

# Mysterious Ways

A Cyberzine for Queer Pagan Men.

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## Theme this Issue: Shapeshifting and Animal Totems

Welcome to the latest issue of Mysterious Ways! This issue is about a topic close to my heart—shapeshifting and animal totems. As a child, I had a strong affinity for animals that I’m slowly rediscovering in my middle age. I’ve also developed a fascination with werewolves—especially where their folklore intersects with magickal and homosexual practices. As a Druid, shapeshifting is a part of the lore of ancient Druids.

I think that many LGBTQ+ folks have a natural predisposition toward shapeshifting. Many of us have taken on aspects that weren’t naturally our own to fit in and to avoid harassment, while others, such as drag queens, have done so to become fabulous. Shapeshifting and gender shifting are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and this was even the case in ancient times. Wolf warrior bands of the past took on shapeshifting and animal reverence along with homosexual rites in their practices. In many cultures, deities and mystical creatures were known to shift both shape and genders. Those who were homosexual and transgender often became shamans and priests and their roles sometimes involved dressing in animal skins, or acting and dressing as the other sex.

In 2016, I wrote a book on the topic titled “The Gay Guy’s Guide to Werewolves and Other Man Beasts.” If you are interested, you can find my book at the following link: <https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/melmystery>



“Highland werewolves had a reputation for doing atrocious and highly unwarranted ‘things’, like wearing smoking jackets to the dinner table.”

— Gail Carriger



Photo courtesy of Matrixwerx Photography at [www.matrixwerx.com](http://www.matrixwerx.com)

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## Special Thanks

Special thanks to all who contributed articles, poetry, and art this issue.

# Events and Gatherings

## Virtual Arcadia Explored “Otherworld Spirits”

By Mel Mystery

The Arcadia retreat for Queer Pagan men was held virtually this past year the weekend of November 3-5, 2023. The theme of the weekend was “Otherworld Spirits.”

Workshops included LGBTQ+ Werewolves in Mythology and Folklore presented by Mel Mystery; The Sacred Fool: Roles and Responsibilities of a Radicalized Spiritual Practice presented by Eric Eldritch of Stone Circle Wicca and the Radical Faeries; Beyond Blood and Bone: Spiritwalking and Deathwalking in the Unnamed Path presented by Sawyer Massie of the Unnamed Path; Global Queer Mythology presented by author Tomas Prower; Exploring the Death Current presented by Necromancer Anthony Nelson; and Cryptids, Aliens, and Ultraterrestrials presented by Chaos Magician and Cryptid enthusiast Gwydion Ream.

In addition to workshops, there were panels and discussions about how the Otherworld / Underworld fits into one’s tradition.

Entertainment included a QUILT BAG Trivia game (QUILT BAG is an anagram for LGBTQIAU) and Queer Storytelling by Matthew Sydney of the Unnamed Path. Frank Serio and Sphinx of the Unnamed Path hosted the main ritual “Journey to the Ancestral Bonfire of the Otherworld” where folks journeyed to meet the ancestors of men who love men and also had the opportunity to meet and invite one of these ancestors to join their spiritual court. Mel Mystery and David Coffman led the opening and closing rituals where attendees entered and then returned from the Otherworld.

The next Arcadia is set to be an in-person retreat to be held in the Fall of 2024. The event will take place at a campground in Virginia. Additional details are yet to be announced.

**For more information on Arcadia:**

<https://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/arcadia-main/>



## Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog

**A Retreat for Pagan Men**

**April 5-7 2024**

**“A Shift in Perspective”**

**Shapeshifting, Glamour, Liminal Spaces**

<https://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/brotherhood-by-the-bog-main/>

## Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog to be held, April 5-7, 2024

*By Mel Mystery*

Brotherhood by the Bog will be held virtually again in 2024. The theme for this year's retreat is "A Shift in Perspective." Topics might include shapeshifting, glamour, liminal spaces, dreams, or even the hanged man in the Tarot. Denny Sargent, author of two books on Werewolf Magick" will present a workshop on the topic and host the main ritual which will involve a shapeshifting trance. Mel Mystery will present a workshop on Practical Lycantropy which will focus on practical ways to incorporate werewolves and shapeshifting into your spiritual and magickal practice. Eric Eldritch will present a workshop on glamour from both a historical perspective and as tool for manifestation. Sawyer Massie and Adam Black of the Unnamed Path will present a workshop on Spiritwalking in the Unnamed Path. Additional presenters, workshops, and entertainment are still to be announced.

For more information:

<https://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/brotherhood-by-the-bog-main/>

## Stone and Stang to be held in-person October 3-6, 2024

Stone & Stang 2024

Hosted by Unnamed Path

A Spiritual Gathering for Pagan Men-Who-Love-Men

"Bonfire of Brotherhood"

Thursday, October 3rd through Sunday October 6th, 2024

At the SIReinity Farms Campground in Sullivan, Missouri

Join us for a transformative experience at Stone and Stang - A Spiritual Gathering for Pagan Men-Who-Love-Men! Unleash the power of unity as we come together under the enchanting glow of the Bonfire of Brotherhood. Immerse yourself in a sacred space where like-minded individuals, connected by a shared spiritual journey, gather to explore. Engage in rituals that unlock the essence of unity and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood. The flickering flames of the bonfire will guide us on a journey of self-discovery and acceptance. The event will include Sacred Rituals, Heart-Centered Workshops, and Mystic Conversations. This gathering is open to all Pagan Men-Who-Love-Men seeking spiritual growth, connection, and a deeper understanding of their unique paths. Embrace the diversity of our community and celebrate the strength that comes from standing together. Don't miss the opportunity to unlock unity and brotherhood at Stone and Stang's Bonfire of Brotherhood.

For more information please Email [stoneandstang@unnamedpath.org](mailto:stoneandstang@unnamedpath.org) Or Call us at (619) 800 - 8218.

## Between the Worlds scheduled for August 7-12, 2024

According to their website, Between the Worlds, a spiritual gathering for men who love men is scheduled to take place August 7-12, 2024 in Southwestern Ohio. Additional information about the gathering has yet to be announced. Registration for Between the Worlds opens on March 1, 2024.

For more information: <https://betweentheworlds.org/>



# From Across the Pond

## From Across the Pond

### Antinous: Man to God

by Anarion (writing from Portugal)

Antinous ( Αντίνοος ) was a young man in ancient Roman times who caught the attention of one of the most famous gay emperors; Hadrian. His story is both a beautiful and sad one: ending as it does in death. However his fate was one of transformation, and as this issue has a theme of shape shifting, it is important to remember that this covers not only the physical, but also the spiritual as well. I will explain.

