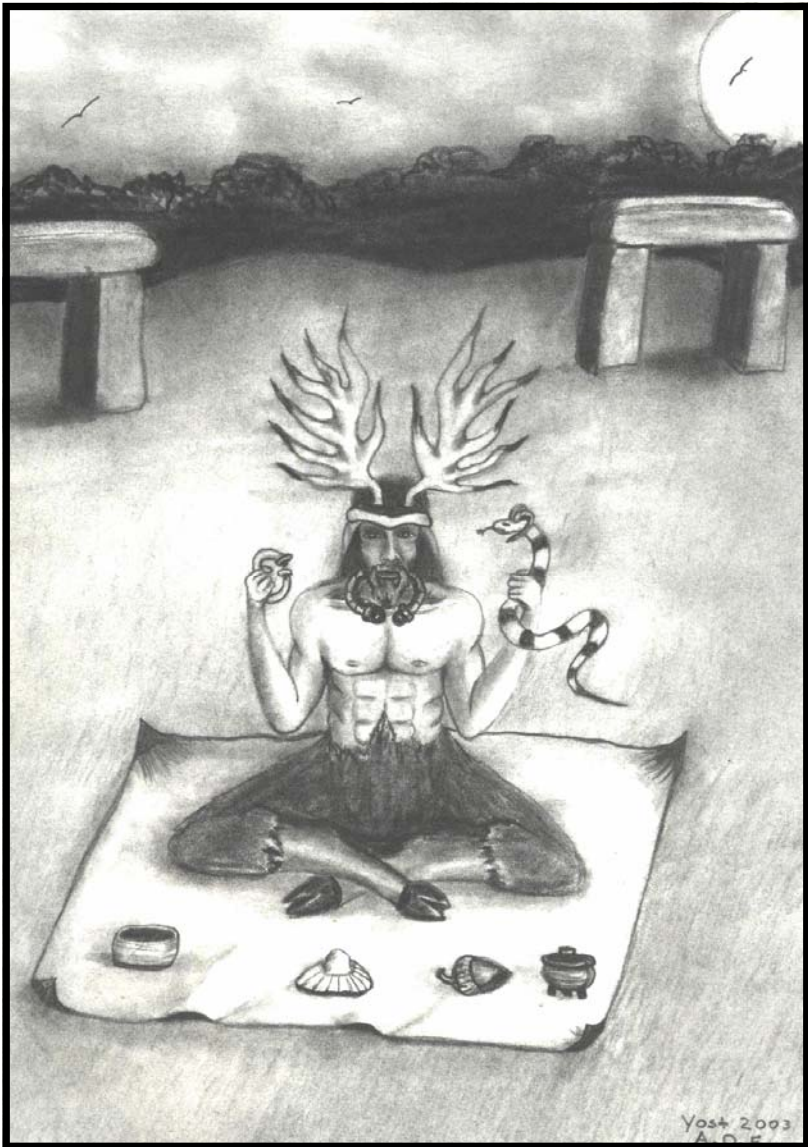


Winter 2004

Issue 23

# Oak Leaves

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin



Yosh 2003  
A.O.F.

# OAK LEAVES

## The Quarterly Journal of Ar nDraiocht Fein Issue 23

Oak Leaves is the quarterly journal of Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship, Inc. It is intended to be both a newsletter informing members and the Neopagan community of ADF's activities, as well as a forum for our scholarly and artistic explorations.

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## Falling Acorns....

*Letter from the  
Chronicler*

I have chatted with several people over the past months about the issue of identity. Most Pagans are not raised as such, most come to walk the Pagan Path out of their own choosing, and most of us do not have a long family tradition to help establish our identity, and build our roots. One of the things people use to develop a Pagan identity is a magical or religious name.

Names help establish our identity, and they help in identifying us to others — in itself a clear form of establishing our identity as individuals. This is something I have been through several times.

When I joined the US Navy back in the late 1980s I essentially gave up my first name, and was simply known as Kling — my last name — for almost five years.

While in the Navy I had become Catholic, and upon getting out of the Navy I joined a Catholic Monastery and while there assumed the religious name of Frater Wolfgang, OSB. It was very traumatic to my personal sense of identity going back to my “secular” name after having been Wolfgang for what seemed like an eternity.

Years later I was given the religious name of Rising Phoenix, and was known as Rising Phoenix within Wiccan circles for several years. When I joined ADF I

felt that it would be appropriate to assume a religious name that was more Indo-European. Since I had experience as a Hellenic Wiccan I felt it only proper to assume a more Hellenic religious name. So I took ten Greek names that I was fond of, and through the use of divination I ascertained what name the Gods wanted me to be known by, and that was Athanasios.

When I got more interested in Roman Reconstructionism, I took the name Gaius Modius Athanasius. Athanasius as a Latinized version of Athanasios, and Modius after my wife's beloved familiar Modius who died in 2002 while I was at Wellspring. Modius was a part of our family, and his death was hard on both of us. Through research I found there was actually a Roman Gens — family — within Imperial Rome that utilized the name Modius. I also found out that a modia was a unit of measuring grain, and to have several modia was a sign of wealth. I felt the combination of Athanasius with Modius would be a suitable pair for my spiritual identity as a Greco-Roman Reconstructionist.

Aside from my time at work, my close family, and some of my friends, my family name of David Kling was of little use to me. The part of me that was David Kling was used to earn an income, and interface with my parents. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't unknown as David Kling within the Pagan Community, but only a few people knew me as "Dave" outside of my Grove, and local area. This was how I wanted it, and what I preferred.

Things have changed recently, however, with the illness of my

**Continued on Page 43**





A ROSE BY ANY OTHER . . .  
Meredith McDonald

Names, labels, titles – what are they and why are they so powerful? What is it in us that seeks out a certain name or a title?

Are we reaching out to define ourselves to the world around us? Or are we begging the world around us to give us identity? And what world are we reaching toward?

‘Names’ are things in our discourse with each other that seem trivial, that we use or deal with every day, but that hold the power of our souls within them. It is by our names that we know the world. A name is the first thing we share in our culture, unless we are making a ‘poetically descriptive’ entrance.

For most of us, our names chose us – others gave them to us. Then, we spend our childhood defining the names we were given. As we grow and shed the pieces of our lives that are better left to the past, our names may become too small to hold the sum of our parts.

Then, at primal turning points in our histories we may find new names. They come upon us in varying ways – someone gives us a nickname or a circumstance bestows one and it sticks. At one place I worked I was ‘Lizzie’ (Hated that) – now, I am called ‘Princessa’ by one co-worker (Love that!). At home I’m Elizabeth – ‘back home’ (The Carolinas) I’m ‘Beth.’ And, on a ‘Union’ stage or set, I’m Meredith. (Hadn’t been on those for a few years, until recently, though.)

When we marry we take new names. Today both parties may change their names. Sometimes neither party changes their name – but, trust me, you’ll be called by the other’s name whether you’ve changed it or not.

There are also the ‘titles’ we wear. Sometimes we ‘work’ for them; Bachelors, Masters, Manager, CEO. Other times we are ‘awarded’ them – Judge, Senator, Arch Druid. There is work involved in gaining the latter titles as well, but they require the consensus of outside opinion. These names require the recognition of a *majority* of our peers.

Finally, for this article, at least, there are initiatory, or spiri-

tual names. Some religions would say that the name one is given at birth must be properly consecrated and is, therefore, 'spiritual.' But others may say that one's birth name must be left behind in order to go into deeper service to one's god or goddens. Thus, one may be asked to take a different name in order to leave their, less-enlightened past behind them.

Some initiatory, or monastery, practices demand that you choose your new name. Others choose your new name for you. Still others ask no change at all. (Blast them! For someone who can't decide what she wants for dinner most nights, this is maddening.)

Yet, that's the path I've chosen. ADF couldn't care less whether or not I choose or use a spiritual name – many pagan paths don't care. So, what to do?

There is a mystical appeal in taking a different name for spiritual purposes. It's an inner craving to become something 'other.' As an actor, I know this yearning intimately. I am also a writer, director, and producer. With our Theater troupe in Cleveland, Jack and I created alternative realities for people in the context of a corporate dinner or a mystery weekend. In this process I had the opportunity to see the power of names and naming.

Our actors in the course of an evening or weekend were, obviously, given a different name. Their true test in the whole of the work was whether or not they answered to that name when it was shouted out. When they did, they knew they had 'become' their character. They were 'committed.'

'Commitment to an action' – that is what actors strive for in their craft. Pure commitment to the persona they have taken on. True commitment of the self to words that others have written. True commitment to the instructions that directors have given. That is the art of the actor. So – answering to a name that is not your own is a crowning achievement.

So, is that what spiritual naming is about, then? Is it about commitment to a new path, or a new godden, or a new learning? I think, in many ways, it is. To choose to answer to a name created by our spiritual practice is to commit to that path wholly (holy? - sorry) we choose to be 'defined' by what we believe.

Sometimes that's a pretty big leap of faith as 'Magical' or spiritual names are at once inviolate *and* targets for ridicule or scorn. For those of you who haven't seen it - Lady Pixie Moondrip's Guide to Craft Names– (<http://www.widdershins.org/vol3iss4/m9710.htm>) is a must for

any pagan that has faced the decision of ‘naming.’

None of that withstanding, I once chose a spiritual name. I completed no initiatory course, nor studied with (worldly) gurus who bestowed upon me a name defined by the crystallizing moment of my training. (Though I LONGED for this experience.) I used it among some friends and on a few chat lists when I learned what they were.

