

Welcome to *Between the Worlds*

Myth, Magic and Community

March 2007

Stepping into the Story: Forbidden Fruit

by Cynthia Jones

The taste for wild fruit is an acquired taste. I hungered for forbidden fruit. You may think that I hungered for it because it was forbidden. I didn't. I am not so easily manipulated. I choose to define myself, to answer the call that calls me, to feed the hunger that tells me what I want. All my life, I refused to shape myself in the image of society's permissions; I certainly don't want to shape myself to violate its restrictions. If I did, I would be as defined by my times as my more compliant sisters. Being what I *shouldn't be* offers no more freedom than being what I *should be*. I hungered for a rare and delicate taste; forbidden fruit is an acquired taste.

Before the apple gives its tart sweetness to the harvest table, there is a long summer of ripening. Before the summer, spring. Before the apple, a blossom. An apple blossom is a simple rose with five petals. In the center of that rose, there is a star. The star becomes an apple; in a many petaled garden rose, the star becomes the rose hip.

Before there can be a blossom, there must be a tree. A tree, roots connect to the earth that feeds it; branches reach for the stars. The mark of yearning, of branches reaching, is the star in the center of every apple. That which nourishes grows rich and juicy around the yearning. A tree establishes a relationship with soil and rock. It takes times to build a relationship, any relationship. It takes time to get established. I hold an apple. In innocence, I offer it to you

Before you take that apple, let me tell you a bit more. It was a Spring Equinox not so long ago. On that day, when Jennet got to Carter Shay, she discovered a wild rose, the first rose and a very early rose at that. Very early – was that possible? That rose was not like any rose she had ever seen. The rose was so exquisite, so pink and alive and rare that she couldn't resist. She reached. She reached for the rose.

She reached into the brambles. Maybe she reached in to pick it; maybe all she wanted to do was touch it. She wanted to feel its softness and discover the texture of its petals, I don't know what drew her so but I do understand hunger. Hunger for beauty, hunger for the wild, hunger for magic, hunger for the impossible. I do know hunger and I'll bet

you do too.

She hungered to touch the softness of that wild rose. She knew the risks; I know the risks and so do you. If Jennet were to reach for the rose, she might get pricked. Some say she did. All I know is that when she came back from Carter Shay, she was not the same. She had a look in her eye and a rhythm to her walk that was not the same as when she left. She seemed to hear music in her ear that the rest of us could not hear. And, as the ballad said, she was no longer a maiden. Before you take that apple....

Cynthia Jones founded Diana's Grove together with Patricia Storm in 1994. Her unparalleled ability to weave mythology and philosophy into a pattern for community and personal development is what makes the Mystery School program so unique. She will be re-telling Jennet and Tam Lin's story throughout 2007.

Why Mythology?

Entering the Realm of the Archetypes

by Cynthia Jones

At the edge of our perceptions we glimpse a world beyond our world: the place where myths are made, where improbable dreamers dream impossible dreams into being. The archetypal realm, an Olympus of consciousness, is inhabited by Goddesses and Gods, by the named and unnamed forces of nature. This is the place where the spirits of fire, water, earth and air live, now that they are considered fiction rather than myth.

Magic: to co-create reality with the archetypes. How do we reach them? How do we find the great patterns of possibility personified in every culture? Archetypal is defined as the original pattern. One of the pure ideas or realities of which all existence is an imitation. The pre-existent form for all things. The essence.

The archetypal realm is the place of all imaginings that precede actuality. It is the place of dreams, a realm we visit nightly in our sleep. It is the homeland of the muses, those archetypes of musical or artistic inspiration who seek out artists and fill them with vision and genius.

The archetypal realm is the home of the great characters of immortal literature. It is where they come from and where they return to when their day is done and they want to rest. Then they change costume and persona and enter another century through the mind of another writer.

The archetypal realm is where the Priestess, Priest, Hierophant and Shaman have gone in centuries past to meet the deities and discover the pattern of the hunt or the purpose of life. Entering this realm began when there was no doubt this realm existed. In those

times, belief in the deities and the realm of magic was not questioned. The realm of the archetypes was as accepted as the change of the seasons. Belief in the Goddesses and the Gods was and is a prerequisite to dancing with them.

The shaman created a place Between the Worlds, a place not of our mundane world but not of the world of forces and patterns either. She created a place where the two could meet. Between the Worlds, we create a place to re-connect with the original essences of all that is and capture the magic of all that can be. The root of the word religion is relinking. The place Between the Worlds is where we relink with the archetypes.

When we enter this realm, we transcend the ordinary, real world and step into a world with an entirely different set of possibilities. We step into a world governed by an entirely different set of laws. In the realm of the archetypes, the place Between the Worlds, we can weave our future with the Sisters of Fate, direct the winds and rains by dancing with the elementals, and spin the great spiral of time forward to create the future and backward to recreate the past.

Shaman, medicine person, miracle worker - one who unlocks the door to this mythic place where mortal and magic meet. Realities merge and the unreal becomes real, the impossible becomes possible. When we bring the realities of the archetypal world into the mundane world, it is called a miracle by some and transformation by others. It is called magic. Magic: to co-create reality with the archetypal beings and the forces of nature.

Go to the edge, the very edge of your perceptions. Open the door. Step through. Let your consciousness expand until the edges of reality are stretched. The edges of reality become thin. What is absolute and dense becomes thin and then thinner. Translucent. Light from some unearthly source begins to permeate reality, changing the color and quality of all limitations. Expanding more, thinner still, the boundary of reality becomes so transparent that it is almost invisible.

Expanding more, thinner still, the membrane between realities becomes porous as if it is made up of a 100,000 windows. Expanding more, thinner still, the windows enlarge and become doors. Open the door and step into the realm of the archetypes.

You enter the realm of the archetypes. Mythic forces, deities, and the elemental spirits of nature are present. Great and timeless patterns of possibilities are present. Art, music, and the stories told and retold in every culture are present. Myths, the great biographies of everyone and no one, are present.

Madness? Inspiration? Some traditions refer to opening this door as responding to "The Call."

For **Cynthia's** bio, please see *Stepping Into the Story* in this month's magazine.

Living the Story: Desire and Yearning

by Shauna Aura

Reaching. Jennet reaches for the rose. She has smelled the impossible scent of roses, and now she reaches for that rose, for the dream, for what she desires. Jennet touches Mystery, the place between the worlds, the place where her dream waits to be born.

What do you reach for? What do you desire? What is your dream?

Reaching for the rose is part of my profession. As a designer and artist, I often reach for something that doesn't exist, and pull it from the place of dream into reality. The essence of any creative work—whether creating a life, a work of art, or something else entirely—is in forming, shaping and realizing something that did not exist before.

Creation, for me, is an act of reaching for and manifesting something I desire. Desire itself is life force—when I yearn for something, that yearning is the very fuel that I use to bring it into being.

Afraid to Reach

Have you ever desired, yearned, reached for ... and failed to achieve a dream? I have danced between desire and disappointment, and at times I've been afraid to risk failure, risk having my heart broken, by reaching for a dream and not achieving it.

