

“We have no concept of Satan. That’s a Christian symbol”

# web weaving

by Jacqueline Ross

**L**ike every other little girl, I can remember dressing up as a witch for Halloween. I had a big pointy black hat and a long black dress. My mother painted my face green and gave me a long green plastic nose with a wart at the end. To top it all off, I had a broomstick to “fly” on as I ran around the neighborhood, cackling in my best screechy eight-year-old voice. Let me tell you, for someone my size, I was pretty scary.

I guess I got the idea from TV. There’s the “Sandwitch” on Looney Tunes who flies around the house screeching and making things in her big black kettle out of “eye of newt.” There was also the witch in Rapunzel who kept her daughter locked in a tower, the one in Hanzel and Gretel who used her house to lure tasty little children, and the Wicked Witch of the West. And then there are the Wiccans of Drake — no green warts here. A campus organization of witches gives students an opportunity to update their images from Saturday morning cartoons and fairy tales to real life.

This Wiccan group at Drake is called Webweaving. If you think witches are people who fly around on broomsticks, the Webweaving group may surprise you. Wiccans, who often call themselves witches, are real people. Normal people, that is, who don’t stir big black kettles screeching, “Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble!” Wicca is widely recognized as a religion, although it is unlike Islam,

Judaism or Christianity in that it is polytheistic. Its members believe in more than one god.

Wicca centers around the worship of nature. According to the Council of American Witches, “Our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility toward our environment.” Ann Marie Knupp, a member of Webweaving, said, “Wicca is about respect and responsibility to the Earth — that’s what the ‘Web’ in Webweaving means — finding the common theme. Healing our planet. Making it a better place for the future.”

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Wiccans hold rituals on the Summer Solstice and Halloween. (Drake’s chapter celebrated Halloween as both a religious holiday and a secular holiday; member held a costume party after their ritual.) In a typical ritual, people gather together and call to the four corners: North, South, East and West, followed by the four elements: Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Next, they imagine a circle all around them. After that, according to Knupp, “We have fun. We sing, dance, read poetry. Then we say thank you and dismiss the four corners, then say, ‘The circle is open but unbroken.’”

Wicca is often said to be Satanic. Wiccans wear a pentagram, the five-pointed star inside a circle. Turned with the point facing down, it has