Let us begin at the beginning. Antinous is thought to have been born in the month of Metes ( the Earth Mother ) [November] 111 CE in the city of Bithynion-Claudiopolis which was situated in Bithynia, a Roman province, and former Greek kingdom, in the north of Asian Türkiye on the Black Sea. Or so it is said as there is little evidence to back up such a precise date. What can be said, from looking at other sources of evidence, is that he was probably born between 110 and 112 CE. It is possible that his name was the male variant of Antinoë who is linked with the, perhaps, mythical founding of Bithynion by settlers from Arcadia ( Mel will like that thought! ). There is debate as to whether he was a slave. The earliest writer to state this was Hegesippos, whose account may have been of his experiences close to the date of actual events. A christian writer also claims this but, let's face it, any christian writer ( be he cleric or not ) would have been trying to do down any focus of pagan worship and veneration. If true though, the transition from slave to god is a truly amazing shift, even in pagan Roman times. However, most authorities think there is insufficient evidence the boy was a slave and Hadrian supposedly having had very fixed ideas about the place of slaves, it is unlikely he would raise one to be his beloved and then a god. Most likely Antinous was a free man and was taken initially into imperial service when Hadrian visited Bithynia around 123 CE, as one of the pages in the Imperial Paedagogium in Rome. This school trained young men, often from well to do backgrounds, in the arts of serving at court and was a natural first step into the roman civil service. However Hadrian returned from his travels in the east by 125 CE and then set up home in his ever growing residence at Tibur. By 128, when he left again for Greece, Antinous was his favourite. Antinous seems to have been mature as a youth and so his beauty may not have been the only attribute which attracted the emperor. This is attested both by Hadrian in an obelisk inscription which I will mention below, but also seems to be alluded to in an analogy by the writer Arrian. Hadrian had married the great niece of the previous emperor, Trajan; her name being Vibia Sabina. The marriage was not a happy one and there is no evidence that Hadrian ever desired sex with women. His interest in Greece and the East may well have introduced him to the idea of a sexual relationship between a man and a younger male as happened in ancient Greece. However it seems that his relationship with Antinous was more than just sexual. There appears to have been true love and devotion between the two men. This is reinforced by the fact that Antinous never, unlike so many in early Rome, used his relationship with Hadrian for personal gain. They also shared interests, especially a love of hunting and this is attested by depictions of hunting scenes on the Arch of Constantine in Rome (see below).

From 127 - 129 Hadrian was back off on his travels again. It seems he had been diagnosed with an unexplainable illness and perhaps, as I find with many buried in the cemetery in Lisbon of which I am a resident historian, the travel to warmer climes was recommended for his health. He and Antinous travelled in North Africa and then to Greece. Here in 128 they attended the Eleusis Mysteries and Ha-



drian was initiated as epoptes in the Telesterion. These mysteries were a cult in nature and secret. Nothing much is known about how people were initiated, but there is evidence of spaces made to resemble the underworld. It is thought, though not proven, that Antinous was initiated at the same time as Hadrian. From Greece they travelled to Antioch and the middle east in 129, and here Hadrian showed his dislike for Judaism by banning circumcision and constructing a temple to Zeus-Jupiter on the Temple Mount.

In 130 CE they were in Alexandria and visiting the embalmed remains of Alexander. By now a scandal was forming of the pair's sexual activities. Nevertheless they then went to Libya where Hadrian tracked down and killed a lion which was causing difficulties for the locals. During this hunt, much vaunted afterwards by Hadrian himself, he saved the life of Antinous. In October of the same year the couple cruised the river Nile and during this boat ride Antinous apparently fell overboard and was drowned. Many fancible theories have been made since as to why this happened, from a simple fall, to murder or ritual sacrifice. Most likely it was just an accident. His body would have been taken in hand by the Egyptian priests of the Nile and embalmed in ancient Egyptian style. A heart broken Hadrian established a new city in his honour at the point where he died called Antinoöpolis. Antinous was elevated to godhead as Osiris-Antinous by the priests in Egypt and Hadrian declared him a god and established the Cult of Antinous. In this the emperor flouted normal procedure as he did it without any permission being sought from the roman Senate. The decision has obviously been used by later christian writers to further vilify the idea of homosexuality and love of an older for a younger male. However the cult spread throughout the roman empire and evidence of it has been found in excavations in at least 70 roman sites.



The final mystery is to where Antinous is buried. Evidence is scarce but what does exist alludes to burial in Italy rather than Egypt. An obelisk to Antinous stands now in the Pincian Hill Gardens in Rome. It has been deduced this obelisk is of Roman rather than Egyptian origin and the hieroglyphs on the inscription are a Roman creation. The obelisk was found in three pieces in the vineyard of the Saccocci brothers and this site was later identified as the Circus Varianus constructed by another gay emperor Elagabalus. It would have stood in the middle spina of the circus but will have been moved there from somewhere else. The inscription has details of the life of Antinous, but up until much later than the first attempt at translation was made, certain parts were mistranslated and caused debate over whether this monument was made for an empty memorial to Antinous, and that his body was actually in Egypt. Now the pertinent phrase can be read as it was intended: *'O, Antinous! this deceased one, who rests in this tomb in the country estate of the Emperor of Rome'*. Hadrian's country estate was the Villa Adriana at Tibur. Recent excavations at the villa have identified a temple complex dedicated to Antinous. Two small temples, of four columns, facing each other have a 3 x 3 metre concrete base between them and it is thought that this is where the obelisk originally stood. So it is likely that Antinous rests within the villa complex although has not, as yet, been found. What has been discovered is a number of pieces of Egyptian sculpture and it is probable that other statues of Antinous including that of Antinous-Osiris now in the Vatican came from this temple complex.

The worship of Antinous continues to this day. On [Mel's website](#) you will find a link to Ecclesia Antinoi; a group devoted to the worship of this gay youth turned god. In terms of shape shifting, Antinous achieved the ultimate transition from boy/youth to god, perhaps the greatest sort of shift that can be ever achieved.

Anarion ( [Boeotia@protonmail.com](mailto:Boeotia@protonmail.com) )

# Shapeshifting and Animal Totems

## Why Werewolves?

by Mel Mystery

Are we really to take werewolf practice seriously? Aren't werewolves just fictional creatures from folktales and horror movies? Isn't this just all fantasy? Why would anyone want to mimic such dreadful creatures? If one thinks about it, many might say the same thing about Witches, or Druids, or Faeries.

There's actually a great deal of historical evidence for including werewolves and shapeshifting in your Pagan practice. In fact, many of these practices might already be a part of your current path or tradition.

There's a rich history of shapeshifting and werewolves intertwined within the myths, folklore, and magickal practices of various cultures. Some of the earliest forms of sympathetic magick practiced by humans involved dressing in the skins of wolves and other animals for hunting and warfare. And, of course, shapeshifting is an integral part of many shamanic practices—whether that shapeshifting takes place in the real world or as part of shamanic journeys.

Early warrior cults took on predatory animals like wolves and bears as animal totems, shapeshifted through ecstatic practices and wearing animal skins, and honored deities related to their totems. If you honor or work with a number of popular deities in your practice, you might be working with a deity who has wolf and werewolf associations (see next page).

How might you include lycanthropy in your personal practice?

If you're Wiccan, you might consider honoring a wolf God and a wolf Goddess.

If you're a Traditional Witch, you might acknowledge that werewolf trials took place in conjunction with the witch trials, and also that the traditional flying ointments of witches are practically identical to the werewolf salves used by those seeking to become werewolves. The only real difference was the intent of the user.

