



Tarot Reflections

Tarot Reflections

December 2007

A Publication of the American Tarot Association

Happy Holidays!

Where has the year gone? It hardly seems like we have published 3 months of Tarot Reflections already, but we have! Now the holidays are upon us - whether you celebrate Christmas or Yule or Hanukkah or Kwanzaa or something else, there are gifts to buy, rituals to prepare for and perform, and probably traveling to do. No doubt, there is also stress and all the usual workload to deal with too. Give a gift of some free "me" time to yourself this season and do something you enjoy... or don't do anything at all! Relax and

catch your breath - enjoy where you are in your life and who you are with, even if it is only for a few moments.

If you can, reach out to those less fortunate, too, either in person or through the charity of your choice. Unfortunately, need is always in greater supply than those who can give.

We have an exciting issue for you this month! Leisa ReFalo has graciously taken time out of her busy schedule to chat with us about podcasting. It's a real treat for me, as I have been a fan of Leisa's since her first podcast!

We are launching our Letters to the Editor column with this issue. We receive many many messages of support and positive feedback for what we are doing so we can't publish all of them, but I've

included some of the comments we have received. They are greatly appreciated!

I am also pleased to announce that we are continuing Gary Meister's "A Spiritual Journey with Tarot" in this issue with "The Star." I'm thrilled that both Peggy Firth and Christine Jette have contributed holiday articles for your enjoyment, and we have a December message from the Fae as well!

This month we will be offering the entire issue of Tarot Reflections as a downloadable PDF! It will look different when printed out - more like a traditional newsletter, but it will be portable! The PDF file should be available within a few days of publication of the website.

We hope you enjoy the December issue!

- Sheri Harshberger

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Letters to the Editor

Here are just a few of the messages we have received. Thanks to all of you, our readers! It's a pleasure bringing TR to you each month! We love the suggestions - many of the features and changes you continue to see are the result of our readers' feedback and suggestions.

I LOVE the new look of the newsletter. I honestly had 'fallen away' for a while because it was time consuming to navigate to the section I was looking for, whatever that may have been.

I love the downloadable spreads option, too.

I would be interested in seeing more things on teaching tarot to students, such as games and exercises, etc.

Anyway, great effort and great job!

- Maighread

CTM

Sheri,

I wanted to drop you a note to say how delighted I am with the November Reflections. Please thank everyone who contributed.....job well done!

I do not use the computer so my husband prints off the Reflections. Such a treat to re-read when I want. I used the Thoth Deck (for myself for years) and recently connected to a deck called The Wisdom of Avalon Oracle Cards by Colette Baron Reid.....for me the deck is fabulous. Some one may like to give it a "look see".

Love and appreciation,

Diane

How pleasantly surprised I was to see such a gorgeous web site for our Tarot Reflections. It enticed me into reading a lot more articles than I normally would. The authors' photos bios were also a great addition.

PS... I would also like to submit some articles in the future as I am working on my next level, CTI, which requires lots of writing.

Peggy Flrth

I love the look of the newsletter. The latest issue gets five stars. Putting the spreads in PDF is an excellent idea.. Please keep up the good work!

Thank you,

Queen Auset

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Announcements

ATA Members - Help set the future course of the ATA!

The Board wants to know what it can do to create a better organization. Please log on to the members' page of our website at www.ata-tarot.com and click the link for the online Member's Survey. It takes less than 15 minutes to fill out and will provide the ATA Board with valuable information for long-range planning. (This is the same link we emailed to all members 11/28).

ATA Elections

Are you interested in serving on the ATA Board of Directors? The ATA is holding elections this winter. Please click the link below for information on the ATA website describing the positions and how to nominate yourself. Deadline is December 15.

<http://www.ata-tarot.com/nominations.htm>



Letters to the Editor *cont'd*

Hi Sheri!!!

Thanks for the wonderful publication!!!! It is like candy for us tarotholics!!!

Many Smiles and Blessings,

Bubbles

Hello!

Is there any way to download the newsletters as PDFs? I never have time to read at my computer, but I'd love to print them out and save them for later.

Thanks!

--

Peace,

Morgan

Sheri,

I really enjoyed this new posting of Tarot Reflections (October issue - ed.). Melanie's fresh and interesting ways of working with tarot talismans and the story of her trip to the thrift store were very interesting...and since I AM an old lady (almost), I think that the idea of an Old Lady Tarot is a great one!

In future issues, I am interested in seeing articles on teaching tarot, interesting and different uses of tarot (talisman, art/craft, decorating, etc), new decks and reviews, interviews with tarot artists and activists, developing tarot community (in our own communities...face to face), putting on tarot events locally, methods for spread reading (telling the story created by the cards), tarot for special occasions (birthdays, weddings, holidays, solstice/equinox, etc), and tarot related pictures/graphics.

Thank you a great issue. I will be looking forward to future issues!

Connie Stout

We want to hear from you!

Letters to the Editor

Send comments and feedback to [us](#). Be sure to put "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line so I know that is where it should go.

Around the World

Send small articles or news items regarding what you are doing in your part of the world right now. We would love to know if you celebrate the same holidays or have any special festivals during the year that affects your use of Tarot or oracles. Send submissions for this feature to [us](#) and be sure to use "Around the World" in the subject line and include your country.

Interested in advertising on the Tarot Reflections site?

The ATA is currently working out advertising rates and packages for anyone interested in advertising on the Tarot Reflections site, the ATA site or in the ATA Quarterly. Our site gets several hundred hits a month. If interested, [email us](#) and use "Interested in Advertising" in the subject line to find out more.

Submissions

Interested in writing an article or short story or -- ? that you think would be of interest to Tarot and oracle readers everywhere? If so, request submission guidelines by [emailing us](#) and use "Request Submission Guidelines" in the subject line.



Tarot for Today

by Melanie Harris

The air is chilly, but hearts are warm with family, friends, and gift giving. In many cultures, December is a time of celebrating light, be it in the form of the Christian birth of Jesus, the Jewish Hanukkah remembrance of the lasting oil lamps, the Pagan rebirth of the solar deity, or the African-American celebration of family and community at Kwanzaa. Even in the coldest season, we find life, hope, caring, and creativity. Days grow longer starting on the solstice, and with increased sunshine often comes greater physical energy and renewed optimism.

December is a wonderful time to celebrate success, creativity, life, and love, and also to cultivate hope for the future. Here are some Tarot activities to harness this month's festive spirit.

December Tarot Talisman for Success

Symbol of the new and the creative and representative of powerful solar energies, The Sun card is an ideal December talisman for success. To transform the card into a talisman, imagine your greatest ambitions as if you've already accomplished them. Envision the details of immense success, and send this emotion into the card. Carry the talisman with you this December to increase your optimism and to help create fortuitous circumstances that can lead to success. This talisman is quite effective, so be aware of opportunities and be prepared to seize your chances with positive, constructive action.

