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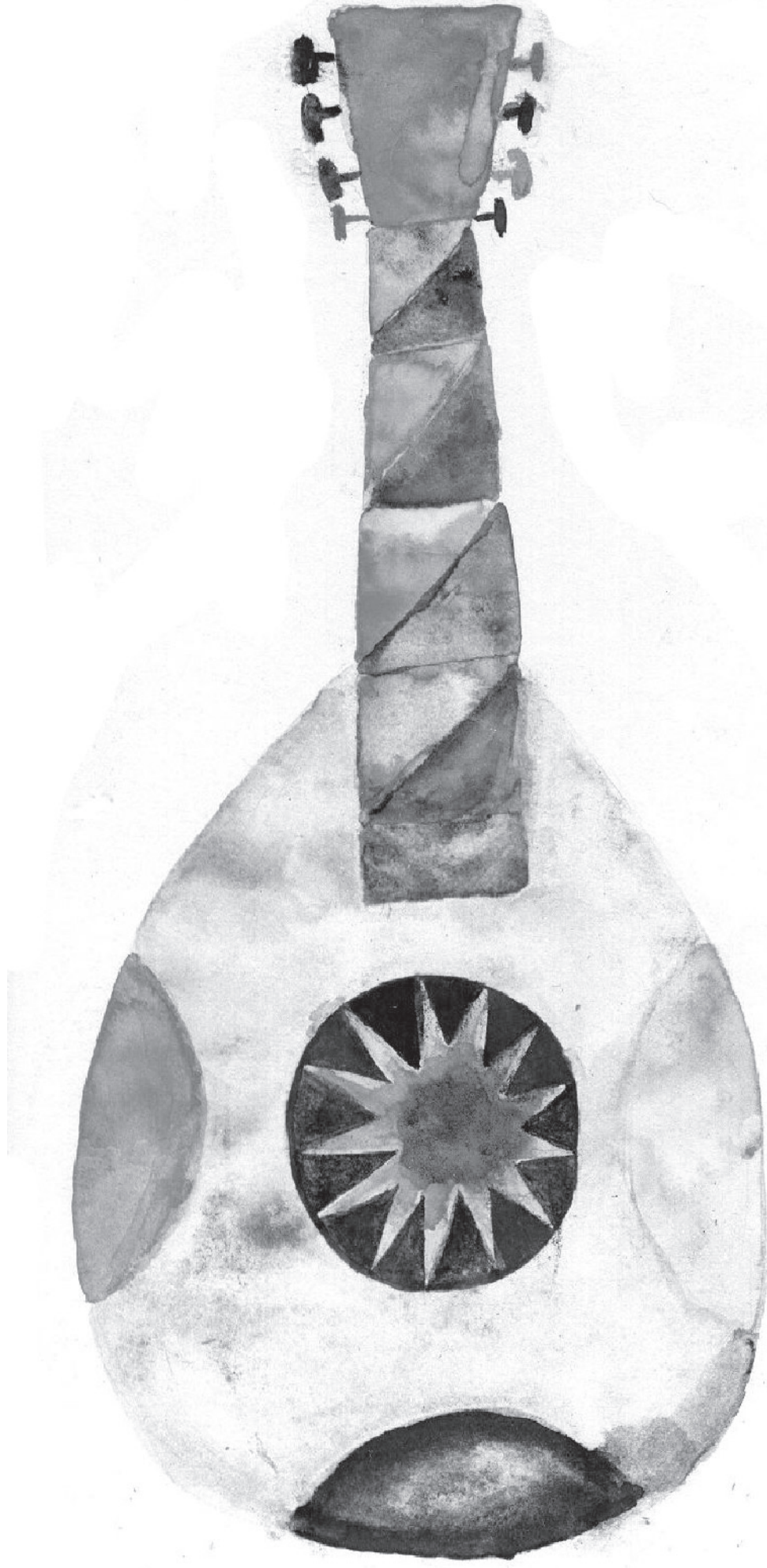
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The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

Autumn 2004 • Issue No. 26





Walking With Fire ~ 2005 Europe *An Eastern Indo-European Conference*

November 22nd through November 27th, 2005
Hollabrunn, Austria, Europe

Presented by
The Order of the Perfumed Scorpion
in fellowship with
Aus Dhwer, Ár nDraíocht Féin
and the Slavic Kin, Ár nDraíocht Féin.

Walking With Fire had such a successful event in 2004 that we have decided to go annual! As a conference, Walking With Fire focuses entirely on the Eastern cultures and religions of the Indo-Europeans. There will be rituals, workshops, food, sight-seeing and fellowship in the tranquil town of Hollabrunn (an hour north outside of Vienna).

Our tentative presenters include the Archdruid of ADF Skip Ellison; Director of Aus Dhwer and President/Purohita of OOtPS Adhitin Ratrija and more!

The events allows for arrival and rest on Tuesday November 22nd, 2005. From the 23rd through the 26th your days will be spent between workshops and sight-seeing around beautiful Austria. Registration is FREE but must be completed by August 31st, 2005. Included are transportation to various sites (does not include any train or ferry fares), all breakfasts and some lunches and dinners. Free accommodations are available on a limited basis. A clean and cheap hotel is a five minute walk away. Due to November being "low season" to visit Europe you can find round trip plane tickets to Vienna starting at 200.00USD if purchased early enough.

Location: Hollabrunn, Austria, Europe

Date: Tuesday November 22nd, 2005 through Sunday November 27th, 2005.

Admission: FREE. Please register by August 31st, 2005.

For more information, please visit our web site at: <http://www.walkingwithfire.org>

Or E-mail us at: conference@walkingwithfire.info

You may phone us at: 1 773-972-7073

We hope that you will join us to discover the Eastern Indo-Europeans in this beautiful intimate environment!



Table of Contents

FEATURES

A Roman Ritual Template — by Jennifer Hunt	3
Shapeshifter Meditation for Stressed-Out Druids — by Carey Reynolds	10
Creating the Desire for Worship — by Michael J Dangler	11
ADF Unity Rite Omens — Drawn by Michael J Dangler	26

COLUMNS

From The Archdruid — by Rev. Skip Ellison	2
Shining Ones — by Jennifer Hunt	13
A Druid Speaks — Interviewing Adhitin Ratrija	14
Living Our Druidry — by Hillary Gross	20
The Solitary Path — by Joey Bernard	23
Little Acorns. — by Dame Julian Green	25

DEPARTMENTS

Poetry	30
Reviews	32
Festivals And Festival Reviews	34
Falling Acorns	36
Crossword Puzzle	41
ADF Directory	42
Contributors	44
Submission Guidelines	44
ADF Membership	45



from The Anchorito

The festival season is winding down and the time for contemplation and reflection is approaching. This was my last quarter of traveling for the year and I will be starting to work on my next book, "The Ways of the Trees:

A Nature-based Magical Training System," during the winter. My book for solitaires, "The Solitary Druid: A Practitioner's Guide," has been turned into the publisher and should be available in stores next summer.

This past quarter I have attended the Pagan Pride Day event in Syracuse, New York; Three Realms festival in California; the Eastern Kin Conference in New York and Between the Worlds festival in Maryland. At all the festivals, I have been presenting workshops on ADF and related subjects and meeting with our members. It is always refreshing to meet face to face with members and answer any questions they may have about our religion.

Our membership numbers continue to grow, slowly but steadily, and we continue to add new protogroves and have proto-groves move up to grove status. Our publications are coming back on track and this should help improve the retention rate for members. May the blessings of the Kindred fall on all of you!

Bright Blessings,
Rev. Skip Ellison

OAK LEAVES

Autumn 2004 • Issue 26

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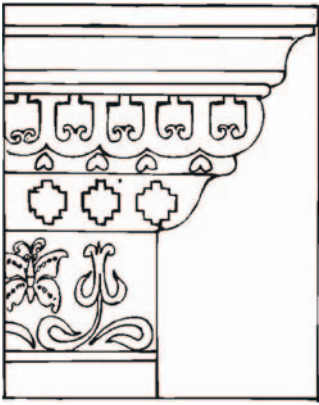
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A Roman Ritual Template

by Jennifer Hunt

It has been a challenge to adapt ADF's standard liturgical formulae for a Roman hearth culture, and being the legalistic, formulaic Roman that I am, I need to accompany this article with certain disclaimers. First of all, this is most certainly a work in progress; I'm working out the kinks as I go along, and this is only the tip of the iceberg. Secondly, I have drawn from sources as widely varying as Cato's *De Agri Cultura* to Ceiswr Serith's *Pagan Book of Prayer*. I am certainly open to suggestion, though I am not likely to begin studying haruspicy with real livers, nor am I likely to do an entire Roman rite extemporaneously. The middle ground between reconstruction and inspiration is where I stand.