If you're a Druid, you might delve deeper into shapeshifting which was said to be a skill of ancient Druids. Shapeshifting also permeates Celtic mythology.

If you follow a Norse path, you might consider fetch work, ecstatic trance, or getting in touch with your inner Berserker.

Lycanthropic practice involves a number of general disciplines practiced in the Pagan community. These include shapeshifting; working with animal totems; working with deities associated with wolves or other animals; working with ancestors and the Dead (wolves are strongly associated with the dead); trance work that might include drumming, dancing, or grunting; working with masks; shamanic/astral travel; shadow work; making talismans and charms; working with herbs and potions to make werewolf ointments; celebrating full moons; celebrating werewolf holidays such as Lupercalia; and getting in touch with your wild side.

If you look closely enough, you might find that lycanthropy and werewolves are already part of your tradition and practices.

## Between the Worlds

A Spiritual Gathering for Men Who Love Men

August 7-12, 2024

Southwestern Ohio

[www.betweentheworlds.org](http://www.betweentheworlds.org)

## A Partial List of Deities with Wolf and/or Werewolf Associations

### Greek

- Zeus
- Leto
- Apollo
- Artemis
- Hecate

### Roman

- Mars
- Luperus
- Luperca
- Lupa
- Diana

### Egyptian

- Anubis
- Duamutef
- Hermanubis
- Osiris
- Wepwawet

### Celtic

- Cerridwen
- Crom Cruach
- Brighid
- The Morrigan
- The Cailleach
- Cernunnos

### Norse

- Fenris
- Odin
- Freyr
- Loki
- Skadi

## Werewolf Disciplines

by Mel Mystery

Below is a general overview of the types of werewolf magick. This list is by no means exhaustive. Feel free to experiment with paths and practices beyond those listed here.

### Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting is integral to werewolf magick – whether you believe folks can shift physically, whether you’re shapeshifting your astral form, or whether you’re shapeshifting your consciousness. Shapeshifting magick is about taking on the aspects of the wolf, werewolf, or other animal, and on some level actually being that wolf, werewolf, or other animal. It’s feeling what it’s like being that creature both inside and out. It’s bringing those experiences, perspectives, and the knowledge gained back with you to human form. While an actual physical shift is unlikely, you can accentuate your experiences by wearing masks, costumes, make up, magickal belts, and using other tools and props.

### Gender shifting

Many mythical shapeshifters could also shift genders, and many shamans and magickal practitioners take on gender shifting as a practical exercise to learn about the other gender. Whether you are Transgender, want to explore drag or crossdressing, or just want to explore all aspects of yourself, gender shifting may be of use to you. Also, if you are very masculine or very feminine, regardless of your sex at birth, you may have something to learn from your opposite. Gender shifting is just another form of shapeshifting. Feel free to explore it as such.

### Herbalism and Potion Making

Werewolves, especially those in medieval Europe, have a history of making potions, ointments, and salves to become werewolves. This might be a steaming cauldron boiled over a fire where the vapors are inhaled while chanting a werewolf spell, or it could be an ointment or salve applied and absorbed through the skin. Many of the latter are practically identical to the “flying ointments” of medieval Witches. Regardless of method, these involve creating recipes using all manner of herbs and other substances to create a hallucinogenic substance that is breathed in or absorbed through the skin. These usually contain some kind of poisonous herb, so extreme caution is recommended.

### Trance Work

If poisonous and potentially deadly herbs are not your thing, there are other ways to enter a werewolf altered state of consciousness. Trance work is one of those ways. There are a variety of ways to enter a trance state. One of the most common is drumming a slow, steady beat. Other methods include using dancing and movement, various breathing methods, sensory deprivation, sexual ecstasy, or concentrating on something visual such as a candle flame.

## **Incenses**

If boiling a steaming cauldron over an outdoor fire isn't practical, many of the herbs used in werewolf potions can be made into recipes that can be burned as incense. As stated before, be careful if experimenting with poisonous herbs.

## **Shamanic and Astral Travel**

Shamanic or astral travel is common in shapeshifting lore. The spirit of the magickal practitioner takes the shape of the wolf to travel. One might travel to remotely view or affect something in the physical world. One might travel to the Underworld and the land of the dead. Or one might travel to various other realms of existence.

## **Working with the Dead**

Wolves are strongly associated with the dead. This is likely because they were known to scavenge battlefields and graveyards in times past. Many deities of death have wolf associations. Even the Underworld is said to be guarded by the three-headed dog Cerberus. And, of course, there are legends of "Hellhounds" that also guard the gates to the world of the dead. I know these last two are technically dogs, but wolves and dogs are closely related. Given these associations, werewolf magick can include communicating with the dead, honoring ancestors, or even working with the dead for magickal purposes.

## **Divination and Prophecy**

Some wolf deities, such as the Greek Apollo, presided over prophecy so there can be overlap into werewolf magick. Since werewolves enter trance states, work with the dead, embark on shamanic journeys, and explore different perspectives, there are all sorts of ways that werewolves might gain insight into the past, present, or future.

## **Music and the Arts**

Apollo also presided over music and the arts. As such, werewolf magick can incorporate dance, ritual movements, and artistic expressions into their magick.

## **Animal Totems**

Certainly, a werewolf would explore their wolf totem and likely others including the bear, dog, fox, and coyote. There is no reason to stop there. A werewolf might consider learning about all manner of other animals, and even experiment shapeshifting into forms other than the wolf or werewolf. Each animal brings its own unique lessons. Gay and bi men in the "Bear" community especially might consider expanding their shapeshifting exercises to explore their bear totem.

Wolves are especially good at helping with problems related to protection of boundaries and territory, strength, cunning, strategy, defeating (or outsmarting) an enemy, or getting along and working with others.

## **Working with Wolf Deities**

The werewolf can work with the Great Wolf Spirit, any number of wolf related deities just as one would in any other path or practice. This can include devotional offerings, honoring these deities in ritual, developing working relationships, asking for their assistance, and so on.

## **Sex Magick**

Given the association of wolf cults with homosexual initiations and the association of many wolf deities with fertility, sex magick is certainly a valid expression of werewolf magick. Werewolves themselves are associated with both blood lust and sexual lusts. The difference between a rampaging werewolf and a well-adjusted werewolf is the ability to control and direct their impulses, lusts, and raging desires. Coincidentally, these are also the skills required to be good at sex magick.



## Wolf Warrior Bands

by Mel Mystery

In many European cultures, young men took part in cultic warrior bands that involved animal reverence, shapeshifting, and homosexual initiations. These warrior bands existed in ancient Greece, Rome, the Celtic and Norse lands, Germania, and even extended into India, Asia, and other places. The most common animals associated with these warrior bands were dogs, wolves, and bears. Horses and boars were also relatively common. These bands were not simply gangs, nor were they strictly military troops. These bands held both military and religious-spiritual significance.