Get Creative Tarot Layout

This layout will empower you with fresh inspiration and will guide you in removing blocks to your creativity. Start by contemplating the question, "What should I convey with my creations?"

Choose a card and interpret it broadly, considering all aspects of the card. For instance, if you pick the Queen of Cups, you could take it to mean that you should create something that expresses love, and you could also consider that it might represent the more specific theme of a woman who holds her love sacred and secret. You might be inspired to craft a quilt with a heart pattern, or you might decide to write a romance story about a woman like the Queen of Cups. Whatever card you pick, let it inspire you. Take some time to contemplate the card, and go ahead and write a list of ideas for creative projects you might want to try. Think of something creative to do that conveys the symbolism of the card, be it a painting, a poem, a dance, or a kitschy craft.

The next step is to explore both the obvious and the unseen blocks to your creativity. Shuffle the deck as you think, "These are the external blocks to my creativity."



Tarot for Today *cont'd*

Lay out the top 1 to 3 cards to represent these environmental obstacles. Re-shuffle the deck with your mind focused on internal blocks to your creativity. Again, lay out the top 1 to 3 cards, this time to symbolize blocks to your creativity that are self-inflicted.

Reflect on the cards you've selected, and challenge yourself to come up with some ways to move past your obstacles. For instance, if the 9 of Pentacles comes up and shows that domestic duties get in the way of your creativity, you can find a solution in taking a day off from your chores once a week or so to work on your own more enjoyable projects. The reading complete, grab your guitar, sewing kit, art box, or journal and get started right away on a creative endeavor that truly fills you with passion.

December Tarot Ritual to Celebrate Light and Love

Here is a December ritual to honor and celebrate all the elements of your life that bring you joy and love. Look through your deck and select all the cards that symbolize something or someone you're thankful for. Lay the cards in a row and think about each one, who or what it symbolizes to you and the good feelings that come with it. Do a little dance to celebrate these elements of light in your life, or simply make a toast, expressing in your own words the gratitude and gladness you feel for everything that brightens your days.

Like the evergreen trees that retain their color throughout the cold of winter, you can keep December bright by nurturing and celebrating the enduring spirit of success, creativity, and life. We hope these Tarot activities will help you to do just that.

Merry December!



An Interview with Leisa ReFalo, the First Lady of Tarot Podcasting

by Melanie Harris

When podcasting gained popularity and became a fast-growing trend, Leisa ReFalo didn't waste any time in pioneering for the Tarot community. Today, her podcast, The Tarot Connection, continues to provide listeners with a steady flow of interesting information on Tarot topics. We recently spoke with Leisa to find out more about her own spin on the podcasting phenomenon.

Tarot Reflections: How did you first get in to podcasting?

Leisa ReFalo: I have a coworker/friend named Rob, who was really excited about podcasting when it first started. He started buying equipment and practicing his first show. Rob and I would talk about the technical details during coffee breaks. I looked around for shows to subscribe to and didn't find anything I was really interested in. I asked myself what would I want to listen to and Tarot was the obvious answer. Honestly, the learning curve is very steep and I had no idea what was really involved. It took me about a year and quite a few false starts to get the first episode out. I really love technology and seeing what can be done with it. Podcasting seems to have a lot of potential to do something that can't be done with other media.

T.R.: Like what? What are the biggest advantages of podcasting over, say, print media?

L.R.: My top three are: immediacy, intimacy, and freedom of expression. You can create something and have it in front of thousands on the same day. I think with a podcast there are things that can be expressed by voice that you can't get in print media. But my absolutely favorite part is that I can put out information that seems interesting that is not commercially viable and I don't need anyone's permission or approval to do it.

T.R.: What aspects of the Tarot do you focus on in your podcast?

L.R.: I try to have as broad a focus as possible. I've had episodes on technique, philosophy, going professional, live classes, and lots of interviews with readers and authors.

T.R.: Your website gets over 7000 visitors and over 200 episodes of your show are downloaded via iTunes each day. I'd call that very successful, and other Tarot podcasters are also finding listeners. Do you think that podcasting about the Tarot is becoming more popular?

L.R.: I do think that it's true that there are a lot more Tarot podcasts. There are more knitting podcasts than Tarot podcasts, though.

T.R.: So what does a listener get out of tuning in for your podcast?

L.R.: I've heard from quite a few people that they feel less isolated and have more confidence in their own abilities.

T.R.: Well, your work is definitely entertaining and informative, and your show has no doubt inspired others to do the same. Do you have any tips for aspiring podcasters?

L.R.: Get a good mic and start practicing. It takes awhile to get used to the sound of your voice. I'm always looking for good material, so I'd be happy to include someone's work so they could try it out without all the overhead of the production and site maintenance.

Once you get it all going, consistency is king. If you want to keep people interested, you need to podcast with regularity.



An Interview with Leisa ReFalo *cont'd*

T.R.: What do you see in the future of podcasting?

L.R.: I expect it to be more like blogging where there will be services to make it easier for people who don't want to become sound engineers to do it.

T.R.: Anything else you'd like to share?

L.R.: The whole process has been more fun than I expected it to be. It has been delightful to talk to my guests. The only thing that I'd like more of is interaction and feedback from listeners.

You can check out The Tarot Connection podcast at www.tarotconnection.net

Leisa has also launched another podcast, Tarot of the iPod, that can be found at www.ipodtarot.com. This ongoing project is a series of audio Tarots with imbedded images that can be used to study the Tarot or to do readings. The first edition is based on P.D. Ouspensky's classic work, Symbolism of the Tarot. Leisa invites anyone who is interested in contributing to this endeavor to contact her.

She also has a nifty Tarot store at shop.tarotconnection.net

Leisa's Sites:

- [Tarot of the iPod](#)
- [The Tarot Connection](#)

Where to Find Podcasts

iTunes

The first and primary spot to find podcasts of all kinds is iTunes. There are many Tarot podcasts as well as meditation and divination subjects and they are easy to search for.

Podcaster's Website

But you don't have to have iTunes to listen to and download podcasts! If a person is publishing a podcast to iTunes, they are also probably making it available for download on their own website.



Tarot Podcasts - The New Wave of Tarot

by Bonnie Cehovet, TE

I enjoy all things Tarot, and one of the newest Tarot venues ... a venue that I feel is just now coming into its own ... is that of Podcasts focused on the Tarot. What is a Podcast? It is an audio recording that can be played through your computer (or downloaded onto a DVD), and allows you to put a voice to people in the Tarot world that have up until now been a face on the back of a book, or a photo on an Internet site, or fellow members of various Internet groups.

