

INSIGHT

*The official
newsletter of
Blazing Star Oasis*

*In the Valley of
Berkeley, California*



**Volume III,
Number 1**

☉ in II,
Anno IV:xx e.n.
Spring 2012 e.v.

Table of Contents

Oasis Master's Address

by Frater Pralixus 1

Events at Blazing Star

by Frater IA0131 5

Blazing Star Temple Dedication

by T Ce Acatl & Frater Pralixus 7

Thelema in the Streets

by Soror Grace 10

Neon Prince

by Soror Anika 13

All About Religion

by Nitnorth 15

Editor: Fr. IA0131

Executive Editor: Fr. Pralixus

Assistant Editor: Sr. Grace

Printing & Distribution: Sr. Marlene

Editorial address:

Blazing Star Oasis, OTO

PO Box 11386

Berkeley, CA 94712-1386

editors@blazingstar-oto.org

OASIS MASTER'S ADDRESS

**BY FRATER
PRALIXUS**

*Do what thou wilt shall be
the whole of the Law.*

Welcome to Volume III of
InSight, the official organ
of Blazing Star Oasis,
O.T.O.!

We are quite pleased to
offer these writings to the
Thelemic and occult
communities, revamped,
redesigned, renumbered,
and reissued to mark the
relocation of our re-
energized organization to
renewed real estate in a
rapidly renovating region

of Oakland, California.

In this first issue of the new volume, I would like to extend my thanks to some of the people who have made our recent successes possible. Firstly, I must thank Past-Master Marlene, not only for her years of friendship and for preparing me to follow in her footsteps as a local body master, but also for shepherding the process of consolidation of Thelema Lodge, Mons Abiegnus Oasis, and Therion-Babalon Oasis into the vibrant Oasis I have the privilege of leading today. Without her assistance, past and present, I suspect that this newsletter would not exist. Secondly, I extend thanks to our erstwhile Sister Marna, the Founding Member of Blazing Star who launched Volume I of *InSight*, and to Fra. P., who once again oversaw Volume II, which comprised an expansive commentary on the fourth power of the Sphinx. Finally, for now, I thank Frater IA0131, Blazing Star's Minister of Propaganda, for taking the reins of this re-launch.

While I generally prefer to look forward, this inaugural address of sorts seems like an appropriate place to look back briefly on recent accomplishments, as much to increase awareness of what Blazing Star has been up to as to toot our collective horn. Too many people have been involved in these projects to name them all, but every Brother, Sister, and guest who assisted has my deepest thanks.

Immediately after returning from NOTOCON VIII, with the ink not yet dry on the Letter of Authorization, we dug right into preparing what has now become the Bay Area Thelemic Temple. This ground-floor storefront now serves as the full-time home of Blazing Star Oasis as well as the Grady Louis McMurtry Memorial Library, and as a gathering place for the Thelemic community as a whole.

Just six weeks after taking possession, following much painting, washing, building, flooring, and furnishing, we dedicated the new Temple to the work of the Order with the kind ceremonial assistance of T Ce Acatl, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Craig Berry. The text of that ceremony is reproduced in this issue. After a further five

weeks, on Sunday 1 January 2012 e.v., Anno IVxix ☉10°♊ ☽19°♑ Dies Solis, we formally opened for regular operation with the commencement of weekly public celebrations of Liber XV. We thus have been able to hold all masses, classes, and initiations in 1,100 square feet of handmade splendor, seasoned with our own sweat, blood, magick, and will, and in the process finally restored to Marlene full control of her own living room.

Since then, we have kept ourselves busy, while enjoying the fruits of our labor. In the first quarter of this civil year, we have already held 13 public celebrations of the Gnostic Mass, and have seen average attendance increase 75% over the same period the prior year. This is ironic in that our new Temple, while far homier, also is much smaller than the Masonic Hall we formerly rented *per diem*; nevertheless, we have been able regularly to accommodate 20-30 communicants without difficulty. Over the same period, we presented 20 classes, lectures, and workshops, featuring nine different presenters, including author and scholar Brother Vere Chappell from Golden



Over 50 people packed into the Bay Area Thelemic Temple for the Temple Dedication and Gnostic Mass with T Ce Acatl

Lotus Oasis, and sex educator Dr. Charlie Glickman of Good Vibrations. We also made four new Welcome Guests, and initiated two Women and Sisters, while seeing the local dues-paying membership of the body increase from 11 to 14, plus four new non-member Affiliates.