Usually these cultic bands were entered by young men at puberty and they remained until they officially became adults. The young men in these bands were unmarried; had no land, no herds, and no wealth. They had no armor, shields, nor weapons either, and they fought naked except for animal skins and body paint. They lived outside of society in the forest and outside the boundaries of villages, cities, and towns. They also lived outside of societal laws. Learning to live off the land and away from the conveniences of civilization was part of their rite of passage.

Initiations and rites of passage into these bands usually involved the youth ritually transforming into a predatory animal using animal pelts and honoring a wolf-god (and sometimes a wolf-goddess) or a deity associated with wolves. These initiations frequently involved initiatory homosexuality, as well. In many cultures, it was believed that an older, more experienced warrior could pass on his virtue, strength, and virility to a younger male by being the active partner in anal or oral sex. Initiations often involved hunting, killing, or sacrificing their totem animal or some other act of bravery and skill. Members of these warrior bands frequently engaged in rites of blood brotherhood with the other members in their groups.

These animal warrior bands served as guerilla troops in battle and were said to be fearless and immune to pain. They fought in ecstatic states brought on by intoxicants, war dances, and battle songs. These ecstatic states weren't just brought about for battle. These brotherhoods often had leading roles in religious festivals and they may have used their ecstatic techniques privately and in secret rites to effect consciousness raising. Besides battle, these brotherhoods were associated with prophecy and poetry. Among the Celts, there is some suggestion that they may have been taught by Druids during the winter months.

Membership in smaller bands often consisted of multiples of three with 9 and 12 warriors being common. Larger armies came in multiples of 50 with 50 and 150 being common. When they went into battle they may have communicated both nearby and across long distances with wolf howls.

- Excerpt from [A Gay Guy's Guide to Werewolves and Other Man Beasts](#) by Mel Mystery



## Exploring Animism and Totem Animals: A Unique Perspective on Queer Men's Spiritual Connection

*By Adam Black*

In recent years, there has been a growing interest for queer men, in understanding how diverse communities relate to animism and totem animals. Animism, a belief system that attributes spiritual significance to animals, plants, and other natural elements, offers a unique lens through which queer men may explore and express their spiritual connection with the world around them.

For many, animism goes beyond conventional religious frameworks, providing an alternative way to connect with their spirituality. Queer men, like individuals from any other communities, seek to find meaning, purpose, and a sense of belonging in their spiritual practices. The concept of totem animals, which represent a connection between the spiritual and natural realms, offers an intriguing avenue for exploration within the context of a queer man's identity.

In animistic traditions, totem animals are believed to embody unique qualities that individuals may resonate with on a personal level. This connection allows individuals to draw strength, guidance, and inspiration from their chosen totem animals. For queer men navigating a world that may not always fully embrace their identities, these spiritual connections can provide a source of empowerment and self-discovery.

The diversity within the queer men's community is mirrored in the vast array of totem animals, each carrying its own symbolic significance. The queer male community takes this a step further, often self-identifying using animal types such as bear, cub, polar bear, otter, or wolf. This has become a colloquial way to describe and identify different subcultures or segments within the broader queer men's community. These animal archetypes serve as shorthand to express certain physical and behavioral traits, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among queer men. These animal types serve as a form of self-expression and identity within the queer community, allowing individuals to find like-minded peers with whom they share common interests, physical attributes, or cultural affinities. The use of such labels fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity, creating spaces for individuals to connect with others who appreciate and celebrate their unique characteristics.

It's important to note that these classifications are not rigid, and individuals may identify with multiple archetypes or none at all. The diversity within the community is vast, and these labels are just one way that some individuals choose to express their identity and connect with others who share similar experiences.

In this way, queer men have moved one step closer to understanding the affinity for working with animal totems and animal spirit guides.

Whether it be the strength of the bear, the wisdom of the owl, or the adaptability of the fox, queer men may find resonance with animals that reflect their individual experiences, challenges, and triumphs. Totem animals, in this context, become more than symbols; they become allies in the journey of self-acceptance and understanding.

The intersection of animism and the LGBTQ+ experience emphasizes the universal human desire to seek connection with the world around us, transcending cultural and societal boundaries. As queer men engage with animistic principles, they not only reclaim their spiritual narratives but also contribute to a broader dialogue on the intersectionality of identity and spirituality. In exploring the realm of totem animals and animism, queer men find a profound way to celebrate their individuality, connect with nature, and foster a sense of unity within the diverse tapestry of human spirituality.

## Animal Totems vs Animal Spirit Guides

Animal totems are symbols or representations of animals that hold cultural or personal significance within a particular community or individual. In many indigenous cultures, animal totems are ancestral symbols associated with clans or families. They may represent qualities, characteristics, or lessons associated with the animal. An individual may have a personal totem animal based on their birth date, life experiences, or spiritual journey. This personal totem is believed to offer guidance and protection. Often, animal totems show up for a brief time to convey a message or assist an individual through a particular time in their life. It often centers around the symbolic significance of the animal's nature with which the individual interacts, aiming to embody those characteristics and draw strength to navigate a particular phase in their life or learn a valuable lesson.

## Animal Spirit Guides

Many people work with spirit guides, however some people can have animals as spirit guides. Animal spirit guides are spiritual entities or energies in animal form that are believed to provide guidance, protection, and support to an individual on their spiritual journey. They do not reflect an individual animal rather they represent the overlying embodiment of the consciousness of all those types of animals. Unlike totems, spirit guides are often seen as personal companions that offer insight and assistance in specific situations. The individual may work with the energies or consciousness of all animals or the spirit guide may manifest as that type of animal. They may appear in dreams, meditations, or daily life. A person may have one or more animal spirit guides at different times in their life, and these relationships can evolve as the individual grows and faces new challenges.

In summary, while both animal totems and animal spirit guides involve a connection with animals in a spiritual context, totems are often temporary engagements, while spirit guides are seen as personal beings that offer guidance and support throughout an individual's life journey.

## Types of Animal Spirit Guides

While we commonly use the term "animal" in this instance, it's essential to recognize that these guides extend beyond traditional fauna and can encompass insects, cryptids, or mythical beings. Insects, for instance, manifest in various forms, from beetles and spiders to butterflies and ants, each carrying a rich tapestry of history and lore. Cryptids, often embraced by diverse cultures throughout history, seem to embody the spirit of specific places, carrying captivating narratives with them. Exploring and working with these elusive beings can offer profound insights. Additionally, mythical creatures like unicorns, dragons, griffins, phoenixes, and pegasus, which have captivated human imagination throughout the ages, can also serve as valuable animal spirit guides. Embracing the aspects of these creatures that resonate with us allows for a deeper connection, offering opportunities for learning and personal growth. frequently in your life, dreams, or journeys.

## Fairy Facts

During the Middle Ages, witches used flying ointments which were said to transport them to their sabbats. These ointments were made from hallucinogenic herbs such as belladonna, henbane, hemlock, mandrake, and wolfsbane. Almost identical to these were the werewolf salves which were said to help transform men into werewolves. The only major difference between these concoctions seemed to be the intent of the user—either to fly or to transform. In reality, these folks were probably hallucinating based upon their intended purpose.