The times when a dream has failed to manifest have left me afraid to reach for my dreams—a project, a job, a community, a romantic relationship, and limitless other possibilities.

In January, I was in the midst of final preparations for *Reach for the Flame*, a daylong event including workshops and a ritual. My dream was to hold an event that would bring Diana's Grove-style personal growth and community-building to St. Louis. I had personally invested hundreds of hours in reaching for this dream.

The day before the event, an ice storm hit the Midwest. As I facilitated the meeting in which the planning team agreed to cancel the event, I felt like I was halting a birth. We had fuelled the fire of this dream with our life-force. My dream was dying, unfulfilled. My heart broke.

Each time my heart has been broken, I've been left afraid to reach again. Sometimes when I've wanted to reach for something, like a romantic relationship, I've been so afraid of being turned down that I failed to act, failed to take any step to manifest my desires.

Other times the failure to achieve a goal, or the accidental or intentional destruction of one of my projects, has left me depressed. Sometimes the death of a dream has left my heart frozen over, unable to feel, desire, or reach for anything. I have wondered, in those moments, “Will I ever be happy again?”

Desire and Yearning

Last year I dreamt of a ritual that took place at the Grove. During the dream, each participant processed to a house. Inside, a staff member was aspeking Hades. I was terrified. Hades asked me, "Which do you choose? Happiness? Or Yearning?"

I wanted more time to weigh the possibilities, but my answer was clear. The happiness he mentioned seemed stagnant—settling, instead of reaching, for the larger things. Yearning was risk, but the reaching was what brought me bliss. I said, “Yearning,” and Hades gave me a pin shaped like a red heart.

The mystery of yearning is that I’m happiest when I’m striving. When I’m at a standstill, the landscape of my life feels like a flat wasteland. My soul begins to wither. Yearning, reaching, is the key to my own bliss.

Igniting the Spark

What ignites you? What lights you up? How do you feel when you are passionate about a dream?

For Jennet, it was the scent of roses. For me, it’s the impossible. Passion lights in my heart with a blaze when a huge, improbable project comes across my desk. Particularly the words, “that’s impossible,” inspire a very visceral reaction somewhere between my heart and my gut.

When I’m lit up by a vision of what could be, when I’m craning with my whole body to reach and pull that dream from between the worlds, I feel like I have wings. When I’m fortunate, that fire inside my heart inspires others to reach with me for that dream, or to reach for their own

And sometimes when I reach, I will fail and I will fall. Desire does not always mean pain, but desire is bittersweet with risk.

Your Dream Needs You

The story of Tam Lin reminds me that my dream may be aching for me even as I desire it ... that the dream, the unmanifested potential of spiritual energy, cannot pull itself into the world without me. That only I can reach, and bring the dream into manifestation.

The inherent risk of desire is that I might not attain what I’m reaching for ... that I might

fall in love with a dream and never be able to achieve it. At times my heart has been broken and I swore to close myself off to passion rather than to risk the pain of disappointment.

And no matter how many times I have seen a dream die, I know that desire will spark in my heart again. I will again be lit up by a vision. Reaching for the impossible is my bliss. Reaching—even when the outcome is uncertain and all my strength, talents, and soul will be required to achieve the dream—reaching is bliss.

Healing from the death of a dream can take time, and in the aftermath of canceling *Reach for the Flame*, I'm still tired. Our group was able to reschedule the ritual part of the event and raise some seed money; soon we will discuss what to do next to fulfill our goals of bringing Grove-style work to St. Louis.

Soon, my passion will re-awaken, I'll smell that scent of roses, and my soul will re-ignite. Right now I'm in a place of stillness, waiting for that impossible scent again.

What do you reach for?

Shauna Aura dreams of impossible projects and brings them into being; creativity is her primary form of spiritual expression. Shauna freelances as a designer, artist, writer, and marketing strategist creating designs, events, and experiences. Shauna helped to found St. Louis Mysteries, a community of Mystery School participants, and one of her dreams is to bring Grove-style philosophies and tools to St. Louis and make them accessible to an urban audience. She dreams of building shrines and church-like community centers for people who practice alternative spirituality.

Ritual Artistry: What are you striving for?

The difference between *intention* and *theme*

by River

Ask just about any group of ritual planners, in any tradition, what the most important aspect of a ritual is, and I bet they'll say, "The intention." They might have different names for it, depending on their background or training, but ultimately they're all referring to the same thing. The common definition of intention in ritual terms is "the reason we are gathering to create and participate in this experience." I have seen and heard some beautifully crafted intention statements over the years. These statements often range anywhere from something as simple as "We gather to honor the return of Spring," to intricately detailed paragraphs about our work in the world or our devotion to Mystery. These statements are designed to give the ritual participants information about what this particular ritual is all about, as well as to provide some context about the

foundational philosophy that the planners used to create the ritual itself.

Several of the rituals that I have planned or participated in have involved posting the intention statement in a prominent location prior to the ritual, and/or reading it out loud to the group right before the ritual begins. As I said before, some of these intentions have been sheer poetry, and they have really served to help me move into sacred space to do the work they describe. To be completely honest, however, only a very small percentage of the intentions that I see have that effect on me, simply because I'm not a visual person. I find it really hard to retain information that I read or hear without being able to embody it in some way. Usually, being able to write it down is enough for me, but that generally isn't possible right before a ritual begins. Therefore, while I love intention statements and can understand their value, they don't work for me 95% of the time.

I've learned over the years that all of my ritual philosophy arises from the way I view the world, rather than from some universal "truth" about what ritual is and how it should be. I'm not visual, so rather than read a distinct statement at one of the "Ritual Conspiracy" sessions that I lead during a Mystery School intensive, I instead spend several minutes talking about the theme of the evening ritual and how we will embody it as a community in a multisensorial way. I'll let you in on a secret—when I'm talking about it, I'm working on integrating it. Some facilitators can just look at the ritual outline and be ready to go. Others can listen to someone else tell them the intention. Me? I've got to talk it through or else I'm lost. That's the blessing and curse of being an auditory kinesthetic person.

I say all this to try and give you a sense of where my practice of working with intention comes from. I encourage you to figure out what your learning style or way of "apprehending reality" is in order for you to develop not only your work with intention, but also your ability to plan and experience ritual as a whole. But now, on to intention!

If you are creating or plan to one day create ritual for other people, then I invite you to consider playing with this notion of "intention" and taking it a little deeper by reframing the concept to make a distinction between *intention* and *theme*. Although I'm kinesthetic, I'm still a word junkie (I do lots of crossword puzzles!). So when I see "intention," I think about "what I intend to do." Therefore, a ritual intention becomes what I want to accomplish as a facilitator. For instance, at a ritual where I'm likely going to have several folks who are new to ritual: *"I intend to create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for the participants who have never experienced ecstatic ritual before."*

You might notice that that statement doesn't say anything about the season, life-force, abundance, or any myriad of possible thematic elements that often go into an Earth-based ritual. It simply states my value for inclusion and accessibility and a primary goal for a particular ritual. If I'm working with a group full of experienced people, my intention might look a little different, such as *"I intend to provide an opportunity for this group to connect on a deeper level, so we can direct energy towards our goal."* Like all intention statements, this changes from ritual to ritual, from group to group.

