

TAWN's History

TAWN was formed in the Summer of 1988 by eight local priestesses: Kal Berens, Sue Bond, Delia Morgan, Patricia Moore, Nancy Edwards (then Schneider), Ashleen O’Gaea (then using her civil name), the late Virginia Thompson, and the late Shona Jackson. (Some of our literature may still say "seven priestesses" -- but that's because we each forgot to count ourselves!) Before TAWN, individual Wiccans – including Rick Johnson and Sue Bond – had worked hard to educate the public about Paganism so we would be able to meet openly. Before TAWN, individual Wiccans -- including Rick Johnson and Sue Bond – had worked hard to educate the public about Paganism so that we would be able to meet openly.

If memory serves, we adopted our first logo in 1989. It was a black-and-white picture of a snake wound through a pentagram. That design was on tees and sweatshirts as well as on issues of our newsletter. Our permission to use that design expired, but for Fall Fest XX, Patrick Campion and Dan Miller created a reminiscent design. Our current logo began life in the late 1990's.



At first, TAWN
members. By

Administration, Communications, Education, and Events. Under the original By-Laws, committee meetings were “closed unless prior arrangements have been made.” An article in a Spring, 1990 issue of the newsletter reported that we had over 100 members, and hoped everyone would consider themselves a resource for TAWN committees, "working to their own strengths in support of TAWN projects that benefit everyone.”

had an Administration Committee, originally with 13
April of 1990, this had morphed into four committees:

By 1989, TAWN had a newsletter, though it wasn't called *Tapestry* until 1992. Our editors over the years have included Ginnie Thompson; Eric Schilling; Ashleen O’Gaea (first in 1992, again in 2006-07); Carol Shippey and Kal Berens; Robin Allathurian; Patricia Moore (with Robin in 1993, solo in 2003, and currently since Mabon of 2007); Valentine W. and Fred B.; Sylvia Lau-McDonald; Stephanie Tinsley; “Red” Wolfhound; Jenny Mabee; and Don Davis. (I don't think I've left anybody out, and certainly don't mean to.) A point of hilarity for a while was that in the early issues, our newsletter's copyright notice read, “Please do not reproduce without permission.”

In 1991 we opened our first bank account -- and revised the By-Laws. We revised our By-Laws again in 2001 (see the Mabon, 2001 issue of *Tapestry* for full details), in the Fall of 2006, and most recently in 2008 (to allow for staggered Board elections) and 2010 (to clarify application and resignation procedures). In 1993, Carol Garr, after having served informally for a few years, was our first formally elected
TAWN
Coordinator.

About the same time, TAWN's name changed from the Tucson Area Wiccan Network to the Tucson Area Wiccan-Pagan Network. We thought about calling it the Tucson Area Pagan Network, but decided on Wiccan-Pagan, because TAWN was already a recognized name, and easier to pronounce than TAPN!

TAWN incorporated in November of 1996, and probably elected its first formal Board of Directors then. At Fall Fest 1997, we started charging membership dues – of \$5 per voting member. Term limits went into effect in January of 2001. In June of 2001, we introduced our Membership and Volunteer Handbook. Dues were raised to their current level in April of 2003. The Handbook was updated around Lammas of 2005, and again in September of 2006 and in the Spring of 2010.

For a long time we debated whether or not to pursue status as a 501(c)(3) organization – a group that doesn't have to pay federal taxes, and donations to which are tax deductible. Our original intent to eventually achieve that status is reflected in our Articles of Incorporation, which affirm that our purposes are educational and charitable. TAWN was so authorized, by a letter from the IRS dated July 16, 2004. This is significant because it shows that the government looked at our records and affirmed we were doing things correctly, and that we are a proper religious group.

In December of 1997, TAWN created a library. After a few years, we liquidated it because we couldn't find a central enough location for it. We returned some books to the people who had donated them, and sold others at Cauldronlucks and Fall Fest.

We have always held Cauldronlucks, even though we didn't call them that till 1993 or '94. Indeed, our first few Fall Festivals were potluck events. In 2001 we voted to begin our Cauldronlucks at 11 a.m; before that, we varied our meeting times seasonally, starting earlier in the Summer and later in the Winter. In 2003, through the Tucson Clean and Beautiful agency, we adopted the ramada at La Madera Park. We qualified to do this by cleaning up the ramada twice a month for several months to prove our reliability. Now we enjoy recently completed renovations, and look forward to moving our open ritual program to this park as well.

Sometime in 1996, we first started giving Moon School classes. At first they were very casual, offering mostly crafts and lessons that occurred to the volunteer teachers before each Cauldronluck. (See the Ostara and Litha, 2003 issues of *Tapestry* for a two-part article about the history of Moon School.) Since the Summer of 2010, Moon School has been on hiatus -- but when we have enough eligible children (between the ages of 4 and 13), we'll start it up again.

