



# Plant Spirit Medicine Association

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### Important Dates in 2013

#### PSMA Conference

June 28–July 1, 2013

The Blue Deer Center

#### Advanced Class

July 2-5—Blue Deer Center

#### Upcoming Clinicals –tba

(7 CEU's per day)

### Upcoming PSM

#### Healer Training Series

March 7, 2013 started at

the Blue Deer Center

June 11, 2013 starting in the  
United Kingdom

January 2014 starting at the  
Blue Deer Center

April 2014, Perth, Australia

### Contact

To coordinate attendance at a  
class or clinical contact:

[Linda Felch](#) for the BDC

[Phil Roberts](#) for Australia

[Jeff Bartlett](#) for the UK

[Clare Pearson](#) for MA

[Alison Gayek](#) for NC

CEU reqs: 40 every 2 years

## ~ THE NANNY GOAT ~

BY MICHAEL LOCKE

About 30 years ago I lived on a rugged hill in West Penwith in the far south-west of Cornwall in the UK. It was, and is, an ideal place for goats to inhabit. My neighbor lived up there and let her goats roam amongst the granite and gorse.

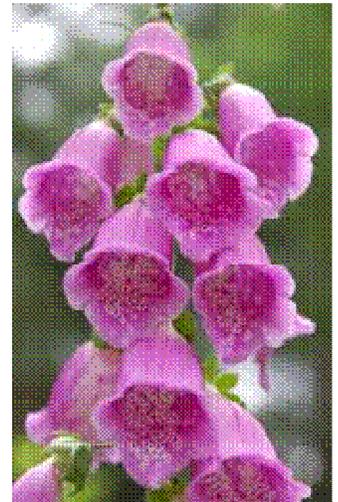
The year I recall, a nanny goat gave birth to a kid and about two months later the mother died. I kept a watch for the young one and was surprised when the day after its

mother's death it started to eat the Foxglove. I was surprised because I know how well these animals know their plants and I'd never seen any animal eat Foxglove before.

Anyway, the kid became intoxicated, its eyes glazed over and it started to stumble. I figured that this was its way of coping with its grief. The question was before me, "How did the goat know?"

I was taught at school what a great advance in

human history was the invention of reading and writing, but now I'm thinking maybe it is actually a sign of our loss of the innate knowledge that we once shared with the



goat and the rest of this sacred Mother Earth.

What a wonderful blessing it is to start on our way to our original way of *knowing* once more.

Thank you!

*Michael Locke lives in Shropshire, England*



## ~ THE ROLE OF PLANT SPIRIT MEDICINE ~

BY ROBIN LOCKWOOD

I graduated in 2000 as a healer in Plant Spirit Medicine. During the time of my instruction, there was no Blue Deer Center, there was no Sacred Fire Com-

munity, there were no Fire-keepers; there were a handful of Plant Spirit Medicine (PSM) healers in California, Massachusetts, and North Carolina.

Sounds odd to read it back to myself: We've come a long way in a short thirteen years!

Eliot spoke to my class

*(continued on page 3)*

~ DISCUSSION ABOUT MEDIA ~

BY PHIL ROBERTS

As many know, **Chris Griffen** has Co-Chaired the Communications Committee for a number of years. He has been instrumental in managing the PSMA Listserve, collecting biographies and updating the Professional Members list for the web pages and launching the PSMA Website. He now turns his attention to a project with the Sacred Fire Community.



Chris Griffen

The PSMA has benefited greatly from the perspective, creativity and enthusiasm that Chris has brought. It was only fitting then, that Board Member **Phil Roberts** got in touch with Chris to ask about his experience and thoughts on working with the Media.

PHIL: Hi Chris, thanks for your time. As you know, the PSMA exists to support and strengthen the practice of Plant Spirit Medicine, and us talking about our work as healers is one important aspect of our medicine flourishing in the world. Last year you had an interesting experience with a reporter who wanted to write about PSM. Can you share more with us about that experience?

CHRIS: Yeah sure, that would be great. I was contacted by a reporter from our local paper who wanted to write an article about holistic medicine. She searched and found my details from a website listing holistic healers in New Hampshire. Initially, her article had nothing to do with Plant Spirit Medicine, it was going to encompass herbalism, homeopathy and other more well known approaches.

I told her that what I do is probably quite different from the offerings of others she would talk to for that article, and that perhaps she would consider doing an article on just Plant Spirit Medicine. She went away to think about it and a few weeks later she came back and said yes.