However, when I sat down in front of my computer, the curser softly flashing at the end of my first post to ADF-Dedicants, I signed off as ‘Meredith.’ It was a strange thing to do. My grove knew me as Elizabeth and any other online pagans knew me by the other name – but I wrote ‘Meredith.’

And, frankly folks, it wasn’t until I ran for ADF Office that I worked out why I had used my professional name in that forum. (And in every other spiritual forum since.) The reason can be found in my ADF Bio on the website, but it’s inconsequential. What is important is what has since happened *to the name*.

It has been consecrated – sacrificed – made sacred. Instead of choosing a name defined *by* my spiritual path, the action made my professional name spiritual. And, now, when I hear ‘Meredith’ on a ‘union’ set or stage – which once harkened audition terrors or ghastly blocking/vocal mistakes – it is familiar. Now, when I hear the name, it connotes spiritual accomplishment; good fellowship and personal service to a growing community. ‘Meredith’ is my commitment to my sacred path and, now, it consecrates my professional path.

Since completing the Dedicant Program and oathing myself to my matron, I have taken a spiritual name, but it is reserved for use with certain people or in certain appropriate situations. I’ll not be rolling it out for ADF consumption, asking folks to change right along with me. Because the commitment I made to my ‘new’ appellation is but a commitment to myself.

“What’s in a name? . . . So ‘Meredith’ would, were she not ‘Meredith’ called, Retain that dear perfection which she owes without the title.” (Apologies to ROMEO AND JULIET)

In fact, names do have an archetypal power of their own. But, once chosen, their meaning comes from us. We may take a new name for its historical meaning and honor, but, as time passes, the meaning of the name becomes no more than a measure of our own deeds.

## **The Birds of Autumn**

*Life is a circle with no beginning and no end.*

Autumn's chill in the air,  
I watch the tinted  
Children of the trees  
Playing in the North wind.  
Mimicking birds, they flutter  
Down to lay a brilliant carpet  
Beneath my feet.  
How sad! Their glorious,  
Bright-hued flight is so brief.  
But as they fall in a colored  
Rain to the Mother's breast  
Around me, they whisper:  
Mourn us not.  
We have frolicked in the rain,  
Listened to the secrets of the birds,  
Danced with the summer winds  
Beneath silvered moons,  
And greeted each dawn  
To the gentle refrain  
Of the new day's waking.  
Rejoice in the beauty  
We bring to a tired world,  
For our fleeting journey is  
Neither ending nor beginning,  
But the heralding of  
Rebirth.

*J. Michael Robertson — December 10, 2003*

If we understand the where of ritual we are closer to understanding the why of ritual. That is, understanding where ritual takes place is a key to understanding the place ritual takes. The intent of this article is to explain both of these; the why in

# terms of the where.

Obviously a ritual is celebrated in a physical location, which has certain physical characteristics. It has shape and size, it is oriented in a particular direction (or not), it contains and may be marked out by objects. None of this is an accident, or, if it is, it is an accident with some serious repercussions. The material has its own importance, and the physical aspects of ritual space affect the meanings of that space as well.

There are other aspects of sacred space, however, and they include the ritual and the cosmic. The ritual aspect is made up not only of the acts and words by which the physical space is made divine; it also involves the way the physical aspects of the space interrelate. Each physical aspect has a ritual effect, and each of the relationships between physical aspects has a ritual effect. It might be said that just as the participants interact, so too do the physical aspects.

The cosmic aspect might also be called the mythical aspect. This aspect answers the question of how the physical and ritual aspects relate to the way the universe is organized mythically.

When seen as an organized whole, the Universe (at least the ordered part of it) is called the Cosmos. The great Cosmos out there is called the Macrocosm, the "big Cosmos." It is common in many religious and magical traditions to also posit a Microcosm – the "little Cosmos." This is the essence of each human being, the soul if you will. Microcosm and macrocosm are generally seen to be the same thing in some way. In some traditions, such as Upanishadic Hinduism, they are believed to be identical.

Indo-European Paganism, though, is about relationships rather than identity. From the Indo-European (IE) point of view the elements of the microcosm are not the same as the macrocosm, but they correspond in a one to one manner to them. In mathematical terms, the microcosm maps onto the macrocosm. For those who, like me, are mathematically challenged, a more literal image might help. A map (at least a good map) relates precisely to that which it represents, but its ink and paper are not the stones and soil of the land mapped. A map thus both is and is not the thing mapped. The two stand in relation to each other.

Besides a macrocosm and a microcosm we can define a mesocosm – a "between Cosmos." The exact nature of this will vary according to the context you need; it can fall anywhere between the two extremes, and there is a whole lot of room between them. Just as microcosm and macrocosm map onto each other, the

mesocosm, lying between them, maps both ways.

What I will be showing in this article is that ritual space is a mesocosm, and therefore maps onto the microcosm (us) and the macrocosm (everything). I hope I can show that not only is this true but that it is at the very heart of ritual.

How is sacred space laid out, and in what way does it fulfill its role as defining a mesocosm in which ultimately meaningful acts might take place?

The first characteristic of sacred space is that it *is* sacred. To be sacred is to be cut off. Most IE words used to describe sacred space derive from roots conveying the meaning "to cut" – *templum*, *temenos*, *ve* – the sacred is that which is cut off.

Cut off from what? If a sacred space is to be a Cosmos, it must be cut off from Chaos. Not only is it ordered, but this order is defined in relation to disorder. This is one of the purposes of the offerings to the Outsiders in ADF ritual. We do not merely "buy off" the Outsiders or scare them away. By recognizing them we establish our space as being in opposition to the Chaos they inhabit and represent. We mark it out as Cosmos, we define it by that which it is not.

The physical space of a ritual is, in IE religion, generally square or rectangular – the Romano-Celtic temples and Celtic Viereckschanzen, Roman *templum* and Greek *temenos*, Zoroastrian *pawis*, Vedic sacrificial ground. A square or rectangle is oriented towards the four spatial directions; it maps the macrocosm, which is oriented in this way. It is also oriented towards the four personal directions (front/back, left/right) – it maps the microcosm. The mesocosm of ordered space thus maps in both directions, forming a link between them. This linking is expressed in language; witness the etymological connection between "right" and "south" – compare Latin *dexter*, "right," with Sanskrit *dakshina*, "south," both coming from Proto-IE \*deks-, "right." Microcosm and macrocosm are here defined by the same terms.

A square space clearly represents the balance expressed by this connection. It is the same in each of the four directions. But what of a rectangular one?

First, rectangular ones offer a practical advantage, and even the most important of symbols must sometimes bow to practicality. A temple (a house for the gods) can be built at one end of a rectangle with room for people to gather at the other.

I would like to suggest a more symbolic meaning as well. IE cosmology includes an axis mundi, a center of the universe about which all is organized. This is expressed mythically in the image of the Well and the Tree. The Well extends downward and

the Tree extends upward, forming together the axis mundi, the pillar about which the Cosmos turns. The world extends out from this point of joining.

Ritually one would expect to find the same thing. However, it is rather difficult for a physical well and tree to exist at the same spot. For either of them to be in the exact center of the space would be to exalt it at the expense of the other. The axis mundi must be separated, with the Tree (or its representative) on one side of the center and the Well (or *its* representative) on the other. In order for them to be in some sense the center, they must be on one of the two centerlines. The connection between "south" and "right" shows that the standard IE orientation is towards the east, so the east/west axis is the one to use. Choosing that axis also allows for some additional symbolism – the tree in the east (where the sun comes up) and the well in the west (where the sun goes down). Although not physically in the center, these two, balanced about that center, are there in a ritual sense.

I will talk more about the center and what goes on there in a physical and ritual sense later. I would now like to turn back to the sacred.

Since the sacred cuts off, it is a border. It defines the difference between that which is inside and that which is outside.

Borders must themselves be defined. They must be marked physically, established ritually, and reflect a mythical reality.

The mythical reality is first that the Cosmos is itself bounded. (Interestingly enough, the current scientific view of the universe is that it is infinite but bounded.) As implied before when discussing the nature of the sacred, the bounding, the border, is between Cosmos and Chaos, between the Macrocosm and Disorder.

Second, this border is conceived in IE thought as formed of water. This water is one of the three worlds – land, sky, and sea – which composes the IE universe. I have discussed this in depth and given my reasons for proposing this model in Serith, 1995. One example is the Graeco-Roman belief in the world-circling ocean. Cosmos is encircled by, contained within, the unordered waters of Chaos. "Beyond here there be dragons" – and dragons are spirits of Chaos, lurking in the depths.

A similar division is found in the microcosm. A person is clearly bounded. This bounding is not done with water, of course, but with skin and air, but there is plenty of history of the metaphor of "the ocean of air" which shows a connection in thought be-

tween air and sea.

With these two mythical aspects in mind – the Cosmos is bounded and it is bounded by water – we can now turn to the ritual and physical aspects. How is such a border between sacred space (Cosmos) and non-sacred space (Chaos) established?

Ritual space is cut off. When researching IE rituals for creating sacred space, I was surprised to find that they were in one way similar to those found in Wicca and Ceremonial Magic – they involved cutting. I suppose I should not have been too surprised, since the symbol is, after all, pretty obvious.