# Connecting and Working with Animal Spirit Guides

By Adam Black

Connecting with an animal spirit guides is a personal and spiritual journey that can take various forms depending on the individual's beliefs and practices. Here is a general breakdown of steps that someone might take to meet and begin working with an animal spirit guide:

## 1. Set Your Intentions:

Clearly define your intention to connect with an animal spirit guide. Be open-minded and approach the process with respect and sincerity.

## 2. Cultivate Awareness:

Develop mindfulness and awareness through practices such as meditation or journey. This helps create a receptive state for spiritual connection. Allow yourself to be open to see who comes to you.

## 3. Research and Reflection:

Explore different archetypes and their symbolic meanings. Consider which resonate with you or have appeared frequently in your life, dreams, or journeys.

## 4. Create a Sacred Space:

Establish a quiet and sacred space for your spiritual practice. This could be a room, a corner with meaningful objects, or an outdoor setting where you feel a connection to nature.

## 5. Meditation and Journeying:

Engage in guided meditations, visualization exercises or spirit journeys focused on meeting your animal spirit guide. Imagine yourself in a setting, and invite the presence of your guide to appear.

## 6. Dreamwork:

Pay attention to your dreams. Before sleep, set an intention to meet your animal spirit guide in the dream realm. Keep a dream journal to record any relevant experiences.

## 7. Symbolic Significance:

Be attentive to real-life encounters, both in waking life and dreams. These encounters may hold symbolic significance and offer clues about your spirit guide.

## 8. Trust Your Intuition:

Trust your instincts and intuition. Your spirit guide may communicate with you through subtle impressions, feelings, or sudden insights.

## 9. Offerings and Rituals:

Consider making offerings or engaging in rituals to honor and invite the presence of your animal spirit guide. This could involve creating an altar, offering food, or performing a simple ceremony. If your not sure what type of offering ask them. You can also collect images or items that represent your spirit animal guide and place them on an altar or sacred space.

## 10. Journaling:

Keep a journal to document your experiences, thoughts, and any messages or symbols that may be associated with your animal spirit guide.



**11. Seek Guidance from Others:**

If you follow a specific spiritual tradition, seek guidance from practitioners, shamans, or mentors who may have experience working with spirit guides.

**12. Patience and Persistence:**

Building a connection with an animal spirit guide may take time. Be patient, persistent, and open to the process unfolding in its own time.

**13. Gratitude:**

Express gratitude for any experiences or messages you receive. A spirit guide connection is a reciprocal relationship, and acknowledgment strengthens the bond.

Remember that everyone's journey is unique, and there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Trust your intuition, be open to the possibilities, and embrace the spiritual insights that unfold during the process.

## Fairy Facts

Did you know that in addition to the well-known witch trials of the Middle Ages that there were also werewolf trials?

Those accused of being werewolves were typically men, but there were some “manly” women believed to shapeshift into wolves. Men accused of werewolfery were often accused of some form of social or sexual deviance. This included accounts of rape, incest, sodomy, murder, savagery, and cannibalism.

## **Stone and Stang 2024 “Bonfire of Brotherhood”**

**A Spiritual Gathering for Men-Who-Love-Men**

**October 3-6, 2024**

**At the SIREnity Farms Campground  
Sullivan, Missouri**

<https://unnamedpath.org/stone-stang/>

# Embracing Liminality: Exploring the Significance of Liminal Day Celebrations in the Queer Male Pagan Community

By Adam Black



Liminal Day Celebrations in the pagan community are a profound acknowledgment of the transformative power inherent in transitional moments. Whether it's the dawn of a new year, the blossoming of spring, or the thinning of veils between worlds, pagans embrace these liminal times as opportunities for spiritual growth, connection, and reflection. By honoring these sacred thresholds, the pagan community enriches its tapestry of traditions, inviting practitioners to step boldly into the unknown with reverence and open hearts.

Celebrating liminal days is particularly important to queer men as it provides a space for them to acknowledge and embrace the diverse spectrum of identities and experiences within themselves and their community.

Liminal days are in between spaces reflective of queer male identities and gives opportunity for queer men to embrace and celebrate the fluidity and complexity of their identities. These moments allow for reflection on the intersections of various aspects of queer identity, including gender, sexuality, and cultural backgrounds. By recognizing and celebrating liminal days, queer men can foster a sense of community, solidarity, and acceptance, creating an inclusive environment that empowers individuals to be authentically celebrate themselves These celebrations become a vital platform for fostering a sense of their identity, contributing to the ongoing journey towards greater spiritual integration.

Let's delve into the enchanting world of Liminal Day Celebrations and the reasons why they hold such significance in queer male pagan communities.

New Year's marks the threshold between the old and the new, a liminal time when the past and the future briefly coexist. In the queer male pagan community, this liminality is not just a matter of dates but a profound spiritual concept, celebrated through various customs that tap into the mystical energy of transition.

When individuals or groups cross a new threshold, be it the turning of a calendar page or the observance of ancient rites, they enter a liminal state – a space between the known and the unknown. This transition separates them from

the familiar, ushering them into a realm of infinite possibilities. This concept is deeply embedded in the fabric of pagan beliefs, where the liminal state is revered as a sacred space for spiritual exploration and growth.

New Year's, irrespective of its connection to the astrological sky, embodies the essence of liminality. Pagan communities embrace this liminal time by engaging in customs such as petitioning energies for the coming year, recognizing the unique energy that surrounds the transition. The belief that actions and events on this day can influence the entire year is manifested in many traditions.

Beltane or May 1st is a representation of ancient spring festivals celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere. The festivities surrounding Beltane align with the liminal tone, as the earth awakens from winter's slumber and bursts forth with new life. Queer male pagan communities engage in rituals that honor the transformative power of this season, embracing the liminal energy that permeates the air during the shift from spring to summer.

In our season cycle, the liminal times for significant events fall around the first of May, again at the end of October and first of November. Samhain, and Day of the Dead mark the thinning of the veils between worlds. This liminal state allows for heightened spiritual connections, making it a time when queer male pagans honor their ancestors and commune with the spiritual realms.

## Gender Shifting Shapeshifters

*By Mel Mystery*

There are a number of gender-shifting shapeshifters in mythology and folklore from around the world. Many shamans gender-shift to learn better understanding of the other sex.

In Japanese folklore, intelligent, supernatural fox spirits known as kitsune are believed to have the ability to shapeshift into humans, as well as to change genders. Kitsune can serve as loyal guardian spirits or they might act as tricksters.

Kitsune are credited with many supernatural traits including the ability to possess humans, generate fire and lightning from their mouth and tails, become invisible, fly, visit people's dreams, and create powerful illusions. Some tales even credit kitsune with abilities to bend space and time, to inspire madness, and to take on fantastic shapes. Some kitsune are said to feed on the life force of humans, usually through sexual contact.

