

# Witch

(Cont. from p. 1-B)

cession, single file, men and women alternating. As the line forms, the witches begin to chant "Yee-OH! yee-OH!" and chanting, they march out the front door and around the house to the circle.

It is chilly outside, but the sky is clear and the March winds that had been gusting up to 30 miles per hour earlier in the day have died down. The path to the circle, lighted by candles, is through an overgrowth of bushes. Four torches — north, south, east, west — light the circle itself, a large clearing marked with rocks. In the center a cauldron hangs over the fire, billowing incense out onto the breeze. And on the altar are the implements of tonight's celebration, daggers, wine and a statue of the Goddess.

## Forehead anointed

As each person enters the circle, his forehead is anointed with oil and he is blessed by the priest and priestess of the circle, Lord Adonis and Lady Per-

sephone. Both were trained at Ravenwood.

When the circle is complete, the ritual begins with the priest and priestess calling the spirits of the deities into their bodies.

Lady Persephone announces then that two members have prepared something special for this evening and invites the couple to come forward. They recite a Gaelic legend about tying ribbons on trees to promote growth before distributing ribbons to the group to tie on their own trees.

Another couple sing to the accompaniment of a guitar and mandolin. Everything possible is done by male/female pairs.

Following the music, all join hands to sing and dance around the cauldron.

Then the group grows quiet. It is time for "communion." A priestess offers every participant in turn a sweet bread, then wine, followed by blessings.

After the drinks, Lady Persephone exclaims, "To the Goddess!" and empties the chalice onto the fire.

Finally, with daggers drawn, Adonis and Persephone bid "Hail and farewell!" to the spirits and extinguish the torches. The celebrants close by singing the special chant of the House of Ravenwood.

The service over, the witches and their guests drift back to the house in small groups for a buffet supper and more wine and conversation.

The time spent in the circle of the Goddess has been a Tolkienesque experience, a morsel of ancient times and faraway lands in urban America. The visitor has felt both reverent and ridiculous by turns and has decided perhaps that Wicca is not for him, after all. But the pungent odor of the incense lingers about him for several days afterward and he wonders what things were in the circle that could only be seen with the soul.