Emain Macha was marked out with a brooch pin. Zealand was ploughed around to separate it from the mainland. Romulus created the sacred borders of Rome by ploughing. Temporary pawis are marked with a knife. The Vedic sacrificial ground is laid out by ploughing. Sacred space is literally cut into existence.

The evidence prescribes ploughing as the canonical method. Due to practicalities, and approved by the variations mentioned, a substitution is possible. What matters is that the implement be sharp and metal (the better to cut with). For instance, a spear could be used, which would add the rather nice symbolic touch of guarding the border. I myself use the shovel with which I turn over my garden in the spring – my plough.


All of this leads us to the physical aspect. You have to be able to see where your Cosmos ends, in this way bringing the visual sense into the ritual.

In a permanent sacred space this would be quite simple. Walls of earth, wood, or stone could be built, or pillars places at intervals, perhaps with a rope or chain between them to enclose your space.

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Temporary space is not that much harder to mark. Its corners can be shown with poles or rocks, which might also be placed at intervals along the border. For added definition, cord or ribbon can be strung from pole to pole.

Walls and cords are hard to pass through. That is the whole point. The border of sacred space is itself sacred. It is a dangerous thing, not to be crossed with impunity. Remus, to show his contempt for the walls Romulus had made, jumped over them. He was struck dead.

If you cross sacred boundaries, will you be struck dead? Of course not. What will happen will be worse. You will have undone the border's sacred nature. You will have dissolved the sacrality of your space and the rest of your ritual will take place in mundane space. You will have left the mesocosm.

This is not to say that IE sacred space is sealed tight. We are not talking here about a Ceremonial Magical or Wiccan circle, a bubble separated from all around it. To return to the story of the founding of Rome, when Romulus ploughed the borders at each place where a gate would be he lifted the plough. Since the gates would be crossed constantly, they had to be non-sacred.

In IE sacred space the non-sealed nature is also marked with a gateway. Traditionally this is in the east. When the borders are cut a door is left in the eastern wall through which people might pass in and out.

This seems to counter the idea of separating out a space; it seems to create a leak through which Chaos might enter and Cosmos escape. And that is exactly what it does. It must, or ritual space would not map to either microcosm or macrocosm.

There is a peculiar but beautiful thing about the IE Cosmos. It is not completely separate from Chaos. Take the Norse cosmology, for instance. This very famous cosmology preserves the Proto-IE one almost perfectly. The World Tree stands at the middle of the Cosmos. At its foot is a well (or wells) from which it is watered. From the Tree honeydew drips down into the well.

The well represents Chaos. Water is unordered, and the well connects with the underground and surrounding sea in which Chaos dwells. This means that Cosmos is fed by Chaos. In turn Cosmos feeds Chaos (honeydew drips into the well). The nature and functioning of this reciprocity rewards study, and I recommend it to all. For now, though, observe that there is an influx of Chaos into Cosmos, and that that influx is necessary.

Note also, though, that Chaos does not overwhelm Cosmos. Rather, Cosmos orders the inflowing Chaos in order to continue living.

This is the macrocosm. In the microcosm we have an even more obvious example. We quite literally have openings in our body. Through one Chaos enters in the form of killed life. Without this influx we would die. It does not overwhelm us, though. In fact, we transform it into the energy with which we operate and the very structure of our body.

Think for a second again about the directions. If the south is to our right, what is to our front, where our mouth is? We face east. Indo-Europeans "orient" themselves when they pray; the gods are spoken to while facing east. And east is just where the gateway is in our physical sacred space. When we pray to the gods, facing east, we face the gateway. Not a bad idea in a very obvious sense; you don't want to turn you back on danger. In a more subtle sense, though, notice that the gods are seen as being in the same direction as Chaos. They are not chaotic, of course. Then why do we face both Chaos and divinity in the same direction?

Like the Cosmos, the gods are fed by Chaos, transforming it into order. They might be said to ride Chaos into sacred space, keeping it from overwhelming our mesocosm. They protect us from Chaos by mediating it.

Ritual space is not only sacred, it is holy. Edgar C. Polome (1982) has shown how the distinction between these two plays out in Indo-European thought, even to the extent of different words for the two (Latin *sacer* and *sanctus*, for example). We have already seen that the sacred can be dangerous, and well it should be – it is on the border between Chaos and Cosmos, where warding power is need. By being dangerous it can serve as a guardian for the holy, which resides within the space the sacred marks out. The holy is unreservedly benevolent. One of the major intents of ritual is to make contact with the holy and absorb its blessing. The holy pours out into sacred space, filling it and bringing with it the blessings of the gods.

The sacred must be crossed to get to the holy. The sacred is wild power, dangerous and difficult to restrain, but necessary for the establishment of microcosm and macrocosm. It is the border, the surrounding water.

The holy is not dangerous at all. In fact, it is necessary if anything is to exist at all. The holy is the center. It is fire.

In the center of the microcosm, fire is the spark of life within us. It is the body's furnace which transforms the chaos that is ingested into the cosmos of the body. It is the altar on which the offerings given by the world are burnt and shared with the divine life.

The place of fire in the macrocosm is harder to see. That is because its equivalent does not exist in the form of fire. It is, rather, the point where the Tree and Well unite, the instrument by which the Chaos flowing from the Well is transformed into the Cosmos which is the Tree. The water from the Well pours through the fire, forming the fiery water that is one of the central mysteries of IE religion. (See Puhvel, 1987, pp. 277-283 for a short discussion of some aspects of this.) This is one of the meanings of the Waters of Life, a topic which deserves its own article.

In ritual space the holy is represented by a fire in the center. Remember how I said that the representatives of the Well and the Tree could not both be physically in the center, even though they were mythically there? The two are equally important; since both can't be there, neither can be there.

Fire, though, is the most important thing in the ritual. Remember that in the macrocosm the fire is at the most central point of all, both on the vertical and horizontal planes. It is found at the exact point where all six directions meet. That is the ultimate center.

For these reasons, then, we put the fire both physically and ritually at the center of the mesocosm (our ritual space and actions), just as it is mythically in the center of micro- and macrocosms.

The central physical fire is square. In this way it equates to the four directions of the micro- and macrocosms. It also reflects the square sacred space. It is the space writ small; the space is itself a container with a fire at its heart. The fire and the space map onto each other.

From the fire, from the center, the holy ones enter the world. Although we may call to them facing east, it is through the center that they come. We call to them in the direction of the rising of the macrocosmic fire (the sun), and they come to us through our mesocosmic fire, that in the center of our space. In ADF terms, the center fire is the Gateway. It opens both ways; through it the gods come to us, through it our offerings go to the gods.

The space where the fire burns is an altar. Many Neo-Pagans think of an altar as a place to put their ritual tools. But that is not the Paleo-Pagan view. An altar is two things. It is the place where the gods sit, and the place where offerings are made. It is a table, yes, but it is the table at which we sit down in fellowship with the gods and eat a communion meal.

In an Indo-European Paleo-Pagan sacrifice, the gods were given small parts of the animal. The rest was cooked and eaten by the people attending the rite. Some of the meat was thus trans-

formed as a gift *to* the gods, born on the rising smoke of the fire. The rest was transformed into a gift *from* the gods – their divine fire transformed the animal into something sacred by cooking it.

The fire is where this miracle takes place. ADF does not sacrifice animals, so there is no meat to burn or to cook. We do, however, send our prayers and offerings to the gods, and they respond with the Waters of Life – fiery water.

In the mesocosm, then, the divine transforming of food into body (in the microcosm) and Chaos into Cosmos (in the macrocosm) is performed ritually by the transforming flame in the center.

There are actually two fires in Indo-European ritual space, though. There is the fire of offering, the square one, and there is a round one. I have been talking about the square fire, the one in the center of the ritual space. This is the public fire of offering.

The round fire is the domestic one. It is the representative of the home's hearth, the original offering fire. I have given the evidence of this in Serith, 1996. Here I will just comment on the *garhapatya* fire in Vedic ritual. This fire is lit by coals taken from the hearth of the person for whom the sacrifice is being offered, and is tended by his wife. It is used to light the square fire.

This is very important. The round hearth fire is the source of the square public one. Not only is the square fire lit from the round one; if the round fire goes out there is a specific ritual for relighting it before the rest of the ritual can continue. Thus although the square fire is the focus of public ritual, it is the round fire which is primary.

So where does this round fire fit into the micro-, meso-, and macrocosm model I am proposing? Ask yourself where it comes from. It comes from the home.

Home and world are equated in many traditions. Mircea Eliade covered this far better than I could, but just keep this in mind. The home mediates between the family and the outside world. It is, then, a mesocosm. In our everyday life we live in a mesocosm, and now in our ritual we are living in another. From our daily life we bring the fire to empower our ritual life. Our ritual life will then empower our everyday life. The round fire represents our everyday life in our ritual space.

Physically, the round fire is, of course, round. It can burn in a cauldron or a round fire pan. It can be laid on the ground in a round fire ring.

The round fire is located between the square fire and the gate. It is thus a stage on the journey from the everyday to the divine, from the world outside sacred space to that space's center.



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It is firmly established within sacred space, but since its mesocosm is of a different order than that of the public ritual it has its own center and is not in the center of the ritual space.

The round fire may be carried into the space already lit if that is convenient, as it would have been carried from the home of the sacrificer in ancient times. It can also be prepared in the ritual space. That fire would be like coals carried from a hearth to the square fire.

A question immediately comes to mind – whose hearth do we bring fire from? ADF ritual is not performed on the behalf of a particular individual, but of the community as a whole.

