

# DeKalb witch's neighbors are split on zoning

By Depeltha R. Thomas  
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Neighbors of a southwest DeKalb County witch say they are worried about the influence she could have on children who walk past her house every day.

"We don't want to see another Mass or Jim Jones situation over here. Children already have so many distractions," said Cleotha Griffith, director of the Love Thy Children day-care center.

"I wouldn't want to see them skip school because they're caught up in having special powers or not being able to sleep because of something they've seen over there," she added.

Mrs. Griffith is one of several residents who oppose a zoning request to allow Lady Sistrana — founder and high priestess of the Ravenwood Church and Seminary of Wicca — to use her Rainbow Drive property as a place of religious worship.

DeKalb County has told Lady Sistrana she must seek the variance, but she said she wouldn't attend today's hearing because she only uses her house for private gatherings.

"My home is not open to the public," Lady Sistrana said. "Just like with any other religion, we have prayer and meditation here sometimes."

Ed Darden, who lives two houses down from Lady Sistrana, said there are about 30 cars at her house some evenings.

"They walk around clapping and beating on something," he said. "They have ceremonies almost every night real late into the night, but as long as they don't come over here, it doesn't bother me."

Staff writer Gayle White contributed to this article.