Through the auspices of the Internet you can listen to someone across the country ... or across the world! You can hear them express themselves on a variety of subjects, feel their intensity, their excitement, their passion for the world of Tarot. Podcasts can be a classroom for learning, or a gateway to your creative self, depending on the subject under discussion. They can solidify your views on some things, and open them up on others. There are many Tarot Podcasts out there, and I would like to talk about a few that have caught my eye ... and ear!

Tarot artist/author/teacher/webmaster Leisa ReFalo is the founder of what I consider to be the premier Tarot Podcast on the Internet ... TarotConnection.net. It is Leisa's intention to present and discuss all things Tarot, and she has hosted Podcasts with James Wanless, Thalassa, Johanna Gargiulo-Sherman, Dan Peletier, Ellen Lorenzi-Prince, James Wells, Robert Place, Teresa Michelson, James Ricklef, Roger Tobin, the Portland Tarot Society, and more. I should also mention that I have a continuing series here myself (entitled "The Hermit's Journey"), as does Ginny Hunt (entitled "78 Notes To Self"). There is a vast variety of subject matter here, including Tarot and astrology, Tarot and dreams, and one of my favorites ... Tarot and writing!

ATA's own Stephanie Arwen Lynch has a wonderful monthly Podcast (Tarot By Arwen - tarotbyarwen.podbean.com) that gifts the listener with a humorous take on Tarotscopes ... and they are right on the money!

"Tarot Today" (tarottoday.blogspot.com) bills itself as a source for what is new and exciting in the Tarot world. You can listen to interviews here with Ruth Ann and Wald Amberstone; Joy Vernon (on the suits and their elements); Ferol Humphrey, organizer of the Living Tarot MeetUp (Dallas). I list this Podcast because it is interesting, although it appears not to have been updated since December of 2006.

"Tarot Table Talk" (magicians-table.com/podcast.html) is co-hosted by Susan Gold and Evelyn Pine. A quick moving, delightful Podcast, it is focused on using the Tarot in conjunction with writing. Other topics are discussed, such as in Episode Four, where the focus is on using hypnosis to reach your potential as a Tarot reader.

The "[Texas Tarot Podcast](#)" is hosted by Brad Ingel, with guest appearances by Isaac Bradfield, Vaughan Wynne-Jones, and Valentina. Discussions here range the full gamut of Tarot interests.



Tarot Podcasts - The New Wave of Tarot *cont'd*

Tarot related Podcasts can be found by using the words "Tarot Podcasts" in a search engine, such as Google, or by visiting Podcast directories, such as www.podfeed.net, www.podcastdirectory.com, and www.podcastblaster.com.

Aside from enjoying listening to the Podcasts, we need to remember that Podcasts are actually an interactive venue. Visitors are encouraged to leave comments, which can be about the content of any given episode, about how the episode affected them, thoughts that they might have to add to the subject, or subjects that they might like to see covered in future Podcasts. Feedback helps the host of the Podcast fine tune their efforts so that the shows they are producing reflect the interests of the Tarot community, which in turn means that people come back to listen to more Podcasts. It is a win/win situation.

If you know of someone that you feel would be a good candidate to be on a specific Podcast, you can leave this as a comment, or e-mail the host directly. If you yourself are working on something that you feel might be of interest for a Podcast, don't be afraid to contact the host and begin a conversation. Shows can be taped over the phone, so you do not have to live in the host's area to be part of their Podcast. Listen to several shows and listen not only for topics covered, but to the technical quality of the show. You want to be on a show that presents you and your work well.

I think that Podcasting open up a new world for many of us, as it allows us to truly feel the passion of authors or artists that we may be following, as well as giving us ideas for new areas of study, and new projects for ourselves.

Enjoy the journey that is Tarot!



A Spiritual Journey with Tarot

by Gary Meister, CTM

Tarot is an excellent tool for meditation to enhance spiritual growth. With Tarot, in our readings, we each have subtly different meanings for the different cards, meanings which work well for ourselves - better than anyone else's meanings. In Spiritual Tarot it works the same way. We each have our own path and we each see subtly different things in the Major Arcana to help us along that path.

With this series, I'm sharing my journey, in hopes that it might help to shine a little light on yours. I'm using the Rider/Waite/Smith Tarot on this spiritual journey.

The Star

The Star pictures a blond woman kneeling beside a small pond. She is nude, showing she is hiding nothing; the truth is there for all to see. Her left knee rests on the ground at the water's edge. Her right foot rests on the water. In the ancient wisdom, water symbolizes spirit, so this shows that she rests her life on both the material and the spiritual. In each hand she holds a pitcher from which she pours water, back into the pond on the right, and onto the land on the left. She is "pouring" her spiritual energy into both her physical and spiritual life. Eight stars shine overhead, one large and seven smaller. In the distance a mountain can be seen, symbolizing the heights we can reach by feeding both the physical and spiritual aspects of ourselves.



Having received an awakening flash of understanding from The Tower, we now have a bit more light in our lives. But, starlight is dim at best. It hints at light, but is not very illuminating. The metaphysical key word for The Star is "meditation." We know that the light is available to us but can actually see little of it. Through meditation we "seek more light." We go into ourselves to find and identify that spirit-self within, the God-Self.

Meditation, in order to be effective, can not be a catch-as-catch-can activity. We need to make a regular schedule for our meditation, and stick to it. The mind can reach deeper and deeper into itself, through this listening activity, and begin to recognize its higher aspects as it does. It is good, at this point, to begin keeping a meditation diary or notebook chronicling the progress we are making. And progress will come if we stick to our schedule and meditate often.

How much should we meditate? Well, too much can be self-defeating. Some say a half hour once a day, consistently at the same time each day, is as much as we need. Some say twice a day is better. It is largely up to the individual, but it should be at least once a day for real progress to be made.

Now for some good news! Not only does this meditation help your spiritual growth, it also tunes you up physically. You should notice more energy after you've been meditating for a while. Studies have shown that the heart tends to slow down and the
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A Spiritual Journey with Tarot *cont'd*

blood pressure tends to lower just as a result of your meditative process. There are many books on the market which teach meditation; one of them would do a lot more justice for your learning than I could in this short article.

When I meditate on The Star, I remember that my meditation schedule is important to my spiritual growth. It reminds me that the light is always there, I just have to learn to be aware of it at all times. My meditation will help me with this.



Historical Notes of Traditional Christmas Foliage

by Peggy Firth

Christmas decorations of natural foliage, whether real or fake, are often used as table centerpieces, front door wreaths, on fireplace mantles and of course, the Christmas tree. Many Tarot cards feature some of the traditional foliage we associate with Christmas. If you are curious about the historical uses of traditional foliage that have their roots in spiritual practices, read on...