Looking forward, we plan more of the same, only different. We remain committed to holding public celebrations of the Gnostic Mass every Sunday starting at 4:18 PM, and a rotating selection of public classes and workshops every Tuesday at 7:30 PM. These include regular installments of Thelema 101, covering basic topics for newcomers; Magick 111, featuring slightly more advanced and wide-ranging material; and Gnostic Boot Camp, examining the rubric and praxis of Liber XV as implemented by the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, led by ordained E.G.C. clergy under the supervision of T Ce Acatl. Applications for initiation, always available at our events, continue to pour in, and we expect to hold three such ceremonies in the next couple of months. On Saturday 9 June, we invite all initiates to attend a daylong workshop led by Brother David Shoemaker, President of the Psychology Guild of O.T.O. and Past-Master of 418 Lodge, examining the Man of Earth degrees (0°-III°) from a Jungian perspective.

Full details of our calendar of events are always available online through our Yahoo! Group, BlazingStar-OTO, and we welcome you to join us there. Our public events also are posted to Facebook and often MeetUp.com, and you may even see us on Twitter from time to time. Those who would rather listen than read may enjoy our Speech in the Silence podcast via iTunes and YouTube. We welcome feedback and suggestions through any of these channels, and even old-fashioned postal mail will eventually reach us using the address on this very newsletter. Most of all, however, we would like to see you in person, so please do drop by and say hello.

Love is the law, love under will.

EVENTS AT BLAZING STAR

BY FRATER IAO131

There have been a lot of new and exciting things happening at Blazing Star Oasis in the last months.

Bay Area Thelemic Temple

One of the biggest events was the process of moving into the Bay Area Thelemic Temple in Oakland. We had a Temple Dedication and a celebration of the Gnostic Mass with T Ce Acatl where we had over 50 people attending! Since the first day of January in 2012, Blazing Star Oasis has publicly celebrated the Gnostic Mass every single week in the Bay Area Thelemic Temple. Since the founding of Blazing Star Oasis in 2009, we celebrated monthly Gnostic Masses at the Mission Masonic Hall in San Francisco. We held our last public Gnostic Mass at the Mission Masonic Hall on December 4, 2011 since we are now moved into the dedicated space of the Bay Area Thelemic Temple.

Regular events

After moving into the Bay Area Thelemic Temple, we have instituted a weekly class every Tuesday. This involves a repeating schedule of classes called “Magick 111,” “Gnostic Boot Camp,” and “Thelema 101.” Magick 111 is a more general class, which involves discussing any topic related to Magick or Thelema. We have had Magick 111 classes on ritual construction, the magical record, the drama of dramatic ritual, and the Rose-Cross ritual. There was also a Magick 111 class called “Thelema in the Streets” that focused on discussing the ways Thelema is applied in the daily lives of our members. Gnostic Boot Camp involves looking at subjects related to the Gnostic Mass. “Thelema 101” is a series that is geared towards individuals that are new to Thelema; so far we have had classes on “What is Thelema?” and “Who is Aleister Crowley?” with classes on *The Book of the Law*, the Stele of Revealing, magick, and the O.T.O. that are forthcoming as part of this series.

Other events

Many unique classes, lectures, and workshops have happened lately. In January 2012, we had Vere Chappell give a guest lecture “Sexual Outlaw & Erotic Mystic: The Life and Works of Ida Craddock” on his new book. In February 2012, we began an “Introduction to Kundalini Yoga” class. In March 2012, we had Dr. Charlie Glickman – the Education Program Manager at Good Vibrations, a writer, blogger, sex educator and occasional university professor – lead a workshop on “The Mystery and the Masculine.” We also started the 4-class series “Lashon Kodesh: Holy Tongue for the Tongue-Tied,” which is a class on learning the Hebrew language as taught by a Hebrew instructor.