Almost identical to the Japanese Kitsune is a supernatural creature in Chinese folklore called Hu Hsien. This shapeshifting fox also has the ability to gender shift. Sometimes Hu Hsien falls in love with a human male and he might change into a woman or keep his male form depending on the human's proclivities. Sexual relations with Hu Hsien are a mixed bag. For one thing, he is linked with venereal diseases and for another he drains the chi or life force from his human lover as the relationship grows stronger. On the other hand, men rarely refuse a relationship with Hu Hsien because he brings wisdom and good fortune. He is also extremely sensual. Eventually Hu Hsien must leave his lovers or their life force will be drained completely and they will die.

Jinn are serpentine shapeshifting spirits in pre-Islamic Arabian mythology. They possess the ability to change both shape and gender. Jinn are not immortal, but they are very long-lived and can understand and speak all languages. They were once associated with the cult of the goddess Al-Lat. Jinn are said to be bringers of wealth. Devotees of the Jinn included transgender and homoerotically oriented males known as the Al-Jink and the Mukhannathun. The Jinn are linked to a concept known as Mujun which embraces homosexual desire, transgenderism, and mysticism.

- Excerpts from [A Gay Guy's Guide to Werewolves and Other Man Beasts](#) by Mel Mystery

## Book Review of Werewolf Magick and Werewolf Pack Magick by Denny Sargent

Review by Mel Mystery

I wrote and published my first book, **The Gay Guy's Guide to Werewolves and Other Man Beasts**, in 2016. At the time, there really weren't any books out there approaching werewolves from a Pagan perspective and perhaps only a book here and there devoted wholly to the practice of shapeshifting. So, I was really excited to see another Pagan book about werewolves come on the scene in 2020. This book was **Werewolf Magick: Authentic Practical Lycanthropy** by Denny Sargent, and as of 2022, Sargent came out with his sequel, **Werewolf Pack Magick: A Shapeshifter's Book of Shadows**. My own sequel to a proposed trilogy has been in the works for a while now, but writing has been slow due to various life circumstances. I'll share any news on my second book whenever that becomes available.

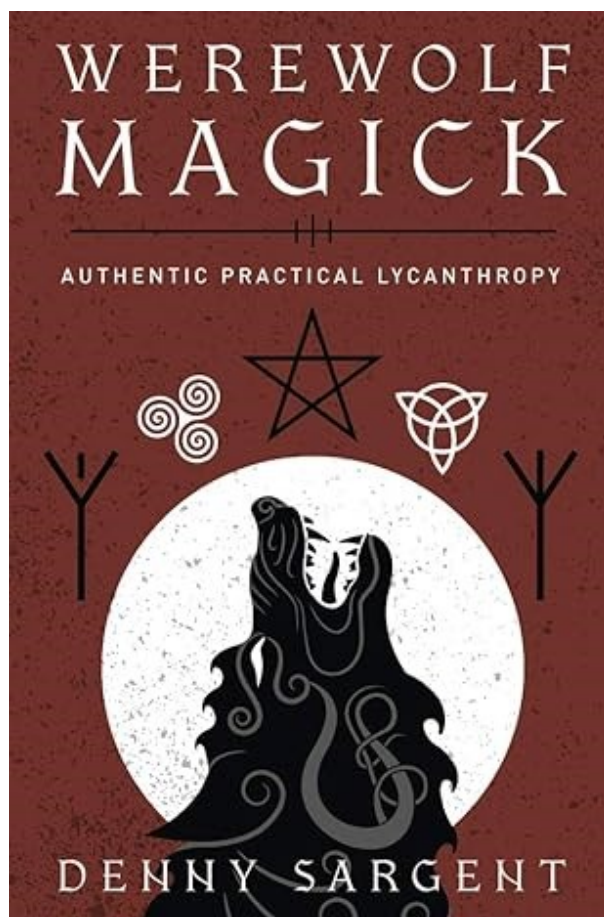
I must say that Sargent's books are informative and well-researched. In his first book, he details a history of werewolf magick. He sets out principles and tools for a lycanthropic Pagan practice. And he sets out exercises, spells, and rituals to get one in touch with one's inner werewolf. These include shapeshifting, an intricate system of growling and howling, working with fetches (astral versions of oneself that can take whatever form we like), and even contacting the dead. Of course, shamanic travel as wolves, fetch work, and associations with the dead are all part of authentic werewolf lore.

In his second book, Sargent lays out reasons for forming a werewolf pack, what that pack might look like, and several practices, rites, and rituals that such a pack might perform. These include initiation rites, creating a pack shrine, consecrating a werewolf grove in the forest, healing and protection rites, and many others. These also include celebrating full moon esbats and the Pagan sabbats. He is especially keen on celebrating the solar solstices and equinoxes as werewolves. While werewolves are frequently seen as lunar creatures, the Greek god Apollo has both solar and werewolf associations. I've noted the same thing in my own book and my own notes for rituals to include in my sequel.

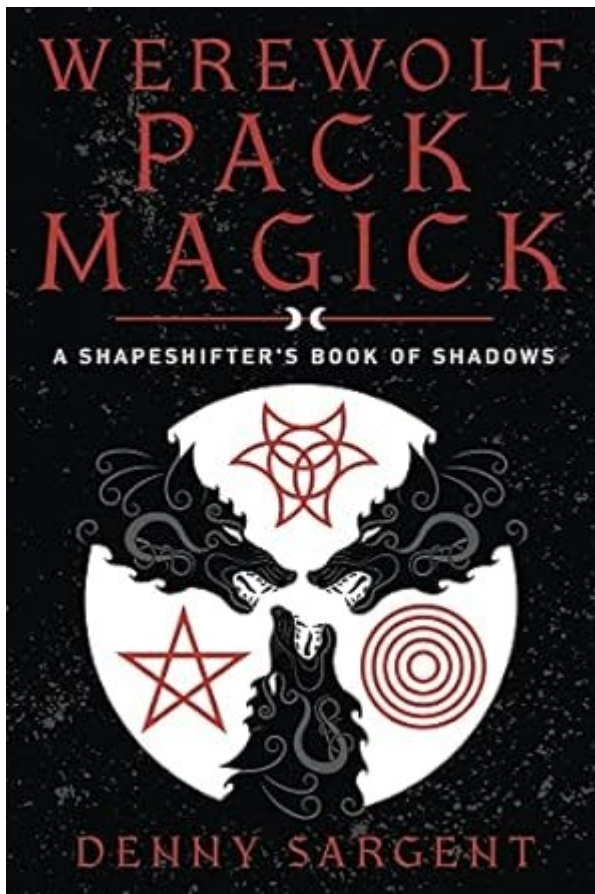
Sargent also suggests some annual events which a pack could celebrate or even turn into public rituals and celebrations. At the very least, werewolves could invite their non-werewolf friends to join in. These include celebrating the Roman festival of Lupercalia, and a "Winter Werewolf Prowl Parade" around the time of Yule. He based this latter parade on European festivals related to the Lord of Misrule and the Feast of Fools. I'm honestly surprised he didn't mention or delve deeper into myths about the "Wild Hunt" as this is a much older and much more Pagan root to those European festivals of misrule. Sargent's parades feature a devil figure leading the procession to draw out reluctant werewolves and other supernatural creatures, whereas the older hunts were led by Pagan deities such as Wodin - who has both werewolf and shamanic associations.

