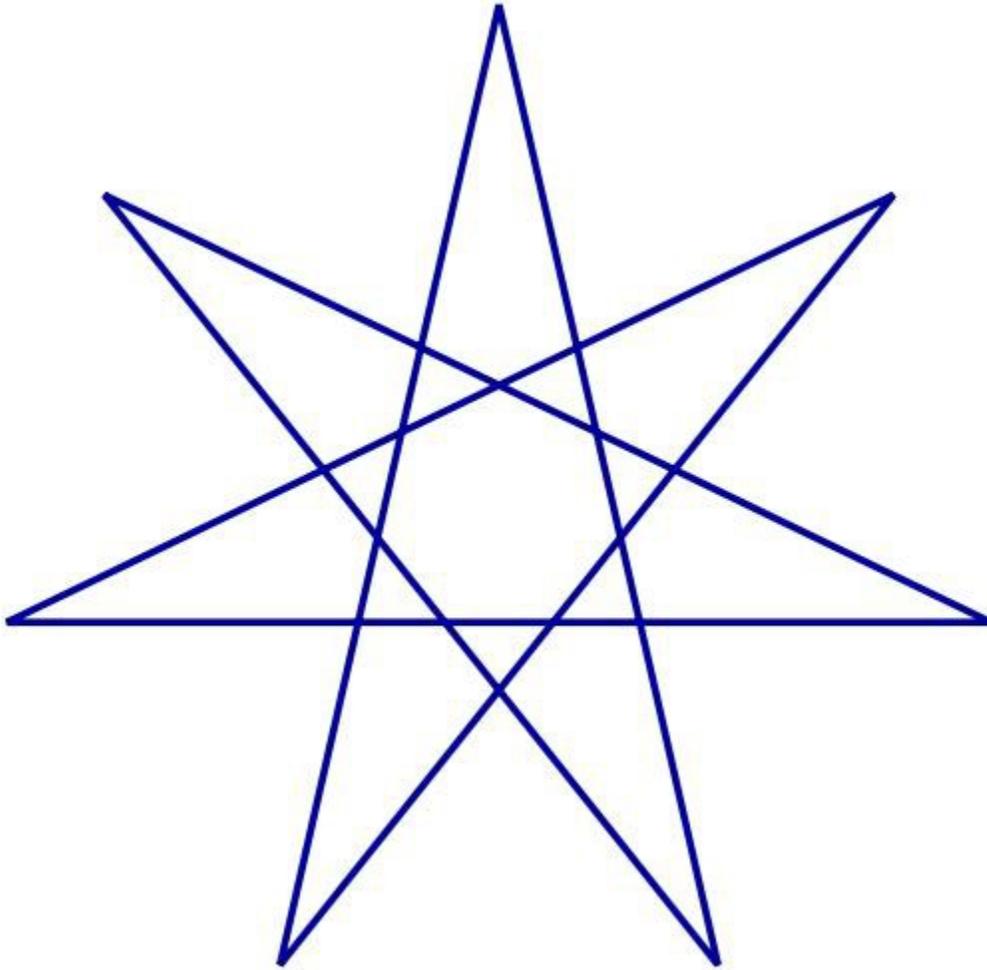


# For the Seeker

An introduction to Blue Star Wicca and Haven Song Grove



January 2014  
Willow Edwards  
Haven Song Grove

# Key Vocabulary

**British Traditional Wicca (BTW):** A loosely related family of Neopagan religious traditions. All of the traditions in this family share a number of characteristics, including basic ritual format and hierarchical organization. Blue Star Wicca is considered a member of this family.

**Coven:** A basic organizational structure of Blue Star is the coven. Covens are traditionally run by Third Degree Initiates, although there have been exceptions to this rule. Every member of a coven is an Initiate of one level or another.

**Grove:** A second organizational structure is the grove. Whereas covens are entirely made up of Initiates, groves are comprised of all hierarchical levels from Seekers all the way up to Third Degree Initiates. Often a grove is run by an inner core coven of Initiates.

**Inner Court:** A term used to describe work and rituals open only to Initiates. An Initiate who is a member of a particular coven is generally invited to all of that coven's Inner Court Rituals

**Outer Court:** Technically, the term refers to all members of a grove who are Neophyte or above and/or work and rituals restricted to those members. In general use, however, it is often used to describe any member, work, or ritual which is not Inner Court.