One of the challenges I faced was that this reporter was quite pushy, she had a deadline to meet and she was determined to create this article on her timeline—

come what may. She was trying to push the whole thing along very quickly, and I had to really dig in my heels to keep things from moving way too fast.

I realized that I wanted to make sure that nothing went wrong with regards to this article. I didn't want it to say anything that could throw the PSMA, the PSM Seminary or other healers in hot water. Sometimes an article from a local paper could get picked up by a major paper, and if anything about Plant Spirit Medicine was misrepresented it could be damaging for the medicine and the practices of all of the healers. So I spoke with Maggie Freier and the Seminary to get some guidance, which was very helpful.

The reporter's impulsiveness made me realize that it was going to be very hard for me to make sure that she didn't write something inappropriate or incorrect that I would have no say over. To protect against that, I told her that I would only agree upon the interview if she promised that I would have the chance to review her work and make changes before she turned it in to her editor. It turns out that it was good I did this, because the first version I saw needed a lot of help.

PHIL: So how did the

interview go?

CHRIS: The interview went for an hour and I thought it went very well. I gave details about myself and my practice, I told her that I don't treat symptoms or diseases but rather the plant spirits help bring balance and harmony into peoples' lives and they really benefit from that. You know what it's like when you start talking about PSM, the energy of the medicine comes through. I found it very natural to express my enthusiasm.

I spent a long time talking about PSM and the reporter was asking really great questions. She seemed to feel the energy of the medicine and seemed to understand. I thought it went really well.

PHIL: That sounds great. So what happened when the reporter sent you the article she had written from the interview?

CHRIS: What I quickly realized was that she had misunderstood quite a few things and described the medicine in ways that were alarming to me. Despite spending a long time talking about PSM, even though I was able to articulately describe Plant Spirit Medicine, she was not able to. It takes a while for people to really understand what the medicine is about. If someone is not in that

(interview continued on page 4)

# *THE NINTH ANNUAL PLANT SPIRIT MEDICINE CONFERENCE JUNE 28 TO JULY 1*

*Role of PSM continued )*

one day about the quest given to him by Grandfather Fire—to seek land upon which would be the home of Plant Spirit Medicine—and it would be called The Blue Deer Center. Eliot was directed to look in the Northeast. That discussion sparked a fire under us all and we began to join those already searching in the Northeast.

The Plant Spirit Medicine Community, as we called ourselves at that time, was inspired to start raising funds for the purchase of the land so we held garage sales, bake sales, barbecues and other such fund raisers. It was a true grassroots effort to raise the down payment money for the land.

And we did it!

A professional fund raiser told us she had never seen anything like it!

Out of the PSM community, came the Sacred Fire

Community (SFC) and the Sacred Fire Foundation (SFF). Whether or not you align yourself with either organization doesn't matter—Plant Spirit Medicine was the start of it all.

Today, Plant Spirit Medicine has a home at the Blue Deer Center, has spread internationally, and has its own association: Plant Spirit Medicine Association (PSMA). Healers now must have Continuing Education Units, and there are professional standards for PSM. To me, thirteen years later—this is incredible!

The PSMA provides many services for the PSM healer. Within these, the PSMA provides a platform for CEUs in the form of the Plant Spirit Medicine Conference. This year makes the ninth year for this conference.

The **Ninth Annual Plant Spirit Medicine Association Conference** is mere weeks away! The theme of this year's conference is *"Exploring the Mystery of Nature – Deepening our Connection to Nature and Strengthening our Practice."*

Nature is the creative expression of Divine. Reawakening our listening to Nature has brought us to the miracle of Plant Spirit Medicine healing. Too often people walk in arrogance born of a de-natured un-tethering from Nature. From this un-tethering arises the spiritual malaise that is epidemic in our world today.

This year's conference experience is designed to deepen our relationship and understanding of Nature as Oracle, and bring the Plant Spirit Medicine healer into better awareness of the tools available for this healing work which brings such transformation to our clients.

Our illustrious speakers will be:

**David Wiley** - Practice Building for the PSM Healer and Perceptions beyond the Mind

**Eliot Cowan** - Readings from the Second Edition of Plant Spirit Medicine

**Alison Gayek** - Listening To Your Plant Oracles Part II: Letting the Divine Natural World Support Your Healing Work

**Maggie Freier** - Confidentiality and Crisis Management—The Tarasoff Decision and Beyond

**Mai Duong and Kateri McCue** - Power of Partnership: Support for Effective Action

Please join us this year as we explore the mysteries of our great medicine, learn strategies to strengthen our practices, and walk upon the sacred land of the Blue Deer Center.