Obviously a lot is going on at Blazing Star Oasis, and there is still more to come.

Speech in the Silence



Speech in the Silence is the official podcast of Blazing Star Oasis in the San Francisco Bay Area. In this podcast, we focus on the topics of Thelema, Aleister Crowley, and Ordo Templi Orientis while also touching upon the subjects of Magick, Yoga, and Initiation. The podcast includes lectures, music, interviews, discussions, and readings of the Holy Books of Thelema and other important texts

written by Aleister Crowley. Our mission is to spread awareness of the Law of Thelema, the writings of Aleister Crowley, and Ordo Templi Orientis. It is also a creative outlet for Thelemites, and we encourage listener feedback and participation.

New to downloading podcasts? It's easy! It's just an mp3 file that you download and play on your computer or other mp3 player. Download or subscribe at **speechinthesilence.com** or visit our YouTube channel at **youtube.com/speechinthesilence** and don't forget to send your feedback to: **thelemapodcast@gmail.com**

BLAZING STAR TEMPLE

DEDICATION

BY T CE ACATL & FRATER PRALIXUS

This was performed on November 20, 2011 at Blazing Star Oasis as a dedication of the Bay Area Thelemic Temple.

Officers and setting

All officers are in street clothes, preferably black or dark in color.

BANISHER carries no implement.

PURIFIER carries an open bowl of water.

CONSECRATOR carries a censer with lit charcoal.

MASTER carries the chartering documents of the Oasis.

SGIG (Sovereign Grand Inspector General) carries no implement.

A black double-cube altar is in the center of the space, with nothing on it. Attendees and officers are seated around the space in no particular pattern

Ritual

BANISHER stands, goes to center, and performs the Star Ruby, then returns to seat

PURIFIER stands, goes to East and faces East, and draws a down-

ward-pointing triangle (with the bowl, or with a wet fingertip) in the air at head level while saying...

PURIFIER: By the virtue of water I purify this temple.

PURIFIER then goes to the South, West, and North and does the same, returning to the East, lifting bowl in salute, and then returning to seat.

CONSECRATOR puts incense on the charcoal, stands, goes to East and faces East, and draws an upward-pointing triangle with the censer in the air at head level while saying...

CONSECRATOR: With the power of fire I consecrate this temple.

CONSECRATOR then goes to the South, West, and North and does the same, returning to the East, lifting censer in salute, and then returning to seat. *SGIG* stands and

goes to the east of the altar, facing west.

SGIG: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

ALL: Love is the law, love under will.

SGIG: Brethren, honored guests and friends, is it your Will to assist in opening this temple of Ordo Templi Orientis?

ALL: It is (or similar)

SGIG: All rise.

(Done.)

SGIG: “I ask you to sacrifice nothing at mine altar; I am the God who giveth all. Light, Life, Love; Force, Fantasy, Fire; these do I bring you: mine hands are full of these. There is joy in the setting-out; there is joy in the journey; there is joy in the goal.”

(Pause.)

SGIG: Let the Master come forward.

MASTER comes to the west of the altar, facing east.

SGIG: Is it your Will to dedicate this temple to the work of Blazing Star Oasis?

MASTER: It is. *(Addressing all)* Brethren, is it your Will to dedicate this temple to the work of Blazing Star Oasis?

ALL: It is.

SGIG: To what end?

MASTER: (1) That the Law of Thelema and the principles of the Order may be promulgated openly, bringing the glory of the stars into the hearts of men

(2) That all who have the means may support the work of their Brothers and Sisters, that they may in their turn exercise their talents in kind

(3) That the ideals of Individual Liberty and Universal Brotherhood may spread without argument or strife through recourse to our Library

(4) That this place may serve as a home for the Oasis and the Sanctuary, and for those who will to gather in comfort and happiness

(5) That our children, and all children, may find this a place for instruction, accompanied by pleasure and amusement for them, their parents, and the community

(6) That those who will to be of service to mankind may have a place to do so in peace and in well-being

(7) That a community of common interest and hope may be established with Love under Will, where even enemies may gather in peace, amity, and fraternity