And so as the proper Roman, I must offer thanks in advance all who have assisted in making this template possible, including, but not limited (and in no particular order), to Nova Roma, Ceiswr Serith, Jason, Cato, Varro, Ian Corrigan, Isaac Bonewits and countless others who have made ADF liturgy what it is today.

As with most ADF rituals, we begin with a....

Musical Signal

I use a bell. Your mileage may vary. I would assume the most authentic Roman reconstructionists might preface their rituals with blasts from a trumpet to get everyone's attention, then the remaining ritual action would be accompanied by a flutist, in order to drown out any ill omens (or hecklers). I prefer to begin with a bell, then set it aside for the remainder of the rite.

[Note: I am skipping the procession in this template, since most Roman rituals would have been in a clearly established sacred space – usually a temple or sacred grove used for no other purpose – and there would have been no need for the celebrants to pass from the profane to the sacred. Again, your mileage may vary. Feel free to add a processional.]

Honoring the Earth-Mother

My favorite Earth Mother blessing is based on prayer by Ceiswr Serith, though I have adapted it to the Roman goddess Ops, goddess of the stores (in a rather literal sense). In the urban community, it was Ops who provided sustenance to all the folk, and so it seemed appropriate to first ask her blessing and invite her to join us as

we worship the Kindreds. (Offerings to Ops would be made into the mundus.)

*Ops Mater. Goddess of the bounty of the earth,
We send out words in praise of you, from whom all worlds flow.
Mystery of mysteries, this continual creation,
like a fountain forever bubbling up from the Earth's darkness
She is a cup that is never empty.
Generous One, eternally giving gifts,
We pray to you; we praise you.*



All: Ops Mater, we praise you. (bend and kiss the ground)

Evoking the Bardic Deity

Apollo is one of the few Greek deities who was assimilated wholly into the Roman pantheon without being equated with a pre-existing deity from Latium. It seems appropriate to pray to Apollo as both a deity of poetry and music, but also a deity of divination. This particular evocation was pretty much divinely inspired – I cannot take full credit for it – and may be used in whole or in part for this module of ritual.

*Phoebus Apollo, bringer of light, son of
Zeus, the almighty and Leto, the rich-haired, who
Bore him at Delos, where all manner of men now
Come bearing gifts, fine and fragrant for thee.*

*O Lord Apollo, who bears the gold sword, who
Shoots from afar with his bright silver bow;
Mighty slayer of dragons and lover of beauty;
Whose arrow strikes truer than Marsyas or Cupid.*

*Thou, who humbled the streaming, scheming Telphusa;
Whose lilting lyre delights all Olympus;
Whose oracle utters Zeus's unerring will;
Whose art, aim, and intellect reigns supreme over all.*

*Sweet-tongued Apollo, who sings for the Gods, may'st thou
Guide thence our praises to bathe them in honor;
For we are but mortals, and thou art a God;
Only this boon we beg thee, grant to us now:*

*That our voices be pleasing to Gods, Spirits, and Manes;
That the aim of our rite strike its target precisely;
That our blessings and theirs pass freely between
The realms of the Kindreds and the lips of our Seer.*

All: Macte virtute esto! (This translates loosely as “Well done!” A simple “Macte” would also be appropriate.)

Specification of Ritual Purpose & Historical Precedent / Naming Deity of the Occasion

This part of the ritual entails as much research and in-

spiration as the celebrants can muster. Some festivals (like Saturnalia, for example) are far better documented than others (such as Furrinalia). Good luck with festivals like Lupercalia and Furrinalia.

Centering, Grounding, & Merging

When in Rome – or your grove ritual – use the group-mind exercise most likely to work with the group of celebrants. I use a sort of condensation and expansion of ADF's “Two Powers” meditation. (This could be an article in itself, so I won't go into any more detail in this context). I finish out the meditation with one of my favorite prayers from Ceiswr Serith that establishes a universal visualization of the cosmos better than any other I know.

Take a moment to find the center of your mind, body and soul.

*Breathe deeply from your belly the air in this sacred grove, charged
with anticipation and potential. Exhale fully through your mouth;
then, through your nose, fill your lungs with the clean, cool aroma
of this moment. Allow that sacred air to circulate and surge
throughout your body.*

*Now continuing to breathe from your belly, stand firm and feel the
Earth's pulse through the soles of your feet. Curl your toes into
the ground, rooting yourself into the bosom of the warm, nurtur-
ing Earth. Draw another deep breath while imagining tendrils of
roots and vines connecting your self with the soil beneath you.*

*Now stretch forth your hands to those closest to you, and grasp
hands or simply touch them, if you can. At one with the cosmos
and at one as a grove – we are, as a community, greater than the
sum of our parts. We stand as a grove in a forest of trees, one
folk.*

*The waters support and surround us
The land extends about us
The sky stretches out above us.
At the center burns a living flame.
May all the Kindred bless us.
May our worship be true.
May our actions be just.
Blessings, and honor, and worship to the Holy Ones.*

All: Macte virtute esto! (“Well done.”) ... or... SO BE IT! (if you prefer)

Offerings to the Sacred Center

I admit, this is the newest and most radical variation from the standard Fire/Well/Tree of standard ADF liturgy, and I am still working out precisely how best to open the gates in Roman ADF rites. Though I still have much work to do in this respect, this is the way I open the gates.

In Roman rites, we do not have a fire, well and tree. We have a focus, a mundus and a portus. That is, a fire (sacrificial fire, as opposed to hearth fire), an offering shaft (or pot of earth if you do not have a permanent ritual space) and a doorway. The latter is literally the portus, the portal between the worlds, of which Ianus (also known in the financial industry as Janus -- though the proper Roman pronunciation is "YAH-noos") is the gatekeeper.

The portus is the trickiest to create ritually. When doing an indoor ritual, I have a particular doorway in my home that is my portus. When doing an outdoor ritual, I have a particular gazebo in the public space in my community that I use as my portus. (I am still contemplating how I might construct a portable, transportable portus that would break down and fit in my Honda Civic. A garden trellis, for example, is just too big.)

Acknowledgement/Offering to the Mundus

(Rarely was the mundus actually opened in Roman times -- twice a year, at best. In modern times, we do tend to be more welcoming to that which is below, and so we [warily] open the gateway to the underworld.)

*Here is the mundus, the eye and mouth of the Earth.
Open for this brief time that we may receive all Numinae into our rite.*

Beneath us, below us and sprouting through us are the waters of rebirth,

The mundus, gate to all of that which is below, we acknowledge and uphold.

[OPTIONAL --To the mundus, we make this offering: (If offerings to the gates are made, one of earth or peat might be appropriate.)]

All: Mundus patet! ("May the mundus be opened!")

Acknowledgement/Offering to the Focus

If at all possible, bring a bit of fire from the celebrant's hearth fire to kindle the ritual fire. This prayer is really to Vesta, who in early times was not precisely a goddess of fire, but more of an embodiment of the hearth itself. This particular prayer is adapted from one written by Ceiswr Serith.

Vesta Mater, Shining Lady, unite us all,

For by worshipping at a common hearth

We are made one family, one people.

Queen of the hearth, Vesta Mater, your household is here.

Let us pray with a good fire.

[OPTIONAL -- To Vesta, we make this offering: (If offerings to the gates are made, one of incense might be appropriate for Vesta.)]

All: Let us pray with a good fire!

Acknowledgement/Offering to the Portus

Stand we here as a doorway,

The folk a pillar between the worlds.

Together, we gather at this sacred portal

In wisdom, love and hope.

[OPTIONAL -- To the portus, we make this offering: (If offerings to the gate are made, censuring with incense or sage and aspersing with water might be appropriate for the Mundus.)]

Evoking the Gate Keeper

Salve Ianus Pater!!

Ianus Inceptio, God of beginnings;

Ianus Brifons, Two-faced Ianus;

Ianus Patulcius, Opener of doors;

Ianus Domesticus, Protector of homes;

Ianus Quirinus; God of the folk

Lend wings to our prayers and conjure a portal between us and the world of the Gods.