Poinsettia

This plant arrived from Mexico in the early 1800s and its leaves have been recently propagated into a variety of lighter colors. Since the leaves of the poinsettia turn red in dry climates around the Christmas season, the poinsettia has been associated with the spirit of Christmas. The legend of the poinsettia revolves around a poor Mexican girl who gathered weeds along the roadside fashioning them into a bouquet to present to the Christ Child at a Christmas Eve celebration. Suddenly, it is told, the bouquet burst into bright red leaves known as "flores de noche."

Holly

The Romans used various foliage during their festivals, particularly during their annual winter Saturnalia festival which celebrated the return of Saturn. The British felt that holly leaves, believed to be endowed with magical powers, helped drive away evil spirits. The sharp thorns found on the leaves of holly symbolize the crown of thorns Jesus was forced to wear while its red berries reminded them of the blood which Jesus had to shed. The British also felt that a distinction between "he holly" and "she holly" was based on the nature of the leaves. The "he holly" was characterized by the thorns while the "she holly" referred to the shine on the leaves.

Mistletoe

Kissing under the mistletoe has been a Christmas tradition since the settlement of our country and has had significance as early as the Greeks, who associated mystical powers and their customs to this partial parasite. The rare oak mistletoe was venerated by the Celts and Germans and used as a ceremonial plant by early Europeans. On the sixth night of the moon, white robed Druid priests cut the oak mistletoe with a golden sickle for their celebrations.

For ages, the plant was thought to be propagated by bird droppings on tree branches. It was thought that life could spring spontaneously from dung. However, later it was observed that the plant was spread by seeds which passed through the digestive tract by birds. "Mistle" is the Anglo-Saxon word for dung and "tan" is the word for twig... "dung on a twig."

Pomegranate

Trees of pomegranates are found in the drier regions of the world, particularly the middle east. The red apple-sized fruit is thought to resemble the womb and has symbolized fertility, abundance and marriage. We also find pomegranate imagery used in the Rider-Waite deck as well as many types of emblems through the ages. Pomegranates decorate the gown of the pregnant Empress of the Rider-Waite Major Arcana and the backdrop of The High Priestess.

Christmas Tree

The Scotch Pine tree is considered a superior Christmas tree, however, many types of evergreens, including small thyme



Historical Notes of Traditional Christmas Foliage *cont'd*

bushes cut into the shape of a fir tree, are used as Christmas trees. The Scotch Pine with its crisscrossed branches was thought to resemble the cross of Jesus.

The Egyptians treasured evergreens as well as date palm leaves which were brought into their homes to symbolize life's triumph over death. The Romans celebrated the god of agriculture and decorated their homes with evergreens and exchanged gifts of food, coins and lamps.

Later, the Druids used evergreens during their solstice rituals. Evergreen branches were placed over their doorways to keep away evil spirits. In the late middle ages the German and Scandinavians placed whole trees inside their homes to show their hope in the forthcoming spring. Decorations such as candles and brightly colored bulbs and toys were added.

Today we may decorate with traditional foliage for the wondrous colors and smells, however, those living in the sunbelt are finding more ways to use native plants to decorate their homes. The traditional colors of Christmas are often softened to reflect semi-arid land with its lighter, brighter landscapes.

Decks that feature many of the plants and trees listed above are:

Old Time Christmas Angels Playing Card Deck

Angel Tarot Deck

Celtic Tarot Deck

Forest Folklore Tarot

Tarot of the Druids

Universal Waite Tarot Deck



December Message from the Frolicking Fae

by Terri C.

When I see the glittering frost on the grass in the first morning light, I can't help but think of our little wee friends. It almost feels like they've been out working furiously all night.

The first two weeks of the month you can expect the excitement and the magic of the upcoming holiday season to build. Plans are being made and shopping lists compiled. You feel that everything is right on track, but something may feel a bit off. There is a slight feeling of disconnect. This feeling is below the surface and not noticeable by others. Use your intuition and search inside yourself to find the source of the feeling. To find a work around, ask the faeries to reveal it to you and then help you release it. If you continue to carry this around with you, it will consume you. It's not your stuff, so don't carry it. The sooner you release it, the sooner you can move forward.

Once you go through the release process (what ever that is for you), you will find that you become quite flirty and playful. This only adds to the magic of the season. Of course, leaving out a thimble of brandy for the Fae will intensify this effect.

Take time to enjoy your close, personal relationships. Treasure them, be gracious for what you do have. Focus on the positive here, not the negative. Relationship growth with the Faeries is also very easy during this magical time of year. You can call them in during meditation. Singing and dancing will also catch their attention. Spreading Faerie Dust can also bring their energy in quickly. They like sparkles!

It may be time to put a new spark into that love life. Plan the ideal date with your someone special. Do something out of the ordinary. Just the two of you. Focus on the magic of your relationships. What brought you together? What are you both passionate about? What is the glue that bonds the relationship? Hold a small quartz (of your choice) stone in your hand and ask Faeries to infuse it with a special blessing for relationship. Be specific here; ask for what you want! Carry it with you or offer it to your someone special. This can also apply to friendships.

As we reach the middle of the month, you may be feeling that there is so much to do and yet so little time. Learn when to say "enough is enough." Remember it really is not all about how much money you spend or how many presents everyone receives. It's all about LOVE.

Energetically, you may be feeling that the more you do, the more that stays the same. When you get to this point, STOP! Let everything be what it's going to be.

The last week of the month you may be feeling blue or let down. It's important to remember here that this week is the last week of a Universal 9 year. There is so much to look forward to. This is not a time to just sit back and do nothing. Use this
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December Message from the Frolicking Fae *cont'd*

time creatively. Set some goals for the New Year and beyond. Make sure that some are easy to obtain and make some others that will cause you to stretch.

Finish up that which needs to be finished. Toss out or give away those material possessions that you no longer need. Close the doors that no longer serve you, by being open. By doing these things now, you set yourself up for big things in January.

All in all, expect a busy, magical month. Enjoy your interaction with the Faerie Nation. Thank them for helping you through



Pardon the Hanged Man

by Melanie Harris

My cheeks are blushing, but I'll admit it anyway. I'm a trash scavenger. While I won't actually go in to a trash can, if I see something of value sitting beside the can, I'll gladly take it for my own with only a slight sense of shame. I excuse this rat like behavior by taking to heart the modern adage, "reduce, reuse, recycle." I want to do my part, and besides, people throw away a lot of perfectly good items.

Judging by the quality and quantity of garbage gems I've collected, an amazing amount of treasure must lie decaying in our landfills. I've found a snowsuit, 2 TVs, a brand new jacket, and about half the furnishings in my apartment. What I found the other night, though, tops them all.