(8) That the lives and works of our predecessors; the legacies of Thelema Lodge, Mons Abiegnus Oasis, and Therion-Babalon Oasis; and the rich and varied history and culture of Thelema in the Bay Area may be remembered, honored, and carried forward

(9) That all who will may study in philosophy, religion, magick, yoga, and the sciences, leading step by step to knowledge and power hardly even dreamed of by the profane

(10) That this edifice itself may stand as a testament to the Great Work, and to the grand principles we promote and uphold

(11) That men and women of character, taste, and aspiration may come together in friendship

(12) And that all these may be realized in security, free from tyranny, superstition, and oppression, and lead to the accomplishment of our True Wills, the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom, and Perfect Happiness.

SGIG knocks once on the altar.

ALL (led by SGIG): So mote it be!

MASTER places charters on the altar. MASTER and SGIG rest their hands upon them.

SGIG: Accordingly, in the name of the United States Grand Lodge, I declare this temple of Blazing Star Oasis duly opened. May Light, Wisdom, and Understanding; Knowledge, Power, and Beauty; Courage and Wit here rest firmly upon the Foundation of Universal Brotherhood.

ALL: AUMGN

MASTER and SGIG clap 3-5-3 together.

THELEMA IN THE STREETS

BY SOROR GRACE

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Oakland Unified School District building on Second Avenue covers almost an entire block. Its off-white (gone an awful beige after a good handful of decades of the sun) paint-chip peelings flake off the sides of its tall walls like a microscopic vision of unmoisturized skin. The windows are sparse, barred, and filthy; the entrance is tiny, well-guarded, and its short open-to-the-public hours are posted prominently in the front – only for a slight duration of hours on any given weekday can a parent trudge up the short staircase and try to reason with the employees within about some kind of clerical discrepancy, a change of address, or to file complaints (which are no doubt stored in an infinitely deep file-cabinet). When I pass this building, I can hardly restrain the upsurge of sympathy for those poor souls who fulfill their daily employment in such a depressing edifice.

But luckily, the structure of a new school office building is being slowly erected on the opposite block. Never have I actually witnessed a person working on the site, but surely, the beams, blocks and rebar webs proceed to spin ever more intricately each time that I pass by. The long sheets of plastic, meant to cover the construction from rain, wrap and wreath around the structure like nightgowns, giving the space a ghostly feel. Both buildings are ghost-like in the darkness of night, under the humid glow of the orange streetlamps.

I walk on the sidewalk that is skirted by these two ghosts to get to the newly dedicated Bay Area Thelemic Temple. In stark contrast to these cold, dreary buildings, the temple offers a warmth, both of temperature as well as light, and a friendly, embracing welcoming: the book-shelves, the couches, the master behind the desk, all in a

flurry of “93!s” of greeting from those present. The journey from bus stop to temple is only a block long, but it feels like an extended time to be walking on such a vacant-feeling stretch. The sounds of cars and cyclists are accentuated by the silence that hangs in the tension between these two deathly quiet buildings, and my stroll is one colored by a heightened awareness of my mysterious and ever-potentially dangerous surroundings.

One Tuesday night in early January, I was taking this short, intense trek towards the Temple, and thoughts of abductors and criminals had stormed the castle of my consciousness, whereas before it had been entertaining thoughts about Thelema and magick (as I headed towards a general discussion Magick 111 class). (I must say that growing up in Oakland, my handful of frightening run-ins with hostile individuals would explain the intrusion of such thoughts; they are not necessarily a reflection of the neighborhood itself. For the few months after being mugged by some gentlemen who were passengers from what had formerly been a moving vehicle, the sound of passing cars startled me, absolutely no matter where I



“Plaid Stallions of the Wood”

by Soror Anika

was.) In a moment, I considered, in the setting of this intense block, here and now, if a mugger sleuthed out from behind one of our friends, these arid buildings, and marched toward me, threatening, domineering, with clear intention to pirate or injure: “How would a *Thelemite* react?”