In ancient communities this would be no problem. The king or chieftain was the ritual center of the group; *his* hearth was the *group's* hearth. ADF has no kings or chieftains, though. Even a grove's Senior Druid does not take this function.

A public hearth must be established. This has fine Indo-European precedent; the temples of Vesta and Hestia, as well as that in the convent of St. Brigid, were such hearths. Some groves actually keep an eternal flame burning, and that is the obvious source for the fire. Alternatively, a group hearth can be established as part of the creation of ritual space. This can be as simple as lighting a candle or oil lamp with a ritual identifying it as such. Or a fire can be lit some time before the ritual, even the night before, and then tended by grove members until the ritual, and then coals taken from it and carried in a fireproof container to the ritual site. After the coals are taken the group hearth can be extinguished or watched over by someone during the ritual. A fire can also be lit once the ritual participants are within sacred space. This would be a hearth newly lit in a new home which they share. This home would then be further sanctified by being transformed into a temple.

As the heart of the mesocosmic house, the round fire be-

comes, when brought to the sacred space, the representative of the microcosm. It is a physical representation within the ritual space's mesocosm of the microcosm. It is a spot where all the ritual participants can be said to co-exist. It is a shared microcosm; through it we are identified with each other, and since from it comes the square fire of offering, through the round fire we approach the gods as one people, the round fire, the hearth, giving us one home.

Both the microcosm and the macrocosm are present in ritual space and fires, then. And ritual space is a mesocosm that mediates between the two.

The idea that ritual space can be mapped onto both the microcosm and the macrocosm is not new. And of course the equation of microcosm and macrocosm is a commonplace. What is not usually realized is that 1. ritual space is a mesocosm, 2. this mesocosm maps in both directions simultaneously, and 3. it is not only the space which serves as a mesocosm, but also the actions within it. This is, of course, true of the ritual acts which create sacred space, through which the identity of the microcosm and macrocosm is established and strengthened. But since ritual actions take place within sacred space, all ritual acts themselves are mapped into both the macrocosm and the microcosm, affecting both. All actions taken within sacred space have an effect on both worlds. All ritual acts are effective acts.

What is scary is that all *non*-ritual acts, performed in sacred space, are also effective. This is implied in the fact that ritual space maps both ways. It is, in a religious sense, the same thing as both worlds, and what happens in ritual space happens in both worlds, whether intended or not. If there is disorder in actions performed in sacred space, there will be disorder both in the people performing and attending the ritual and the Cosmos as a whole. If, on the other hand, the actions are performed with grace, beauty, and order, the individuals and the Cosmos will be imbued with those qualities.

This puts a huge responsibility on those who attend ritual, and especially on the celebrants. The latter are responsible for ensuring grace, beauty, and order. If mistakes are made – a bowl is tipped over, words are misspoken – they will, if not dealt with, have negative repercussions on attendees and the Cosmos. A misspoken line, a missed cue, the spilling of a bowl – each action is seen as an irruption of disorder into even the most carefully controlled mesocosm. This is in the nature of things; order is always threatened by disorder. If such mistakes are made, it is the responsibility of the celebrants, especially the chief priest(s) to

weave them into the ritual so that they appear necessary, so that what is originally and error is instead shown to be a meaningful part of the ritual.

Where the celebrants can shine is by transforming the disordered act into a constructive one. The misspoken word is gently made right, the person who misses a cue is brought to say their words, the bowl is righted and refilled – the fixing of mistakes in the most

graceful, beautiful,  
and orderly way possible becomes a ritual act. Performed in sacred space, it becomes an act which fixes some of the disorder in the attendees and

*Grove of the Twilight Owl, ADF . . .*

*. . . Would like to send a special thanks*

*To Everyone who made . . .*

## **ELYSIUM GATHERING 2003**

*A Success!*

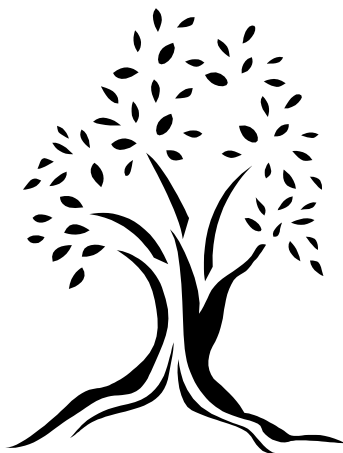
With a special thanks to:

- Skip Ellison
- Ian Corrigan and Liafal
- John Michael & Sara Greer
- Michael J. Dangler
- Nin-Si-Anna
- Wulf
- Candace Moore and Danielle Sparks
- Snakes Rising
- And to all the vendors and attendees who made the magic come alive.

Mark Your Calendars, **Elysium Gathering 2004**

# News From Around The World....

## ....*Tree!*



### Births

**Elena Rowan**, born August 23, 2003 to Sylvan and Seabhac Fionn of Little Acorn Grove.

### Dedicant Program Completions

Comgratulations to the new Dedicants!

**Batela**, completed June 30, 2003

**Explore**, of Black Bear Protogrove, completed August 6, 2003

**Kat**, completed October 21, 2003

**Meredith McDonald**, of Raven's Cry Grove, completed October 31, 2003

### Newly Chartered Provisional Groves

**Rogue River Grove**, Medford, Oregon, Aug. 25, 2003

**Three Cranes Grove**, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 26, 2003

**Grove of the Seven Hills**, Lynchburg, Virginia, Sept. 10, 2003

**Hallowed Oaks Grove**, Huntsville, Alabama, Dec. 1, 2003

### New Protogroves

**Abhainn Glas Protogrove**, Portland, Oregon, Sept. 12, 2003

**Black Bear Protogrove**, Bloomington, Indiana, Oct. 8, 2003

**Protogrove of the Rising Phoenix**, Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 13, 2003

**Protogrove of the Mystic Ash**, Amelia, Ohio, Dec. 2, 2003

**Enchanted Desert Protogrove**, Alamogordo, New Mexico, Dec. 13, 2003

## Grove News

- **Cedar Light Grove, ADF, Baltimore, Maryland**

**Community Service:** Accepted donations of close to 100 items and services for an auction to raise funds for Highland Farms, raising a total of \$1143. Donated \$100 to a coven forming in Eastern Correctional Institute. Doing a clothes drive for residents of Shepherd Pratt Hospital. Providing space for local pagan groups to meet.

**Special Events:** We mustered folks to clean and prepare two of our apartments for rent. We tore down a wall between two of the rooms in the Grove to make more room for our ever-growing group. We decided to retain the smaller first floor apartment for Grove use instead of renting it out to a residential tenant. Over the Labor Day weekend, we attended a large pagan gathering hosted by one of our members, Ed Gately, for Mars gazing and general celebration of life. Jim and Roni Gossweiler donated a large permanent pavilion, total value around \$15,000, to enhance our outdoor sanctuary.

Our web page changed from Yahoo to Host Rocket on October 11. Due to technical difficulties with Yahoo, all web server changes were not final until November 4. We earmarked \$10,000 to go toward paying off our mortgages. We began having Full Moon Rites in September, led by various members of our Grove. We have seven people oath-bound to finish the Dedicant Program by next Samhain. Five of those folks are striving to be done before Wellspring. On December 17, several of us attended a hearing regarding our Grove's property tax exemption; things went well.

**Rituals:** August 2, High Rite at Cedar Light Center, approximately 15 people attended. September 10, Full Moon Rite at CLC, 5 people attended. September 27, Lughnasadh High Rite and Caryn and Will's handfasting at CLC, 75 people attended. October 10, Full Moon Rite at CLC, approximately 10 people attended. October 31-November 2, Samhain Camp-out at Highland Farms, 67 people attended. November 7, Full Moon Rite at CLC, 28 people attended. November 8, Samhain High Rite at CedarLight Center, approximately 40 people attended. December 9, Full Moon Rite at CLC, 28 people attended. December 20, Yule High Rite: Noon Saturday, 3 folks, the Scribe, Senior Druid and Purswarden. 6 P.M., about 30 people; Midnight, 8 people; Dawn, 7 people; Noon Sunday, about 13 people; 12 people held vigil all night.

**Weekly Events:**

- Walk With the Old Ones, a semi-formal weekly gathering in the Sanctuary for healing work, discussions, and a chance to remember our connection to earth, Sundays at approximately 11A.M.
- Lore Meetings, every Thursday night from 7-9 P.M.
- Healing circles and Reiki Shares, Tuesdays at 5:30 P.M.
- Rites of Caffeina, a potluck brunch social scheduled from 10 A.M.-12 noon on Sundays but usually ending between noon and 4 P.M.

As we haven't determined our 2004 calendar yet, our web address for information on high rites is. <http://www.cedarlightgrove.org>. There's a

contact button on there for queries and all of our events are listed as we schedule them.

-- Sati, Scribe, Cedar Light Grove, ADF (satikat@adelphia.net)

- **Little Acorn Grove, ADF, Dumfries, Virginia**

Our little tribe has grown from about eight to over fourteen people in the last six months, and we're enjoying the new energy. We've begun working on the Dedicant Program as a group, and recently also had our first Lore Meeting in many years. Additionally, our members are learning how to write and lead ritual through our "Druid in Charge" program, and so far it's gone quite well.