How do I decide on an intention? Generally, my first step is to think about who is coming to the ritual. One of the first things I often do with a planning team in my local community is to generate a list of all the people who could possibly come to our public ritual. We could have any number of people from any number of backgrounds, ages, physical abilities, or experience levels, so our goal is to design a ritual that includes everyone. Our intention statement might be more general, so as to include a number of possibilities. It's a little easier for the ritual planners at a Mystery School weekend, since we often have a good sense of what kind of people are attending the weekend because we've developed more of a relationship with them. Our intention statements can be much more specific and focused to a particular group, and as the year progresses, our intentions get more complex because we have a better understanding of the people who come to the Grove on a regular basis. Having a sense of the participants can help you really get down to the essence of what you intend to do.

You may be asking, *But River, what about the beautiful language and poetry of the classic intention statement? I liked that part!* Me too! And it's still there! Based on conversations and ideas that I've adopted from Cynthia's ritual philosophy, I am now calling the "why" of ritual the *theme*. In essence, this is the classic intention statement with a different name, simply because, as you'll recall, I'm a word junkie.

The theme essentially answers the questions, "Why gather? Why should we do this? Why should we expend energy and do this work?" Here's where you can use statements like, *"Every choice we make manifests our sacred work. Together we celebrate this divine activism and accept the inspiration that ignites our will."* (That's from a recent ritual in my local community.)

However you decide to work with it, I strongly recommend that you have some kind of an intention for your ritual so that everything flows together and supports the whole. It doesn't have to break down into "intention" and "theme." But I find that if I'm a facilitator, and particularly if I'm working with other facilitators, being explicit about what we're working for as a group is extremely helpful. Whether you adopt it as part of your personal ritual planning routine or not, I offer it as another possibility for ways to really utilize the power of an intention statement and enhance your awareness as a facilitator. That's what this tool has done for me.

River is a Grove staff member and 8th-year Mystery who hails from Chicago, Illinois. When she's not teaching, facilitating, or just plain talking about ritual, you'll probably find her solving a crossword puzzle or playing one of her sixteen or so drums while singing her heart out. Please feel free to contact her at river@dianasgrove.com.

Mystery's Light

by Laurie Dietrich

All text in quotations is taken with minor edits from emails to the Mystery List, the voice of the 2007 Mystery School community.

Last month, the figure at the center of this year's story of Tam Lin, Jennet, spoke on the Mystery list. Running, running to answer the call of Carter Shay and the wild, she said, "I knew who I was, in my tower. And I know who I am, here in the dark. Then, I was potential. Now, I am desire." To begin this year in Mystery School, we considered our potential, and desire was the conversation that bloomed from that seed. Desire was the theme that many Mysteries explored.

"Desire is what pulled me into this world when I took my first breath. It is the longing I feel for the realm of dreams and magic and the longing that realm has for me." "I have been drawn forth by desire, desire to seek and to savor the seeking; desire to live fully the laughter and love and discomforts of life; desire to discover, again and again, who I am and who I am becoming."

But "to really allow myself to want, to desire, to long for something, opens me up to a wound and to pain that feels very deep and dangerous to me. If I really feel that longing, then I risk really feeling the denial of having that longing filled." "I realize that I have learned to associate desire with pain." "I am wondering why this dance of desire *must* lead to painful transformation?" "Desire, for me, does not always end in pain; but it does often enough that I risk pain when I let myself desire. No matter how many times I've had my heart broken, I continue to desire, to yearn, to reach. It makes me feel alive to reach, even when I fear failure, even when the outcome is uncertain. For me, it's not always about courage or trust—it's more about faith, it's more that I can't *not* reach."

And yet, "I don't believe that desire is always painful. Often desire is profoundly joyful. It's telling me how connected I am. It also tells me when I'm not connected," which can be "inspiring, informative and painful too." "I don't see desire as leading to painful transformation—though when I resist change, I experience my resistance as painful sometimes." But "without the wish, the desire, we wouldn't go into the woods, or pick the rampion or the rose, or light the lamp. And we wouldn't grow, and transform."

"I was just musing the other day in response to the shattering of a shared dream, that the only cure for such a dream is another dream, or else the old one resurrected and transformed." So "I still risk. I still allow my heart and desire to lead me to risky places. I know that I may hurt, but the benefits are so much greater than that. I still get scared, but I try to remember that by allowing myself to love and to dream and to desire, I am opening myself to possibilities of joy and love returned beyond imagining." "Based on the outcome—I would do it again."

So, “what do I desire this year? To be connected to spirit.” “For me, the hardest place to discern the difference between intuition (what I know at some level is right for me in this life) and desire (what I tell myself I want) is when I am faced with a strong attraction and a potential for true connection with another.” “I can begin to discern the nature of my desire and the 'goodness' of my desire when I look at the impact of my desire. When I take responsibility for my desire, I become accountable for it.” Because “perhaps, just perhaps, I too am drawing someone else out of that castle. Perhaps someone is running to me.” “When we long for, yearn, desire, hunger ... is that when we reach for what has been reaching for us?”

Desire compels me to reach and to be reached. “I wonder if safety and comfort reach for me just as the wild does, if the warmth of the familiar and the ecstatic, clammy-hands feeling I get from truly new experiences are always surrounding me. If, in fact, the universe is patiently waiting to reveal that which I most need to learn.”

“I think that as I reach for the divine/desire in any of its forms, it is reaching for me. I believe the divine is all around me. It is always caressing my life, softly plucking my finest tunes from my soul. The times when I am actually in tune with my emotions, hungers, and desires are the times when I reach out and discover what has been reaching out to touch me.”

“Through the night, as I lay, the wind from Carter Shay fanned the embers within me. Through the night, the moon rose and sank among the clouds and wandering stars, and the wind from Carter Shay blew. And now I felt a yearning that I feared would destroy me if not expressed. Now I felt a desire that demanded an outlet. I felt a wanting that would not be contained.”

“There is always something to strive for, always something to desire.” “That phrase from the Charge of the Goddess saying that She is what we attain ‘at the end of desire’ really speaks to me of death. The end of desire, the end of the fire that provides the momentum of my life means death. For me, the end of desire, death, is a new form of union with the divine. Perhaps paradoxically, I also see desire in life as union with the divine, as a continuing embrace (or dance!) with Fire.”

Jennet, running, is desire. The voices of the community, “some sewing, some listening, some running, some waiting, some in the wild calling, some creating beautiful images with words,” give voice to that desire, and make it their own.

Laurie Dietrich is (among other things) a freelance writer and editor living in San Antonio, Texas. A fourth-year Mystery and sometimes over-enthusiastic volunteer, she has too many pets, not enough silence, and just the right amount of challenge in her life.