On this night, my thoughts about Thelema merged aggressively with those concerns on this short street’s walk, and it led me on a powerful succession of thoughts about Thelema as it is practiced in everyday life. A curiosity swept over me; I wanted to know how the Thelemites in my community *lived* as Thelemites. When I arrived at the temple, with only myself, the master and deputy master in attendance, the general discussion became a brainstorm for ideas on topics for upcoming classes, and so came about the idea for the class we jokingly decided to call, “Thelema in the Streets.”

I constructed the “class” to be a discussion group with guided questions, as I was genuinely interested to know how people in the Blazing Star Oasis community actualize the various principles of Thelema in their lives. I wanted to hear people’s stories! Some of the questions involved individuals’ introduction to Thelema, how Thelema has affected love lives, and areas where Thelemic principles could be better integrated. I saw that the class had an opportunity to provide a safe platform for people to hear others’ stories, to have their own heard, to reminisce, and to connect with each other on a community level. Now that we have a centralized dedicated space, new aspects of the community element have been pushing themselves to the fore, and, through the “Thelema in the Streets” class, I wanted to take the chance to foster it.

Though the class itself, held in late January, had a relatively small turn-out, I felt that the conversation had an easy, intimate flow, and allowed me to leave with not only a deeper understanding of my fellow brothers and sisters of BSO, but of Thelema itself. It was also truly wonderful to see the places where people had similar

philosophical practices (as opposed to theories) in common that they didn't previously suspect. I think that the theme and format has a particular potential to unite Thelemites in a community as far as people are willing to share about their life experiences as such.

In between those two buildings, one in the snares of entropy, and the other fresh in the course of development, there is a tension. Like Zarathustra's tightrope walker, the space between the poles offers up the stage for our most mysterious, potentially-dangerous, and exciting dance that is life. Whether on such a street we meet a hostile burglar, a morose school district employee, a parent with a bone to pick, or anyone in between, how would our Thelemic principles, as far as we've integrated them into our automatic response system, influence our interaction? The stories of our lives as Thelemites are indeed mysterious, exciting, and dangerous, and are, I believe, worth sharing.

Love is the law, love under will.

NEON PRINCE

BY SOROR ANIKA

Morose Lines on Making a Collage

Why can art eer be wot it ought?

Being the back face of anything not wrought.

We being aught and seeing naught,

Or just inverted to be naught and see all,

The blank grope between thought, known and caught.

How far?

When can expression not expose

all laws?

Forget all begotten and clamp time's maw.

Being and seeing all and nil

Knowing and giving away its laws

Or leaving them inside time's jaws.

To see, to be reversed in perversion,

Versions persisting in evasion.

Plaid prince, in prints of neon

Brash kiss, blood engendered

Prince of this small kingdom.
Prince of phallus, bride of pulp
and pith
Flapping its black dong off the
garden wall.

But then is gone.
Alone
Along the garden wall
Forgotten or compressed, or
barred under the prince's wand
And wadded into time's small
hand
It stands,
Is branded with the prints of
neon.
All along
Neon virgins parading in
inversion,
Black dong
Black dong it stands.

In art, in arc of flat flowers
growing past their bounds
In ink, in carbon and in paper
flaps
In lieu, in place of recollection
Mere accumulation of the
flowering lines.
Our lives
Our lives are Prince of neon yours
for now.
What for,
What for remember we what
black dong dropped

And rendered not, black dong
black dong!

Neon Prince has Financial Problems

To wit, what farther I from black
dong's shadow light
In fear of my ensuing blight to
gray
Without the purples of his
shadows, and the greeds his
eyes?
Without my greed, without the
lust that lives and dyes?
Arise.
From loss or lack of property, the
last estate
The Prince vacated now his
grounds,
But still must stand.
He, Prince of neon heavy bowed
and weighed
With hound's tooth shadows on
his mortgaged grave,
Had bent his hand around those
branches now are felled.
So where entomb,
But neon gardens of the world?
Though none is mine.

The head is heavier without its
crown of lead,
The cheek has ripened and has
shed its down
But so

The neon kingdom grows
between the gaps,
Though ripped, again, by the
caretaker's claw.
And garden boys who sported
now are dead by their own hands
Our blooms, now cheap Osirises
and paper Hels
Now pasted varnished Romeos
and Juliets
Without redress, what now!