We don't have as complete a history of our adult education classes as we'd like, but a variety of workshops and classes have always been part of our activities. By 2005 we were meeting on the second Monday and third Sunday of the month, and the classes had been going on for some time then. Since 2009 (at least) our classes have been once monthly.

Our open ritual program was part of our original agenda. Here's an incomplete list, compiled from *Tapestry* archives:

1988: Our first annual Fall Festival was held in the southeast corner of Himmel Park. It was very small, but was open to the public, as it is now, and included, as it still does today, an open Mabon rite.

1989: The second annual Fall Festival was on Saturday, Sept. 19th from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Himmel Park, and included workshops, Circles for children, maidens, mothers, crones, and men, a spiral dance, the Mabon rite, and a pot-luck community feast.

There was no public Samhain, but the Yule ritual was hosted by Amber Moon Coven at 11:30 a.m. on December 23rd, in Ramada Seven at Ft. Lowell Park.

1990: There was a Spring Equinox rite on March 25th at 1 p.m. in Himmel Park. Beltane was a camp out in the Chiricahuas. The Summer Solstice was celebrated on June 23rd from 6-10 p.m. in Himmel Park. From the newsletter: "What a wonderful Litha we had: Jordan calling the South with Baby Caitlin on his hip. Peter the Highland Piper [leading] us into the Circle." The ritual was at 6:30, and a potluck followed.

The third annual Fall Festival, also featuring Peter the Piper, was on Saturday, Sept. 22nd, from noon to 10 p.m. The Yule ritual was on Saturday, December 22nd at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park. (Per the newsletter; "Once again we will go caroling through Winterhaven, thrilling all too recognizable melodies and *our* words.").

1991: The Spring Equinox rite was held on Saturday, March 23rd. There was a "Summer Solstice Soiree" on Saturday, June 22nd, from 4 p.m. till 8 p.m. in Himmel Park.

There was a New Moon rite on September 8th, and a Full Moon rite on the 23rd, both at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park; these were regular events for a while. The fourth annual Fall Festival was on September 21st. Reports were that about 125 people attended, and that there were about 70 in the Circle.

1992: An open Imbolc was held at a private home on Saturday, February 1st. TAWN members were invited to a Festival of Vali (Ásatrú) campout over the weekend of February 7th, 8th, and 9th at Catalina State Park. A camping trip was scheduled for March 20th, 21st, and 22nd to celebrate Ostara.

The Beltane camp was from April 29th through May 3rd at Cypress Park. There was also a Walpurgisnacht celebration on the evening of April 30th. Fall Fest was held in Himmel Park from noon to 9 p.m. on Saturday, September 19th. This year, people were asked to bring their own picnic suppers rather than contributions to a potluck.

1993: There was another Beltane camp-out, organized by different people. Sue Bond hosted a Summer Solstice rite on June 19th at her house. Fall Fest was on September 18th; according to *Tapestry*, guests from the *Tucson Weekly* counted 325 attendees, and over 100 in the Circle. A couple of TAWN members hosted a show, "Out of the Shadows," on Tucson's public access television station this year, too, and through 1995.

1994: A full Moon Circle and late Lammas rite, followed by a “cauldronluck” was held at Mystic Moon (a shop). The annual Fall Festival and Faire was at Himmel Park from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on September 24th.

1995: We danced a Maypole on Sunday, April 30th at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park. Don and Arlene announced another Liberty Spirit Gathering, held the weekend of June 30th through July 3rd. Fall Fest was on September 23rd, in Himmel Park, from 10 a.m. till 9 p.m. A second annual Candlelight Vigil was held on Halloween at the Mystic Moon.

1996: The Ostara open Circle was hosted by Moonatic Fringe on March 23rd, at 5:30 p.m., at Himmel Park. Another Liberty Spirit Gathering was held up north, from July 4th through the 7th, and featured speakers from Tucson. Fall Fest was held on September 21st. By this time we were hosting guest speakers from around the country. The ritual was hosted by Caer Arianrhod and Moonfire Covens, and the festival had outgrown Himmel Park so we moved to Reid Park, around ramadas five and six.

A Samhain ritual was held at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park, and TAPADO (the Tucson Area Pagans Against Discrimination Organization, founded and led by Ken Girard) held a local Witches' Ball. We caroled again on December 20th, and a Yule ritual was held on December 22nd, at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park

1997: The open Beltane was on May 4th at a member's home. There was a Litha rite on June 21st. Lammas was in Ft. Lowell Park on Saturday, August 9th, hosted by Campsight Coven. Carol Garr's group led the Mabon ritual at Fall Fest, on September 20th at Reid Park. There were reports of 300 people in the Circle. A Full Moon and Yule rite, hosted by Children of the Moon, was scheduled for December 13th at Ft. Lowell Park; caroling was the following evening, and we went again on December 23rd.