For Lughnassadh, we harvested close to 40 lb. of raspberries at a local farm and made a wonderful raspberry mead, our second annual batch. At our Yule celebration we'll be installing a new Bard, Scribe and Seer. In January, we'll be shaping up plans for our 6th annual Trillium Spring Gathering, to be held in April. Oh yeah, and since Lughnassadh we've had two engagements and one baby born. We've been busy!

--Spiraldancer, Senior Druid, Little Acorn Grove, ADF  
(spiraldancer@comcast.net)

- **Rogue River Grove, ADF, Medford, Oregon**

Rogue River Grove has been quite busy these past six months. We celebrated a number of rituals including Summer Solstice at our new ritual spot on Big Butte Creek in the Rogue River National Forest. For Lughnassadh we held our first campout at Beaver-Sulfur campground in the Applegate area of Southern Oregon. Over a dozen people attended the ritual and everyone had a great time.

Fall Equinox was celebrated with our largest campout to date. We spent three days at the Jim Creek campground near the base of Crater Lake. We had over twenty people attend the ritual itself, with the beauty of the area inspiring us all. Our ritual was held alongside Jim Creek, where we were surrounded by towering Douglas Fir. The power of our circle was incredible and everyone came away with a greater understanding of what it means to be Druid. We also continued to establish many Grove traditions, much to the delight of our growing membership.

October weather in Southern Oregon is always iffy at best, so we decided to hold our Samhain celebration indoors. Our focus was, of course, on ancestors and we had a very moving ritual. By the end there was not a dry eye in the circle. After the ritual proper, we enjoyed each other's fellowship with our traditional feast. An evening of singing and merriment topped off a very successful celebration.

On the public education front, Rogue River Grove offered a set of Druid 101 workshops during the summer. Designed to explain the basics of who we are and what we believe, nine workshops were presented in such subjects as the History of the Celts, the Eight Festivals, and the Nine Virtues. All were very well received. We also offered a number of individual workshops as well as regular Meet and Greets.

We have recently begun a new project we are calling Rogue Rescue. A number of our members are avid anglers and noticed that a disturbing of cats were being abandoned at one of our favorite fishing spots along the Rogue River. Working with local agencies, we have begun to rescue as many of these poor animals as possible. Once a cat has been trapped, they are cleaned and fed. They are then taken to a local vet to be neutered. At this time we also deal with any health problems the cat may have. After the vet declares the animals healthy and fit, they are placed with new loving homes. Members assist with essentials such as food and litter, as well as acting as foster homes for our new little friends. I am happy to report that Dolly, our first rescue, was adopted on Winter Solstice. We will soon have a web site up for Rogue Rescue.

For the coming year we are planning a number of rituals, campouts and other events. For more information you may contact us at [RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net](mailto:RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net).

-- Grey Badger Senior Druid, Rogue River Grove  
([RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net](mailto:RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net))

- **Black Bear Protogrove, ADF, Bloomington, Indiana**  
Black Bear Protogrove formed in Bloomington, Indiana, in early September, and was officially recognized as an ADF Protogrove on October 8 2003.

We held our first high day ritual for the Autumnal Equinox, where we worked with a pan-Celtic pantheon, honoring Lugh and Flidhais as patrons, and offered thanks for the harvest and formation of the grove. In early November, we celebrated Samhain, honoring the Morrigan as our matron and releasing that within us that was ready to die. For our Yule, we worked with Odin, several tree spirits, The Black Bear, and Freya to get us through the dark of the year, bring back the sun, and help us prepare for spring.

In addition to celebrating the high days, we have been holding regular meetings to learn about and plan our rituals. While some of these are more business-oriented, others are scholarly discussions, providing introductions to the relevant high days and to the general pantheons and specific deities we work with for each ritual. We alternate these organizational meetings with more activity-based educational workshops; recent workshop topics have included personal altars and meditating with trees

-- Explore, Grove Organizer, Black Bear Protogrove, ADF  
([blackbeargrove@yahoo.com](mailto:blackbeargrove@yahoo.com))

**Enchanted Desert Protogrove, ADF, Alamogordo, New Mexico**  
Enchanted Desert Protogrove applied for Protogrove status in late October, 2003; the application was reviewed, accepted, and so the Enchanted Desert Protogrove was founded in November, 2003. The certificate was received by Grove Organizer, Polarity. Celtic Cultural Focus is listed as the only chosen cultural focus, thus far.

Kirk Thomas, who is our ADF Representative of the SW and Re-

gional Druid, as well as our protogrove mentor, drew much attention and enthusiasm among friends when he paid two visits to Alamogordo, New Mexico, prior to the Enchanted Desert Protogrove's formation; during one of his visits he led ritual for Midsummer Solstice.

Those prior visits from Kirk here in Alamogordo had a good impact because friends were invited to join us in our discussions about the Druid path, as well as answering questions from the local Alamogordo attendees about the ADF national organization.

With that, two ADF members, Polarity and another local solitary ADF member, began making plans for study groups. Encouraged by their friends' additional enthusiasm to awaken the pagan community, here began the momentum to develop our ADF Protogrove. Thus, it was decidedly time for New Mexico to be represented among the ADF communities.

The Enchanted Desert Protogrove has met at least twice each month since that time for pagan "Get-togethers" to discuss the Protogrove's goals, upcoming proposed activities, and meeting places. The Enchanted Desert Protogrove held its first high day ritual for Winter Solstice on December 24, 2003, at the home of Polarity, with four attending. Others who could not attend due to conflicting work schedules and other previous engagements, six in number, contacted Polarity to wish the Protogrove best wishes for the Winter Solstice celebration, saying they would make it to other future activities and high day celebrations, so they were with us in spirit!

Contact information: Enchanted Desert Protogrove, ADF, P.O. Box 5053, Alamogordo, NM 88311-5053; Online forums: alamogordoareapagans on Yahoo groups; [www.adf.org](http://www.adf.org) website, ADF-SW Region; The Enchanted Desert Protogrove website is still under development at this time, while we build our schedule of events and activities which will be posted there.

One local attendee, Dean, has stepped up to volunteer to build the Enchanted Desert Protogrove website. Hussah!

Meeting places are currently homes of the attendees. We are spreading our wings with plans to meet in a variety of restaurants and coffee houses of the area while we investigate which of these are comfortable for our needs.

The Protogrove attendees are currently having discussions about the community service function and which, of the variety of these locally, we may decide on as our work for the community. Community service suggestions by the attendees are: sponsor an animal at the local zoo; sponsor a tree that is part of a local Alamogordo, NM, community beautification program for the city; adopt-a-highway (state program); sponsor a section of the city (for area clean up). Details of these findings have been posted on the alamogordoareapagans Yahoo group and will also be discussed as we meet at our next get-togethers.

Additional topics, goal setting, and proposed activities for the newly developing Enchanted Desert Protogrove will include: divination, ogham study, liturgy, magic, Neopaganism, art, mythology, tradition of the old ways; workshop development, liturgy understanding and writing, feasts (to

include mead-making competitions and other palatable delights), arts (with crafting staffs and other druidic designs and things), quests to investigate nature spirits of the land and its ancestors who once roamed this area, theatre events, barding and presentations, and more!

A personal goal I have set is an eventual festival to be held by Enchanted Desert Protogrove, ADF, for this locale in New Mexico. This goal is far in the future.

As we begin our journey as a new ADF Protogrove here in Alamo-gordo, there has been some intense concern among the attendees about the public aspects and functions of our Protogrove. Understandably, due to the tremendous number of fundamentalists in the area and with regard to this, we use continued good judgment with the process of a growing Protogrove, just as we do in our daily lives, but yes! We are moving forward with new and ever-strong motivation and determination to live our paths wholly.

*Winter Solstice:*

The Winter Solstice was the beginning milestone ritual held by the Enchanted Desert Protogrove on December 24, 2003. We borrowed the ritual of the River of Fire, ADF's Winter Solstice celebration found at: [http://riverfire.radiantmatrix.org/rituals/winter\\_solstice.shtml](http://riverfire.radiantmatrix.org/rituals/winter_solstice.shtml). We honored the Rio Grande Mother in place of the Mississippi since we are located near the Rio Grande, and honored Brigid, Cailleach, Mannanan and Ogma. The omen, drawn from the Druid Animal Oracle, included the cards: Water Dragon, Boar Reversed, and Raven. An interpretation was done by Seer Corinne — *Enchanted Desert Protogrove Yule Omen:*

- *Were the offerings accepted?* Yes, that the long-term effects of the need for community are appreciated, along with our compassion and courage to face them in our work.
- *What do the Kindred offer us?* A breakdown for a new start, but with a lot of work, a deeper connection will abide.
- *What do they ask of us in return?* To resolve conflict, bring opposition to a balance, heal and begin again. For us, we are expected to bring change in a better light than has been in the past for pagans in this local community.

Toasts and Boasts were made by each, and a wreath passed to ask for blessings. Duly noted were words of appreciation for those who've volunteered their time, for those who've come forward to work to bring our local pagans together in a group and to be courageous in undertaking such a difficult task, for the donation of the sewing machine for the Protogrove's needs, and for appreciation of all the attendees who've shown an interest by participating in our gatherings and working toward building a Protogrove.

Before closing, we asked the Deities to please overlook our oversights and any other undone things, or other possible clumsy errors we may have made during the rite while we are still attempting to hone our liturgy skills.

