

History of FPG

A History of the Florida Pagan Gathering Historic Festival Dates

1994 - The City of Palm Bay Florida cites Iron Oak founders for attempting to convert their home into a church without a variance. Code Enforcement Board later declares them not in violation. For more information, see the Iron Oak web site archives at IronOak.org.

June 23-25th, 1995: First Freedom Fest held in Fort Pierce, Florida with 150 attendees

October 20-22, 1995: Samhain Freedom Festival

November 15-17th 1996: Freedom Fest with Nybor and Elspeth

May 1-4th 1997: Beltane Freedom Fest with Christina Tialdo and Derek Aubin

November 1997: Freedom Fest renamed Florida Pagan Gathering and moved to St. Petersburg

April 30-May 3, 1998: Beltane '98 FPG

November 12-15, 1998: Samhain '98 with Silver Ravenwolf

May 13-16, 1999: Beltane '99, Crafting the Craft with Robin Wood, Mike Short, Oberon, and Pete Pathfinder

November 11-14, 1999: Samhain '99 - Magick Beyond the Veil with Raven Grimassi, Amber K and Phyllis Curot

May 4-7, 2000: Beltane 2000 Reaching for the Spirit! with Donald Michael Kraig and Maya Heath

October 4th, 2000: Temple of Earth Gathering formed to manage festival

FPG takes vacation: Samhain Fall into Rhythm hosted by Synergy

Beltane 2001: - Rites of Spring with R.J.Stewart and Ann Moura

Samhain 2001: - with Selena Fox and Ann Moura

May 2-5 - Beltaine 2002: - Creation! - with Dorothy Morrison and Ann Moura

November 7-10 - Samhain 2002: - You Shall Not Be Forgotten! - with Raven Grimassi, Gavin and Yvonne Frost, Dorothy Morrison, Joyce and River Higgenbotham and Ann Moura

May 8-11 Beltaine 2003: - MaidenFest - with Selena Fox, Dorothy Morrison, Ann Moura, and Roger Coleman

November 6-9 - Samhain 2003: - Raven Grimassi, Gavin and Yvonne Frost, River and Joyce Higginbotham, Ann Moura, Roger Coleman and Fire Walking.

May 6-9 - Beltaine 2004: - Fires Of Life - M.R. Sellars, Carl McColman, Gavin and Yvonne Frost, Dikki Jo Mullen, Ann Moura, Roger Coleman, Gwen Knighton. OVER 400 ATTENDEES!!!!

November 11-14 - Samhain 2004: - Calling of the Clans - Dorothy Morrison, Isaac Bonewits, M.R. Sellars, Kristin Madden, Dikki Jo Mullen and Roger Coleman. Special musical guests: Loke E. Coyotes Wiccabilly Circus and Shining Wheel. Some of the best drumming we have ever had along with the burning of the Wicker Man. And to top it off we had an ATTENDANCE OF 490 FIRED UP PAGANS!!!!!!

May 5 - 8 - Beltaine 2005: - The Joy of Beltaine - Christopher Penczak, Judika Illes, Kerr Cuhulain, Gavin and Yvonne Frost and Roger Coleman. Special musical guests: The Annie Johnson Band. We blew by the 500 attendee barrier with a vengeance for a total of 585. It started with a few raindrops on Thursday but it was clear sailing after that. With over 60 workshops and events we were all a pretty busy bunch, but all had a great time.

November 10-13 - Samhain 2005: – “Crossing Over” – Dorothy Morrison, M.R. Sellars, Kristin Madden, Kerr Cuhulain, Phoenix McFarland, Orion Foxwood, Drema Baker and Roger Coleman – Special musical guests Skinny White Chick and War Band. Over 600 Pagans attended the final FPG at Boyd Hill in St. Petersburg. Once again the weather was perfect, the crowd was happy as always, and Main Ritual sent everyone home feeling a bit more than uplifted. But unfortunately the city of St. Pete put a damper on the festivities by finally restricting the sound levels on everyone’s favorite activity, drumming. A decision was made to seek a new venue immediately after festival was over and as it turned out the decision was to everyone’s benefit. Read on.....

May 4-7 - Beltaine 2006: – “Bring Back The Drums!” – Edain McCoy, Taylor Elwood, Lupa, Gavin and Yvonne Frost, Roger Coleman – Special Musical guests Gina Citoli and Kenny Kline. This was our first festival at 4H Camp Ocala in the Ocala National Forest and wow, did TEG ever find a beautiful place for FPG to be held. On the shores of Lake Sellers (No relation to M.R. Sellars although he may stake a claim at Samhain 2006) with swimming and canoeing, plenty of cabins with A/C-Heat and toilets/showers in each, and best of all no traffic noise from I-275. As to be expected when a festival moves there were some minor glitches but only minor (Those little dust devils off the lake were quite surprising). More than 500 Pagans showed up to BRING BACK THE DRUMS! And what an incredible three nights of drumming it was. The ritual fire burned bigger and brighter than anyone could remember, the drummers were at there absolute best and being down by the lake just added that special magic which everyone took part in. Taylor Elwood and Lupa pronounced FPG the best Pagan Festival they had ever been to. Now that we have an experience with 4H Camp Ocala we only expect things to get better and better.

How FPG Came to Be

For many years, the Church of Iron Oak, ATC has sponsored the Florida Pagan Gathering. When it started, it was an important part of the legal battle we were embroiled in but it soon succeeded in getting the message out beyond our wildest imagination!

First it was called the Freedom Fest and was held at a small resort on the East Coast of Florida. Then, the battle was over, the dust settled and the lawyers put away their briefs but the festivals continued. We changed the name to the Florida Pagan Gathering when we moved it to a place that could accommodate more people. Over the next two years, the festival grew to more than 300 people! It became a wonderful chance to bring together the Pagan community as well as attract popular authors to Florida, many for the first time. By that time, most of the FPG staff were from different groups or were solitaries so we were already a Florida-wide staff.

Well, we of the Church of Iron Oak, want the festival to continue under a statewide community event as our thanks to the wonderful Pagan community inside and outside of Florida, people who helped us during our difficulties. We decided to continue the festival under the watchful and caring hands of the Florida Pagan community, since it pretty much was already. On October 4, 2000, the Temple of Earth Gathering, Inc (TEG). was formed as an independent Pagan council. It is composed of Pagans from all over Florida expressly to manage FPG.

Since this is a community event, we are always looking for good people who are willing to help this festival become a success. Please consider helping us continue to make this festival successful by joining TEG! We always have openings for people who can work along with us and keep the spirit growing. Please contact the festival coordinator or the TEG president and be a member the Temple of Earth Gathering.

Be sure to bookmark our new web site, the home page of the Temple of Earth Gathering, and check it for exciting festival news!

Blessed Be,

Roger Coleman, HP Church of Iron Oak