Through your door, let the prayers of your supplicants pass to the Kindreds.

[OPTIONAL -- Ianus Pater, accept our offering! (An appropriate offering might be olive oil, wine, incense, doorknobs, WD-40... or whatever else you want to try with a god of doorways and beginnings.)]

Opening the Gates

In traditional ADF fashion, I still conjure the Gates, making an opening gesture (usually simply a circle) on the triple center, saying:]

Now, Janus

Join your magic with mine

And let the focus open as a gate,

Let the mundus open as a gate,

Let the portus be the crossroads of all Worlds.

Ianus of Openings, admit us into the presence of the Shining Ones

IANUS PATULCIUS ADMITTE NOS IN PRAESENTIUM NUMINUM LUCENTIUM

PORTAE APERLANTUR – Let the gates be open!

All: Let the Gates be open!

Acknowledgement of the Outsiders

The celebrant carries out an offering for Mars Silvanus, as protector and warder against the adverse influences of the wild. Traditionally, Silvanus received offerings of pork, fat and grain. I suspect he has an appreciation for greasy fast-food, so I think offering him “sliders” – White Castle burgers – seem to keep him fairly happy, though I have also offered more wholesome turkey bacon, whole wheat flour and olive oil, too. As always, your mileage may vary.

(Because I think the Roman deities appreciate it when we try it in Latin, though this is a bit less formulaic and more vernacular...)

Mars Silvanus Pater,

te precor uti sis bonaevolentatis et propitious mihi domui familiaeque nostrae,

ad quod offero hoc sacrificium,

uti nos defendas, et tu prohibeas et avertas, et averrunces omnia adversa, tam visibilia quam invisibilia, quae nos opponere volunt.

(And for those following along in English...)

Father Mars Silvanus,

I pray you be of good will and favorable to me and to our house and household,
for which purpose I make this offering

that you may prohibit, defend and avert things seen and unseen that may oppose us.

All: FIAT! (“So be it!”)

Offering to the Ancestors

The children of the Earth call out to the Mighty Dead.

Salvete, Majores et Di Manes!

Greetings, ancestors and divine dead.

You who were here before, we offer you welcome.

Ancestors of our blood, we offer you welcome.

You who guide us, we offer you welcome.

Come to our hearth, Ancestors

Meet us at the boundary

Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

Majores et Di Manes, mactete hoc sacrificio!

All: Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!

Offering to the Nature Spirits

The children of the Earth call out to the Spirits of this Land.

Salvete, Numinae et Indigites!

Kindred of earth, we offer you welcome

Kindred of the growing green, we offer you welcome.

Kindred who fly or walk or swim or crawl, we offer you welcome.

Come to our fire, Spirits;

Meet us at the boundary.

Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

Numinae et Indigites, mactete hoc sacrificio!

All: Nature Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

Deities

The children of the Earth call out to the Shining Ones.

Salvete, Dei!

To all Gods and Goddesses, we offer you welcome.

To all Gods of this place, we offer you welcome.

To all the deities of this household, we offer you welcome.

*Come to our hearth, Shining Ones;
Meet us at the boundary.
Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.*

Dei, mactete hoc sacrificio!

All: Deities, accept our sacrifice!

The Main Sacrifice

Wash your hands first and cover your head. (Roman sacrifices were performed *capite velato* – heads covered; Greek sacrifices were performed with the head uncovered – *Graecus ritus*.)

A pretty good formula to use (this formula more or less straight from Cato, because it is always a good idea to first address them in the language to which they are most accustomed...)

*[insert name of deity] Pater/Mater (since you are establishing a patron/client relationship),
te hoc vinum [porcum, bovvum, etc.] ommovendo bonas preces,
precor uti sies volens propitious illis Quiritibus te laudatis,
quoius re ergo hoc sacrificium offero.*

*Father/Mother [deity's name]
With good prayers I offer to you this wine [pork, beef, etc.].
May it be your will to look with favor upon these folk who have honored you,
For which purpose I make this offering.*

All: Macte virtute esto! (“Well done!”)

Praise Offerings, Dance, Libations, etc.

[Any additional praise offerings from the congregation]

Piacular Offering

Being the let’s-make-sure-we-cover-all-our-bases Roman that I am, I would never do a ritual without a piacular offering – just in case. So far, I think it has saved me from being struck by lightning, swallowed up by a suddenly opening chasm in the earth and being washed out to sea by a great wave. So, what the heck?

This final offering – for me – has traditionally been of gold, wine and incense. So far, that has covered all the bases (though I might also consider a golden apple). The text of the prayer is based on one by (liturgist extraordinaire) Ceiswr Serith:

*[Deity(ies) name] Pater/Mater,
Gods and Goddesses,
Holy Ancestors,
Spirits of this place:
If anything that we have done here has offended you,
If anything we have done here has been incomplete,
If anything we have done here has not been in the proper manner,
Accept this final offering in recompense.*

Seeking the Omen of Return

I still struggle for the perfect compromise between traditional Roman liturgy and Neopagan expectations. If I were a complete reconstructionist, I would simply ask if the offerings and rite were acceptable and wait to see if I were struck by lightning (or some other such obvious sign of displeasure). In the absence of any real “sign,” I would assume all the Kindred were cool with my rite. My preference is simply to stand still, listen, and pay attention to anything out of the ordinary. (At my Neptunalia/Furrinalia rite in July, when I asked if the rite was acceptable, the sun came out from behind the clouds and the wind shifted – inexplicably – from the west to east. Works for me.)

However, folks attending modern, Neopagan rituals tend to want some sort of direction from the Kindred – some sort of “answer” to a question. Short of asking the resident diviner to perform a Tarot reading or draw runes [shudder], I have pulled three cards from a selection of cards from the Mythical Tarot. (I use only the major arcana cards with Greek mythology that can be easily associated with Roman deities.)

The ritual text is derived from (I believe) 6th Night Grove, ADF’s standard liturgy, Latinized, of course:

*So we have given of our love and our wealth
To the Kindred, that they may know our devotion.*

*Now let our voices arise on the Focus
Let our voices sound in the Mundus*

Let our words pass through the Portus.

*May we open to the Kindreds,
Asking what blessings they offer us in return
And the needs they have of us.*

At this point, usually, I simply ask, “Have the sacrifices been accepted?” If I am celebrating with folks more accustomed to ADF rites and omens, I will use the (abbreviated) Mythical Tarot and the three questions (Have the sacrifices been accepted? What do the Kindred offer to us? What do the Kindred ask of us in return?)

If the omen is such that this question is answered in the negative, we go back and do another piacular offering, then start this part over, until we get it right. (So far – knock wood – I have never had to make additional piacular offerings.)

Induction of Receptivity

(Adapted from standard ADF and 6th Night Grove, ADF liturgy...)

*Ancient and Mighty Ones, we have honored you
We pray you honor us in turn
For a gift calls for a gift.
Hear your children:
NUMINA LUCENTIA, AQUAE VIVAE DATIS!*

All: Shining Ones, give us the Waters!

Consecration Agreement

*Behold the holy Cup of Magic
The outpouring of Blessing from the Great Ones
When we share the draught of the Gods
We drink in wisdom, love and strength
To do as we will in the worlds
In service to the Shining Ones.*

*Hear us [Father/Mother deity(ies) of the occasion]:
Hallow these waters!*

ECCE AQUAE VIVAE!

All: Behold the Waters of Life!

(The cup is shared.)

Thanking of Entities Invited in Reverse Order

(Also adapted from standard ADF and 6th Night Grove, ADF liturgy...)

*The Great Ones have blessed us.
With joy in our hearts,
Let us carry the magic from our sacred Grove
Into our lives and our work.*

*Each time we offer to the Powers
They become stronger
And more aware of our needs and our worship.*

*So now as we prepare to depart
Let us give thanks
To all those who have aided us.*

Father/Mater [deity(s) of the occasion],
PATER NEPTUNUS, GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

O Gods and Goddesses of elder days,
DEI. GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

O Spirits of this land
*NUMINAE ET INDIGITES, GRATIAS VOBIS
AGIMUS!*
All: We thank you!

O Ancestors, our Kindred
*MAJORES ET DI MANES, GRATIAS VOBIS
AGIMUS!*
All: We thank you!