The Rite was ended and we fell right into song, followed by a

hearty feast! I took it as an omen that with the burned top of the apple pie, nothing would be easily gotten for us at first, but that with persistence, we would finally be rewarded in the end if we could overlook our own faults as we learn to hone our abilities, and that working harmoniously, we would perceive the best of circumstances even in the light of sometimes otherwise negative influences.

--Polarity, Grove Organizer, Enchanted Desert Protogrove  
(jrabbitflats@hotmail.com)

## Protogrove of the Rising Phoenix, ADF, Phoenix, Arizona

It all started just before Samhain, when Kirk Thomas, the Southwest Regional Druid, reported to the Mother Grove (MG) that he had been working on the formation of two protogroves, one in Phoenix, and one in New Mexico. I had been considering it for a year, but the timing wasn't quite right. Suddenly, it was. I had just acquired a place to hold the rituals, and I had the support I needed to get started. It was time. And so, the day before Samhain, I went to the ADF website, and submitted my application to the Grove Organizing Committee (GOC). Within two weeks, the Protogrove of the Rising Phoenix rose out of the ashes to be born anew.

As grove organizer (GO), I have been in a flurry of preparation, as I planned the ritual, gathered materials, as well as establishing the necessary structure to start up the protogrove. We came up with a logo, and got a rudimentary website up ([www.risingphoenix-adf.org](http://www.risingphoenix-adf.org)). We began to have structured meetings which turned out to be combinations of business meeting, ritual meeting, and dedicant study group. And somehow, we got it all together and had our winter solstice ritual on Friday night, Dec. 19th, 2003.

It was well attended by 22 folks, several of whom expressed interest in becoming members of ADF. The energy in our circle was phenomenal, and there came a moment when I knew I was simply providing the means for the gods and goddesses to walk among us. I surrendered to them, knowing that the ritual was out of my hands. Others told me they felt the shift, and at least one person told me that it was the most powerful ritual he had ever attended.

I was very pleased with the omen. The seer drew the Ace of Cups for the Nature Spirits (nourishment from spiritual sources, love and joy); the Wheel of Fortune for the Ancestors (good fortune and success); and the Seven of Swords for the Shining Ones (indicates areas of growth for our grove in diplomacy, and not letting our fear of success get in our way). In essence, we have some growth ahead of us, with lots of spiritual support and good luck on our side. In actuality, we are fortunate to have the mentorship of the Sonoran Sunrise Grove in Tucson, led by Senior Druid, Gannd, assisting us in this process. Very nice indeed. I am excited about what the future holds for us.

-- Linda Costello, Grove Organizer, Protogrove of the Rising Phoenix, ADF (LindaC5755@aol.com)

## Thistledew Progrogrove, ADF, Louisville, Kentucky

We are finally beginning to grow. We average two to three people at our regular meet-and-greets on the second Saturday of each month, and usually at least one will show up for ritual on the fourth Saturday. We have a retreat twice a year with a nice turn-out each time. If anyone is near Louisville on either day, email Gaiason at [thistledewadf@yahoo.com](mailto:thistledewadf@yahoo.com) for directions.

– Gaiason, Grove Organizer, Thistledew Protogroove, ADF  
([thistledewadf@yahoo.com](mailto:thistledewadf@yahoo.com))

## Regional News

### South West Region

The most exciting new development in the SW Region is the establishment of two new Protogroves: The Enchanted Desert Protogroove in Alamogordo, New Mexico and the Rising Phoenix Protogroove in Phoenix, Arizona! Also, the Three Realms Festival, hosted by the Ravens Cry Grove in the mountains above Santa Barbara, California, took place this October for its second year. This festival is an inspiration to those of us out west and an opportunity for fellowship with other ADF members who might not be able to travel to the other festivals back east.

-- Kirk Thomas, South West Regional Druid ([kirkthomas@starband.net](mailto:kirkthomas@starband.net))

### North West Region

Spring washes over this land  
Like the high tide onto the beach  
Life explodes from nothingness  
Like a newborn from the womb  
A mystery  
Magic  
Let yourself be blinded to your cares  
by the beauty of Spring

Since June of 2003 the North West Region has seen the Rogue River Grove (Medford, Oregon) become a Provisionally Chartered Grove and the creation of Abhainn Glas Protogroove (Willamette area, Oregon). Please send them your congratulations! The North West Deputy Regional Druid, Chelle, attended Abhainn Glas' first public ritual for Samhain.

During the Fall Equinox, we held the first annual Regional Festival at a private campsite in the Rogue River National Forest, which was attended by 20 Druidic Pagans.

The North West Region also has its own e-list on the ADF Server, which is open to the public. Please feel free to subscribe by visiting the following website: <http://www.adf.org/forums/subscribe.html>.

Those regional ADF members who have not listed a grove affiliation or subscribed to the Regional e-mail list have been contacted by email

and/or by snail mail with updates on the Mother Grove Board Meetings, as well as encouraged to otherwise stay in touch so they can be kept up to date on Regional events.

Additionally, all regional ADF members currently working on their Dedicant's Program have been invited to join the PNWDedicant's e-mail list for mutual support, discussion and assistance.

Looking ahead, we are busy finalizing the details of the 2004 Regional Festival. Additionally, I'll soon be making a trip to the Oregon/Washington Coast and Idaho to meet personally with all interested Druidic Pagans. I've also been working with Anne Lenzi, Grove Organizer of Abhainn Glas, to secure a hospitality suite during PantheaCon 2004 (February 13-16, 2004, the Double Tree Hotel, San Jose, California) on behalf of all ADF groups located in the West.

As always, please feel free to contact me for more information, with spiritual requests or with any suggestions.

--Aigeann, North West Regional Druid (aigeann@earthlink.net)

## Guild News

### Artisans Guild

The ADF Artisans Guild has been busy with many things since Samhain. They are releasing a set of calendars which feature the dates that are important to the members of ADF as well as the artwork of several people in the guild including Christine Wityshyn, Caroline Farrow, Lee Ann Beaulieu, Heather S. Koerner, Karen Dougherty and Melissa Ng. The calendar proceeds will benefit the guild as well as ADF and the calendars themselves can be purchased through the Guild Store at Lulu.com:

<http://www.lulu.com/ADF-Artisans>

Another subject worthy of note is the possibility of an art contest hosted at Wellspring by guild member Sharon Smith. All media will be allowed: 2-D, 3-D, painting, sculpture, functional art, decorative arts, jewelry, fiber, paper, wood, found objects, prints, and computer-generated images. More details on this event will be announced once more solid plans are made.

Among other things, the officers have been discussing potential charity projects and are looking for ways to put up galleries featuring the work of various artisans on the ADF Website as well as other ideas to increase the exposure of the artists in the Guild.

-- Ashleyder, Chief, Artisans Guild (melissa@wingedside.net)

### Naturalists Guild

The Naturalists Guild recently held elections; newly-elected officers are: Chief - Epona, Preceptor - Explore, Scribe - Spiraldancer, Pursewarden - Havenne, Registrar - Havenne,

*Member news:* Jason Crowder recently became Wilderness First Aid Certified. Spiraldancer will be working as an intern at Prince William Forest Park mapping vegetation, including invasives, and forest health.

Epona made the Dean's List at Oregon State University where she is pursuing a BS in Natural Resources and expects to graduate (after many years off from school) next fall.

-- Epona, Chief, Naturalists Guild (epona@emagichappens.com)

## Seers Guild

The Seers Guild recently held elections; newly-elected officers are:

Guild Chief - Meredith, Preceptor - Francesca, Scribe/Pursewarden - Wil-  
low, Archivist - Bardd Dafydd, Registrar (appointed) - Hekatia.

I have gotten some good response for a potential Seers' Unity Project. Similar to the ADF Unity Rite, we would set a time to take an omen or trance journey together.

-- Meredith, Chief, Seers Guild (bitsenter@yahoo.com)

## Scholars Guild

Not much activity within the Scholars Guild. However, I would like to remind everyone that the Scholars Guild has an approved Study Program. We also have an on-going project known as DRUID: Druidism Research User Interactive Database. Both the Study Program and DRUID can be seen at the Guild's website: [www.scholarsguild.org](http://www.scholarsguild.org)

-- Rev. David O. Kling, Jr., Chief, Scholars Guild  
(athanasiosofspfd@aol.com)

## ADF Community Service for 2003

[Compiled by Caryn MacLuan: GCC Chairman]

The following is a report of the good deeds performed by the good Druids of Ar nDriaocht Fein, A Druid Fellowship. The information comes from the quarterly reports submitted by the Groves.

### Cedarlight Grove:

- We provide space for the neo-pagan community for meetings and rituals. 2)A Grove member brought a needy family to the attention of the Grove. A (non-pagan) widowed father with 3 small children and no hope of giving them a Christmas. Grove members donated money, food, toys and clothing. The father was completely 'blown away' that a bunch of strangers from a Druid Grove had given himself and his children "the best Christmas ever!"

. We are beginning a possible long term arrangement with a local

Wiccan group to use the space on days we are not. 2. Raised \$550 for Highland Farm Community Supported Agriculture Project at our Beltain High Rite and campout. 3. Grove member brought a needy man to the attention of the Grove. A (non-pagan) elderly man in the neighborhood near Cedar Light Center was

about to be fined by the city for failing to paint his house. The Grove wrote a letter to the city stating that we have volunteered to paint his house as soon as the spring rains stop and the wood dries out.