The Dark and the Wild

by Raven

I breathe in, and then out. I breathe in again. I breathe into my cupped hands and I see the swirling and the dancing of my breath of life. I see gods and goddesses, ideals and archetypes, qualities and possibilities that I could dedicate my soul to for this upcoming year.

In February, the Mystery School Moon Shadows journal offered us the opportunity to dedicate to an elemental force, an aspect of nature. I dedicated to Air. This month, Moon Shadows invites us to dedicate to a value or quality for which we strive. With Air as my ally, will I choose to dedicate to a quality that inspires me? Or will Air conspire with those swirling gods and goddesses, and make me the chosen, not the chooser?

My first dedication was to Medusa. She came to me in my dreams ten years ago and challenged my status quo. Medusa said to me, "Take action; be beauty". I had seen the creatures of the natural world and had heard their beauty, their poetry and songs of living. Yet I was fearful of owning my place in that world. "Take action; be beauty," she said. Despite loved ones' concerns and pleas not to change, I saw my place in nature. I found my life force among elements and deities, mythology and fairy tales.

Now, as I seek a new dedication, I look into my breath. I look at who I was: a child who found her soul while singing the songs of nature in the woods; a teenager who lost herself in the woes of first loves, losses and growing pains; a young woman who married too late for my community and earlier than I expected; a mother who broke conventions, fought conformity and learned *from* her children, following their steps rather than leading their lives; an artist who touches with gentle hands and well-chosen words; a woman still sometimes afraid to live up to my potential and take responsibility for my impact.

What qualities do I need now? What values demand my attention now? Do you ask these same questions? As you consider your dedication this year, can you name what you are willing to stretch yourself to touch?

Not yet satisfied that I have my answer, I reach, and reach further. I long to touch and to be touched; I reach for a co-conspirator, someone to breathe with, an ally. Unawares, I reach for courage. Courageously, I *dare* to reach for courage, the ability to take action despite fear or reason. Perhaps action is the path that I wish to walk on.

Action takes just one step, and then another. Could it be as simple as that? One step after another and I have a personal practice. Taking care of my body and soul is part of living up to my potential. Living up to my potential means taking responsibility for my impact. Courage! I dedicate myself to the quality of courage and the possibility of action. I promise to walk for a half hour every day and to take time each evening for quiet

meditation and possibly some drumming. I dedicate myself to claiming my gifts and acknowledging my talent.

For one year, I will face my fear of others seeing my value. It feels frightening. I need courage. And, while courage and I get to know each other, I will still do it! I will do it afraid.

What will you do? What quality calls you? What personal practice is waiting for you? Are you afraid to step into your power? So am I. But I will do it anyway.

Raven is a Massage Therapist and Massage Therapy Instructor in St. Louis, Missouri. She is part of the Post Rites Leadership Team at Diana's Grove. She shares her life with two Grove dogs, two pre-teen boys, a husband and bird.

Stewarding the Land: Who Stewards the Land?

by Patricia Storm

Stewardship implies that someone is doing the stewarding. One of the Cornerstones of the Diana's Grove community is stewardship of self. To me this Cornerstone is about being responsible to bring into being all that you are capable of, as your gift to your community and the universe in general.

Stewarding Diana's Grove has become a formal process over the last two years. It has been an informal process since the Grove was founded in 1994. Cynthia and I were the original stewards, believing from the beginning that we didn't really "own" the land, but had the responsibility to take care of this beautiful place.

There have been many people who have lived on this land and supported this vision in one way or another over the years. Some lived here for brief periods of a week or month. Others stayed for several years. Ramona was here for the final years of her life. Jane was here for seven years and was a key influence in the growth and development of Diana's Grove, philosophically and physically. These individuals have stewarded as cooks, cleaners, builders, visionary leaders, gardeners, teachers, students, and other services too numerous to mention.

Currently the stewards of Diana's Grove who live at Diana's Grove are the following people:

Cynthia: the driving force and visionary leader of Mystery School, the written work, and the Diana's Grove Dog Rescue. She is a Master Tarotist and very good astrologer. Community dynamics and dog rescue are her passions. She is my life partner and one

of the most brilliant women I know.

Me—Patricia: drummer, computer geek wannabe, builder, former psychologist and telephone engineer, and current lover of this place we've named Diana's Grove.

Jim: describes himself as "plumber, drummer, chef, and assassin" (of wasps and mosquitoes who venture into cabins). He manages to keep things running on the land and in the kitchen. He's a self-taught gourmet cook and poet.

Canyon: known in the "other" world as one of the country's leading child development professionals; she helps us keep on task and organized, and leads groups and on-line discussions. She is writing a book on the 7 Childhood Treasures and how each of us can rediscover those treasures in ourselves.

Constance: Cynthia's partner in the dog rescue work and my advisor on things financial. Constance can coach any terrified dog out from any drain pipe to be rescued. She handles almost all of the calls and emails about dogs needing homes and people wanting a dog. She and Cynthia recently placed 49 dogs in a 30-day period. They won't tell me how many we took in during that time.

Nyx: a fairly recent transplant from Florida via Chicago. Nyx has joined the dog rescue work. She handles medications and special needs primarily, but also does some fine cooking and almost any other support requested. She helps us prepare for weekend guests and philosophical conversations.

Amanda: came last summer as part of the apprenticeship program and stayed. She's gathering an informal education in running a retreat center and dog rescue before going off for a more formal education via college. She cooks, cleans, takes care of dogs, builds, researches, and is still trying to capture a rabbit (they are all safe so far).

Gus: a recent transplant from New Orleans. Gus provides invaluable service as he keeps all the kennels clean and takes many dogs on long walks. He also assists with tree work and other odd jobs around the land. Gus is willing to take on most tasks when asked. He loves to chat with people and be a part of things.

Meghan: attended the Earth Activist Training held at Diana's Grove last fall. She came back for a visit a few weeks ago and we want to keep her. I don't know how long we'll be successful. She is a delightful, helpful, enthusiastic presence. I'm hoping she will help put a garden in soon. She helps with anything asked of her and takes on anything she sees that needs to be done.

charles: I'm so happy to report that charles is with us again at this time. He is a free spirit who moves with the wind and the needs of the world in general. He does so much, even the things that scare him, like climbing high into trees to build a treehouse. He is an activist working to make our world a healthier place for all of us. He understands tools, people, and the land better than most other people I know. He is my mentor and

guide.

None of us receives a “salary” for our work. Some even contribute financially to sustain the Grove. Each of does have our basic needs met. We eat really well. We have whatever shelter we choose (or are willing to build). We have the relentless support of each other and the larger Grove community. We can each have as many dogs to sleep with as we want. We have opportunities to meet incredible, dynamic, and brilliant people. We have, I believe, wealth beyond imagination.

More will come and some will leave. Perhaps Diana’s Grove is a people rescue as well as a dog rescue.