To all those Powers that have aided us, we say again...
GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!!
All: We thank you!

*Mother of all
To you we return all we leave unused
Uphold us now in the world as you have in our rite.
Mater Ops, GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!*
All: We thank you!

*Ianus Clusivius, closer of doors,
For your presence and power
Your guiding and guarding we say...
GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!*

Sinal offering to Vesta:

Make a final offering of incense to the sacrificial fire, which is left to burn out on its own. (This, too, is adapted from a prayer by Ceiswr Serith.)

*Vesta Mater, Queen of the hearth,
Who by rights receives the last,
Bless and guard all those who worship you
Whether in their home or without
Whether alone or with others
Whether thinking of you or engaged in business.
Lady of Fire, receive this offering.*

Affirmation of Past/Future Continuity and Success

*Now by the Keeper of Gates and by our magic
We end what we began.*

*Now let the Focus be but a flame;
Let the Mundus be an urn [or whatever you're using];
Let the Portal be only a doorway [gazebo, trellis, or whatever].*

Let all be as it was before...

PORTAE CLAUDANTUR!!

All: Let the Gates be closed!

*Go now, Quirites
In peace and blessings
The rite is ended!*

ALL: IO SATURNALIA!! (or Neptunalia, or Lupercalia, or whatever occasion you happen to be celebrating... or simply – my traditional ritual ending: WOO HOO!!!!)



Attention all Artists! **ADF has issued you a Challenge!**



Within each issue we will send out a word, an idea, a vision for you to explore through photography, sculpture, poetry, jewelry, song, wood carving, fabric or any artistic medium that you can come up with! Challenges will appear within the pages of Oak Leaves. You will have three months to complete each challenge.

Send in a text document, a scan or a photograph of your work to the Oak Leaves Art Director at Vedis_jansdottir@mchsi.com. Please include your name, e-mail address, dimensions of the piece, title, media, and your web site if you have one.

Submissions will be judged by the Oak Leaves Staff based on each submission's relativity to the Challenge, artistic merit, appropriateness for print in a publication, cultural accuracy, and creativity. One First Prize and two Honourable Mentions will be selected. The First Prize recipient will be featured in a future issue of Oak Leaves in an article showcasing them and their art. Honourable Mentions will have their work shown in a future issue of Oak Leaves.

**The Current Challenge Is:
Birth And Children**

**The Challenge Deadline Is:
January 1st, 2005**

The Challenge is open to all. You do not need to be a member of a Guild or ADF to enter your submission. One submission per individual please.

Shapeshifter Meditation for Stressed-Out Druids

by Carey Reynolds

Are you a stressed-out Druid? Have you overbooked your life, filling it with not just work, but grove meetings, environmental task force events, elaborate public rituals, planning meetings, budget meetings, social gatherings, and all the errand-running it takes to prepare for these various events? Are you telling yourself that scheduling more events of the social variety will “count” as relaxation? Are you an introvert living the life of an extrovert on amphetamines?



Stressed-Out Druid Syndrome (SODS) is an insidious thing. At first families don't talk about it. Eventually, the stress and lack of quality time together can fray the fabric of any loving family.

There are many steps that are important in reclaiming your life, such as making time to be alone, making time to be with family, and leaving at least one day a week empty in the day-planner. But as a Druid, there is also a spiritual aspect to the healing. Make time to get in touch with nature. Do a daily devotional out of love, not obligation. And of course, meditation can be a great tool for the Stressed-Out Druid.

The Shapeshifter Meditation for SODs comes from writer Diane Ackerman's technique called “spanieling”:

“Find a comfy corner, curl up, and relax. If you find yourself agitated by human thoughts and fidgets, imagine you're a cocker spaniel and laze with ‘doglike dereliction’.”

Be the dog. Be the laziest, loungiest lump of a dog you can be. It's almost too much trouble to scratch yourself. Let your face droop like a basset hound. Let that utterly relaxed droopiness fill your body. Be the dog. Sprawl with no cares about where your limbs land or what you look like -- you're a dog! Be the dog.

If you have any doubts that dogs do this as a spiritual practice, remember that they turn in three circles before they begin.

I recommend that anyone suffering from SODS perform this meditation for ten minutes every day -- or longer if you fall asleep.



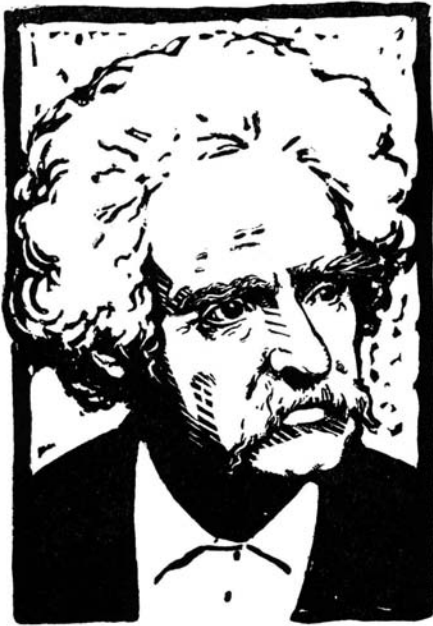
Eldr ok Iss : Kin of Fire and Ice

The Kin of Fire and Ice is a Kin for ADF members interested and/or practicing the Germanic & Northern Traditions. Our mailing list is ADF-Norse, and you can sign up for it on the member subscription page. We are currently collecting information to assist ADF members interested in the study of the Germanic & Norse Gods and Goddesses.

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Creating the Desire for Worship

by Michael J Dangler



Last night, I was reading Mark Twain's fascinating book, *Following the Equator*, and came across the following description:

"The system [of pledging to break a bad habit] does not strike at the root of the trouble, and I venture to repeat that. The root is not the drinking, but the desire to drink. These are very different things. The one merely requires will--and a great deal of it, both as to bulk and staying capacity--the other merely watchfulness--and for no long time. The desire of course precedes the act, and should have one's first attention; it can do but little good to refuse the act over and over again, always leaving the desire unmolested, unconquered; the desire will continue to assert itself, and will be almost sure to win in the long run. When the desire intrudes, it should be at once banished out of the mind. One should be on the watch for it all the time--otherwise it will get in. It must be taken in time and not allowed to get a lodgment. A desire constantly repulsed for a fortnight should die, then. That should cure the drinking-habit. The system of refusing the mere act of drinking, and leaving the desire in full force, is unintelligent war tactics, it seems to me."

Twain was, of course, discussing the manner in which a person should break a bad habit. Habits, he tells us (using drinking as his prime example), have two components: the *act* and the *desire to commit that act*. In order to avoid an act, to break a habit, Twain suggests that we must remove the desire, not merely cease the act, for the desire will always manifest eventually.

Upon reading this passage, I found myself considering those habits that we encourage within ourselves: diets, exercise, and even proper dental hygiene.

We learn to diet, not because we eat things that are good for us routinely, but because we have a desire to look and feel better. We are able to keep our exercise routine, not because we do the exercises in a certain order, but rather because we have the desire to have abdomens that make women swoon or bikinis that make people stop and stare. Children learn to brush their teeth not through rehearsal of the motions, but through a desire to keep the cavity monsters at bay, and this develops later into a desire not to kill your date with bad breath.

What does all this have to do with Druidry? How can the concept of *desire versus act* inform our Paganism?

One of the most common issues Dedicants have is

their inability to maintain a formal, consistent personal practice of meditation or daily devotion. Often, we begin strong and soon, rather inexplicably, our personal practice tapers off or ends quite abruptly.

I suggest that perhaps our problem is not with the act, it is with the desire to create and maintain that act throughout our entire lives.

Twain states that if you can repulse a desire for a fortnight, you will beat it soundly. By that same token, can we then build the desire over over the same amount of time?

Of course, ridding one's self of a desire is a simpler, more clear-cut thing than creating a desire. When seeking to ignore a desire, you simply do something to remove it from your mind (exercise works wonders here), but to plant a desire is more difficult.

If the removal of a desire requires something to distract you from it, then it stands to reason that the creation of a desire will require things that focus attention on this desire. Let's consider first how to build the desire to do daily ritual.

As our goal is to remind us of ritual in order to build the

desire to practice it, the first thing to do is fairly obvious: build an altar. It doesn't matter if it's an elaborate piece of carved limestone or three bowls and a stick; what matters is that it is visible to you once, twice, or even three times a day.