- . Raised \$650 for a local pagan who was hospitalized with no insurance and not qualified for state assis-

# tance programs. Mustered folks to help several members and non-members to move from one house to another.

- One part of our space will be used on a long term basis for wiccan studies, reiki training and a member's coven. Accepted donations of close to one hundred items and services for an auction to raise funds for Highland Farm CSA raising a total of \$1143.00.

Earth Dragon Protogrove:

- Food Drive for Meals on Wheels Lexington, KY in conjunction with Pagan Pride Day.

Grove of the Midnight Sun:

- Dragyn's work with Alternatives. Kara's work with the animal shelter, and several Food drives.

Grove of the Other Gods:

- 11/14/02 - Dianic Wicca 101 workshop by Deb for Rutgers Pagan Student Association - 16 in attendance. 2/9/03 - Service at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County Greg, Liz and Carolyn did readings and officiated service Druid directions and sacred space orientation by Ed Sermon on Imbolc by Norma.
- 3/26/03 - Rutgers University Pagan Student Association's Pagan Panel Discussion with Pagan community leaders - Norma represented GOG - 7 GOG-ers in attendance - 60+ spectators \*4/3/03 - RUPSA workshop - Bellydancing for Everyone presented by Grove member Peg - 28 in attendance 4/17/03 - RUPSA workshop - Glamourbombing presented by 5 Grove members - 32 in attendance \*4/22/03 - 3 GOG members volunteered to cook feast for Hands of Change Coven's Shapatu of Ishtar weekend event -Also Norma volunteered to run drumming workshop for Shapatu -3 Grove members volunteered to assist in opening the Gates to the Underworld \*5/5/03 - 3 GOG members attended Shapatu of Ishtar planning meeting
- 5/19/03 - participated in Hands of Change Coven's Shapatu of Ishtar

planning meeting - 3 GOG members in attendance \*5/31/03 - participated in HOC's Shapatu of Ishtar festival and ritual - 5 GOG members in attendance, 2 with ritual parts \*6/7/03 - 4 GOG members gave workshops at Crucible Magick Conference \*6/8/03 - participated in Pagan Picnic planning meeting - 2 GOG members in attendance \*6/21/03 - 60 cans and boxes collected at Summer Solstice as an offering to the spirit of New Brunswick NJ donated to a local soup kitchen \*8/2/03 - participated in Pagan Picnic - 2 GOG members gave workshops, 3 GOG members participated in community ritual, GOG member built labyrinth for picnic

- 10/30/03 - Rutgers University Samhain / Day of the Dead Lecture (by Norma) - 23 in attendance \*10/18/03 - Handfasting ritual performed by Norma with assistance from 3 other GOG members \*networked with other local Pagan groups \*forwarded announcements for other local groups to GOG mailing list \*listed other local Pagan and Pagan-friendly groups and their events on GOG's website

#### Grove of the Sacred Crows:

- Helped a young man who is headed for Iraq have a ceremony for safety and good courage.
- Helped a needy family with a handicapped child get aid that the Spina bifida foundation does not cover

#### Grove of the Seven Hills:

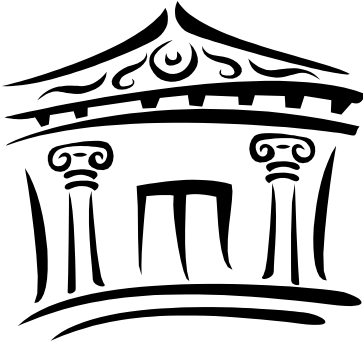
# .Our Grove has en-



The Oak Leaves

# FORUM

The Oak Leaves FORUM is a place for ADF members to express their opinions about what is going on within ADF, and the Pagan Community. The opinions expressed in the FORUM are those of the author ONLY and NOT necessarily of ADF.



## Cedarlight Grove's Day in Court

Hello All,

History: Cedarlight Grove, ADF incorporated and purchased its own property, Cedarlight Center in 1996.

As many of you may know, Cedarlight (CLG) has been trying to gain our legally entitled exemption from MD state property tax for Cedarlight Center for a number of years. Our progress in the past has always depended on how

much time we had to pursue it and time is something we've never had much of. This year we took it all the way. Our initial request was denied and all help from the tax appeals office ceased after we were asked if our church professed a belief in the God of Abraham (clearly illegal). It looked like it was going to be a long uphill battle. I appealed to and received from ADF Leadership, affidavits stating that Cedarlight Center (CLC) was in fact a church and legal in the eyes of the federal government & the state. We appealed the denial of our initial request and expected to plead our case in Aug/Sept. Well as the wheels of the government move slower than a speeding snail, our appeal date was set for Wed, Dec 17th. We spent that time between, preparing and gathering every possible document, picture, or letter which could be used as evidence for our case.

Tuesday's we hold reiki share/healing classes at CLC so we took that opportunity to do a guided visualization into the appeals board the next day. Filling the scene with healing/ balancing energy for fairness, justice and most of all open minds.

Wednesday morning found 13 Druids marching in most professional array through the pouring rain and the downtown Baltimore traffic to the appointed place and time. Like the ancient Celts in their best, most fearsome battle gear, we stormed the fort determined to emerge victorious. We filled every seat in the small appeals board room and when "the State vs. Cedarlight Grove" was announced we stood in unison. The board chairman looked surprised and said, "All of you?" Myself and founding member/senior druid emeritus of 7 years, Will Pierson, were sworn in and I will defer now to the

notes and comments of the other Grove Members in the audience as I was on the 'hot seat'.

Ruby wrote: I sat down about a half hour early, and so heard the 2 cases before ours. This was helpful because the Associate Director of the Department of Assessments (DoA) cited two cases that I think are relevant to us - though not favorably. Both had individuals living on property which would otherwise be tax exempt but due to the rent collected and Baltimore City Law, they were not. They are pertinent to the CLC case due to our two upstairs apartments being rented out to provide funding for the center.

The DoA Director cited "recent litigation" they had won in court where the argument was that while a "house of public worship" is not taxable, property owned by the church but used for "marginal purposes" is taxable. The other case, from 1982, was Bosley Methodist Church Cemetery vs.. Board. In this case, the Cemetery was appealing the tax on the caretaker's house. The ruling was that while the cemetery was not taxable, the caretaker's house was because it was a private residence.

Our hearing started with a description of the property. Cedarlight Center is a detached house that is divided into 4 apartments. Originally, the CLG used only 1 of the 4 apartments as an area of public worship. However, the entire downstairs of the house has been used as Grove space since 07/01/03, the date relevant to this hearing. The two upstairs apartments are rented by the Grove to help pay the mortgage. CLG went into the hearing prepared to accept a 50% tax exemption, though we consider the upstairs apartments to be our parsonage. If the SD wanted to live there, it would be hers. As it is, she doesn't need it so she's agreed to rent it out for the Grove. However, it is income and the apartments are not open to the public. The examiners and the assessors were shown photographs of both the inside and outside of the property, including the sanctuary in the backyard and the altars inside. The lawyer from the State asked Caryn to point out how the 4 apartments were accessed. In discussing the upstairs apartments, the parsonage argument was made.

Phobos wrote: I was absolutely delighted with how well the meeting progressed today with the Baltimore City Tax Appeals Board. Will was incredibly well-prepared for the event, and it was quickly evident to the appeals board that CLG was competent, organized, and unshakably resolute in its conviction to obtain the same tax relief benefits afforded to mainstream religious groups by our beloved Constitution. The appeals board and the representing attorney searched for evidence of uncertainty, insecurity, and intimidation in both Will and Caryn's testimonies, and came up piteously short.

Caryn was orally grilled for about a half hour by the tax attorney representing Baltimore City (including questions regarding her competence/credentials to serve as CLG leader), and Will rapid-fired documents, photographs, and affidavits like a tribal Celtic warrior peeling off arrows at approaching Roman soldiers. There was doublespeak aplenty, where the attorney would ask one question under the guise of another for the sake of

political correctness or lightly veiled intrusiveness. On this point, both Will and Caryn were so polished at fending off the questions that the appeals board was peacefully disarmed in a ballet of verbal swordsmanship. Bravo!

Ruby wrote: This led to a discussion of Caryn's ordination. Caryn completed her Dedicant's Program (DP) and served as Senior Druid/President of Cedarlight for the past 3 years. She showed her ordination certificate as a dedicant priest through ADF, explaining that it was contingent on her continued studies. She was asked what was entailed in obtaining this certification. She briefly explained the DP, the requirement of leadership within her Grove and the ADF Clergy Program, etc. She explained that through her ordination she is able to perform weddings, child blessings, etc. The DoA rep asked if the DP and/or study program amounted to some sort of degree, such as an associate's or bachelor's degree. Will responded that no, ADF did not have educational accreditation.

Caryn writes: The long and short of the above is that the ADF Dedicant Priest Ordination certificate and an accompanying explanation of the ordination requirements survived the scrutiny of the lawyers for the State of MD and the State Tax Appeals Board. This is a good thing.

Copies of both CLG's articles of incorporation, and both CLG's and ADF's bylaws were presented when we were asked to explain our belief system. The passage highlighted for the purposes of the hearing was " Since one of the primary duties of the ancient Druids was to lead their tribes in magical and religious activities, A.D.F. advocates and practices, as an integral part of our faith, open, inclusionary, and public ceremonies to worship the Earth Mother and the Old Gods and Goddesses, rites of passage to mark the cycles of our lives, and magical rituals to accomplish our other goals in an honest and ethical manner."

