

Aggielife

asons and lives coming to an...

Q U I N O X

For pagan religions, fall season symbolizes beginning of new year

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The Battalion

"There is a close connection between astronomy and the passage of time."

-Dr. D. Bruce Dickson,
professor of anthropology

The Autumnal Equinox marks the death of the pagan god and a celebration of the cyclical year beginning again.

This is the belief many pagan religions hold for this holiday. The equinox is a symbol of the change of the season and the beginning of the year.

The god is associated with the sun, and the goddess is associated with the moon. Winter is when the god is born from the goddess.

From February through the spring it is growing and maturing. On May 1, he marries her and they mate. This is when May solstice is celebrated. The god is at his mightiest at this time.

Aug. 1 is the time of harvest. He is preparing to die and go to the underworld. The autumn equinox is the death of the god and announcement of winter. In the winter the goddess gives birth to the god and the cycle repeats.

Carrisa Brown, president of the Pagan Student Association and a senior animal science major, said there are many theories about the birth of this holiday.

"Some scholars say Celts were interested in astronomy, and they

may have known what was happening with the sun and the moon," she said. "They began celebrating this time because it was a change in their season."

Dr. D. Bruce Dickson, professor of anthropology, said the origins of the celebration of the autumnal equinox may have begun with the Celtic or Druid religions and their interest in tracking the movement of the heavens.

"There is a close connection between astronomy and the passage of time," he said. "People began keeping track of the celestial bodies because of the relationship between agriculture events and the movement of animals and plants."

Dr. George Kattawar, a physics professor, said there are many religious explanations for this event but the scientific definition for the autumnal equinox is the seasonal

change of the year.

"It is the point on the celestial sphere where the sun crosses the celestial equator going southward," he said. "Also, when the sun reaches this point, autumn begins in the Northern Hemisphere."

The autumnal equinox marks the beginning of the major harvest time and the end of the pagan year.

It is the end of the summer and the beginning of the fall.

Brown said pagans are aware of the importance of nature and life.

"Our roots are with the people who lived with the land. It is a connection with nature and the world outside the city," she said. "Because of this, the ceremonies and rituals are based around nature and harvest."

Brown said many religions fall under the category of paganism. Not all observe the Autumnal Equinox.

However, those who do, celebrate with a gift from nature.

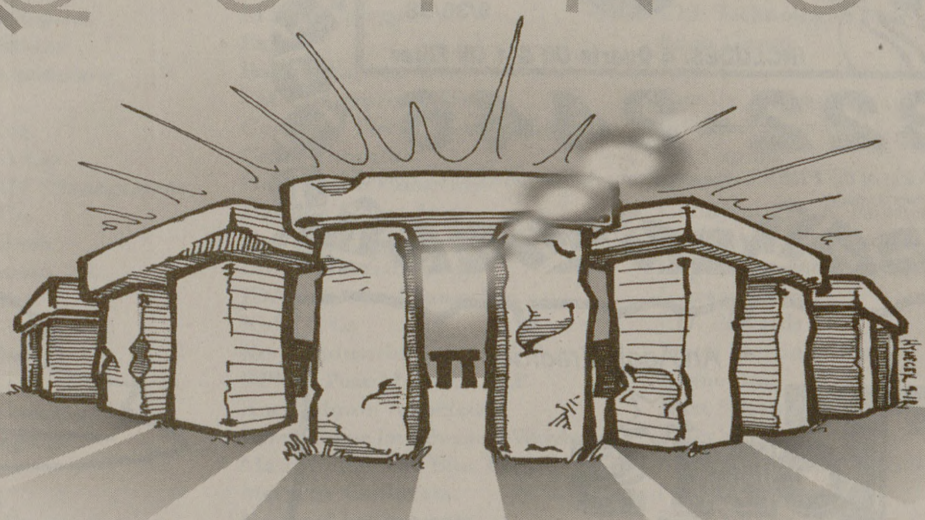
"Some students make fresh loaves of bread," she said. "They use some kind of grain product, fruits, vegetable or meat. They use the things they would be harvesting."

"They may give a gift of meat because the farmers begin to slaughter their animals as preparation for the winter."

Brown said many take this time to contemplate nature.

"Many modern day pagans live in big cities," she said. "So the equinox marks a time for us to think about nature and to get back to our roots."

"It is a time for us to plan ahead for the fall season. Nature and life are important for all pagans and the autumnal equinox is another mark of the cycle of life and death."



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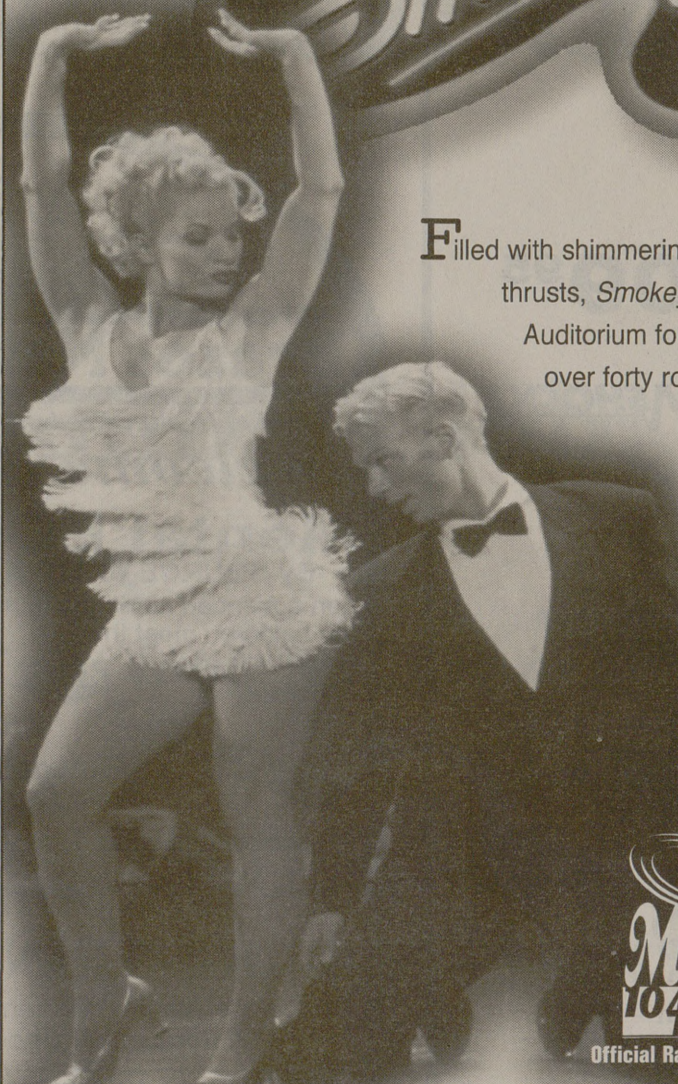
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