I was taking my dog for a walk, and admittedly, I was on the prowl. As I scanned the nearby trash cans for useful stuff, my eyes lit up. There it was: my Three of Wands. My ship had come in! It was a large rug, just the thing my son had been asking for but my wallet wouldn't allow.

I moved in for a closer look and I started unrolling the rug to see if it was in good shape. I was surprised at how heavy it was; I could hardly lift the corner.

Being paranoid as I am, like my nemesis the Five of Swords, always on the look out for imminent tragedy, my mind raced to the worst conclusion.

"What if there's a dead body rolled up in this?" I thought.

With nine wands around me, I took a few steps back and then approached again, hunched and alert, hesitant and on guard. I got up my courage and tugged hard on the end of the rug.

The whole roll trembled, and a low grunt escaped into the icy air.

I squealed like a mouse in a trap.

"Sorry...I'm homeless. I'm sleeping in here!" a voice from the rug called out.

My rascal of a dog still silent and calm beside me, I was flooded with embarrassment and shock. I felt like a jerk for drawing attention to the man's cozy hideout with my terrified shriek, especially since my dog hadn't barked at him, which meant that the man was clearly nice. Apparently, my dog barks at anything and everything except people rolled up in rugs.



Pardon the Hanged Man *cont'd*

"Sorry," I said. "I thought I had found just a rug..."

I hereby vow to repent from my trash scavenging ways. I was very lucky; I could have just as easily discovered a homicidal maniac rolled up in that rug.

The next time I pass a trash can, or get The Moon or the High Priestess in a reading, I'm not going out of my way to find out what jewels of truth or trash treasure lie behind the veil.

What is hidden should sometimes stay concealed. Once you unravel a mystery, is the mystery still intact?

No, just keep your scroll rolled until you're ready to show it, High Priestess. Tell it to The Moon, dogs. Keep a lid on it, trash bin. I don't need to look too deep beneath the surface to know that it's often best to keep my nose well out.

Answers to Trivia from Fun, Games and Community page:

1. The Fool is unnumbered.
2. Mademoiselle Lenormand
3. The Hanged Man
4. Cary-Yale Visconti deck



Winter Solstice (Yule) by Christine Jette

I don't know anything about the Winter Solstice rituals or Yule, so I thought maybe others would enjoy learning about the history of Yule and Christine's suggestions for rituals and celebration. She includes a recipe, too! This article is excerpted from her book, *Tarot for All Seasons: Celebrating the Days and Nights of Power*, copyright (c) Christine Jette.

Winter Solstice: December 21 or 22

(Yule)

Yule celebrates the Goddess for giving birth to a son, the God. The Goddess draws light into her womb during the darkest time of the year, from Samhain to Yule. She gives birth to the light, her son the God, at the Winter Solstice. Because ancient pagans honored divine birth at Yule, it is no accident that the Christian Church chose December 25 as the birthday of their own divine Son.

Since the God is symbolized by the Sun, the Winter Solstice (also known as 'the birth of light') marks the point of the year when the Sun is reborn as well. In the northern hemisphere, the winter solstice falls on December 21 or 22, when the sun seems to stand still at its most southeastern point over the Tropic of Capricorn. This is the longest night and shortest day of the year, after which daylight hours grow longer. From this point on, the sun rises a little earlier, giving more light to the cold days of winter.

Yule is both a time of balance and a time of change. The Anglo-Saxon word for the Winter Solstice is 'Yule', derived from the Nordic word 'iul', meaning "wheel", related to the sacred circle or wheel of nature. In an agricultural society, survival meant having enough food. The Yule ritual symbolically hurried the end of a harsh winter to celebrate the bounty of spring, when food was once again plentiful.

Yule was the day when Druids honored the battle between the Holly King and the Oak King by cutting the sacred mistletoe from the oak tree and letting it fall to the ground. The Holly King has symbolized death and darkness since Samhain. At Yule, the Oak King, who represents light and life, defeats the Holly King.

Great fires were lit to celebrate the return of the Sun. The act of burning a Yule log at Christmas is a surviving remnant of that Druid custom, but also shares a relationship with the entire Season of Light- Chanukah, Kwanza and St. Lucia's Day are but three life-affirming holidays during the darkest time of year. Ancient pagan peoples brought fir trees, holly, ivy and pine boughs into their homes at Yule as a reminder of returning light and life. The Christian customs of displaying Christmas trees and decorating with evergreens are directly related to this Yule tradition.

In present time, the Goddess gives birth to the God at Yule and we are reminded that birth is a **continuance of life**, not its beginning, and the ultimate result of death is rebirth. It is a time for balancing our nature, spirit and physical body.



Winter Solstice (Yule) *cont'd*

Meditations focus on the hidden energies lying dormant within the Earth and us during winter. It is also a time of returning hope and we gather to celebrate and make merry. Children receive gifts from Father Winter, we decorate our homes and good food abounds. Yule reminds us to take care of each other, the Earth and all Her creatures in the gentle, kind and magical season of goodwill.

The Winter Solstice/Yule Ritual

(Around December 21 or 22)

Yule is the season for peace, returning hope and restoring balance. It is the perfect time for planning, making wishes and seeking visions. Clear quartz crystals, garnet, ruby and green tourmaline will enhance the energies of Yule, when worn or placed around the home. After deciding on your magical working(s) for the Yule season, focus your intention to realize your desire. Remember, focused will remains the core of magic.

Yule Tarot Cards

Place the Star, No. 17, on your altar as a sign of returning hope. Justice, No. 11, restores balance while the Sun, No. 19, symbolizes the hidden energies lying dormant in the winter and welcomes the return of the God. Use the Nine of Cups for making wishes and the Two of Wands for seeking a vision.

The Scents of Yule

Pine, cedar, balsam, fir, cinnamon, clove, mistletoe, orange, frankincense, myrrh, rosemary, bay and juniper all add atmosphere, beauty and depth to your winter solstice celebrations.

Magical Brews of Yule

Any recipe for wassail(*); hibiscus, cranberry, apple, orange, cinnamon or ginger tea. Mulled cider or red wine with spices such as cinnamon and clove.

Yule Candles

Use a large red candle set in a bowl or cauldron to symbolize the birth of the Sun. Green represents life, ever present and renewable, gold for sunlight and white for the purity of new fallen snow.

(*)Christine's Winter Wassail

Yield: 11/2 Gallons (24 8-oz. Servings)

4 C. boiling water

4 apple spice or orange spice teabags (flavored black teas have caffeine, herbal tea does not)

½ gallon cider

½ gallon cranberry juice



Winter Solstice (Yule) *cont'd*

1 C. orange juice

½ C. lemon juice

¼ to ½ C. brown sugar according to desired sweetness

1 tsp. Cloves (substitute whole allspice if you don't like cloves)

2 sticks cinnamon broken in half

Stick cinnamon or orange slices as desired for garnish

Place the teabags in the boiling water and steep for five minutes. Remove teabags from the tea concentrate and set aside.