If you decide to put it into your bedroom, you might take the following things into consideration: place it right next to the door, not in a back corner somewhere, or perhaps atop the vanity in front of the mirror. Make sure it is in a location where it will be seen (or even stumbled over) every day. This will start to remind you of the worship you could be doing.

Next, we'll use a tactic gleaned from motivational speakers everywhere: affirmations. Take a 3x5 index card and write the words, "Today I seek to honour the Gods." Tape this to your mirror in the bathroom, to the steering wheel of your car, or laminate it and paste it to the wall of your shower, again making sure that it's in a place that you will see it every day. If you're feeling really frisky, you could even sigilize the phrase and post it in that form.

Finally, as icing on the cake, you can start reading hooks, watching movies, or listening to CD's that turn your attention back to the Gods. These could be fantasy fiction, religious works, or things like Ceisiwr Serith's *A Book of Pagan Prayer* (a personal favourite of mine). You might also write rituals for use when you do start the devo-

tions, or prayers of praise.

Once you have all this set up, don't take any action. Let the altar sit unused, read the affirmations but don't recite them, read the book or listen to the CD exclusively for a fortnight.

By the end of that fortnight, you should be ready to begin daily devotions. More to the point, you should be eager to begin devotions. If you aren't yet, give it another week.

As Twain said, action always eventually follows desire. Here, we're simply looking to place a positive desire into our minds for constructive use.

The same process can be done with any form of daily mental discipline, from meditation to Tai Chi. Simply replace the altar with a meditation seat or a Tai Chi mat, the affirmation with something more appropriate, and the book with something such as the Tao Te Ching.

Nearly every Dedicant has issues with this section of the DP, and those of us who are no longer working through it often feel a need (a *desire*, if you will) to go back to the daily devotions and meditations we once did. Hopefully, this essay can help.



ADF Brewers SIG

The Brewers SIG exists to promote the art of brewing in a religious context and to aid those seeking knowledge in the brewing arts by the sharing of ideas. For more information, you can subscribe to the group's e-mail list ADF-BREWERS using the subscription page, or you can contact one of the the SIG coordinators, Flip Rutledge and A.J. Gooch, directly.

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Shining Ones

A Day in the Life of an Indo-European Deity

Saturnus

By Jennifer Hunt

The story of Saturn is older than Rome itself. Saturn reigned during the Golden Age of Latium, when all people were equal -- there was no class distinction and there were no slaves. Everyone prospered and no one -- even kings -- set themselves above others. It was a time when the villages of Latium welcomed among them all who cared to make their homes and share in the communities' toil and bounty.

Tradition has it that Saturn, known as Kronos, King of Gods in Greece, was given an oracle that he would be defeated by his own son: In fear, the god devoured his offspring as fast as they were born, and he kept them sunk in his bowels.

Many a time did Saturn's wife, Rhea, grumble, to be so often big with child, yet never to be a mother; she repined at her own fruitfulness. And so when Jove was born she concealed a stone in a garment, which, Saturn, thinking it was the babe, swallowed. So had fate decreed that the sire should be beguiled.

The fate of Saturn's children is a story best told another day. Suffice it to say that the oracle was true, and defeated, Saturn fled Greece, driven from the celestial realm by his son, Jupiter, who, along with his siblings, reigned in their father's place. And so to Latium during the reign of Ianus "in a ship came the sickle-bearing god to the Tuscan river after wandering over the world." (*Fasti*) Just as Latium opened its arms wide to refugees of all kinds, Saturn was welcomed in Italy.

When Saturn arrived by ship, Ianus received him as a guest. He learned from Saturn the art of husbandry, thereby improving his people's lives, whose methods of farming before then had been brutish and rude. Saturn is credited with the invention of the art of grafting, with the cultivation of fruit trees, and with instructing men in everything that belongs to the fertilizing of the fields.

Ianus and Saturn reigned together in harmony for many a year and built two neighboring towns, which some say were on two of the Seven Hills of Rome. Their reign is said to have been a time of great happiness, both on



account of the universal plenty that then prevailed and because as yet there was no division into bond and free.

It was during their reign that Saturn suddenly disappeared, and Ianus then devised means to add to his honors. First he gave the name Saturnia to the land ruled by Saturn. He then built an altar, instituting rites as to a god and calling these rites the Saturnalia - a fact which goes to show how very much older the festival is than the city of Rome. It was because Saturn had improved the conditions of life that, by order of Ianus, religious honors have been paid to him since before the birth of Rome itself. A pious posterity inscribed a ship on coinage to commemorate the coming of the stranger god to Rome, the other side depicting the two-faced Ianus.

The statue of Saturn was filled with oil and was bound with woolen bonds, which were untied for the feast day of Saturnalia. Those who have associated Saturn with sowing have attributed this unbinding as symbolic of the seed bursting forth in the tenth month (both with respect to the calendar -- December being the tenth month -- and to pregnancy).





A Druid Speaks

Interviewing ADF Members

Adhitin Ratrija has been a member of ADF since 1998 and is the Director of Aus Dhwer, the Eastern Indo-European Kin in ADF.

Oak Leaves: How did you come to polytheism?

Adhitin Ratrija: Like so many others, I was raised as your standard garden-variety Protestant. In early adolescence -- as many people do -- I started questioning the various philosophies I'd always taken for granted. Thus, I began examining religions outside Christianity. After a while, I started to feel a very strong affinity for Zen, and spent many years after focusing on Ch'an Buddhism (the Chinese precursor to Zen). The Ch'an form of Buddhism focussed its energy for centuries expounding and developing many of the more epistemological philosophies of Mahayana Buddhism. However, it did not yet encompass the ceremonial or martial aspects that later were to be incorporated into Zen by the Japanese.

The Ch'an philosophies, while important, do have a tendency to become more a way of explaining reality than an actual religion, though. Indeed, many of those philosophies are compatible with almost any religion, and it is hard for me to view them as a religion in itself. I finally came to that conclusion while in university. It seemed to me then that I had a very detailed view of the way reality did, or could, work. I didn't feel this in itself was a religion, however, and for a long time after I termed myself as an Agnostic.

Being a 'hardcore' Agnostic really isn't really much fun, though. I mean, how many times can you nullify a religious argument with a statement such as: "I don't know. You don't know. Nobody really knows until they're dead. And those people aren't talking." After several years of beating that drum, I was really starting to get tedious.

Long before, I had learned that it was possible to literally negate everything from one's belief system. In fact, at the time I was practically living in a somewhat 'tabula rasa' state. I had invalidated nearly every one of my core beliefs, and had steadfastly refused to replace them with anything concrete whatsoever. Eventually, I made the conscious choice that I wanted to start replacing some

of them with things that I could actually believe in.

I had always had an interest in the esoteric, and it felt comfortable to begin dabbling with things along those lines again. Eventually, I drifted toward Ceremonial Magic. In particular, I found myself practicing a lot within the Enochian tradition, after having picked up the Schuller books and some translations of John Dee's original manuscripts. Eventually, I flashed onto Chaos Magic, and went on to do a nice bit of work using those techniques. One of the techniques in Chaos Magic is for one to "try on" different belief systems. The nice thing about that particular technique is that it validates the concept that we are in control of what we choose to believe.

At that time I found myself drawn somewhat to traditional Paganism. This was because it was much more visceral, and, rather than merely being a school of philosophical thought, it actually felt like a system of beliefs. The mind can play games with philosophy and logic for years on end. After all, the brain secretes thought in the same manner that any other gland secretes vital fluids. But, eventually, you've got to give the heart equal time.

As a result, I spent some brief time studying Wicca -- merely because it was the most common form of modern Pagan religion that I tripped over. I felt absolutely no affinity for that religion, though. I still don't, for what it's worth, so I abandoned that path pretty quickly. Afterwards, I drifted toward "true" polytheism, Druidry, and eventually I discovered Vedism.

OL: Could you briefly explain what Vedism is?

Vedism is the religion practiced by the ancient Indo-European peoples who moved East into the areas which are now Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Northern India around 2000-1700 BCE. It was a religion that flourished in the area for almost two thousand years, and later spawned off other offshoot religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, and Sanatana Dharma (better known as Hinduism). Eventually, starting around 200 BCE, it was supplanted and finally wiped out by Hinduism. Today, it is practiced as a living religion only by a handful of reconstructionists.

