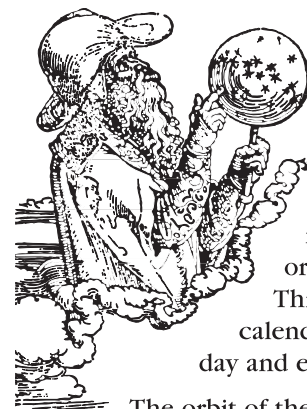


THE SUN

One of millions of stars, the Sun is 1,390,000 kilometres in diameter and 332,000 times bigger than the Earth in mass. The Earth orbits the Sun from a mean distance of 148,635,200 kilometres.

The Sun gives off more light than 60,000 candles (measured at one yard's distance). Every hour the heat radiated from the Sun could melt a 1.2-kilometre-thick layer of ice covering its entire surface. Light and heat from the Sun are the source of all life energy on the Earth.



THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

The Earth completes $365\frac{1}{4}$ rotations during one orbit around the Sun.

This is the basis of our calendar. Each rotation is a day and each orbit is a year.

The orbit of the Earth is elliptical, so the Earth is not always at the same distance from the Sun. (*See dia. 1.*) The Earth's axis is inclined at a $23\frac{1}{2}$ degree angle to the plane of its orbit.

The same part of the Earth is not always turned towards the Sun, and the Sun's rays are not always shining directly on the same place on the Earth.

The shifting of the Sun's rays causes the change of seasons. In spring, the Sun's rays fall perpendicular to the Equator. The VERNAL EQUINOX falls on March 21, when day and night are equal in length everywhere.

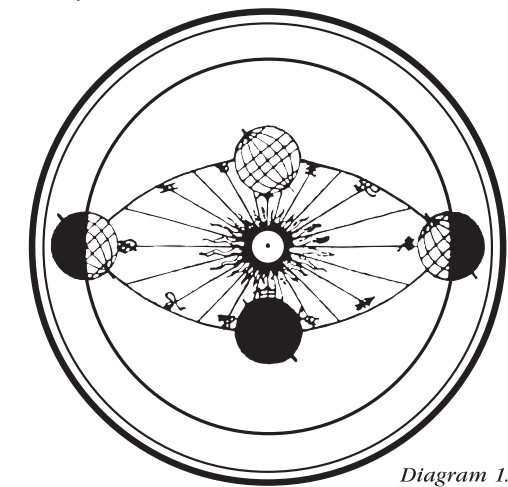


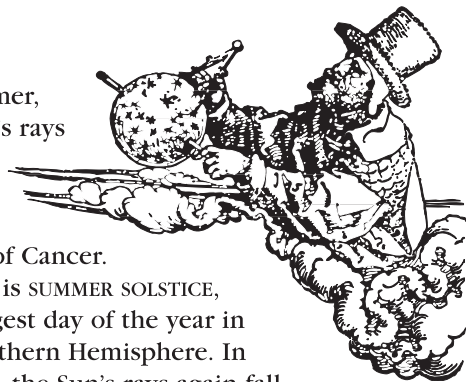
Diagram 1.

In summer,
the Sun's rays
shine
directly
on the
Tropic of Cancer.

June 21 is SUMMER SOLSTICE,
the longest day of the year in
the Northern Hemisphere. In
autumn, the Sun's rays again fall
perpendicular to the Equator.

The AUTUMNAL EQUINOX falls on
September 21, when day and night are
equal in length again. In winter, the Sun
is closer to the South Pole and it shines
directly on the Tropic of Capricorn.

December 21 is WINTER SOLSTICE, when
the Sun pauses before returning north.
While the Southern Hemisphere enjoys



its longest
day, the
Northern
Hemisphere
endures its
longest night.

YULETIDE CHEER

On winter solstice, darkness holds the
night. Nature's breath stands still and
there is meaning in this pause. Life
is both the energy of the Sun and the
darkness of its absence. It is a time to
find a peaceful place for contemplation
and to direct one's gaze inward.

Through myth and ritual, we face our
fears and enact our own transformations.
Like the change of season, we are
renewed by our passage through this

night. We reflect on the continual birth,
growth, fulfillment and passing of our
ideas, dreams, relationships and loved
ones. It is a process that is seasonal ...
Celestial. There is hope as night gives
way again to the light. The Sun returns,
and with dawn comes the promise of
warmth and summer.

Winter solstice is a time
to celebrate with
a child-like
innocence,

taking delight in all things and giving
gifts that catch the light.

On December 21, at sunset, plunge
naked into the ocean. Bless yourself in
the water of renewal. Keep a vigil all
night with a fire or candle. At dawn,
gather friends; climb a hill; chant, drum
and dance until the Sun rises.

As promised, the light
of inspiration will
grow stronger
in you as the
days grow
longer.

