



Altar Building

What is an Altar, anyway? Almost a year ago, Raja wrote an article about that in *The Oak Leaf* (see Issue #19, Imbolc 2003) - & he said a lot of things that made sense about what an altar is & what it's for. When I read back through that not long ago, it made me think about the way I build altars all the time (& maybe the way you do, too) & the fact that I think I have been doing it ever since I can remember.

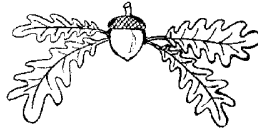
What is an altar? A sacred space of keeping. Keeping what? Whatever matters or makes sense at the time. The key is in the word "sacred." I have a drawer (actually several...I'm a sock fiend!) where I keep my socks - simply keeping them there does not make that an altar space. On the other hand, I have a shelf that holds some of my most treasured poetry books, pictures of several writers I admire, and special pencils I use when I am writing. Is that an altar? Yes, I think it is. I use writing in a magickal way, & the tools that are part of doing that are sacred to me. While I do not "worship" at this space, I use it for sacred workings & I focus & direct my energy a lot while writing. Magickal? You bet.

Look around your house to see what kind of altars are there, whether anyone calls them that or not. Is there an area that has pictures of your family together? That sounds a lot like an altar dedicated to memories & family ties. How about pictures of grandparents? Altar to the ancestors. A collection of stuffed animals arranged just the way you like them? An altar to the creator's free-spirited "connected with nature" side.

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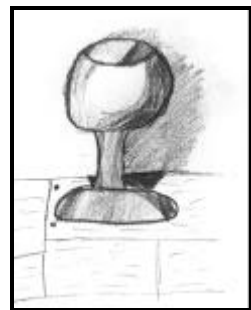
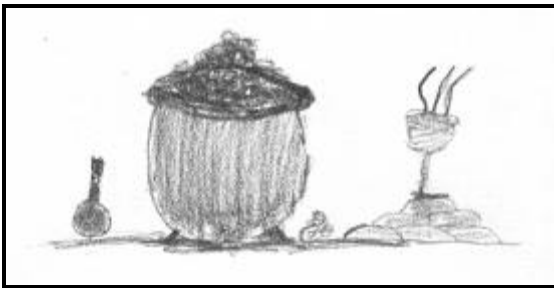
A bunch of graceful statues carefully placed in a cabinet or on a dresser-top? An altar to beauty, to take the viewer to a world of delicate swirling movement & perfect stillness. A pile of stones & leaves? An altar that allows a direct connection with the world beyond the walls of a room or a house.

Your house may have altars designed for magickal workings, or it may not - but if your house has *people* living in it, there are very likely quite a few altars in it, celebrating or commemorating the things that are important to those within. The altars people build can say a lot about them - what they treasure, what brings them good feelings inside. If you decide to build your own magickal altar - go for it! As you do it, though, remember - only *you* can truly know what belongs there. You might look at other altars for ideas, or create some very personal tools using Starlite's Crafts in this issue... just remember that you are creating *your* own sacred space of keeping. Make it yours, & it will be absolutely perfect!



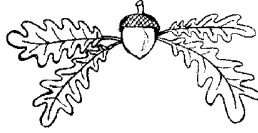
*****Kidspirations!*****

Magickal Altar Tools



This issue's **Kidspirations** artwork drawn by Dragon, age 12, of Akron

Do you ever draw pictures, write poems, or think thoughts you would like to share? Send them to The Acorn, & we could print **your** creative inspirations in here, too!



Crafts by Starlite ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ 

Make Your Own Altar Basics

There are some basic pieces that go on the altar, in most traditions. You've seen them on the altars of the adults. Some of these can be easily made by you, or with a little help from an adult. Being handmade, the objects have more magickal power.

Basic Altar Pieces

Chalice- the cup for juice (or wine for the adults)

Pentacle- the plate to hold bread, or an object of focus for ritual

Candleholders- three (in my tradition) Always check with an adult before burning candles, or anything else in your rituals!

Wand- a tool to help focus & direct your energy

Mirror- used for scrying, or magickal reflection

Making Your Pentacle, Chalice, & Candleholders

Wooden or Glass Disk

Wine Goblet or Glass

Silicone Sealer

Glass Candle Holders

Paints - ask an adult to help make sure these are right for your project material. (wood, metal or glass)

You can make your Altar Pentacle of wood, a round mirror or even a glass candle plate that you can find at craft stores. Paint a pentagram on the wood or glass. Apply sealer following instructions on the container. Your Chalice can be made this way also, as well as Candleholders that you design your own way! Check out crafts stores for glass paint.

Making Your Wand

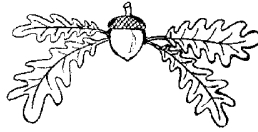
Carefully-Chosen Stick

Gems, Crystals

Paint or Markers

Wood Glue

Ribbons, Sequins, Leather Scraps, etc.



Some say your wand should be the length of your arm from your elbow to your wrist, but I think it should be what is right for you. Only you know that! Find your stick - the one that calls to you or is just perfect. Ask the tree if you can take it. Mother Nature did have some branch fall already, so try to find one on the ground instead of cutting one. If you are not allowed to use a knife, ask a grown-up to carve a groove in top. Glue your crystal or gem into this groove. You can cover the stick with leather lace or ribbon if you want. Glue sequins or whatever to the wand itself.

Making Yourself a Black Mirror

Black Paint

Tacky Glue

5X7 Picture Frame (or round piece of glass)

Ribbons, sand, shells, pieces of leather, trinkets, sequins, etc.

Samhain is the time for Divination. Black mirrors can help you see into the future or just look really cool on your altar!

First take the glass out of the frame. Paint the glass with the black paint. Now the hard part... waiting for the glass to dry. If you are using a round piece of glass, glue this to a piece of cardboard after it dries. Place your glass painted-side-down into the frame. This will protect the paint from being scratched. You may want to place the items around your frame to see how they look. Now using tacky glue add your ribbons, shells and whatever you like to the frame to create a fabulous item for your altar.



V

The Fox's Den



Outside during the fall and winter I find some of most amazing altars of all, made by the spirits of nature... & sometimes with the help of human hands! Rake yourself a pile of leaves to celebrate their cycle of death & rebirth - then jump & roll in them with glee! When the snow comes, play in it, build with it - & look into the icicles every chance you get. Morning snow on trees - an altar beyond description!!!

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