Caryn writes: Yes the term 'magical' really seemed to be a sticking point for the lawyer for the State. He was very intent on me explaining how the word 'magical' was relevant to a church. I explained that its all in the definitions of the words. A church group gets together to pray for something or someone for example, someone in the hospital. If the healing occurs they believe their prayers were answered, they may even say it was a miracle. We would call that magic. Same thing yet different words. The board seemed OK with that but the lawyer did not want to let it go. He asked about details of our 'secret' rituals.

Ruby wrote: As requested, we were also asked to detail a ritual "if that wasn't confidential." The SD explained how we began by processing to the sanctuary, calling the Deity chosen for the ceremony, and so forth. She did use words like sacrament & blessing instead of 'waters of life' or return. We were then asked to give examples of what we would consider a deity. Caryn and Will explained the various pantheons. CLG does not have an established pantheon as some Groves may. We call most often on the Irish Celtic gods, but not always.

The next question was if we had a book such as The Bible or Koran we

followed. A 'divine book' they called it. It was explained that ADF primarily follows the traditions of pre-Christian Europe. Since most pre-Christian Indo-European civilizations did not have a formal written language (Caryn said that), there were no specific books to follow for worship. She explained that because of this, we must look at primarily academic texts. The function of the ADF Scholars' Guild in researching the most academically correct works was mentioned as a part of this.

"Is it tribal?" "Is it like a historical tribal faith?" Believe it or not, that was the assessor's next question. The answer was no (and yes). As everyone seemed a little confused by our openness it was explained that one of our central beliefs is inclusivity, that one of the few things we require of our members is tolerance of other beliefs. Will invited the assessors and examiners to our Yule ritual, btw :)

Fortunately, the conversation moved on from there. We explained that we hold study meetings every Thursday evening (Lore Meeting), and that on Sundays we hold a potluck brunch (Rites of Caffeina) and 11am worship service (Walk with the OldOnes). There is time set aside for those of us currently going through the DP, and we have healing classes on Tuesdays.

It started wrapping up from there, with only one more (irrelevant?) question, this time from both the assessor and one of the examiners. Is there one day of the week that we consider more important than other, like Saturday or Sunday? The simple answer was no.

Summed up, it was restated that the entire 1st floor of the house is absolutely used only for public worship, entitling us to at least a 50% exemption. Whispers in Will's ear reminded him of the sanctuary in the backyard. He mentioned it, and received a load of crap from the assessor about curtilage, a practice in this country that comes from English common law. It has to do with the land around a building and how it's taxed, etc.

You never know for sure, but it is my feeling that the examiners were leaning for the 50% exemption despite a lot of confusion about our beliefs. We will be notified in writing of the decision within 30 days. If, in the future, our SD or other clergy lives on the premises, we can reapply for exemption of the upstairs. Our tax bill for this year is paid. Therefore, if we receive the 50% exemption, Baltimore City is to issue a refund check within 30 days of the decision.

Phobos wrote: There was much attendant support by about a dozen ADF/CLG members, and the group probably appeared disturbingly cohesive and determined to the appeals board. The reviewing board chairman, remarked how all the CLG members present uniformly nodded "yes" or "no" when a question was asked. It's tough to confront and undermine such resolve and shoulder-to-shoulder grit in any group. In short, CLG was fabulously represented and supported at all corners. Sati's (our scribe) performance was also remarkable. Sitting with the CLG enclave at the back, Sati was able to recall upon command and with clarity an array of facts, specific dates, and financial amounts when needed.

You know, sometimes it's downright great to be Druid. Well, today was

one of those times, when everything spiritual and emotional inside you focuses and clears a giant unobstructed path in front of you. Today was truly among CLG's finest hours. Today CLG truly walked with the OldOnes, and They smiled down upon us...

Caryn writes: Interestingly, shortly after our meeting with the Appeals Board, the pouring rain turned to a beautiful snow and we all felt this was a wonderfully positive omen towards a new chapter in the Book of Cedarlight. We have high hopes and faith that we will receive a 50% exemption which will mean a refund check to the Grove of \$1,500. Hussah!

Blessing to All  
Caryn MacLuan

## Time to let go.

I recently watched a mother of three transform in the span of four months from being a healthy 45 year old to being semi-paralyzed, dying from cancer. It is hard to deal with the problems of family and work on a daily basis without having to deal with one's own death when it faces you head on.

Marie took it all in stride and battled each new challenge with the ambition of resuming her normal life. With each surgery or new treatment, recovery looked promising until another setback would develop. It was almost like a warning: "This is it; get ready." Do we recognize, do we comprehend, do we respond when this message is being delivered?

Active in the community, Marie had priests and ministers of different faiths visiting her, besides family and friends. Hope was constant, even when she kept saying she was tired of it all. That last week, the doctor finally told her that it would take a miracle to beat this, but he thought the treatment was worth a try. Marie was a fighter, and if anyone could beat it, she would. As with everything, it was up to her, but there was also the pressure to consider that which *could* make her better.

Saturday she became terrified -- she had a dream of seeing a brilliant, white light and didn't know what it was, and it scared her. She asked her husband, "How do you die?" But he made light of it, saying he hadn't died and didn't know.

It was Monday evening that I had a few minutes to be with her alone. She was in a losing battle now and heavily drugged, but I knew as I talked that she could hear me. I told her the latest news from work and thought I saw a smile. I then talked about how it was her body, and that she could fight as long as she wanted. When she had enough, she didn't have to be afraid. She did not have to worry about her husband and children. They would have some difficult times but they would make it. They would not forget her, and if she wanted, she could always look in on them. When she was ready, all she had to do was let go. Remember those relatives that have already passed

on; remember those that made her happy; they will be waiting for her. If she needed me, I would be around, and all she had to do was call to me. She did not have to be afraid, because she was not alone. I sent energy to her and asked the kindred to take care of her. I told her goodbye and left. She died the next afternoon.

Just as we are born into this realm, at some point we must leave it. We grow up with instructions from all areas on how to live. Except for the occasional philosophy class or preacher instilling fear, people never stop to contemplate dying. Sure we all will eventually die, but it would be so much easier to understand about it before it faces you when you least expect it. We are staying healthier, living longer and also having to deal with friends and family who are dying. Don't let your children grow up being frightened about death. Don't let your friends and love ones suffer alone. Don't wait until it confronts you to decide how you would like to face your own ending.

We all come from cultures that worshipped their ancestors, so remember them, honor them and they will be there when it is your time to let go.

— Francesca

## The ADF Mother Grove

**Archdruid:** Skip Ellison

**Vice Archdruid:** Bardd Dafydd

**Scribe:** Epona

**Preceptor:** Jennifer Hunt

**Member's Advocate:** Meredith McDonald

**Guild Master:** Gwynne Green

**Chief of the Council of Senior Druids:** Flip

**Non-Officer Director:** Todd Covert

**Upper Midwest Regional Druid:** Hekatatia

**North East Regional Druid:** Francesca

**Heartland Regional Druid:** Duir

**North West Regional Druid:** Aigeann

**Central Regional Druid:** Fionnghal Nic Phaidin

**South East Regional Druid:** Reggie

**South West Regional Druid:** Kirk Thomas

**Canada Regional Druid:** Farrell McGovern

father. A week ago, from the time of this writing, my father was laying in Intensive Care at the local hospital in a liver failure induced semi-comatose state. He was unresponsive and unable to communicate. I was holding his hand in mine when I noticed his hospital identification bracelet. It said David Kling. I thought to myself, "that's me!" It was at that time that I truly felt proud to be David Oliver Kling, Jr.

The past ten years I have struggled with identity. I have finally come to grips with reconciling my identity as David and my chosen Athanasios. I am both, and will continue to be both, but I will honor my father and my family by being KNOWN as David Kling.

In this issue of Oak Leaves you will see the addition of a News Column, ~~I would like to welcome~~ Hearthstone to the Oak Leaves staff. Also, we are presenting a new feature in this issue; The Forum. I would like for Oak Leaves to be a place for ADF members to express their opinions about ADF, and the Pagan Community. With the expansion of the Internet, much of our intellectual thought is lost in cyberspace. I would like to see diverse opinions within Oak Leaves, and not just in a post on a mailing list that most will forget in a few days. So send us your thoughts, essays, articles, poem, et al!

In Fellowship:

*Rev. David Oliver Kling, Jr.*  
ADF Chronicler

# Desert Magick Festival

Send Resv. fees to  
Sonoran Sunrise Grove  
PO Box 17874, Tucson AZ 85731

For reservations:  
[druidkirk@starband.net](mailto:druidkirk@starband.net)

May 6 – 9, 2004

Summerlands, Tucson, Arizona  
Home of Sonoran Sunrise Grove  
ADF Members \$25  
Non-ADF Members \$45

Workshops include:

### *Magic Track:*

Ian and Sue Corrigan - Celtic Magic  
John Michael Greer - ADF Ceremonial Magic  
Skip Ellison - Ogham Tree Magic  
Francesca Hedrick - Slavic Magic

### *Spiritual Track:*

Kirk Thomas and Steve Sampson - Sensory Deprivation: A  
Route to the Spiritual

### *Physical Track:*

Elizabeth (Meredith) Richards - Ritual Voice

### *Entertainment in the Hall*

by Ian and Sue Corrigan,  
followed by a Bardic Circle on Friday

Visit our web site at  
[www.ssg-adf.org/desertmagic.htm](http://www.ssg-adf.org/desertmagic.htm)