Oh what
What poverty and poverty of life
in this
The prayer for sustenance to
rattling pods
Oh wealth and poverty, pajama

pants, patina'd socks beneath a
trailing seam.
Oh Prince of ruin, flaming tower
and thorn
Burn down them all so your
estate may thrive.
They die,
They move aside so he may live?
But why so many princes rose
and fell,
Could not his tiny palace shed its
rents
Forget
Forget the debts and flap the
sceptre in his private dance,

But where?

ALL ABOUT RELIGION

BY NITNORTH

Hi, campers. Today we're going to talk about Religion. You know what "religion" is, don't you: it's where you get dressed up every Sunday and dragged off to sit on hard wooden benches while some guy in a funny shirt tells you all about Sin and Salvation, and afterwards they pass around this big plate that they want you to put money in. Right?

Well ... no. That is, yes that's one little tiny bit of religion; but it's so far from being the whole story that we might as well not even worry about it.

Before we go any farther, you should probably read what a dictionary¹ has to say on the subject. Then I'm going to say some bizarre things about those definitions. Because, you see ...

Fundamentally, *everything* is religion. Belief in one or more gods is a religion, but so is belief in **NO** gods. So is belief in the Big Bang, democracy, Communism, mathematics, physics, or Frosty the Snowman. You can't prove any of those things, nor can you disprove them. At its base, every system of thought has some core set of assumptions, things that we must simply accept as right or else the system doesn't work. Those assumptions, the givens², must be taken on faith. Simply claiming that " $2 + 2 = 4$ " is a statement based on religious beliefs. (Seriously. $2 + 2 = 11$, and I can prove it.)

Some religions are much better than others at predicting how the world will respond when we poke at it. Physics and astronomy, for instance, have pretty reliable ways of predicting things that we

1 Religion defined. I took this text from The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, © 1966 by Random House, Inc. There, it says:

religion, n.

1. concern over what exists beyond the visible world, differentiated from philosophy in that it operates through faith or intuition rather than reason, and generally including the idea of the existence of a single being, a group of beings, an eternal principle, or a transcendent spiritual entity that has created the world, that governs it, that controls its destinies, or that intervenes occasionally in the natural course of its history, as well as the idea that ritual, prayer, spiritual exercises, certain principles of everyday conduct, etc., are expedient, due, or spiritually rewarding, or arise naturally out of an inner need as a human response to the belief in such a being, principle, etc. [Wow, talk about long-winded!]
2. a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects. [And it goes on from there for many more definitions. This will do for a start.]

2 Givens: In any logical or mathematical system, there are some things that are true simply because they are declared to be true. We claim they are self-evidently true. What that really means is, it's pointless to argue about them because those items form the basis from which you're arguing. Those items are givens, and can be used as facts when solving problems. In Science, they're givens, and are the foundation from which everything else proceeds. In Religion, on the other hand, they're dogma, and are what proves that religion is nonsense. Remember that. There will be a quiz.

subsequently find, whereas astrology doesn't. *Prediction* is, in fact, one of the measures scientists use to separate probably-correct theories from probably-not-correct ones: they let the theory predict something they haven't seen yet, then go look for it. But do note that one branch of philosophy, solipsism, claims that we can't prove we found those things because we can't *prove* that anything exists beyond ourselves. And if that's true, then we can't even prove that we exist — maybe we're all only a figment of something else's imagination. (So says nihilism, another branch of philosophy.)

But even if we accept (ahem: take it on faith) that we do exist and that physics does describe the world accurately, that's still not a final answer. Sir Isaac Newton's physics worked perfectly well until about a hundred years ago, when we began investigating things that moved really really fast or which were vanishingly small. Then we needed Einstein (relativity) and Planck (quantum mechanics) to explain the universe. And as we look farther and faster and smaller, even their explanations are turning out to be incomplete.

Furthermore, no system based on interpreting observed results — that is, no science — will say anything about how the universe started. There are branches of mathematics that can make statements about how the universe came to be, and even some things about what existed before it, but because of its nature we can't know. So lots of people make wildly varying claims, and we have lots of competing theories.