While you are waiting for the tea to steep, put spices (cloves and cinnamon) in a tea ball. Beginning with the cider, mix the remaining ingredients together in a large kettle and pour in the tea concentrate. Stir. Add the tea ball with spices. Simmer all ingredients together for one-half hour on low heat. Stir occasionally. As you stir, visualize love and warmth and send your good intentions into the brew. Remove tea ball and serve warm in punch cups or mugs. Garnish each mug with a stick of cinnamon or orange slice. Enjoy!

May be kept warm for hours in a crockpot on low setting. Can be stored in the frig for several days and heated as needed.

Microwave instructions: Use cheesecloth instead of tea ball and a micro-safe container. Follow instructions for assembly. Heat uncovered on HIGH, ten minutes per gallon. Ovens vary. Check frequently for desired serving temperature.

Important: Do not boil wassail! Boiling destroys its flavor.

VARIATIONS:

Leave out the teabags and 4 cups of water. This decreases the yield by one quart.

Add one liter red wine to mixture and simmer. This increases the yield to 2 gallons.

For a sweeter taste, omit wine and add 1 ounce of apple, cranberry or orange liqueur to each mug at serving time.

Wassail recipe may be halved or doubled depending on your needs.



Deck Review - The Gummy Bear Tarot

by Debra Madigan

"Gummy Bears are a tradition enjoyed by generations. Who better to turn to for inspiration or a new outlook on life?".....This quote from the 59 page companion booklet from the Gummy Bear Tarot from U.S. Games by Dietmar Bittrich (Artists Anneke Larsmeyer & Sascha Tessman) says it all, do not dismiss this deck as juvenile, as I did for a long time before examining it closer!

The art style most certainly is simplistic, although it does closely follow Rider-Waite in a very pared-down way. However, this serves to make it very easy for the intuitive Tarot reader from beginner to advanced to just blossom with psychic inspiration. I feel the clarity of the cards, the 'crayola'-like colors, and the happy images help the alpha waves flow. The fronts of the cards have a minimal white border, and the Major Arcana are labeled with the Title and also with the number (Fool=0). Some of my favorite Major cards are the Devil and Death, and the Hierophant (who appears female to me). The Minors are labeled also, and two of my favorites are the 5 of Pentacles, with two forsaken Gummies outside the church (one lame), and the ominous black caped Gummy of the 5 of Cups. The backs of the cards have 16 bears, 4 rows of 4, red, blue, green, and white. It is impossible to tell from the back if you have drawn a reversed card.

When reading with this deck, I found it very easy and a pleasure to use. It is definitely querent friendly. The booklet recommends using the Celtic Spread, or

one to three card readings. As far as meanings of the cards, the meanings in the booklet assigned to the cards are slightly different and much more positive than Rider Waite, and there are no "reversal" meanings per se, only "strengths" and "weaknesses. One thing I loved about the booklet is that for every card, despite strength or weakness, it has an assigned "Task" per card, such as for 5 of Cups the Task is "Renewal". This is a very easy concept for anyone, your querent, or yourself if meditating with the deck to grasp.

The only drawback I see to this deck is that it is printed on somewhat thin card stock. A definite plus is that it comes in a cute little tin for card safekeeping. I would highly recommend this deck to both new and advanced readers. New readers can easily learn from the numbering of the cards, and the simplicity of the meanings in the booklets, especially the "tasks"; and advanced readers, especially Gummy lovers or Rider-Waite or Hansen-Roberts readers will be refreshed by the art and get many laughs. That alone is worth the price of the deck!

December 2007



Gummy Bear Tarot, ISBN 1-57281-471-3, is available from U.S. Games Systems, Inc. on their website at www.usgamesinc.com.

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TarotScopes for December 2007 By Adrienne Abeyta

The December TarotScopes features the cards of the Gummy Bear Tarot. The Gummy Bear Tarot is published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. and is available on their website, www.usgamesinc.com.



Aries: Chariot (8 of Swords)

Be prepared to encounter a rather perplexing challenge; to do or not do, is the question. Though circumstances may feel limiting, there is a solution that lies just beyond your normal rationale. You must tap into your emotions if you are to steer a direct course. Forget your fears and listen to your inner warrior because the course of your life is about to take a dramatic detour. The week of the 17th will start off with a bang and end with a fizzle - don't do anything you might regret later.



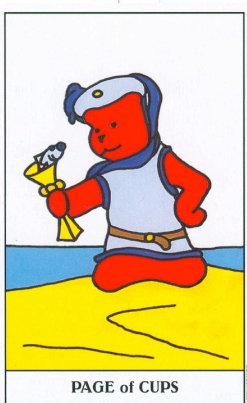
Taurus: Hierophant (Knight of Swords)

When you ask provoking questions, expect provocative answers. A small tornado may blow the roof off your humble abode as you encounter words you were not prepared to hear. A virtuous intention to help someone who you assume needs it may inadvertently backfire in your face. Or, the one thing you've been itching to know, yet too afraid to ask will finally come to the surface, however the response is as unsavory as you thought it to be. By the 20th things should be back to normal, so take a look at what has this lesson taught you.



Gemini: Sun (Queen of Cups)

A chance encounter with a mysterious person will shed light on a dark corner of your psyche. This may evoke some deeper emotions that alter the way you've been living your life. If you're in a relationship, reach out and connect in a more intimate way, turn your mind off and let your heart do the talking. This is a glorious time for you to express what you feel and what is true for you. The Solstice on the 21st is a wonderful time to celebrate with those who mean the most.

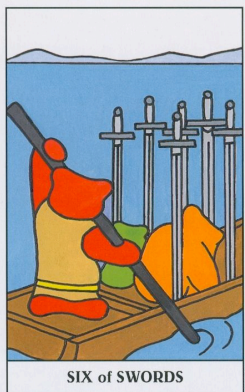


Cancer: Magician (Page of Cups)

Make the best out of what you have, because whether you see it as good or bad, there's an opportunity on offer. The power of thought and the magic of your mind are a remarkable combination for creating the life you want. Though a recent emotional situation may have confused you, trust that a fragile new beginning is emerging. Let go of any resentments as they only prevent you from the happiness you deserve. The full moon will offer you a night of miracles when someone you least expect makes a surprise appearance.