An invitation has been extended to Grandfather Fire. We are hopeful that He will grace us with His presence.

Y'all come!

*Robin Lockwood is co-chair of the 2013 PSMA Conference committee. For registration or scholarship information go to [www.bluedeercenter.org](http://www.bluedeercenter.org).*



Daisy Fleabane or Sweet Scabious—JB

(interview continued)

place of inspiration—of being *drawn* to the medicine and having really embraced learning about it, it's a big leap for them to get the simplicity and profound nature of it. Add that to the fact that she was not the greatest writer, and it's no surprise that her initial version of the article wasn't that great.

PHIL: *Wow, that must have been a bit of a shock for you. What did you do next?*

CHRIS: I thanked her for sending it to me and I said something like "I think this might need a little straightening out, I'll take a look at it and get back to you soon."

I basically re-wrote the article for her and only left as much as was originally accurate. She had provided a good framework, which I re-worked and sent back to her in a form that I liked. She submitted it to her editor, who made some more changes to the final version. The final curve-ball was that her editor then introduced some additional inaccuracies, but it was not a big deal.

The bottom line was that the reporter wrote the first draft and then I wrote the article. But she didn't complain too much. The whole experience seemed to resonate for her.

PHIL: *That's interesting. I'm wondering, how did the reporter respond to hearing about PSM?*

CHRIS: She was really impressed that I referred

to other PSM Healers as "colleagues". She really got it that there was a strong aspect of community, and that we all help each other. She made special note that I spent a lot of time and energy supporting other people and that I was interested in trying to help other healers build their practices. She had never seen that in any of the other healing modalities she had written articles about.

The other thing that was fun was that when we met for her to do some photos, we were close to a hiking trail and so I took her for a short walk and we found a plant that I work with. I talked to her about the importance of relationship and working in partnership with the plants. We offered tobacco together and sat quietly for a few minutes listening. It gave her an experience of the aliveness of plant spirits. She really liked that, and it gave her a sense of what the medicine is about.

By offering the tobacco to the plants and asking for their input, we were inviting the medicine to come into the process, and it really helped.

PHIL: *It sounds like you did a great job. Can you tell us more about the guidance you received from Maggie Freier and the PSM Seminary?*

CHRIS: Maggie told me to stick to facts that were truthful and verifiable. She strongly encouraged me to avoid saying anything that might give the

impression that a PSM Healer practices medicine without a license. In order to do this, it's important to not say anything that would state or suggest that Plant Spirit Medicine can be used to diagnose or treat symptoms or diseases.

The thing that makes this easy is that it's fundamentally true, we just need to align ourselves with the truth of what the Plant Spirits do, and avoid saying anything that could be interpreted as a claim about what PSM can do.

These restrictions make it harder to talk about specifics. Because people are coming with specific problems it is very easy for symptoms or diseases to come into the discussion.

Maggie basically said that I want avoid any situation where I could get into a legal problem, or create a legal problem for the PSMA, the Seminary, or other healers. This is best done by sticking to facts like what it is I do, where I practice and for how long. I ended up talking about how I call on the spirit of plants to help people, how they create balance and harmony. I also mentioned that because the mind and body are connected to the spirit, they can also benefit.

At numerous classes and conferences, Eliot has encouraged us to tell stories, as they are the most effective way to really touch people and illustrate what PSM can do. It needs to be made

*"The final curve-ball was that her editor then introduced some additional inaccuracies!"*

alive. We were encouraged to develop a good elevator speech and then build on that by sharing stories.

PHIL: *Chris, this is such a fascinating story! I love the way you brought so much of the medicine into the process. Is there anything else you would like to share in regards to talking about the medicine?*

CHRIS: Yes there is one more thing I remember Alison Gayek sharing at a past conference. Of-

ten when we speak of PSM it can come from a place of fear. It's like, "Oh My God, how do I put into words something so profound and un-languagable?" I think that this fear is understandable for someone who is new to practicing PSM and who also may not be a gifted orator.

However, this won't be as effective as connecting with our excitement and enthusiasm for the medicine. Talking to people about PSM, whether

it's a reporter, a group of strangers, or your mom, should be like talking to an old friend about something that inspires and excites us, and not being worried about whether they get it intellectually or not. People will pick up on something more important than the words.

