is sexist, and the choice of Mary to bear Jesus only came about because she was a virgin.

But Wicca, he says, recognizes both a god and a goddess. The soul on earth rounds out the trinity, he says. And he says the religion as a whole is much more peaceful than Christianity.

"Jehovah is jealous," he says, "Jehovah is warlike. Jehovah feels not the slightest bit of whim in causing the deaths of thousands of millions of people."

With recruiting, too Artison says witchcraft has a much more low-key approach.

"We're non-proselytizing," he says. "We're not out there at the airport handing out pamphlets, and we're not knocking on your door giving you a copy of the 'Witchtower,' and we don't jump up and down on the streetcorner with drums."

They plan to set up a table in the EMU Main Lobby soon, though, along with the other religions. Anyone who wants a head start can call Jack Green at 683-5055 for information on witch workshops.

Artison says the workshops, which purportedly include lessons in low magick, offer people a chance to investigate the religion's claims to their own satisfaction.

"You've always had a certain percentage of people who say, 'I'm tired of bullshit — don't give me something that's based on faith, give me something that I can prove,'" Artison says.

"Witchcraft is just the right ticket for those sort of people."

Joe Austin to appear on talk show

Joseph Austin, a University instructor who teaches the SEARCH course "War and the Nuclear Age," will be a panelist on a Portland talk show to discuss the proliferation of nuclear weaponry.

Austin will join several guests on the Gerry Pratt show, which will be aired Sunday at 6 p.m. on KGW channel 8.

Joining Austin will be Massachusetts Institute of Technology political science Prof. Paul Walker, a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Walker is the author of several articles on the politics of nuclear arms and has written a book called "Price of Defense."



FRIDAY

8:30 a.m. Parents attend classes with students.

11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Art Exhibit, 167 EMU.

Noon Lunchtime Entertainment, EMU Breezeway: "Inner-Urge" - 12:30 - 2 p.m.

3:30 p.m. Parents' Registration, EMU.

4 p.m. Beer Garden, EMU.

6 p.m. Canoe Fete, Mill Race.

8 p.m. Jazz Ensemble, Beall Hall. Bill Cosby Concert, McArthur Court.

SATURDAY

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Footbag Tournament, Howe Field.

8 a.m. - Noon Late Registration, EMU.

8 - 9 a.m. Parents' Association Board Meeting, EMU.

8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Special Olympics, Hayward Field.

9 - 10 a.m. Parents' Association General Meeting, EMU.

9:30 a.m. All-Campus Tour, Open House: Fraternities/Sororities/Dormitories, EMU.

10:30 - 11:15 a.m. EMU, Prof. Sharon Sherman, "Oregon Folklore." Prof. Robert Smith, "The Economic Outlook for the Future."

11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Residence Hall Carnival for Parents, 15th and Agate. Art Exhibit, 167 EMU.

11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Prof. Gordon G. Goles, "A Look at Mt. St. Helens." Dr. Richard Hill, "Crisis of Higher Education."

12:30 p.m. Luncheon, EMU.

5 p.m. Northwest Relays, Hayward Field.

6:30 and 9:30 p.m. Movie: "Apocalypse Now," EMU Ballroom.

7 p.m. Parents' Association Wine and Cheese Reception, Gerlinger Alumni Lounge.

8 p.m. Jing-Chih Chang, Piano Doctoral Recital, Beall Hall.

SUNDAY

A.M. Local religious centers have services.

Noon-Dusk First Annual Music Festival, 18th and Agate. Soccer Field.

4 p.m. Saxophone Recital, Beall Hall.

8 p.m. "Rites (Rights) of Spring," humorous musical sketches by UO graduate students, Beall Hall.

Duck Week/Parents' Weekend presented by S.U.R.C. and the Parents' Association.

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