OL: When did you first discover ADF?

I discovered ADF via its web presence, while I was doing research on Druidry in general. There were a couple of the core tenets that really struck a chord with me. In particular, I was impressed by the fact that ADF embraces belief in “true” polytheism -- that the Gods are each real and distinct, rather than just a manifestation of some other power. I was also attracted to the fact that it’s focused on reconstructing the beliefs of *all* the various Indo-European cultures, not just the Celts.

OL: What is it that you currently do in ADF?

Currently, I am Director of Aus Dhwer, ADF’s Eastern Kin. We’re committed on focussing attention on the IE cultures that moved East from the Proto-Indo-European homeland into the Middle East and Asia. This includes the Indo-Aryans, or Vedics, as well as the Indo-Iranians, Hittites, and Anatolians, amongst others, and some smaller cultures about which we know very little, like the Tocharians.

OL: What goals do you wish to accomplish within this position?

We’re there to act as a resource for anyone interested in those cultures. We provide information for those who might feel a calling to the worship of those Gods, as well as a community with which to network. We also act as a sort of ‘reality check’ within ADF as a whole, in respect to making certain that our religion is backed up by sound scholarship. For instance, we make certain that Hindu or other non-IE Gods are not being passed off as Indo-European.

We have also passed members through the Dedicant Program in order to establish areas of the program which could possibly be considered contrary -- or even insulting -- to those practicing the faith of the Eastern Indo-Europeans. In the future, our goal is to work with the Preceptor to compose alternate versions of the DP specifically for those following an Eastern IE path.

On a larger scale, we participate within ADF’s system of Kins. For instance, the Cape Cod Accords outlined a process by which individuals and groves could be certified to practice in a manner much closer to that practiced by the actual original cultures within ADF. This is something that all the Kins should be championing. While the

Kin system itself is a bit fragmented right now, it’s my belief that we should still be offering up our support to anyone who wishes to worship as the ancients did. I think the Kins in general, and Aus Dhwer in particular, can be extremely valuable in disseminating scholarly information to the membership of as a whole, as well as making certain that all individuals feel they have a place within ADF.

OL: We have established that Vedism is not the same thing as Hinduism in the previous issue of Oak Leaves. Why is it that you are Vedic as opposed to being a follower of one of the various Hindu faiths?

In displacing Vedism, the Hindus discarded some very core beliefs that are extremely important to me. First, Hinduism is monistic, believing that all Gods are merely aspects or incarnations of a single “God.” Instead, I am a polytheist, and believe that each God exists and is distinct all upon their own. Next, Hinduism is centered around the individual, whereas Vedism is very community-focused. Also, Hinduism is judgmental, locking one into a wheel of reincarnated lifetimes based on the supposed value of their actions in each life. In Vedism, one’s actions are judged primarily by the reaction they bring directly, not by an elusive moral code which is tallied up in the afterlife.

Finally, I have been to India myself. The Vedics were supposedly supplanted and replaced because they had become corrupted by two millennia of power. Yet the Hindu priests I saw were every bit as corrupt as the Vedics they replaced two thousand years before. Why should I take up a religion that is as rotted now as any of which it is supposed to be the better?

OL: What is it that you do in your own personal practices?

I try to be as faithful to history in my own personal practices as is possible in a modern context. We cannot maintain a full firepit for our daily oblations, for example, in an urban apartment; however, we can still perform those oblations in a slightly modified form. We regularly give homage to Vastos Pati, the protector of the home, and my wife performs daily Agnihotra rituals for the household, just as the Vedics themselves did. We celebrate the seasons of our land, and the cycles of the Earth.

We try to emulate those ancient practices as best as we possibly can. Of course, it's tough when some of the Vedic rituals require four Priests at a minimum, plus their assistants, plus about a year to complete the rite, and a horse, and an army to follow it around the entire time.... While rituals like the Asvamedha -- or Horse Sacrifice -- aren't performed very often at all, they still give you some idea how complex these rituals can become.

And then there are some areas which come into conflict with prevailing ADF thought. Don't even get me started on blood sacrifice, for instance. However, as a more publicly-suitable example, take the "gift for a gift" argument that is used to justify the return flow portion of ADF ritual. That's one that has always grated on me. I guess it has to do with faith on my part. As I mentioned before, many of the tenets of my religion are ones that I have intentionally chosen. One of these is that the Gods -- my Gods, at least, since I can't really speak for anyone else's -- are inherently good and worthy of worship. If I accept that tenet, then I must accept that ritual and praise in their honor is a worthwhile act, without consideration of any other consequence that may come as a result of that act. As go the Gods, so goes the act which honors them.

That is the essence of Faith: you trust that your fate rests in the hands of Gods that are, in their own manner, benevolent. Why bother with worship at all then, if the Gods are indeed kind? Because that act itself is also right and well; because it helps maintain Rta, or the order of the universe.

It's my thought that the "gift for a gift" metaphor is based in human society, rather than the conceptions of the Gods. It began more or less as a courtesy custom between some of our ancestors. In relation to keeping people civil, it does have value.

But also viable is the concept that this custom is based even more in our own modern society. Here in the United States, we currently exist in one of the most unabashedly hyper-Capitalist states the world has ever known. Every item and act is inherently reduced to a transaction. Each gesture or deed is judged and valued solely in relation to what return we receive from them. We have been so indoctrinated into this model that we are no longer even consciously aware of it. Soap is sold, marriages are counseled, counseled, and Gods are worshipped solely based on terms of barter: "What is it worth to me?"

This value-system is ingrained into our modern character. We emulate this in our religion, and frequently reduce our worship to a mere utilitarian device. We pay the Gods, and they deliver on our payment. This is no longer an act of Faith or Love. This is a transaction, an insurance policy. And it's at that point that I have to ask if such an outlook is really worthy of everything to which we aspire the Gods to be. Is it even worthy of what we ourselves aspire to be? While pleading our case to the Gods does have its proper time and place, it sometimes seems as if that is all modern religion has become.

Some would state that there can be no Yin without a Yang, but I would likewise argue that we ourselves are the ones who define 'Yin' and 'Yang' to begin with. They can be whatever we want them to be, or they can be nothing at all.

So, in this environment, does that make me a heretic that I wish to offer up a "gift" with no expectation, or even a concern, for anything whatsoever in return?

Would rather I be Yin, erasing Yang?

OL: What exactly is a Brahmin?

A Brahmin is a type of Vedic Priest.

OL: How does a Brahmin differ from a brahmin, Brahman, Brahmanas and Brahma?

Well, in particular, the Brahmin is the head priest during Vedic ritual. There are four priests in total: the Brahmin, the Advarhyu, the Hotr, and the Udgatr. It is the role of the Brahmin to preside over the other three, and to make up for any shortcomings that may arise in the course of the ritual.

A brahmin (with a small 'b') is merely a generic term for any Vedic priest.

And Brahman is the term that Hindus use to refer to the one monistic power from which all others derive their existence. You can think of Brahman as the Hindu name for God.

The Brahmanas are a set of texts that provide commentary on the Vedas. They act somewhat like extra instructions for the verses set forth in those four holy books.

Finally, Brahma is the name of a Hindu God which is one portion of a Hindu concept known as Trimurti. In this construct, Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Siva the destroyer. However, this is a wholly Hindu creation. Neither Brahma nor Siva are ever found in the Vedas, and are not Vedic in the least. They were created after Sanatana Dharma had supplanted Vedism. And while Vishnu is indeed found in the Vedas, he is so different from the Hindu conception as to be a completely different God which merely bears the same name.

OL: In the past, people have questioned what authority you have to use the term Brahmin. What response do you normally give?

Well, the quick answer is that I'm practicing a religion that died two thousand years ago. If I don't have the authority to use the term, I don't know anyone alive who could possibly bestow it upon me.

Many 'gurus' would have you believe that it is impossible to obtain any sort of meaningful insight without outside help. Unfortunately, in a majority of these cases, what they're usually referring to is their personal help, and what they're usually asking in return is most of the contents of your wallet.

Altruistic or otherwise, I think the argument these individuals bring up gets back to the question of whether one can actually be 'self-taught'. For example, during the first millennia, Chinese monks wrestled with this same question, and referred to it as the problem of "Transmission of Mind". Essentially, how does one teach the unteachable, or something which may only be experienced individually? They developed two differing schools of thought on the subject.