Patricia Storm is one of the co-founders of Diana's Grove, and is famous for being as comfortable on a tractor as she is playing frame drum. (Both of which she does extremely well!) She has been instrumental in developing the Stewardship Path program, which is a key part of Mystery School 2007. For more information on how you can be a part this work, visit www.dianasgrove.com or contact Patricia at patricia@dianasgrove.com.

Design Your Becoming

by Canyon

The 7 Childhood Treasures—capacities for Trust, Independence, Faith, Negotiation, Vision, Compromise, and Acceptance—should be built in your first seven years of life. (See the January edition of *Between the Worlds* for an introduction.) February’s chapter of our story connected to Faith, the treasure that can be built by the three-year-old child. This month’s story is one of individuation, of becoming an individual; being who you are, rather than the person others want you to be. The 7 Childhood Treasures are all built in the process of individuation, but the second treasure, Independence, relates best to this chapter of the *Ballad of Tam Lin*.

Against all advice, Jennet goes to Carter Shay and touches the wild rose. When she comes back home, she is different. No longer the dutiful daughter her father hoped for, nor the sedately stitching woman the village admired; she is a self-possessed Self. Jennet owns herself and is who she is, despite others’ desires. The Celtic Cross Tarot spread position for March is *What is over me? What do I reach for?* The two-year-old child reaches for this self-possession and builds the Childhood Treasure of Independence.

Independence is freedom from the control, influence, support, and aid of others. In the context of the 7 Childhood Treasures, it is freedom from control, and *choice* over influence, support, and aid. As a Childhood Treasure, Independence is not isolation; it is separation from others that includes interaction. In the parlance of psychology, this treasure is about boundaries.

Boundaries are simply the edges of who you are. Your most visible boundary is your skin; it forms your physical boundary. It is where you stop and everything that is *not you* begins. If you had the support to build boundaries during your second year of life, then you also have intellectual, psychological, and emotional boundaries.

As a young toddler, you began formation of your psychological and intellectual boundaries the first time you uttered “No,” the first word spoken by the vast majority of young children. “No” is toddler-speak for a much longer message. If you could, you would have said something like, “That’s a nice idea, but I have something else in mind. Instead of a bath now, I’d like to play a bit longer with these blocks.”

What kind of boundaries do you have now? Are they so permeable that you simply take on the values, thoughts, feelings, or desires of others? Have you ever felt that you had no self of your own? When have you acted as if your body didn’t exist or didn’t deserve your attention? Have you ever let your needs be eclipsed, over-shadowed by the needs of another?

Have you ever felt that very few of your thoughts, feelings, desires, and values could “hold their own” against those of your friends, partners, coworkers, or family members? Have you ever pushed your body’s needs to one side because they would inconvenience you, or another? When have you found yourself willing to give in to what others believed or thought, rather than voice a different opinion or need? Have you ever compromised who you are for the sake of avoiding being different, avoiding disagreement?

Have you ever been confident that your thoughts, feelings, or desires were the most important—the “only ones worth having”? Have you ever physically overwhelmed another person ... even with a hug or a gentle touch she didn’t ask for? Have you ever found yourself over-sharing, telling people too much about yourself too soon? When have you told somebody your life story within the first hour you knew him?

These questions all describe boundaries that are “mushy”—soft or thin, over-permeable. Mushy boundaries are not strong enough to allow you to be a separate, unique person in the world.

Healthy, strong boundaries look quite different from mushy ones. They let you know who you are and let you express what you believe, what you feel, and what you want—simply, clearly, without aggression. With healthy boundaries, you can listen without defensiveness to others as they express what they believe, feel, and want, even when you have very different beliefs, feelings, and desires. Healthy boundaries allow you to know what your body wants and needs and to provide it or ask for it. You can calmly state your own interests without feeling the need to qualify or explain them.

Have you ever said, “Here’s what I think, feel, want...,” without fear of rejection, without feeling pushy or greedy? Have you disagreed with someone else’s ideas or had feelings different from another’s and known that you were acceptable in your difference, and so

was the other person—both of you perfectly okay *and* different? Can you consider another point of view, desire, or feeling that differs from your own without needing to aggressively defend yours?

These are the signs of healthy boundaries. Do you have them? Do you have them with some people in your life but not with others? If your awareness of your boundaries is new, then your boundaries might be made of fragile materials. What do you see, if you imagine what your boundaries are made of? Do you see steel walls that protect against all incursions? Do you see balsa wood that splinters easily on impact? Do you see rice paper that tears with the pressure of a fingertip?

Awareness of the strength of your boundaries helps you know two things. First, you know what kinds of pressure to keep away from. If your boundaries are young and vulnerable, formed from fragile materials, then you don't put them into the wind tunnel of certain relationships or events: for some, Thanksgiving with the biological family; for others, a meeting with the boss. Second, when you become aware of the strength of your boundaries, you know when you need to shore them up with stronger materials; you know you need to build them better.

Building boundaries builds Independence, the treasure of the two-year-old child. Will you design your becoming by building them now?

On Sunday morning of each Mystery School intensive, we will spend an hour exploring childhood's wisdom as it relates to that month's story and themes. These explorations, in community, will enliven and enrich this personal growth work through shared experience.

Canyon is a staff member at Diana's Grove and has been writing for *Between the Worlds* since 2002. Also known as Dr. L. Carol Scott, she is writing a book about the 7 Childhood Treasures™. She uses the wisdom of childhood to help you become who you truly are, who you were intended to be. Learn more about her work at www.LCarolScott.com.

Journey in Words

by Shaun Perkins

A rose. Symbol of beauty. Symbol of love. In reaching for the rose this month, we are reaching for beauty and love and so much more. We are on a journey to search, to learn, to revel in the knowledge of our individual selves. And one way we can do this is through creating our green mantles, our symbols of protection and regeneration that will accompany us as the year unfolds.

Our online writing class used the form of an acrostic (the first letter of each line, running vertically, spells out a word) to describe our green mantles. Herein are feelings, jewels, clothes, elements, and mottos. Herein are some of the green mantles that we are creating in this year of mystery.

Garish emotions
Return in me
Excited by the
Energy
(Nearly) welcoming

My
Attention turned just to the
Now
Tapping out a bead
Leaving the door open, daring
Ecstasy
--by Mouse

Gemstones stitched onto black cloth
Rim the border of my quiet space.
Elements represented in each bead --
Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Center --
Neatly arranged, they watch and they witness.

My companions in silence they are.
An invitation to listen deeply they make.
Nearer to my wild places I draw.
Taking the time to hear what is spoken in the
Language found only between the words.
Elemental silence has much to say.
--by Jessica Hernandez

Growing
Robe,
Emerging
Entity of
Nature

Magick
Adornment
Naked beneath
Twilight's
Love
Entwined
--by davis

Seeking Silence
By Donna

Grounding gently; each
row returning.
Ego
ebbs.
Now remains.
Moving mandala:
awe is the center.
Naming in silence new
territory.
Latitude for seeing
ever farther shores.

Guessing at an outcome.
Ready or not.
Entering into the story.
Encouraged to create my own myth.
Not knowing.

