

**WITCH** Continued from Page A-1

to the time of the Inquisition in the 13th century, followed by the Reformation in the 16th century. Theologians of that period firmly believed that witches formed compacts with the devil and regarded such persons as unfit to live. Depending upon the source, estimates of no less than 300,000 and as high as two million men, women and children were put to death as a result of being charged with practicing witchcraft.

In 1431, Joan of Arc was burned alive at the stake for witchcraft, and during the latter years of the witch hunt craze in Europe, the mother of astronomer Johann Kepler was placed in prison for five years for suspicion of being a witch.

The infamous Salem, Massachusetts witch frenzy of 1692 resulted in the death of 20 people accused of being witches. That incident apparently stemmed from the antics of some young children in the home of Samuel Parris, a Salem minister. An old West Indian slave woman who was a servant in the home was accused of bewitching the children, and, before the delusion was brought under control, 53 people had been tortured and 20 others were

executed. Ironically, the Indian woman was never harmed, although she was put in prison.

Terri said that many of the current witch superstitions are the result of inaccurate stories that were circulated long ago.

As an example, she pointed out that the belief that witches ride through the air on broomsticks got its start from a Pagan ritual honoring the fertility of certain crops.

In the days before the Inquisition, Terri said the people of the European countryside would gather and the women would bring their brooms as symbols of domestic virtue. As was custom, the women would straddle their brooms and ride them around in a circle, jumping up in the air from time to time. The purpose of their jumping was to show the grain how high to grow that year. Unfortunately, Terri said the inquisitors interpreted their actions as a form of witchcraft, and the participants in the rituals were accused of being witches.

The popular tradition of wearing a disguise on Halloween also originated from Pagan practices, Terri said.

As a result of rising pressure from the witch hunt craze, believers in Paganism were forced to disguise themselves when traveling and from the customary gatherings. In order to avoid being recognized and later prosecuted, they would wear a cloak or similar disguise.

Terri said. From this ancient attempt at anonymity came the present-day custom of wearing a disguise on Halloween.

**Wicca religion**

To Terri, Wicca is a religion. She admits to being a Pagan and describes Paganism as being a belief in nature. The Wicca philosophy is essentially that you never stop learning about yourself, she said. "People will pick a religion for what best suits them," Terri explained. "Most religions are confusing. This one lets me grow."

"I'm a Pagan," Terri said. "I don't believe in Christianity. That doesn't mean that I don't believe in Jesus Christ, but I don't believe he was the son of God any more than anyone else is. He was very close to God, but there have been many others too. Buddha and Mohammed for instance."

Terri said she doesn't fear

blasphemy because of her Wicca beliefs because she doesn't condemn other religions. "If I did, then I could never expect anyone to understand or accept what I feel," she said. "It's a very passive religion."

**Casting a spell**  
There are many current misconceptions about witchcraft, Terri said. One is the belief that witches possess a great deal of power. "People say that they want to be a witch so that they can zap somebody," she said and then smiled. "You can't zap anyone. It just doesn't work that way."

Spells and incantations are a combination of key words that command attention, Terri explained. In essence, it is the application of an advanced understanding of the laws of nature beyond the knowledge of the average person. Terri said she's never used the power to hex someone. "I've never used it for my personal gain or to hurt someone. It's more like a prayer asking for strength to overcome a difficulty."

According to Terri, a witches' coven would be a disappointment to most people. The Hollywood version of a coven is filled with naked bodies, sacrifices and sex orgies, she said. "Mostly a coven is just a group of people getting together to talk about different things, like life and nature."

She did say that there is a certain amount of nudity in witchcraft get-togethers, but that's because they feel that clothes act as a barrier and don't allow free emission of energy. However, she said working in the nude has no implications of being either lustful or evil. Instead, it has to do with their belief in the sacred forces of nature, life, death and rebirth.

The practice of Wicca is decidedly different than that

of Satanic witchcraft as practiced by Alister Crowley and Anton LaVey. Terri said. She felt the movie Rosemary's Baby, which LaVey helped write and direct, was a relatively true portrayal of black witchcraft. Satanic witchcraft deals with the devil and man, she said, stressing the fact that the devil referred to is not the same as that taught by the church. "The devil is that part of us that always wants more and is never satisfied."

For youngsters all over the country Halloween is a time of spooky delight. Terri recognizes that and doesn't condemn anyone for dressing up and playing the part of a hag, pointed hat and all. But she does sometimes wish people were more aware of the way it really is. On All Hallows Eve, Terri will prepare a witches' altar and perform a ritual ceremony as all witches do in recognition of the change from summer to winter. She won't be stirring a frothy brew in a crackling cauldron and she guaranteed she won't be changing any local residents into toads.

**Public invited to speak on proposed city ordinance**

The first of two public hearings on the proposed Neighborhood and Community public facilities ordinance comes up for airing next Tuesday night in the city council chambers at city hall.

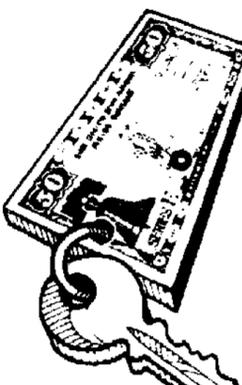
The regular meeting of the city planning commission will hear citizen response to the proposal, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The purpose and intent of the ordinance will require the dedication of land, the payment of fees in lieu thereof, or a combination of both, in order to provide for necessary public facilities

such as parks, open space, public facilities under the city's general plan, etc.

The text of the proposed ordinance, the public interest, convenience, health, welfare and safety require that five acres of property for each 1,000 persons residing in this city be devoted to local recreational purposes. That equals 217.8 square feet per person, according to the bill.

After hearing public opinion on all or any part of the bill, city planning will then pass it on to the city council for another hearing and then final action.



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A WITCH'S ALTAR is a consecrated circle used to hold in certain powers so that they can be directed. The circle has four corners which represent the four elements. Earth is represented by the bowl of salt just below the Book of Shadows, the stick of incense represents air, the candle is fire and the wine-filled chalice is water. The center of the circle contains ceremonial jewelry and the witch's athame, or ritual dagger. The athame is never used for killing or cutting, but merely serves as a ceremonial tool.

DEMOCRAT PHOTO

**Thefts reported at building sites**

John M. McClellan, a Pollock Pines resident, reported that approximately \$1500 worth of building materials were stolen from a residential construction site on Ridgeway drive. McClellan told El Dorado county sheriff's deputies that sometime between 4:30 p.m. Monday and 7:30 the following morning someone hauled away 52 sheets of rough reverse board. Tire tracks left in the dirt at the site indicated that a dual-wheeled vehicle was apparently used in the theft.

Henry Hudgens, a contractor for a home on Wood lane, said \$584 worth of cedar shingles were taken from a construction site sometime during the weekend of Oct. 15.

**Pleasant Valley plan for review on Nov. 3**

The county planning commission will review the proposed Pleasant Valley area plan on Nov. 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the planning commission room. The evening meeting is to allow area residents to give further testimony at this public hearing.

In an unrelated incident, Harry Plummer, a contractor for High Sierra builders, reported that \$420 worth of walnut stained doors were taken from a residential building site in the Shingle Springs area sometime last weekend. The theft of the 14 doors occurred while workers were away for the weekend, he said.

A similar theft also took place the previous weekend at a residential building site in the Cameron Park area.

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