The Northern School overcame this problem by composing a complicated set of teachings that culminated in a single act at a single extremely-well-timed moment. This one act at this precise moment was designed to push the student over the threshold, where he could experience for himself that which could not be taught. The Northern School obviously relied heavily on the teacher to monitor and guide the student, and to pick the particular moment when years of teaching would finally reach its culmination.

The Southern School, however, believed that this teaching was a gradual process. The teaching built upon itself,

and eventually resulted in a series of smaller revelations. In other words, it relied upon constructing an environment and making the information available to the student. Each student would reach the culmination of the teachings at their own pace, and that culmination would be an ongoing process rather than a single stroke.

Bringing this back to the subject at hand, while both Schools relied upon teachers to guide the student, the Northern School made the teacher indispensable. This would roughly match the 'guru' philosophy which claims that it is impossible for one to be taught without a human guide. I reject this philosophy as absolutist. Rather, the history of the Southern School shows that it is possible for one to gradually collect all the 'puzzle pieces' and put them together on their own.

So, in my belief, given the right source material and a lot of persistence, it is absolutely possible for one to be self-taught. This form of transmission is every bit as valid as one would receive from a guru or 'lineage'.

OL: What advice would you give to an individual new to Vedism?

First, learn the source material. Start looking for *complete* translations of the four Vedas: the *Rg Veda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, and the *Atharva Veda*. I'm not saying you have to go through every one of them first thing, but it's going to take a bit of time to actually track down good and complete translations of each of these. If you start early, you might actually have them all in hand by the time you're really ready to use them. Look for names like Macdonnell, Keith, Whitney, or Griffith.

Next, grab a copy of A. A. Macdonnell's, *Vedic Mythology* and A. B. Keith's, *The Religion of the Veda and the Upanisads*. Those should get you a firm footing to build from.

At the outset, be suspicious of books written by authors from South Asia, in particular India and Pakistan. The reason for this is that literally 99% of the Indian authors out there are Hindu and write from a Hindu -- rather than Vedic -- perspective. Thus, you're probably already dealing with tainted source material, and you probably don't yet know enough to filter the Vedic teachings out from what the Hindus later twisted them into. Similarly, stay away from the Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty version of the *Rg Veda* from Penguin books, unless you're merely a dilettante looking for pretty words to add to a

ritual. And, for the record, there actually are some very good South Asian authors out there, but as a beginner you won't yet be able to distinguish them from the huge amount of dross that's been published.

It's unfortunate, but the best translations you'll run into predominantly come from stodgy Western anthropologists or linguists who lived almost a hundred years ago, and those who later built on their work. Why is that? Because these men were academics merely trying to translate the words on the page. They're not trying to interpret the material, nor force it into a religious paradigm based on two thousand years of Sanatana Dharma baggage. As human beings go they're not perfect, but they are about as neutral a source as you're likely to find.

Finally, keep in mind that many followers of Hinduism frequently refer to themselves using the term 'Vedic'. They often appropriate the term because it gives them the appearance of a heritage dating back another two millennia older than their religion would be otherwise. These particular followers like to claim their religion as being almost 5000 years old, when in fact it is only a couple hundred years older than Christianity. Just because they attempt to use the term, however, it does not mean they're actually Vedic.

OL: What is the one thing you wish everyone knew about Vedism?

These Gods are real. They're real and they're still out there, but for the most part they've been buried, discarded, or malformed by the religions that replaced them. They are still there, however. They're beautiful, they're powerful, and they're merely waiting for us to rediscover them.

OL: How do you balance your religion with the rest of your life?

In this respect, I agree with the Sufis. They teach that while one is learning and practicing their religion, it is still essential for them to be a part of the world-at-large. Shutting oneself away "on a mountaintop" only serves to separate them from the world in which they must ultimately exist. This denies the reality and -- in some sense -- the vitality of everyday life. It shuts one's religion away into a single compartment of one's life, a box. This, when religion should be as normal and commonplace as breathing. Rather, religion should express itself trans-

parently with every casual motion of the individual...in every footstep, every sigh, every laugh.

OL: How do your beliefs work within ADF?

Unfortunately, they can be sometimes be a bit of a rough fit. There are a lot of differences from the standard ADF paradigms. For instance, there is no analog to the "Well, Tree, Fire" construct. In Vedism, it's more of a "Fire, Fire, Fire" situation. Agni, God of Fire, is the messenger -- or portal, if you will -- to Heaven, the Realm of the Gods. That much is the same with ADF ritual. However, there is no Vedic Underworld and the Ancestors reside in Heaven with the Gods. So the Well is meaningless, as the Fire also fulfills that function. Likewise, there is no Axis Mundi supporting the three Realms, so that negates most of the Tree's function.

In fact, while there are three Realms present in Vedism they are re-ordered. Standard ADF cosmology consists of an Underworld at the bottom, with the Earthly plane above, and finally ascending to the Realm of the Gods at the top. Instead, Vedism places our Terrestrial Plane at the bottom. As one ascends, the next plane is the Atmosphere -- the space the sky inhabits between the Earth and Heaven. Finally, just as one expects, Heaven is the highest Realm, where many of the Gods as well as the Ancestors make their home.

For ritual, the Vedic paradigms just don't work within the ADF Standard Ritual -- there are just too many differences. However, for all the small differences, the Vedics did come from the same roots as the other IE people. As a result, we find that if one tosses the Standard Ritual and instead goes back to the individual elements presented in the ADF Standard Outline, it is possible to compose a liturgy that is satisfying to ADF while still maintaining the integrity of the Vedic belief system. It's not an easy job, but, for a great part, it is possible to reconcile the Vedic beliefs within ADF ritual if one strips down the structure far enough.

OL: You are hosting an Eastern Indo-European conference in October. Why did you decide to do this and what do you hope to accomplish with it?

The conference you're speaking of is Walking With Fire, and detailed information can be found at <http://www.walkingwithfire.org>. What we wanted to do was to generate interest in the Eastern IE cultures accepted

within ADF.

The format we chose was more like what you would find in an academic colloquium, rather than the typical festival atmosphere in which you find most ADF events. We did this for a few reasons. For instance, we knew the target audience was going to be more focused than something aimed at all levels of the entire ADF membership.

Since we knew attendee interest was going to be limited, this gave us an excuse to use a much more intimate environment. This seminar is occurring in a conference facility next to the Catskill Mountains in New York State, rather than a camping environment. We've also intentionally limited the number of attendees so that we could create a more intimate atmosphere. We wanted to bring ADF's scholars together in an environment where they felt comfortable discussing this aspect of our religion face-to-face. It gives us three days during which these individuals have the opportunity to focus specifically on these cultures in a comfortable environment, without the typical distractions you find at most ADF gatherings.

Aus Dhwer is doing this in collaboration with ADF's Slavic Kin, as well as the Order of the Perfumed Scorpion, a Vedic Reconstructionist organization which I also helped found. Of course, we're not screening the attendees, so anyone -- ADF or otherwise -- with any interest in the subject is welcome to attend.

OL: Do you recall your first ADF ritual?

Yes. It was the first public Beltaine ritual in which I participated, with Little Acorn Grove in Virginia.

OL: What was it like for you?

Interesting. I was moving from practicing solitary magical experiments to actually functioning in a group setting. At the same time, I was intentionally turning loose of the cerebral (i.e. constructing a magical system and testing it) and embracing the visceral (giving up personal control to the group dynamic, and seeing where that ride would lead). While I typically have a tough time feeling anything from stock ADF rituals, the individuals participating in this one made it hard not to get caught up in the spirit of it. I guess you could say that the enthusiasm was infectious, which was a little different than most of the workings I'd done up to that point.

OL: What do you see as your greatest accomplishment, thus far, as a member of ADF?

Helping to bring an entire set of cultures to light which were previously underrepresented within the organization.

OL: What would you advise people to do in order to see the ADF community in action?

Simple: start. To a great extent, there is some truth in that old phrase, "it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission." ADF does have a tendency to tie any idea up in endless discussion, not to mention inter-organizational politics. In fact, we've often been criticized of having too many leaders. For some reason, ADF tends to attract a lot of people with the burning desire to lead. However, what it really requires are people who are willing to simply roll up their sleeves and do what's needed for the best of all in the organization.