PHIL: *Thanks so much for taking the time to share this with us Chris.*

CHRIS: You're welcome, it has been a pleasure.

*"It should be like talking to an old friend about something that inspires and excites us . . ."*



Goldthread—Clare Pearson

The PSMA hopes to have an interim "Media Survival Guide" ready for discussion at the upcoming Conference. However, this is a process where we need input from the community and one or two experts outside of the PSMA membership. Given that all contributors are volunteers, it will take some time. Therefore, we want to communicate our expectations that this is a large project that will be completed in stages. Regardless of timing, this discussion will make a great topic at the Town Hall Meeting

***~IT'S ALREADY JUNE~***

***DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR RENEWAL IS?***

The renewal period for membership in The Plant Spirit Medicine Association was open from March 29 through June 1, 2013.

This is for the membership period from February 1, 2013 through January 31, 2014. To those of you that have already renewed "THANK YOU" for your continued support of the medicine, your colleagues and the Association.

If you haven't renewed, please do so by visiting us at:

<http://plantspiritmedicine.org/psma/membership/#renew>

***"OOPS!***

***I FORGOT!!!"***

***Author unknown***



The mission of the Plant Spirit Medicine Association is to support, preserve and strengthen the practices of Plant Spirit Medicine as recognized by the Temple of Sacred Fire Healing

**Board of Trustees**

Annie Smith, Chair  
 Dena Sparks, Treasurer  
 Julie Ellerbeck, Secretary  
 Phil Roberts

The Board encourages comments and feedback  
 Contact: [psma-trustees@plantspiritmedicine.org](mailto:psma-trustees@plantspiritmedicine.org)

**Committees**

**2012 PSMA Conference**

Robin Lockwood - Co-Chair  
 Jane Wollack - Co-Chair

**Membership**

Mark Gionfriddo - Chair

**Standards of Practice and Ethics**

Anna Murray Preece - Co-Chair  
 Annie Smith - Co-Chair

**Communications**

Jeff Baker - Chair

**Board Support**

Clare Pearson - Asst. Treasurer

Contact any committee at [psma@plantspiritmedicine.org](mailto:psma@plantspiritmedicine.org)

The PSMA Newsletter is always looking for articles, photographs or scanned drawings of plants and plant-related images. If you have experiences or pictures to share, please send them along to [psma-communications@plantspiritmedicine.org](mailto:psma-communications@plantspiritmedicine.org)  
 All contributions appreciated

~ BOARD REPORT ~

“...to support, preserve and strengthen the practices of Plant Spirit Medicine...”

Dear Colleagues,

What does it mean to be a Trustee of the Association, to be guided by the mission of the organization? Lots of hours at a candle, lots of seeing and feeling ahead – into our future. Taking a good hard look at the past, looking for success and stumbles along the way. And from this sitting, and writing, and talking, and guidance, emerged a wee little operating plan for 2013. There aren't that many goals, but they're packed with action items! Here's a look:

- Establish policy and procedure for each function of the Association.
- Develop strong membership support for the Association mission.
- Establish a mutually beneficial process for collaborative work with the PSMA Seminary and the Temple of Sacred Fire Healing.

So - honestly, how many of you are thinking “...better you than me!” Gunga Din... (that's not really the quote, but it's close) Okay—the point here is to understand that even if the Board of Trustees can stay in “warrior” mode, and make a lot of progress in operationalizing our association; it matters not at all if this doesn't serve the medicine and you—because, this is not about us.

Here's how we see things:

The Association can't do the things you've asked us to do if we don't have some more people to take up the work, put their hand in, share the load. We need to be able to do routine things, with ease and grace- things like the renewal and the newsletter, the conference.

Trustees also need to pave the way for other parts of the operation to become easy; like a secure member portal. But new projects, need more hands, because once they've become part of the operation, they need to be managed. And so it goes.

We're focused on recruiting, retaining and recognizing our volunteers, for the future of our medicine.

There are many other goals that are calling to us in 2014-2015 that need a firm foundation. And that's where we are now, getting our foundation in place, to have something strong to stand on to move ahead.

In the next two weeks we will be sending out opportunities for you to work with us, to build the foundation, so we may begin to move in the world with balance and harmony, a healthy, energetic organization—bringing a beautiful gift to the world.

Julie Ellerbeck—  
 Board of Trustees



Meadowsweet—Clare Pearson

Note: As of June 6th only 31 of 75 PSMA Members have renewed for 2013/2014.