Myself
And
Naked
Tales
Lo[osing] all
Entanglements.
--by Diane/Cricket

Gusts of wind lift the corners
Raising edges, playing
Even the wind can sense the magic
Endlessly dancing with the fabric
No mortal garment could so enchant the air

Minutes, each day
Aware...of everything
Needle, or hand, or tool, or pen
Tell me a story. I will
Listen
Everything I hear flows through me
--by Sarah Allison

Wrapped in Surprise
By NorthLight

Goddess speaks in my heart

Reality made emphatic
Energy lifts me into my own Self
Everywhere I look I see beauty
Now is the moment; there is no other
Manifestation is a blessing, opportunity, challenge
All my learning, knowledge, truth, and trust
Now brings to fruition dreams lightly seen
Time waits, pauses, leaps, stretches, and pounces
Love is the key to
Everything!

Giving form with my fingers to
Ragged weave, I
Entwine threads together.
Everything is so twisted and tangled;
Nothing in my life will stay neatly separate.

My breath is my gift,
And I give it to the weave as well,
Nurturing citywild strands of green, yellow, purple,
Touching the red heart of this blackness that waits outside my window.
I weave
Life, lived together, the millions of us, packed into a white-hot core
so dense it might
Explode.
--by Bri

Go.
Reach for the wild, and reaching,
Experience the
Ecstasy of living in and for the
Now.

My heart breaks, recalling each time I shied
Away from the wild, away from passion.
No more.
Tennyson said it - I will drink life to the
Lees (at least for today). And while it is but one day, may today become
Evermore
--by Jason

Whether or not your green mantle is one of poetry, are you weaving it from the material of your mind and soul? Does your body move toward the scent of that rose that beckons to Jennet . . . that holds the beauty and love of our selves and our lives in its petals? If so, feel that tenderness that burgeoned from the earth into this world we journey through.

And if words call you on that journey, know that if you are a Mystery, you can still join us

in our online class. You can weave your words into a mantle along with so many others. Just reach.

Shaun Perkins, a published author and presenter, offers workshops throughout the year at Diana's Grove events and facilitates the Grove's online writing class. She has presented workshops nationwide, for such organizations as the National Storytelling Network and the National Association for Poetry Therapy. You can learn more about her and her work at www.journeyinwords.com

Astrology for the Journey: Points of Desire

by Teri Parsley Starnes

Desire is that vital force in me which lets me know that I am alive. To turn Descartes' quote entirely on its head: I am, therefore I desire. It is winter as I write this. In fact, Valentine's Day is just a few days away. I am aware of the incredible desire welling up in me right now to feel the life force return to the trees and grass and flowers. Perhaps we created Valentine's Day for this time of the year when we need to rekindle desire—to know that we and the world around us are indeed alive.

Perhaps it was on Valentine's Day that Jennet threw down her work and ran into the wild. Perhaps she ran because she had to feel that she was alive. She must have run into a strange world indeed, because she found a rose growing when a rose should not be growing. A stronger desire rose up in her at that time, I think. A floodgate of hunger opened for her, she found herself alive.

If a birth chart is "breathed into life" at our first breath, then the whole chart is about being alive. And if life is about desire, then the whole birth chart reflects how desire plays out in our lives. What called you into life? I describe the Ascendant or Rising Sign of the chart as the energy that called me into life. Perhaps life desires us. Perhaps the sign of the zodiac rising at the moment of our birth is showing the desire that life has for us. How do we engage with that call to being? The Ascendant marks the beginning of the first house—the house of identity and individuation. I think of the Ascendant as the energy that kicks us into life and says, "now go and learn". It is the beginning point.

Desire begins with a call from the stars and coalesces in the Sun—the vital source of energy in our solar system. Life would not exist without it. We need the Sun. Astrologically, the Sun represents what we are striving for. Imagine that you are holding your desire above your head. It might look like a round golden disk that everyone else can see, but you only see the shadow behind it. You only see the desire yet unattained. In this way the Sun becomes a dream, a yearning, a force pulling you into being more than you already are. If I am alive then I must desire. I must reach for more.

The Sun sign shows us much about our desire, but often people don't quite feel like

their Sun signs, or at least they don't feel quite like the way their Sun signs are described in astrology books. The house and the aspects to the Sun also figure into the Sun's story of striving. Each house of the birth chart represents a unique arena of life. Aspects are relationships that planets form with each other. This additional information gives us a clearer picture of our Sun signs. We can learn about the resources we have and the challenges we face as we seek to attain our desires. We can see the contradictions and struggles. We can see the unique quality of our desire. As we get older and experience all the delights and the set backs along the path to attaining our dreams, the Sun becomes our contribution to the world—the life-giving force that others see. I like to think we also learn to better see our own light.

Liz Greene writes “Mars is the right hand of the Sun.” Mars is the champion, the warrior, the agent of our Sun's striving. Mars describes how we pursue that which we desire. What is the story of the relationship between your Sun and Mars? Even if there is no traditional aspect between the Sun and Mars in the chart, it is worthwhile to consider how these two energies interact. Element, sign, modality (Cardinal, Fixed, Mutable), and house position should all be factored in. Flesh out the character of Mars in your chart. Create a warrior. Are there aspects to Mars from other planets in the chart? These are especially important as they will show both the resources and challenges that your warrior self meets in acting upon your desires. Then return to your Sun. Hold up that Sun as your desire and converse with your Mars.

For example, in my chart my Sun and Mars are not in aspect with each other. My Aries Sun strives for expression as a leader while also needing to spend a lot of time doing internal, private work (because it is in the 4th house). My Mars is in Gemini in the 6th house. Both Aries and Gemini are yang signs; my passion flows outward, sometimes surprising the part of me that wants to remain safe and hidden in the 4th house of the private self. The Aries energy is impulsive. Mars in the 6th house of service, apprenticeship and order wants me to act with a little more deliberation and patience. But being in Gemini (mutable air), this is not always easy to do. I have noticed a pattern in my life of expressing my desire for leadership in the arena of service. With my Sun in a fire sign and my Mars in an air sign, I notice that these elements feed each other and are sometimes volatile. I struggle with burn out and loss of focus. Another important feature of Mars in my chart is that it is unaspected. In other words, it does not have a relationship to the other planets in my chart. An unaspected planet sometimes acts like a rogue energy. I don't always have a handle on this aspect of myself. The relationship between Sun and Mars shows a pattern of how I manifest my desires. There are ways they support each other, ways they support each other too much, and ways that they remind me to refine my expression of desire to incorporate more balance and focus in my life.

No consideration of desire would be complete without Venus. Venus represents the force of attraction that awakens desire. And Venus represents the completion of desire's yearning. In this year's story, Carter Shay, the Wild, and Tam Lin are some of the symbols for this attraction. I have a special fondness for Venus in my chart and I suspect everyone loves that part of themselves too. Venus reminds us of beauty. The

Sun's striving would be hollow without it.

