Sacred Circle Ministry returns to Rider’s campus

By Jenn Kuhn
Photography Editor

A once defunct group on campus, Sacred Circle Ministry has now been reinstated and is already introducing other religious beliefs to the campus community, while at the same time providing a forum for open-minded and curious people to discuss rather controversial religious issues.

The main goal of the Sacred Circle is to promote the awareness of Paganism and to increase the community’s tolerance of different religions ideals. Freshman Laura Bejgrowicz has already taken on the job of restoring Sacred Circle, a group in which she now serves as President.

“It took quite a lot of courage to get such a controversial group reinstated when I was new to the campus, and I was a bit nervous about everyone’s initial reaction,” Bejgrowicz said, “but everything went much better than I had expected.”

Although the community was accepting of the new group, Bejgrowicz was still the target for harassment when flyers were placed around campus informing students of the group’s first meeting – the flyers that included her room extension.

“At first I was slightly worried by the prank phone calls. I thought it might have been more serious than it was,” said Bejgrowicz. Luckily, nothing ever came of it and I haven’t received any others since. I think it was just some ignorant students having a good time at someone else’s expense.”

In addition to Sacred Circle Ministry, other religious groups on campus include Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM), the Hillel Society, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, the Muslim Student Association and the Protestant Campus Ministry (PCM).

Sacred Circle, which holds its meetings in the basement of Gill Chapel, does not consist only of those practicing Paganism and Wicca. People of all religious backgrounds invited and encouraged to attend and ask their questions in a “fun and friendly environment.” The group’s goal is not to convert anyone, but to educate people on a religion they may have misconceptions about.

“I, myself, don’t consider myself either Pagan or Wiccan. I joined the group to learn more about their religion and about my friends who are part of that religion,” said freshman Jenn Cole.

“I am very glad to see that there is a group on campus where people who are of this religion can congregate, and that people who are curious can get some answers and broaden their knowledge of the world around them.”

In addition to meetings, the group also conducts rituals, open full moon circles and holiday celebrations.

Bejgrowicz says that she is pleased with the amount of people that have attended the meetings and that she hopes Sacred Circle Ministry eventually has the same credibility and reputation on campus as other organizations do.

“Everyone knows who CCM is and what they’re about. I want it to be the same for Sacred Circle Ministry. I want people to understand whom we are within the community and that there’s no reason to fear us,” Bejgrowicz said.

“Pagans are a part of a religion not very different in beliefs than Christians or Protestants. Our organizational structure is very different, but our moral standards are the same.”