

## Frost Clears Up Witchcraft Misconceptions

Laura Rose

Jo Frost is just sitting down in the cove at SAGA. She is approached by an apparently embarrassed inquirer who, with pronounced hesitation, manages to ask, "Are you a witch?"

After a few people giggle around the table, Jo looks up and smiles, "No, but my parents are."

Jo Frost, freshman at St. Andrews, is the daughter of Gavin and Yvonne Frost, practicing witches living in New Bern, NC. Throughout her life, this graduate of the North Carolina School of Science and Math has had to cope with other people's reactions and misconceptions surrounding this fact.

"I was ostracized when I was little," Jo said. "I had maybe one friend until people were old enough to look past who my parents were."

It seems that past adverse feelings toward Jo stemmed from common misperceptions about her parents' beliefs. After all, witchcraft is not widely accepted. Jo explained, to the best of her knowledge, some aspects of her parents' religion of life, spirituality, nature, and intelligence and learning.

"They're not Satanists," Jo said. "They don't believe in Hell, because through astral-travel, no witch can find it."

Contrary to anything negative, Jo said her parents believe in a 'great good', which has no name because power over something you worship is not good. They celebrate the winter solstice, the rebirth of the sun, instead of Christmas. They mourn the summer solstice, because that is when the sun begins to die, she said.

"There are gods and deities over everything, and they celebrate each in their own way," Jo said of her parents. "There are rituals and spells, but the only magic comes from within - any power comes from within."

She explained that they believe healing can be done with the hands, and that meditation and prediction can be done using any medium, be it tarot cards, dice, or sticks.

Jo also explained the religion's origins that her father discovered in his native England when, at Stonehenge, he first became interested in witchcraft.

"Before Jesus Christ, witchcraft was the accepted religion," Jo said. "My father found it in research of the ancient Celts and Egyptians."

The Druids as well were members of this system of religion, philosophy, and instruction in ancient Gaul, Britain and Ireland. In the Irish and Welsh sagas, and later Christian legends, the Druids appeared as conjurers, instead of priests and philosophers.

"Today, people think of witches as being bad, making potions, and being green

with a wart on their nose," Jo said. "But these images are Christian dogma. Witches were suppressed after Christianity became supremacist."

Jo explained that views toward witchcraft have been slowly changing, but there has been a recent drop in the spread of acceptance, perhaps due to TV evangelism.

Her parents have felt this trend recently in actions toward their Church and School of Wicca, an organization that offers correspondence courses in prediction, tantra yoga, graphic analysis, and cooking. The National Enquirer cancelled these mail-order advertisements because witchcraft is mentioned in them.

Jesse Helms tried to pass an addendum on a tax law saying that all U.S.-chartered witchcraft organizations would be considered profit organizations, and therefore, would have to pay taxes. This addendum was namely directed toward the Frosts' Church of Wicca, because it is the only chartered witchcraft group in the United States.

"There was a huge uproar, Jerry Falwell being among the protesters," Jo said, "because if the policy started there, it might end in applying to Christian organizations, too."

The addendum was removed, and the Church and School of Wicca still operate tax-free. The organization's creed remains, "And it harm none, do what you will."

Jo's beliefs, different from her parents' in many ways, have changed since her childhood.

"Until Christian society pounced on my morals, I believed what my parents did because I was allowed to," Jo said. "I'm not angry because of it. But it's a very different feeling sitting on the outside of Christian society."

Jo does not discuss religion with her parents, as "it may be too touchy a subject."

"I still believe in a 'great good', and think of the devil as the sandman - something made up to scare little kids," Jo said. "I get angry sometimes when people are closed-minded."

Once, Jo wanted to try to help a sick friend, but a priest told the patient that Jo was a product of Satan. He threatened Jo's friend with excommunication from the church if she let Jo heal her leukemia.

"I don't think the same thing would have happened," Jo said, "if Ernest Angeley (TV evangelist) would have healed her."

Jo does not feel negatively toward Christianity, but she is often scared to tell people who her parents are.

"But I'm also proud of them, because they've done a lot," Jo said. "Hopefully, I can measure up in some way."



St. Andrews freshman, Jo Frost talks about growing up "outside the Christian society."

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During the 1840s, a series of educational reforms began to deal with the new wave of immigrants to America. Teachers were now viewed as specialists, standardization of curriculum and grade separations were incorporated at all levels of public education.

"Schools in the 1840s were selecting and sorting agencies, factories of learning where students were the final product," said Schlechty.

"In the 1960s the pressure for school reform was relieved by the belief that the best predictor of student success in schools is background variables," said Schlechty. In other words, just get an estimate of father's income to determine IQ."

Teaching has always been traditional and conservative, Schlechty said, but labeling is a problem - a way to get around dealing with people.

"For example," said Schlechty, "we all want to teach the gifted, who don't need to be taught, where teachers don't make much difference anyway."

In Kentucky, Schlechty is part of the Center for Leadership and School Reform, which is involved in creating a new image for public education.

"The purpose of schools has a societal end, that is, a child does not have the right not to read."

"It is the schools obligation to make sure that all students can read and think critically today," said Schlechty.

The difficult part about re-inventing education today is that we can forecast what the future will be like, but almost everything kids will need to know when they are 40 years old will not be invented until after they graduate, Schlechty said.