Venus gives value to our dreams and desires. Consider the relationship of your Venus to your Mars and your Sun. The story of desire deepens when we do. On the Mystery list last month Wil Perry wrote, "I pried my heart open to desire and years of beauty rushed in." Sometimes we need to risk desire, to let ourselves want, reach, and dream. What rushes in may be purpose. What rushes in may be beauty. What rushes in will be life.

Teri Parsley Starnes delightedly begins her 8th year as a Mystery in 2007. She has been practicing as a professional astrologer since 1995. She welcomes all your astrology questions and encourages Mysteries to continue the astrological conversation on Diana's Grove Oracle e-list. Visit her website www.starsdanceastrology.com to find out more or contact Teri at tpstar@mninter.net

Interview with a Mystery: Jo Carter

by River

My interviewee this month currently lives in an eco-friendly home nestled in the Sandia Mountains of New Mexico with her husband, three dogs, several stacks of books, boxes of quilting supplies, board games, and gobs of electronic equipment. Jo's interests range from performing improvisational theater/comedy to training for marathons! Admittedly, I am slightly biased about how wonderful she is, since Jo has been one of my dearest friends since we were both teenagers back in Nebraska, but I think you'll truly enjoy getting to know Jo and her unique take on the world.

You've been to Diana's Grove a few times in recent years, but this is the first time you've decided to join Mystery School. What drew you in this year? Why do Mystery School now?

Oh, I've considered doing Mystery School a few times now. I was never quite sure it was right for me, or maybe not sure that it was the right time for me to take on this work. But I'm firmly planted in the outside world, and I still have vast troubles picturing myself with a mystical, spiritual life. So ... Mystery School? It took me a while to decide that it was really something for me, despite all the wonderful Mystery folks I've met over the years.

Honestly, I'm still not sure that it's the right time for me to try Mystery School—I've got a *lot* of outside life on my plate these days—but I decided to make the jump anyway. I've definitely learned that it's NEVER the "right time," so I just do what I can when the opportunity comes around.

I've heard you describe your spiritual tradition as "patchwork." Could you

elaborate a little on that? What are your core spiritual philosophies? How would you describe your path right now?

I'm not actually sure if I'd call myself "religious" or "spiritual" at all, but I do feel a need for some form of myth that I find metaphorically satisfying in order to make sense of the world for myself. I grew up Catholic but left that tradition when I realized that my idea of what was true didn't match up with the official version. Ever since then, I've read and listened widely, incorporating those bits and pieces that work for me, that help me make daily life more livable, and that fit with my innate sense of bedrock truths.

What are those bedrock truths, or what you might be calling "core spiritual philosophies"? Walk humbly, for it opens me to change and surprise. Respect everyone and everything, for there I find self-respect. Offer help whenever I can without imposing, for then I can seek help myself. The world is more complex than I will ever understand, and so the best path is to explore, to think, to challenge myself and others, and to treat it all with a sense of humor and an open mind. Take both nothing and everything seriously. There's quite a bit of the Grove in there, plus some Quaker bits and some Unitarianism, but I think that *Spiderman* comics and *Star Wars* (the original series, not the horrid recent trilogy) have also definitely provided much of what I work with. It's a sort of spiritual granola: kinda funny to look at, but (hopefully) ultimately filling and nutritious.

As for spiritual practices, I'm still working on finding a set that works for me. I say hello to trees as I walk to campus, brushing their branch tips in a sort of arboreal high five. I frequently will draw a tarot card in the morning as a sort of check-in, though I often find myself snorting in recognition at the insight given. I cuddle my dogs to relax. But I'm not involved in any local spiritual community or group practice, though I sometimes feel the lack. I just haven't found a good fit yet—part of the danger of being quite so eclectic.

In this year's story, Tam Lin represents the dream we reach for and hold onto, even when it shifts and changes into forms we could never have imagined. What's your dream? What outcome are you looking to hold onto at the end of this year?

I don't know what my dream is right now, and that's my big quest. I feel as if I've lost touch with my own intuition, leaving me a little unable to say what it is that I really want out of life, what will truly make me happy. I'm married to a great guy and so I don't seek a different romantic love, but I do feel like there has to be more to my life than that relationship for me to be fulfilled. What that "more" is, I have no idea, which is maddening.

We follow his job around the country, and over time I've developed a habit of doing things that are convenient rather than just right. I've picked up three graduate degrees along the way and am working on a fourth one now, realizing that these too may be substitutes for that unknown something. I need to regain the habit of being Goldilocks and not settling for that first bowl of "too hot" porridge, I guess.

The way I see it, this year I am both Jennet and Tam Lin: seeking to fall in love with me, to become pregnant with possibilities (and that's it, because "Jo as Mom" is one of those things that wakes me up in a sweat in the middle of the night), and then to be brave enough to grasp my true self and hold on despite all the distractions and confusions that may come my way.

Yes, this year really is all about me. Me, me, me. Of course, it's about everyone else too, but not in my Moon Shadows book. Me. And as silly as I feel, I'm ok with that.

For River's bio, please see *Ritual Artistry* in this month's magazine.

Cornerstone: Thinking Well of the Group

by Jennifer Wilson

Last month, I explored the Cornerstone of Choice, one of the essential elements of the philosophy of Diana's Grove. This month, I will take a short step over to the Cornerstone of Thinking Well of the Group. Over time, the name of this Cornerstone has evolved to Thinking Well of Others. I will use the original name in this article, and I encourage you to hold the newer name in your mind, too, and think about the implications of Thinking Well for individuals as well as groups.

I say that it is a short step because, as Cynthia says, "Thinking well of the group begins simply as choice. If you choose to be in this group or community, you choose it because you think well of it." Admittedly, this belief is an assumption, and this belief is where thinking well begins—with assuming that others have good intentions. If we can start with this assumption, we have a place from which to ask about our interactions or conversations. We might say, "That seemed off to me. What was that about for you?" when something happens that feels "less than"—less than respectful, less than healthy, less than kind.

Can you feel the difference between thinking well as a starting point for direct communication versus thinking well as an invitation to gloss over problems and pretend that everything is rosy and perfect? The goal is not to deny that we feel hurt when we believe someone has insulted us. Rather, I see this Cornerstone as an entry point into conversation about difficulties that may arise between you and me without blame being automatically invited to the table. If we discover that something disrespectful did take place, then thinking well allows us to hold the space for healing and resolution to happen without holding grudges or seeking revenge. Starting with thinking well allows us to return to thinking well.

Now if your mind is at all like mine, you may have started to think of exceptions. What about groups I didn't choose to be a part of, like my family? What about coworkers who didn't work there when I took the job?

Sometimes I can understand concepts better by looking at their reversal. In this case, the reversal is to think poorly of the group from the start. Again, I have to jump back to that Cornerstone of Choice. I definitely do not want to be a person who chooses to think poorly of people, so even if I didn't choose the group in which I find myself, I can still choose the way in which I want to relate to that group.

To take it one step further, I think that this Cornerstone reflects a tenet that is universal to almost every religion or spiritual path: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In other words, if I expect to be well thought of *by* a group, I must enter into my relationship with them by thinking well of them, too.

