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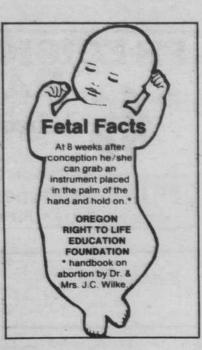
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'Magickal Weekend'

Pagans gather in EMU

By Diane Winocur

About 40 Pagans - the only physical sign of their unique beliefs hanging in five pointed stars around their necks - stood in a circle, holding hands and chanting, "We are one with the infinite sun."

They were celebrating their Pagan history, a history traced by its followers to pre-Christian times. The Northwest saw its first regional gathering of Pagans at a "Magickal Weekend." two days of nature-worshipping workshops and rituals this weekend in the EMU.

The Oregon Pagan Association sponsored the events, bringing speakers and performers to Eugene. Pagans, witches, followers of the Goddess cult, and other members of the Nature Spiritual Movement attended.

During their introductions, many at the seminar said they had never known more than three Pagans in their lives, and had attended the weekend in hopes of meeting others with philosophies similar to their own.

Paganism is not a religion, in that it has no creed or authoritative structure, but is more aptly described as a lifestyle, says Salena Fox, high priestess of the Church of Circle Wicca. Her title, she says, exists only as required by the IRS to function as a legal church.

In Paganism, "each person is his own minister," eliminating a need for hierarchy, she

The world's nature worshippers share three basic views with "Neo-Pagans," or those just discovering Paganism in Western Europe and the United States

These are a sense of the earth's life cycles and ecology, a feminist consciousness of the equality and worth of all individuals, and a "Goddess concept" in which the deity is not external but can be found within oneself, and all things, through meditation, she says.

Paganism had been relatively unknown to the popular press until an article appeared in People magazine in late 1979, Fox says. The



About 40 Pagans celebrated their alternative lifestyle at the University this weekend.

number of Americans declaring adherence to the Pagan lifestyle since then has increased dramatically to more than 80,000, she claims.

Rituals of nature and the cycles of life were the focus of Saturday's workshops. Pagan celebrations of the changes in the cycles of the moon, sun, and planets were discussed. Many of these celebrations have been adopted in whole or part by Christianity, she says.

'Yuletide," for instance, was celebrated as the winter solstice and the annual death of the harvest god for thousands of years before Christ's birthday usurped the date, Fox says.

Politics and pleasure mix at Iranian New Year fete

By Sandy Johnstone

Even an authentic Persian dinner and entertainment didn't disguise the fact that the Iranian New Year celebration was meant to bring Iranian issues to the forefront of the campus.

'We want to inform people of what is happening in Iran," says Bijan, of the Iranian Student Association. Bijan does not allow his last name to be printed because he fears repercussions from Iranian officials. "The mass media does not reflect the repression that is happening in Iran. We want to inform Americans."

Bijan says the main message proposed by the entertainment was simple. "Iranians need to get united and fight for freedom and democracy," he says. The event was sponsored by the Iranian Students Association and the Foreign Students Organization.

Folk dancing, siide shows and choral presentations brought this message to the approximately 400 people who attended the Sunday celebration. A genuine Persian dinner featuring sholehzard - a pudding-like dessert - dressed up the politically-oriented event.

The slide show and songs brought a serious note to the program, with some of the slides graphically portraying death and oppression. The economic plight of the Iranians, including

items like government supported black markets on scarce items and runaway inflation, also was emphasized

The most effective entertainment presented by the Iranian Students was a facetious play on the problems of the Khomeini regime. In the play, one character says that everything that once belonged to the Shah's regime now belongs to the new government. "Corruption, repression - bullshit like that," responds another character.

Friday, the Iranian Student Association had some trouble with the Iranian Student Association in the United States, a group that supports Khomeini.

There is no logic behind what they (the pro-Khomeini group) say. They had to attack us physically," says Bijan, speaking of a confrontation in the EMU lobby where both Iranian groups were distributing information. Both groups deny starting the argument.

A spokesperson for the pro-Khomeini group, Firooz, says his group wants to defend the Iranian Revolution as a turning point in Iranian history that hasn't fulfilled all its goals and has been troubled with economic difficulties and war. He says his group supports the current government in Iran.

"The overwhelming number of people here are against the current regime," says Amin, a representative of the Iranian Students Association.

Tuesday, April 6, 1982

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