1998: An Imbolc rite was held on January 31st, at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park. The Ostara ritual was held on March 21st at 3 p.m., at Hippie Hill in Himmel Park. The Mabon ritual at Fall Fest (September 19th) was hosted by Woods Park Pagan Temple West. There were Lammas (August 1st), Samhain and Yule (December 20th) rituals, for which the scripts were printed in *Tapstry*.

1999: The open Ostara was at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park on March 20th. Ocean Underground Coven led the Beltane rite on May 1st. Litha was on June 19th at Ft. Lowell Park and Lughnassadh was on August 1st at Ft. Lowell Park. The fifth annual Liberty Spirit Gathering was on Mt. Lemon from July 29th through August 1st. Fall Fest's theme was “A Day of Myth and Magic,” and it was held on September 18th around ramadas 18 and 19 in Reid Park and the rite was led by WindTree Ranch. The Samhain rite was on October 30th.

2000: Ostara was on March 18th at Himmel Park, led by Tina and Darron Huntington. Beltane was May 6th at Ft. Lowell Park, led by Ken and Bonnie Girard. Litha was on June 24th at Ft. Lowell Park, led by ElvenStar Coven. Fall Fest was on September 23rd in Reid Park, and the Mabon rite was led by Campsight Coven. Yule was on December 16th at high noon at Ft. Lowell Park, hosted by Steve and Cathy Mackie.

2001: The Coven of the MoonShadow host a March 17th Ostara rite. A Litha ritual was scheduled for June 17th at Ramada Seven in Ft. Lowell Park. Lammas was hosted on July 29th by the Sonoran Sunrise Grove. There was a Witches Ball scheduled for October 28th. Samhain was on November 2nd at Ft. Lowell Park. An Eye of Sokar ritual was scheduled for November 15th at Ft. Lowell Park. Yule was December 21st at Lincoln Park.



2002: Fall Fest was on September 21st. There were other Sabbats but apparently they were on the website rather than in the newsletter. The theme art, by Faerie Moon Rhiannon (a.k.a. Patricia Moore, our current *Tapestry* editor), is at left.



2003: Ostara's open ritual was on March 29th at the Reid Park soccer field at dusk. The Silver Midnight Coven led the year's Beltane. Litha was on June 21st and Kennedy Park, led by Raven. Fall Fest was moved to the Unitarian Universalist Church and was held on September 27th. The theme was Mabon in Middle Earth, and this year's art (at left) was also by Faerie Moon.

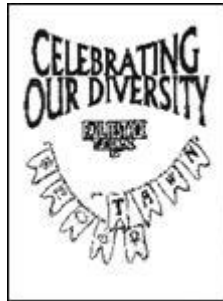


2004: Fall Fest was at the UU Church this year, too, and O'Gaea did the artwork (right) to the theme of Heroes and Heras.



2005: We moved Fall Fest back to Reid Park, and O’Gaea provided the “Back to Nature” theme art at left.

2006: Fall Fest stayed at Reid Park, the theme was Celebrating our Diversity, and the art was O’Gaea’s.



Reid Park, the theme was Celebrating our Diversity,



2007: Our 20th anniversary! As mentioned above, Patrick Campion and Danial Miller created the 20th anniversary logo, reminiscent of our first one. Using the fronts of past years’ tee-shirts collected from members, Sue Bond (extreme left in photo) and Mary Lanz (right) created the 20 Years of TAWN quilt, which was raffled at Fall Fest, and won by Deborah Campion (center).



2008: Fall Fest’s theme was Coming of Age. Faerie Moon did the artwork for us (at left).



2009: We had a nice shirt design.



2010: Faerie Moon provided the “Weaving the Web” art (at left).

Like any group, TAWN periodically faces various challenges. Ours have ranged from personal to public, from minor to major, and though every one of them was disruptive to some degree, and some resulted in a severe drop in membership, many were taken as opportunities to grow. The very first “kerfuffle” stemmed from a misinterpreted *Tapestry* article, printed in 1991 and taken personally by people it wasn’t about. Other crises have centered on store closings, personality conflicts, disagreements with membership decisions, intentionally malicious behavior, out-of-control self-aggrandizement, and sensational accusations that would’ve been all over the national news if they’d been true.

A look at the history of just about any organization, public or private, tells us that challenges, conflicts, and controversies are par for the course, and not in themselves symptoms of dire wrongness. That we handle such situations with compassion and according to established rules is an indication that our group is a healthy one. Other Pagan networks have fallen apart for far less than some of the things TAWN has been through, and there are only a handful of older networking groups in the country.

The enduring reality is that TAWN is so important to its members that it survives – and usually thrives -- despite occasional periods of burn-out and the need to regroup now and again. “Diversity is welcomed,” we said in our Articles of Incorporation. After 20+ years, it's still true; and we can all be proud that we're still doing what we set out to do, facilitating a vibrant and accessible Neo-Pagan community in the Tucson area, and letting the public know the truth about our religions. If you're a long-time supporter, we thank you; if you're new here, we look forward to your being part of the Pagan history we continue to make!