TarotScopes for December 2007 *cont'd*



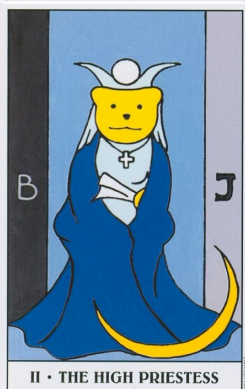
Leo: Empress (6 of Swords)

You will be gathering the harvest of your past efforts and incredible patience. Your recent challenges are actually god-sent programs for growth; and as the weather changes, so will your direction. You may consider going on a trip at this time to prepare for the bigger journey ahead. Use those gifts from your past to develop a new course of action and be open to what your family has to offer. Christmas day is a great starting point to embark on this next phase; say farewell to the old you and go confidently toward your bright future.



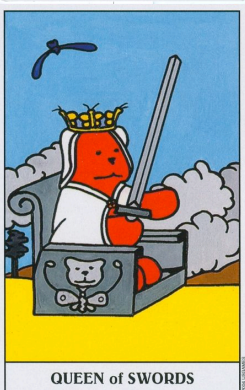
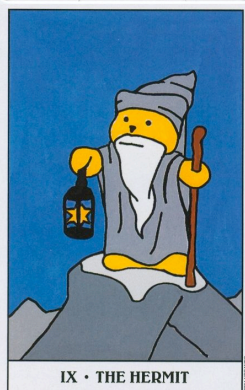
Virgo: Star (King of Pentacles)

Ambition is only one side of the coin when striving for personal goals; the other, perhaps even more valuable, is self-confidence. Attaching your faith in life to your own abilities will offer you deeper insights. At the beginning of the month, you will encounter a prospect so promising that you'll be inundated with inspiration. Find the connections to what you've been working on and don't waste energy going down unproductive paths. By the end of the month, you should be able to secure means for consistent growth.



Libra: High Priestess (5 of Wands)

Beware, there are hidden influences coming that threaten to undermine your current circumstances. Yet, before pointing the finger of blame, look beyond others at the reflection of yourself. Your uncertainty reflects more of your secret fears than you realize. Those silly conflicts with others are really about your own limitations. Focus on the potentials that are ironically present in your struggles and you will find both creative solutions for your problems and insights into who you really are. A disagreement near the 3rd may be a ripe opportunity for such awareness.



Scorpio: Hermit (Queen of Swords)

Being a little introverted this month may actually provide you some much needed reflection. Issues of dependence could be hindering your relationships; either you're being too dependent and clingy, or your independence is excluding others. During this period of soul-searching you may want to revise some of your core beliefs about relationship - do you expect a little more than you are willing to give? During the first week of the month, someone you care about may give you the cold shoulder. Give them space and they'll come around.

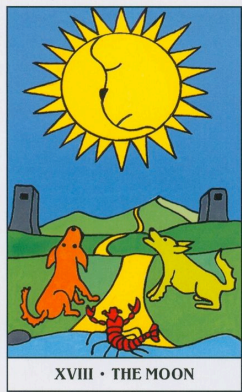


TarotScopes for December 2007 *cont'd*



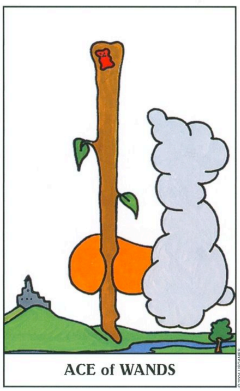
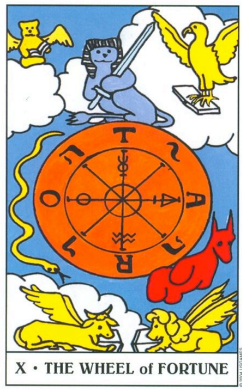
Sagittarius: Lovers (7 of Swords)

With affairs of the heart come choices, the deeper your connection, the harder your choices may seem. In the same way as others act as a mirror, so too does a choice reflect your values. Some of your recent choices are beginning to reveal the cracks in your façade; you're avoiding issues and upholding pretenses for the sake of security. Pretending that you are happy, compromising your feelings, and dancing around that big elephant will only put off the inevitable. The New Moon will likely expose the truth behind your charades and the purpose for pretending.



Capricorn: Moon (3 of Pentacles)

To dream the impossible dream - a beautiful song perhaps, but as for your life right now; you may want to be a little more realistic. Prepare yourself for what could happen because an established area of life is about to hit a speed bump. Someone or something you're depending on may not come through like you expected. However, if you have a "Plan B" as back-up, this may only be a small detour. In regards to finances, the week of the 10th waves a red flag, so be prudent and check your records.



Aquarius: Wheel of Fortune (Ace of Wands)

Ready for a ride? This month will surely deliver something unexpected and exciting. You would do well not to grasp for control because the energy behind this is explosive. Something that started last summer will suddenly go in a different direction, and this is guaranteed to change your perspective on things. The weekend of the 14th will deliver a surprise that will shock you, so be prepared to initiate a long-kept plan. Now is your window of opportunity to take that risk, ask for that raise, propose marriage, or take that leap of faith.



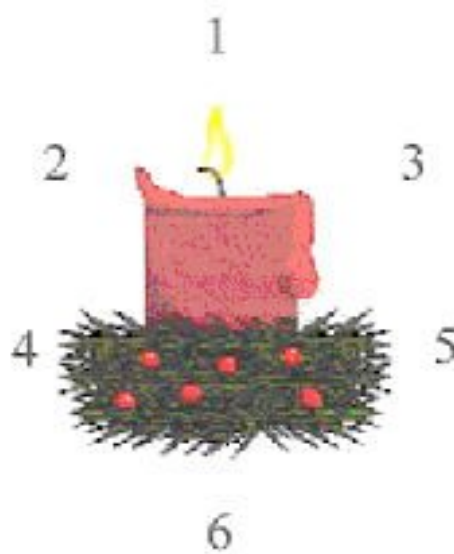
Pisces: Temperance (Page of Wands)

A feeling of dissatisfaction is emerging on your horizon, and the more you attempt to avoid it, the stronger it will get. Your emotions are your navigation system for your internal landscape - if you mask them by distracting yourself with superficial pleasures, you will only get further from your truth. The truth in this case is that you're not satisfied with a major part of your life: relationship, job, home life, appearance. During the middle of the month you will feel more restless than usual. Use this time to explore something fun or perhaps even taboo.

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Solstice Light Tarot Spread by Christine Jette



Position 1- Returning hope: What are you hopeful about?

If this card feels negative to you, it depicts painful issues that will be resolved or healed in the coming year. Remember, all cards show a spectrum of life, from happy to sad, and offer opportunities to learn wisdom.

Position 2- Making wishes: What does your heart desire?

Again, if you don't like the card it is because it shows an uncomfortable situation that you wish were different.

Position 3- Seeking visions: What is your vision for the future?

Where do you see yourself next year at this time? Do a three-card time line reading if you need to clarify the meaning of position three. (Timeline reading: Card 1 is the situation as it is right now. Card 2 shows trends for the next three months. Card 3 looks at months four through twelve from the time of the reading.)