**Officiant:** At a typical Blue Star ritual there are four individuals that are responsible for running and/or organizing that ritual. Each of the four officiants (Priest, Priestess, Summoner, and Hand Maiden) have particular tasks to accomplish.

**Seeker:** A term often applied to someone looking for membership and training with a grove. Seekers hold no formal rank within the Blue Star hierarchy, and may or may not be seeking dedication.

**Rite of Passage (RoP):** A term used to describe the rituals which serve as transitions between hierarchical ranks. With the exception of the Dedication ritual, RoPs are not open to anyone who has not achieved the Blue Star rank being conferred.

**Initiate/Initiation:** A key RoP within Blue Star is Initiation (aka First Degree Initiation or First Degree). Those who have gone through this RoP are referred to as Initiates. Initiates are the clergy of Blue Star and have a high level of responsibility within the tradition and grove/coven.

**Athame:** All Initiates own and use a special, sacred blade called an Athame. When a non-Initiate is officiating a ritual any blade that they use (unless borrowed from an Initiate) is not considered an Athame.

**Invocation:** This religious practice (aka "Drawing Down") is often seen at Blue Star circles. The invoker will lend his or her body to a chosen deity, so that the deity can interact with the people present at the circle. This practice is similar to spirit possession that is seen in many other cultures (Voudun, Santeria, and Southeast Asian traditions, for example). In Blue Star Wicca only Initiates are permitted to Invoke.

# Hierarchy of Blue Star Wicca

**Dedicant:** Dedicants make up the largest portion of the laity of Blue Star Wicca. Dedication is considered a stable rank in Blue Star--students with no interest in becoming clergy may stay at this rank for their entire lives.

Dedicant entitlements include **green robes** and **gold cords**.

**Neophyte:** Neophytes are students who are actively working toward Initiation. This is considered a transitional rank, and is not meant to be held indefinitely.

Neophyte entitlements include the **green robes** they wore as Dedicants, as well as a new, **silver cords**.

**First Degree Initiates:** First Degree Initiates make up the largest portion of the Blue Star clergy. In an ideally organized Coven/Grove they would teach classes, and otherwise assist the Third Degree Initiates.

First Degree Initiates are entitled to **blue robes, gold, silver and black cords, amber jewelry**, and a **septagram tattoo** (often called an "Initiate's Mark").

**Second Degree Initiates:** A Second Degree Initiate has all the responsibilities of a First Degree Initiate, and is studying to take his or her Third Degree. Traditionally, this is the time when an Initiate begins to take on students of his or her own.

Second Degree Initiates are entitled to the same **blue robes, gold/silver/black cords** as First Degrees, but are entitled to **jet jewelry** instead of amber, and an **encircled septagram tattoo**.

**Third Degree Initiates:** Third Degree Initiates comprise the leadership of the Coven and Grove, and at any time, two of them hold the roles of High Priest and High Priestess. Their responsibilities include all those of Second and First Degree Initiates, as well as the actual management of the Coven and Grove as organizations and delegation of all related responsibilities. When an Initiate reaches Third Degree he or she may choose to take his or her students and "hive," or form a new, independent Coven/Grove.

Third Degree Initiates are entitled to the same **blue robes** and **gold/silver/black cords** as other Initiates. However, they are also entitled to wear **jewelry that incorporates both amber and jet**, and to a **tattoo of an encircled septagram with horns/the moon**.

# Haven Song and the Wider Blue Star Family

At last count, there are over two dozen active Blue Star groves and covens, comprised of well over one hundred Initiates and countless Dedicants and Neophytes. Although Blue Star uses a hierarchical system for individuals, there is no similar system for covens; each is autonomous, with no power or control over the internal workings of one another. Each coven is the equal of any other coven, regardless of size or history. Each has its own set of Initiates and students, its own style, personality, and mission.

Blue Star covens and solitaires can be found all over North America, and even occasionally in Europe. Regional styles often develop, but we remain a cohesive tradition through regular online communication between the Initiates of various regions, and frequent gatherings. Each year we hold a Family Gathering which is open to all members of the Blue Star family regardless of hierarchical rank. Approximately every two years, we hold Initiate Gatherings which, as the name implies, are open only to Initiates. These gatherings change location on each occasion.