But we are only human, as the saying goes. Can we achieve this state of grace? I like this quote from Cynthia's writing: "What if everyone were struggling with the same issues—inclusion, personal comfort, self expression and connection? What if we all are doing the best that we can and at times, folks aren't going to act or react in the way that best meets my needs?" Those last two words may be at the heart of the matter. Being in community means that sometimes *my* needs won't be met, plain and simple. How I handle that reality, well, that is my Choice.

So we've come full circle back to Choice. The wonderful thing about these Cornerstones is that together, they build a foundation. Tug on one and feel all of them shift. Next month, I will explore this month's twin, Thinking Well of Self. Until then, I wish to close with a Sanskrit word that for me is the essence of thinking well of others: *Namaste. The divine in me recognizes the divine in you.*

Jennifer Wilson is a Diana's Grove staff member and founder of New Leaf Coaching and Consulting, www.newleafcoach.org. She is a teacher, rock climber, mountainbiker, wanderer, writer and nature-lover. jennifer@dianasgrove.com

Skippy Speaks

by Skippy's Editor

Usually, one of the Grove's favorite dogs ever will speak in this space all year, giving her unique perspective on the Ballad of Tam Lin and other topics that catch her attention.

This month only! Skippy's "Editor" Speaks

"Channeling" a dog can be problematical at best. In the past it has required the dog, Skippy, to slow down enough that she was willing to lie next to my chair and let her

words drift into my mind. Dogs are very psychic so they have no problems with this process.

However we humans ... well, let me speak for myself. I am not particularly psychic and I need a certain amount of cooperation from said dog. Last year was a piece of cake. Skippy was dedicated to Zena, Warrior Princess, an archetype that talked. This year, well, this year is a problem because Skippy has decided to dedicate to a deity that doesn't speak.

The main characteristic of her deity is an intense fierceness coupled with constant vigilance while simultaneously looking into the past and into the future. She tells me I need to learn to listen to "languages that speak without words." I hate it when the dogs start quoting the packets to me. Not only that, Skippy won't even slow down enough to sit by me. None of this is conducive to slow, patient "channeling."

In other words, right now Skippy is entirely too busy to "speak" with me. I told her to choose her deity carefully. That once a connection was made, between dedicant and deity or archetype, often the dedicant would begin to embody characteristics of their particular deity.

But no, Ms. Skipena thought she was smarter than that. After all, she has dedicated to Fire once again this year and that was a snap for her—isn't she the color of red and gold, able to run swifter than the wind and leap higher than the tall grasses?

All of the above was conveyed to me in glorious full color images as Skippy ran energetically out into the meadow, away from me. I called after her, wanting to remind her that dedication to a deity requires being willing to open yourself to that deity's or archetype's influence and being willing to embody and live its characteristics. Yes!

Her answer came back to me swiftly. Since her deity, Cerberus, has three heads, shouldn't she now be getting three bowls of food at feeding time? Channeling a smart dog really isn't easy.

Lonely Hearts: The Rescuing Continues

by Cynthia Jones

Once you have adopted a dog from a shelter, any shelter, the rescuing continues. When we take in a dog, we start the process. The dogs we take in often need care and rehabilitation and, when you adopt, the rescuing continues.

Adopting a dog isn't the same as buying a dog. When you adopt, you help save a life but not just that life of the dog you take home. An adoption fee doesn't "pay for" your dog. It isn't based on your dog's expenses. If it did, if it was, I could show you a few "thousand dollar" specials. Your contribution lets us be a *no kill* shelter. Your contribution lets us save lives even if the pup is black or doesn't have a grandparent that even remotely resembles any of those wonderful dogs who pranced around the ring at Westminster.

There are many misconceptions about what it is like to run a dog rescue and what we can do for people and dogs. We are always sorry to say no and, at times, *no* is all we can say. When we are full, we say no to people who want us to take a dog and to people who want us to take back a dog they adopted a year or two ago. Constance wrote the following letter a few nights ago to a person who asked to be reimbursed for her newly adopted dog's first veterinarian visit.

Dear Mary,

I apologize for the delay in responding. Other than responding to a call about an abandoned puppy, the rest of my trip back from Kansas was fairly uneventful. I spent an extra night out of town in order to bring Darla, an eight-week-old baby girl, home.

I enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your kindness to me in the midst of the snow storm. Thanks for helping me find my way to my motel. I'm glad you are happy with Rosie and she is fitting in well.

I have struggled with how to respond to your request for reimbursement and find I want to tell you more about our work. I want to give you a picture of the 'rescuing' that your adoption donation helps fund. Late yesterday afternoon I received a call about a chocolate lab living on a chain with no shelter. Our mail carrier noticed that she had been out all winter and now had puppies. She had no food or water. The 'owners' moved away and left her chained. I got to the house to find that she died on the end of that chain. One of her pups was also dead. The other two were terrified. Eight weeks old, growling and barking, they ran away because they had never been touched.

After two hours I was finally able to capture them and bring them home to warmth and safety.

I spent a large part of the preceding week giving subcutaneous fluids and nutritional supplements to four pups who hovered between life and death. Neglect and malnutrition take the young. They are now all on their way to full recovery.

Today I will be going to the vet with a wonderful, adoring dog that I love very much. He has been having frequent seizures all weekend. We need to see what

will be involved and if we can care for his condition. As much as I love this dog, he doesn't get along with other male dogs and therefore, he is not the most place-able boy. Now he is falling into the category of special medical needs. Calm, loyal, extremely devoted to people, we will do what we can for him depending on the resources available.

This is the world we live in. As I tried to convey in my original email, above and beyond the medical expenses we have incurred for the dog you adopted, saving dogs in situations like those I just described is what we do with your adoption fee.

Very few of the dogs we work with are as healthy and happy as Rosie, the dog you adopted. Even for her, there was considerable expense to get her ready for adoption. She was spayed; heartworm tested; wormed with Panacur; given rabies, bordetella, and DA2PPV vaccinations. You might ask your vet what you would have paid for this care. I imagine it will be more than your generous adoption fee.

I'm sorry you experienced an additional expense. I wish you had contacted me. Our vet could treat Rosie's diagnosed condition for a price that is affordable for us, \$18 rather than the \$130 you paid. I hope that seeing the pups whose lives were saved this week will assure you that your adoption fee is doing great things. May these pups be as fortunate as Rosie and end up in a home like yours. Please know that you didn't buy a dog, you bought time, life, and hope for the pups below.

Sincerely,

Constance
Diana's Grove Dog Rescue

All donations to the Diana's Grove Dog Rescue are tax-deductible. For more details or adoption information, please contact Constance Fleming at 573-689-2029, or email her at Constance@dianasgrove.com. To see photos and descriptions of dogs that are available for adoption, please visit www.takeafriendhome.org. Thank you for helping us Give Life a Chance!

Cynthia Jones co-founded Diana's Grove with Patricia Storm in 1994. In addition to being the driving force behind the Mystery School program, Cynthia is also one of the visionaries behind the Dog Rescue operation along with Constance Fleming.