Position 4- Sense of balance: What will restore balance to your life?

If the card feels negative, it is because it shows an area of your life that is out of balance and where you need to focus your efforts to restore order.

Position 5- Goodwill towards others: Your expression of love.

Yule is the season of giving. In what way can you open your heart to others? If this card makes you uncomfortable, it indicates a situation in need of repair, forgiveness or making an amend. Note if card four, your sense of balance, is related to card 5, goodwill towards others.



Solstice Light Tarot Spread *cont'd*

Position 6- Advice: The next step. Planning. The action card.

What can you do on the mundane level during the winter months to make your hopes and wishes real?

Look at cards 1-5: your hopes, wishes, vision for the future, sense of balance and goodwill towards others. What story do they weave together to advise you on your next course of action?

To complete the Yule reading, you can meditate with the cards, write a journal entry, keep the cards out until Imbolc or simply close. Carry a card or two with you during the day to strengthen the connection between you and your vision for the future.

Affirm your personal power to plan the life you want: "I awaken to the season of Yule and bring my Spirit's desire into balance. This, or something better, is manifesting for me now, for the good of all, harming no one, according to free will." (Or write your own affirmation. Your words always work best.)



Fun, Games and Community

We are hoping to include a calendar of events on this page, too, so please contact us if you have a meet or conference scheduled and would like to add it to our calendar!

This will also be the home for our monthly Tarot Trivia game and any other games or fun things we (or you!) come up with.

Try your own version of Tarot Captions in the sidebar. Pick a card and come up with a caption for it. Submit yours to TR for publication. Be sure to specify the card you used, i.e., whether it is a Waite Smith or another deck so we can get an image for it.

Tarot Trivia for December

compiled by **Melanie Harris**

1. In the Tarot de Marseille style of decks, which number is attributed to The Fool?
2. What celebrated female French cartomancer read cards for the Empress Josephine?
3. Which card is also known as "The Traitor"?
4. Which famous 15th century Italian deck contains 86 cards and includes representations of female pages and knights?

Answers at the end of the Pardon the Hanged Man article.

Tarot Captions



"Note to self - the next time the Empress asks if she looks fat, say **NO.**"

The Universal Waite Tarot is published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc and is used with permission.



Contributors

Adrienne Abeyta combines the symbolic systems of tarot, numerology, and astrology. She offers a contemporary approach as she connects modern psychology and spirituality in her readings. Her specialty is bridging the practical everyday world with the spiritual growth and evolution of each person. She believes in the capacity of individuals to discover their fullest potential and it is her gift to assist in this process. Adrienne is a certified life coach and owner of Five Muses Entertainment.

www.Fivemuses.com Adrienne can be reached at 619-917-0998 adrienne@fivemuses.com

Bonnie Cehovet, TE, is a professional Tarot reader with over twelve years experience, a Reiki Master/Teacher and a writer. She is certified as a Tarot Educator with the American Board For Tarot Certification.

Bonnie has served in various capacities with the American Tarot Association, to include Secretary on the ATA Board. She is co-founder of the World Tarot Network, and past Vice President (as well as Secretary and Director of Certification) for the American Board For Tarot Certification.

Her articles and reviews currently appear in the World Tarot Network newsletter (www.worldtarotnetwork.com), the Meta Arts Internet site (www.themetaarts.com), the Aeclectic Tarot Internet site (www.aeclectic.net/tarot), as well as on her own site, www.tarot.thecrystalgate.com. Bonnie edits her own newsletter - Gateway to Tarot - which is archived on her site. Bonnie's work also appears in both the 2004 and 2005 "Llewellyn Tarot Reader", and in monthly and quarterly versions of the American Tarot Association newsletter.

Terri C. is a featured reader at the Pacific Northwest Psychic Fairs, Dragonfly Souls & Spirit Fairs and Friends and Fellowship Fairs. She specializes in Behavior Kinesiology and has guested on Seattle area radio stations. She can be reached at satinangel@ncplus.net

Peggy Firth, CTM, has been interested in the metaphysical for two decades and has been culling her tarot knowledge since the early eighties. "It's a life-long study that fascinates me". Peggy lived in Los Angeles for twenty years and misses not having a strong tarot community here in New Mexico. However, reading on the ATA Free Reading Network and having access to tarot sites keeps her involved.

"As a freelance surgical illustrator I find that my creative instincts also come into play. I take a deep breath and ask for assistance for greater understanding in almost all that I attempt."

Freelance writer and folk artist **Melanie Harris** has been practicing and studying magic since childhood. She has worked with Tarot cards for over twenty years, and she is the Assistant Editor of Tarot Reflections. She authors a column for the ATA Quarterly, and she also writes for the Llewellyn Journal and Circle Magazine. injoyart@yahoo.com

Christine Jette (pronounced Jetty) is a registered nurse and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. She is the author of Tarot Shadow Work, Tarot for the Healing Heart, Tarot for All Seasons and Professional Tarot. Visit her on the web at: www.findingthemuse.com



Contributors *cont'd*

Debra Madigan is a very spiritual Witch, who has loved Tarot for as long as she can remember. Her current favorite decks are the Hudes deck and the William Blake deck for the Creative Imagination. She is a successful Wiccan artist and Tarot reader On-the-Go. Her products can be seen on the "Offerings page of www.GoodWitchLemont.com. She is currently working on a book about spirituality. The love of her life and her true chaos magician is her pug dog, William S. Burroughs.

Gary Meister, CTM, has been a proud member of the American Tarot Association for quite some time. He holds the title of Certified Tarot Master (CTM) from both The Associated Readers Of Tarot (T.A.R.O.T.) (now defunct) and the Tarot Certification Board of America. He is a lifetime member of the Magical Golden Dawn, (MGD,) an initiatic order descended from the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn, established in 1888, and belongs to the Modern Essene Fellowship, a healing, teaching order. He has studied Spiritual Tarot through correspondence courses from Builders of the Adytum (BOTA), a modern mystery school, and many other sources over the years. He holds certificates in Practical Metaphysics, Metaphysical Healing and Comparative Religion from the Gabriel Society, (also now defunct), and he holds a certificate of Outstanding Achievement in "Intuitive Tarot" from UniversalClass.com.

He has made a lifetime study of all things spiritual and metaphysical, and has studied and read Tarot and Numerology for over twenty-five years.

Visit him at his website: <http://www.tarotmeister.com/>

Sheri Harshberger has been working with the Tarot for many years and is thrilled to share her love of the ATA, Tarot and oracles with the world community as Editor of Tarot Reflections. When not working on features and the Tarot Reflections website, or reading at a fair, she can found on the [Aeclectic Tarot Forum](#) using the member name valeria. She can be reached at sheriharshberger@mac.com