Haven Song has strong ties to Compass Rose (MO), Torch (NJ), and Acorn (PA), and is heavily influenced by their Initiates and particular traditions. Currently, our small grove boasts only one Initiate and her students, but regularly hosts open Sabbats. Non-Haven Song attendance at these Sabbats varies from just a few seekers, to roughly a dozen people not formally attached to the grove.

# Social Norms and Basic Etiquette

## **What is the dress code for Haven Song rituals? Is there anything I should or should not wear?**

We ask that all ritual attendees avoid wearing robes, cords, and jewelry to which they are not entitled. For a seeker, with no formal rank within Blue Star, this would mean avoiding both green and blue robes, silver cords, jet jewelry and so on (see the “Hierarchy of Blue Star” section for a full list of entitlements). Otherwise, casual, comfortable clothes are acceptable, unless otherwise stated in your invitation to ritual.

Other Blue Star groves and covens may have different dress codes, and you should always check with the group you are visiting.

## **When I attend rituals, are there any people that I should particularly pay attention to?**

Traditionally, a Blue Star ritual has four officiants: The Priestess, Priest, Hand Maiden, and Summoner. Regardless of who is filling these roles, directions given by these officiants should be followed in a timely fashion. If there are Initiates in attendance who are not officiating, they are often a good source of information about the Tradition, but probably will not have any information about this particular ritual that has not been shared publicly.

## **Is there anything I should know about handling the athames and other items on the altar?**

We ask that you refrain from picking up or touching the tools and symbols on the altar. This is particularly true of an Initiate's athame. If you are asked or invited to handle any of these items, please do so only with your right hand. If an Initiate asks/invites you to handle his or her Athame, he or she will give you instructions as to the proper etiquette. *Never* handle an Initiate's Athame without direct consent from the Initiate.

## **Am I expected to contribute to the feasts that are offered after ritual?**

In Blue Star, we consider the feast to be an important part of the regular ritual. We ask that all members, Seekers, and guests attempt to contribute to feast as they can. In general we would ask that the contribution be in the form of a dish that fits the feast theme, announced before the ritual.

At the current time most of the members of Haven Song Grove are vegetarians, and ritual is often held in an intefait home which keeps a kosher kitchen by being meat free. For this reason we require that all feast contributions be vegetarian unless specifically cleared with the Grove's Priestess. Additionally, we encourage lactose-, gluten- and cinnamon- free contributions so that as many people as possible can enjoy each dish.

## **Is anything else expected of me when I attend rituals?**

All the general rules of hospitality apply to rituals. All our rituals are held in volunteered member homes, and we ask that you extend all the same courtesies to our members and their homes that you would expect them to extend to yours. If the household has requested a firm end time for ritual, please be ready to leave by that time. Try to honor any special requests, such as parking constraints, or removal of shoes. As in the rest of life, common sense is your friend.

**What's going on with all the hand motions and singing? As a Seeker am I expected/allowed to participate with everyone else?**

Blue Star liturgy involves several stances, gestures, and songs. Although some of these are specific to a particular officiant, most are meant for the whole circle. If at any time two or more of the officiants are holding the same pose, or singing the same part of a song, feel free to join in. If at any time Blue Star Dedicants, Neophytes, or Initiates *not* officiating take a stance, sing, etc, feel free to join them.

One posture is observed slightly differently by Initiates and non-Initiates. In Osiris pose, Initiates cross their left arm above their right arm, both across their chest. Seekers, Dedicants, and Neophytes cross their right arm above their left arm, both across their chest. If you're unsure which way to hold this posture, feel free to simply copy the posture of anyone wearing a green robe and either a gold or silver cord.



**If I decide to pursue further study and Dedication, what is my first step?**

In Blue Star Wicca, students are individually guided and mentored by Teachers – Initiates that have a special one-on-one relationship with the student. Initiates will generally not seek out new students, but instead respond to requests from Seekers. It is important to remember that no matter how many open sabbats you attend, no one will be assigned to teach you. You must make that connection yourself.