Who's right? Nobody knows. You find the evidence you're most willing to accept, figure out which theory best explains that evidence, and make that your religion.

Curiously, too, having done that, many scientists then become unwilling to consider other evidence that disproves their beliefs. They truly have adopted their theory as their religion, and will persecute, scorn, and ridicule those who question them, just as surely as ever the Church persecuted Galileo.

Questions, questions, questions

Okay, so we have to take everything on faith. What does that do to our moral sense?

Nothing, unless you're ready to die right here and now. Before we can take anything on faith, we have to *have* faith. Some of those faiths are going to be about what the "right" and "wrong" ways to behave are. Those faiths are our moral sense.

On the other hand, if we don't dust off our faiths every now and again and have a good look at them, we can lose track of what it is we believe. If we don't think about every new idea that comes along, we will occasionally be fooled into believing something we don't really think — a faith that won't stand up to questioning.

As a starter set, I'm going to present a few articles of faith that lots of people believe in. I'm not going to say whether they're right or wrong; I'm just going to say what the belief is and offer a counterargument. You make up your own mind.

Democracy

Government of, by, and for the people is Good. So good, in fact, that some countries are willing to start wars in order to bring it to other countries that don't have it yet. It's the way the modern world is going, the best form of government so far seen on the earth.

Is it? Libertarians characterize democracy as "two wolves and a sheep voting on what's for dinner." In a democracy, your freedom is limited to what the majority of your neighbors think it should be. Who you marry, how you spend your money, what you smoke or drink (or whether), what clothes you wear or music you listen to or books you read, are all decided by committee. You get — maybe — to be on that committee, but yours is not the determining vote. Is that really the best way to live your life, letting your neighbors decide where you may go and what you may do when you get there?

Vegetarianism/Veganism

Eating animals is Bad. Buddhism tells us this, as do several other sources. Taoism says that back somewhere in prehistory, Man lost the Way, the "Tao", and fell out of harmony with his brother animals. One symptom of this fall from harmony is that we began eating flesh; and in order to regain that perfected state we must stop doing that. If so — if not eating animal flesh is necessary to regain harmony with nature — I wonder why we don't see more vegan lions and tigers and bears, oh my. Why is eating animals okay for other animals, but not for humans?

Private Property

Someone owns the house you live in. Maybe it's you, maybe it's a landlord, but someone holds a deed claiming they have the right to do as they like with that property because they bought it from someone else. That claim to ownership is fundamental in developed countries. So, where do those deeds originate? I live in California, which became a republic in 1846 after a war between the USA and Mexico³, and a state in 1850. Mexico inherited the land as a protectorate from Spain, which got it because someone stood on it and claimed his king owned it. The native California Indians were apparently not consulted. (The Spanish even referred to them as *las Pulgas*, the Fleas.)

Any deeds in my home state thus derive from some unilateral taking — theft, in other words: USA from Mexico, or Spain from the Indians. Where is the moral or legal foundation for that ownership? If I buy land from the aggressor who captured it, do I "own" it? Even if it is legal, according to whoever defines "legal", is it moral? When I do that with a television, it's called "receiving stolen property". When I do it with a homestead, it's called "real estate".

³ The Republic of California. There's a good book on the subject of how control of California passed from Spain to the USA: *Bear Flag Rising*, by Dale L. Walker, ISBN 0312866852, published July 1999 by Forge. Good writers make history come alive, and Mr. Walker is one of the best. If you like, you can order it through Amazon.

General Schedule of Events at Blazing Star Oasis

*All events held at the
Bay Area Thelemic Temple
130 E 12th St, Oakland, CA 94606*

Every Sunday

Public celebration of the Gnostic Mass.

Doors open at 3:30pm;

Mass begins at 4:18pm.

Every Tuesday

Oasis Master office hours

*Talk with the Master of the Oasis about
Thelema, pick up or drop off applications,
or whatever you will. 5:30pm-7:30pm*

*Public class on Thelema, O.T.O., the Gnostic
Mass, Magick, or another related topic.*

Class begins at 7:30pm.