I feel like Sargent came into his own with his second book on Pack Magick. He draws on various werewolf mythologies and traditions including Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic, and Old English. I feel that his rituals speak to and pull from modern Pagan traditions including Norse, Druid, Wiccan, and Hellenist paths among others. I believe this weaving of various mythologies and paths is a strong point of the second book. His rituals include very fine and rhyming prose of seemingly perfect symmetry, all of which must be growled as werewolves rather than being spoken in a normal human voice. If anything, the prose seems just a bit too perfect for the application.

He also came up with his own system of werewolf symbols and a werewolf divination oracle using these symbols. And I must say that I was very amused that his suggestions for games that werewolf packs can play in the woods included "Get the Bone." This







was really just a game of keep away with a bone or stick, and with this playful game mentioned, I'm surprised that "fetch" wasn't included in the games and not just as a form of astral spirit work.

I was very happy that his thoughts on werewolf packs included affirmation that all sexual and gender orientations should feel welcome, and his suggestion that wolves (and werewolves) do not have the same sexual restrictions and taboos as humans. He also advocates for consent culture within a werewolf pack. My understanding is that the author is bisexual.

While I'm very much impressed with Sargent's werewolf books, I do have some critiques and I feel like his approach has some limitations. For one, I believe it is largely a repackaging of Robert Bly men's movement and the Iron John story. The werewolf in Sargent's writings fills the same place as Iron John in Robert Bly's. The werewolf is that part of oneself that is essentially wild, feral, and free of society's restrictions and taboos. While I see nothing wrong with this, I do feel that too much emphasis is put on becoming a werewolf as a path to free oneself of societal restrictions when there are so many other facets of werewolfism and shapeshifting to explore. I've done a great deal of research on mythical and historical werewolves and spent a great deal of thought on applying werewolf concepts to my Pagan practice. To me, werewolf magick includes shapeshifting, astral travel, shadow work, working with animal guides, working with the dead (given the association of wolves and werewolves with graveyards and as psychopomps to the deceased), and working with various wolf related Pagan deities. While many of these topics are touched on in his books, I feel they could be explored further.

This emphasis on losing oneself to the feral wolf makes me a bit uncomfortable. From Sargent's books and a few videos of his workshops found on YouTube, this emphasis comes out a little too macho and a little too devil-may-care for my own tastes. As a gay man and a former high school nerd, all the growling, grunting, and appeals to having fun without seeming consequences comes across with all the gusto of a jock or frat party, the macho grunting on Tim Allen's **Home Improvement** series, or Ogre from the **Revenge of the Nerds** movies. For me, werewolf magick comes from being in a liminal space – somewhere between the extremes of wild and civilized, between male and female, and so on. That said, ecstatic states and losing one's identity to that of an animal certainly fall within the limits of authentic lycanthropy. Sargent seems to place a lot of emphasis on losing one's persona to that of the werewolf. While I can certainly see that as a valid learning experience, becoming the wild, feral wolf seems to be the be all and end all of his proposed practice (and then exploring that experience with others in a pack as suggested in the Pack Magick book). While this may appeal to some, I consider myself a Druid practicing shapeshifting and werewolf magick more so than as an actual werewolf practicing Druidry and Paganism.

My other big critique of his second book is the length and structure of his rituals, though not their intent. Sargent goes to great lengths explaining that the advantage of being a werewolf is freedom from structure and restrictions, so I expected the rituals would be less structured, more free form, and more instinctual. He has specific ideas about how each ritual should proceed which span several pages each – along with the already mentioned flowery, perfectly rhyming prose. While I'm certainly a fan of structure myself, I've also increasingly subscribed to the idea of keeping rituals simple and authentic wherever possible. Simple, authentic, free form rituals would be more on message with the rest of his book. That all said, Sargent suggests that individuals and packs can change and adapt his rituals as they like.

I certainly look forward to any additional books that Sargent writes on the topic. I believe his next book is titled, "Feral Magick", and will explore working with other types of animal spirits. I would also be happy to see more Pagan writers approaching the topics of werewolves and shapeshifting.

You can find out more about Denny Sargent, his books, and contact him through his website:

<https://dennysargentauthor.com/>

## Poetry and Art



"The Werewolf Rite" by Mel Mystery.

Hail, Hail, Hail, great wolf spirit, Hail!  
A boon I ask thee, mighty shade,  
Within this circle I have made.  
Make me a werewolf strong and bold,  
Grant me this – both young and old.

Grant me a figure tall and spare;  
The speed of the elk, the claws of the bear;  
The poison of snakes, the wit of the fox;  
The stealth of the wolf, the strength of the ox;

The jaws of the tiger, the teeth of the shark;  
The eyes of a cat that sees in the dark;  
Let me climb like a monkey, scent like a dog;  
Swim like a fish, and eat like a hog.

Haste, Haste, Haste, lonely spirit, Haste!  
Here, wan and drear, magic spell making,  
Findest thou me – shaking, quaking.  
Softly fan me as I lie.  
And thy mystic touch apply.

*- Words from a Medieval werewolf ritual.*

### **Arcadia 2024**

### **A Retreat for Queer Pagan Men**

### **Fall 2024**

**We will return to an in-person retreat this Fall in Virginia.  
Details to be announced.**

<https://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/arcadia-main/>

## The Passage of Dreams

When Speakers fall

The power of dreams does its vision fail,  
And, as silence closes in upon truth,  
A cry is heard,  
A great wailing in the desert lands -  
the lonely passage of dreams.

For when the grey man treads the darkening path

Know that time is almost come,  
When walls will fall and barriers break  
And truth in naked gaze is seen,  
And horror tares the gracious soul.

But still my heart is called by desert winds,

Which blow in chaos through my life.  
And my sleep no longer tranquillity gives,  
For I deny the ending  
Chosen for my soul.

The river calls its cry to the canyon walls,

And without haste wears the rock thought so strong.  
Flooding unto the very source  
Of time and untime.  
And wisdom crumbles in the face of a child's tears.

When shall the Speaker fall?

And when will stars their journeys end,  
When will the storm wave overcome the land,  
And darkness combine with light  
To beguile the Dragon King.

Sometime.

when the poet his pen lays down  
And sleep overwhelms the wise  
And the last light of Evenstar  
is quenched by the world's demands.



Anubis, Egyptian god of the Dead and Afterlife  
From the Wikimedia Commons

Anarion 1998

## Help Us to Help You and Our Tribe of Queer Pagan Men

Where else can you find a publication geared toward your unique interests and experiences as a Queer Pagan man?

Submissions to Mysterious Ways are not only encouraged, they are vital to provide several voices to the content of this Cyberzine.

I usually start sending out requests across various social media about a month before the submission deadline, but you don't have to wait for my request to get your articles in. The submission deadline for the next issue is always listed in the current issue and I'm always happy to receive submissions anytime during that six month period. Mysterious Ways is published semi-annually. While there is usually a specific theme for each issue, submissions of a general nature are welcome too.

Please consider sharing your voice by sending in your articles, book reviews, event reviews, poetry, art, or anything else that might be relevant to Queer Pagan men. Don't forget to share information about your Queer Pagan Men's groups and events!!!

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is May 15, 2024.**

# Queer Pagan Resources

## Queer Pagan Men's Groups

**Brotherhood of Cernunnos** -- A Brotherhood of UK Gay Pagan Men.

FMI: <http://www.brotherhoodofcernunnos.org/>

**Cern'osia** -- An eclectic Neo-Pagan faith which focuses exclusively on the veneration and worship of the Celtic Horned God, Cernunnos. Although it could be adapted by anyone who worships the Horned One, it was designed primarily with the needs of a solitary Pagan man in mind.

FMI: <https://cernosia.webs.com/>

**Ecclesia Antinoi** — Devoted to the worship of Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Antinous was deified after his death and is worshiped by modern practitioners as a god of gay spirituality, youth, and beauty.

FMI: <http://www.antinopolis.org/>

**Gay Druid Brotherhood** — An international network for homosexual and bisexual men on the Druidic and Keltic inspired Pagan paths.

FMI: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaydruidbrotherhood/>

**Green Faerie Grove** — A brotherhood of queer men in Columbus, Ohio.

FMI: <http://greenfaeriegrove.org/>

**The Minoan Brotherhood** — A men's initiatory tradition of the Craft celebrating Life, Men Loving Men, and Magic in a primarily Cretan context, also including some Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern mythology.

FMI: <http://www.minoan-brotherhood.org/>

**Radical Faeries** — Generally we are gay men who look for a spiritual dimension to our sexuality. Many of us are healers of one kind or another. Our shared values include feminism, respect for the Earth, and individual responsibility rather than hierarchy. Many of us are Pagan (nature-based religion).

FMI: <http://www.radfae.org/>

**The Unnamed Path** — The Unnamed Path is a shamanic path for men who love men. The path focuses on four main parts—Magic and Prophecy, Shamanism, Energy Healing, and Deathwalking.

FMI: [www.unnamedpath.com](http://www.unnamedpath.com)

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is May 15, 2024.**

**Please consider sharing your articles, reviews, poetry, art, events, and announcements.**

E-mail these to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com). Please put "Mysterious Ways" in the subject line.



## Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

**January 12-14, 2024 — Gay Spirit Visions Winter Meditation** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**April 5-7, 2024 — Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat for Pagan Men.** “A shift in perspective.” Topics might include shapeshifting, glamour, dreams, and liminal spaces. This virtual event is FREE.

FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

**May 10-12, 2024— Gay Spirit Visions Spring Retreat** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**August 7-12, 2024 — Between the Worlds: A spiritual gathering for men who love men** held in southwestern Ohio.

FMI: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org>

**September 26-29, 2024— Gay Spirit Visions Fall Conference** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**October 3-6, 2024—Stone and Stang gathering for men who love men.** “Bonfire of Brotherhood.” To take place at SiRenity Farms Campground, Sullivan, Missouri.

FMI: <https://unnamedpath.org/stone-stang/>

**November 24 — Arcadia Retreat for Queer Pagan Men.** To take place in-person at a campground in Virginia. Details to be announced.

FMI: [www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia](http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia)

## Blogs and Podcasts for Pagan men who love men

**A Path through the Woods** — Blog by a gay, Pagan, polytheist who lives in Chicago — <https://www.adrianmoran.com/>

**Discovering the Male Mysteries** — Official webpage for Mel Mystery and the Discovering the Male Mysteries podcast for gay and bi Pagan men. — <http://www.melmystery.com/>

**Enfolding.org** — A blog by Phil Hine to discuss interests including Tantra, Queer Theory, Gender, History, and Occult Practice. — <http://enfolding.org/>

**Faehaven** — Based in Harrisburg, PA the community is forming in order to create a space where queers and their advocates can explore spirituality of all sorts and have a safe space to share among like-minded independent individuals.

— <https://faehaven.wordpress.com/about/>

**Walking the Unnamed Path** — Discusses the teachings and techniques given to us by their Ancestors of MWLM, and laid out by their late founder Hyperion. They also discuss topics and ideas pertaining to queer Pagan men in general.

— <https://unnamedpath.org/podcast/>

**Witches Betwixt** — Witches Betwixt is a collective of queer witches representing a wide variety of magical practices and spiritual paths. We release a 45+ minute episode bi-weekly in which we discuss various topics relevant to the experience of a queer witch.

— <http://witchesbetwixt.buzzsprout.com/>

**Looking for a speaker for your next gathering, retreat, or other event?  
Check out the Queer Pagan Speaker Directory online!**

<https://www.melmystery.com/queer-pagan-speaker-directory/>

## Mysterious Ways

**The Mysterious Ways Cyberzine is produced and published by Mel Mystery.**

Mel Mystery is host of the Discovering the Male Mysteries Podcast for Gay and Bi Pagan Men. He is also author of the book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Werewolves and other Man Beasts" and he has a few other books in the works

You can find out about Mel, listen to his podcast, and find out more about his books at: [www.melmystery.com](http://www.melmystery.com)

Archive copies of this newsletter will also be kept on the site.

## We need your support!!!

This paper is a community-based project. We're not charging for subscriptions. We're not accepting paid advertising. Those writing articles are not paid for their work. This paper is for the Queer Pagan Men's community and by the Queer Pagan Men's community.

If you think this paper is worthwhile, please consider helping us to thrive. We need folks to submit articles, artwork, poetry, reviews, and other content. We need folks to share this in Queer Pagan groups and social media groups. We need folks to print copies and share them in LGBTQ and Pagan spaces in their local communities.

Thank you for doing your part!!!

## Next Issue: Working with Ancestors

In the next issue we'll talk about working with ancestors. Who are our ancestors of blood and spirit? Who are the Ancestors of Men Who Love Men? Do we have ancestors of spirit who were Witches, Druids, or other magickal folks? How do you honor your ancestors?

Any or all of these topics, and topics of general Queer Pagan interest, are suitable for submission to the next issue of Mysterious Ways.

Please send articles, reviews, original poetry, and other submissions to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com) by May 15, 2024. Be sure to put "Mysterious Ways Submission" in the subject line.

### Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions should be of interest to Queer Pagan Men and fit at least two of the criteria—Queer, Pagan, and Men.
2. All submissions (especially photography and artwork) should be rated PG-13 or less. Since this newsletter will be shared in social media groups and in Pagan shops where minors might have access, we'd rather err on the side of community standards—not that we necessarily agree with them all.
3. Most articles should be a typewritten page or less. We may consider longer articles based on relevance and content.
4. You retain ownership and/or copyright of any articles or artwork you submit. We are only providing a venue to share your work with the world.
5. We reserve the right to refuse any content for any reason; to make minor edits such as spelling, grammar, and formatting; or to send the content back to you for revision.
6. We will not accept content that is explicitly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, body shaming, or that otherwise spreads hate, negativity, or misinformation about any population or subculture of people.