If you have an idea which you know in your heart is good for everyone, then start implementing it. There will be plenty of time for talk about it later (and, trust me, there will be plenty of talk). Don't let discussion paralyze a good initiative. Get to work.

OL: What is your fondest memory of an ADF event?

The morning I crawled out of my tent at ADF's encampment during Starwood, and stood face-to-face for the first time being introduced to the woman who would later become my wife.

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Living Our Druidry

Personal Experiences In The Practice Of Our Druidry

Coyote and Crow go to New Brunswick

by Hillary Gross

Friday night, Deb and I began our ritual. We'd been preparing for a long time, and I dare say the ritual started the night before we gave it, when we sat down to make the medicine bag prize and prepare all the offerings. I thought maybe we'd be full of giddy Coyote/Crow energy or chugging tequila and partying or beating drums, but instead we were two tired chickadees trying to get our act together. Deb sewed and assembled the medicine bag (shinies [Sacajewia dollar], Coyote medallion, Crow medicine, Coyote tail fur, Crow beads, and Crow bones and Coyote claw on the outside) while I figured out how to get the Coyote scalp/mask on my head and prepared the vessels for the offerings. I couldn't get the mask right -- the idea felt right (tying it on my head), but the execution felt wrong. We were both tired and tumbled into bed unshadowed (as far as I know).

I slept all right. Max, Deb's cat/familiar, kept me company.

In the morning, I was cranky and still too much in my body. I showered and got ready. Deb braided my hair, and that's when I finally started to feel something, like we were going into battle.

We were going to drink kava tea, but we were running late, so Josh prepared some shaman smoke for us. I'd never had it before. At first, it was an awful lot like magical pot -- very much in magical space to the point of not being too connected to the mundane world. By the time we got to Ed and Norma's, it had dropped to a regular feeling of ungroundedness that had followed me all week.

The drive to New Brunswick was...interesting. I was in the back seat, and they'd put on some magical music, and it was all I could hear, "dancing in the fire. . ." And Coyote came to me, which relieved me because he'd been conspicuously absent until then. I'd wondered if he was mad about the chat Frigga and I had had, but he seemed nonplussed, as I was *his* and she knew it.

Then we communed . . . for a while. I last opened my eyes before Millstone and next thing I knew, we were in Somerset.

There was a small flutter of activity at Ed and Norma's, as we were on time, which threw them off. It also surprised me, as we'd gotten out of bed nearly an hour late. We prepared the house, but really, there wasn't too much left to do.

Then the guests started arriving. I was pretty well myself for a while, but then I felt the puppy creeping into me. I was bouncing around, nearly coming out of my skin. The pre-rit seemed to go smoothly enough, and I was glad I wasn't in charge.

Then we got to Change.

I figured out -- of course - the scalp/mask goes on the black leather fedora, not the green one, not on my head. My tail looked fabulously organic. Crow took a long time to preen, as usual.

DebCrow and I messed up right away because we had to get out of the house. We'd told them there would be a clear opening in the house, but we forgot, so we made our way out and got smudged. It took Josh a while to gather the congregation out the door and get them smudged (Carol and Nora were on smudge duty), for which he apologized and explained how everyone thought it would be inside the house. He was very tactful. I was a little worried that this wasn't a good beginning, but it all went well enough.

Josh blew the clear opening on his flute.

Deb honored the gods and the earth mother with a meditation. We felt the ground and our roots in it. She offered sacred tobacco to Mother Earth.

Then I got to lead everyone in the directions. Ed had drawn a fabulous compass on the driveway to help me, but I still needed my notes, as everything kept falling out of my head. I gave local landmarks for all the directions, followed by an Indian tribe out in that direction and what they did. I may have insulted white people as a whole and definitely insulted a Californian, but I tried to make nice and I hope they took it all in good fun. I didn't feel a lynch mob forming, anyway.

Misha did a great well invocation, saying how all civilizations and groups were centered around the well. Then we gave it a Swedish Fish of Knowledge, which I think it liked.

Pat led us out into the sun for the fire invocation. The sun came out from behind the clouds after we remembered to actually give it its offering of cinnamon incense.

Then Grinning Wolf, who was wearing a tree t-shirt, gave us a lovely invocation of the tree, speaking also of the world tree.

We had a long walk ahead of us, down Somerset Street, and to the gates of the Old Queens campus. We had a chant to keep us focused, and it sort of worked, but I think the words and syllables got changed. DebCrow and I kept trying to sing along and then broke down giggling, as it was sort of hopeless to keep track. But it did keep the focus.

Then on to the grand wrought iron gates of Old Queens. Chris and Ed served as gatekeepers while Josh invited Thunderbird, the one who punched the way between worlds for us. The gates did indeed open, and then Old Queens was full of magical shimmering gate-y goodness (but no faeries because of the iron in the gates). Thunderbird was offered more tobacco (Josh said it's all he'll accept).

On to Benchenge for the Outsider invocation. Monika extended a chipper invitation to the Outsiders, and I felt the group trying to follow her as she skipped away to place the offering, a copy of S.E. Hinton's "The Outsiders" inscribed: "If you've found this book, it's for you. Good luck from The Outsiders. Summer Solstice 2004, Grove of the Other Gods."

Next was our invitation to our muse, Grandmother Spider. There's a wonderfully ookey spidery tree in the midst of the campus. Maggie wound thread around the group while telling the story of how Grandmother Spider was the only one clever and small enough to steal fire and put it into the sun for everyone to use. She also offered a sun piñata to our grove, which we later enjoyed. It was full of omenny goodness, and chocolate. And Laffy Taffy.

We went to a war memorial (I forget which one, the one by the Freedom Tree) to do ancestors. A very brave first-timer, Louis, invited all the ancestors of everybody, and he offered the Star Anise we'd brought. Our party was starting to get populated!

On to the Indian Well, a small well lurking behind the Geology Museum. For the animals and nature spirits and especially New Brunswick and bunnies, Patty told a story of rescuing some birds who'd flown down her chimney. We offered them posh bubbly water, which they seemed to like. Then we called out to a menagerie and New Brunswick herself to walk with us.

Our final kindred invocation took place by more gates, thoes facing Hamilton Street, which somehow had champagne glasses embroidered into the ironwork. Betty led the invitation to our gods and goddesses, and we offered the four elements (feather, incense, shell, and stone).

After a (thankfully) uneventful pagan street crossing, we processed into Vorhees Mall to invite our guests of honor. DebCrow told her story under a tree. It was a really neat story about how Crow used to be white but gave up his feathers to find out why we're all here from Thunderbird, and then Gaia rewarded him by making him her Secret-Keeper. (We're all here to live and learn, apparently.)

Next, Coyote and I gleefully led our party to the deserted benches in front of Scott Hall. He sat on the stone wall above one of the benches and talked about his purpose, to teach by example and to show that it's ok to make mistakes. He told a story (with visual aids) of when he wanted to fly like the crows, but he wasn't very good at it, so they plucked out his feathers and dropped him to the ground. He shouldn't've presumed to be like the crows, but vanity got the best of him. However, when he fell, his tail lit on fire and he got covered in dirt, so now he's

the color of the desert. This shows that even though he made a mistake, he's better off, because a grey coyote is perfect for the desert, while his old color (blue) was not so perfect at all.

Guests and kindreds called, we went off to Whispering Willy to hear the story-telling contest, the winner of which would receive the Coyote-Crow medicine bag. There were many stories, but here are a few:

Norma told of a true tall tale of a tree almost toppling her friends.

Tracy told of tricking tigers in India.

Grinning Wolf told of the Solstice.

Laure told of the Mead of Poetry and Odin's tricky deeds.

Monika told of cow-tipping in Ohio.

Jeff told of a Zen master who did something obtuse.

Vigile told of Loki giving birth to Odin's 8-legged horse.

But the best stories (in Coyote and Crow's opinions) were:

Nora telling of how Coyote and Crow first tricked Thunderbird to make rain in the desert, and then tricked Condor to make the rain stop and put Thunderbird to sleep, thus making Condor all bald and ugly and croaky.

Ed telling the true tale of a New Brunswick fire and brimstone preacher who sent his brother to be educated at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, only to have his brother slip into the debauch ways of the town. Preacher brother then preached the little brother to death. However, at his funeral, little brother rose and told of the heavenly visions he had experienced, thus contradicting preacher brother's assertions of hell and brimstone that surely awaited his sinning brother.

The contest was so close that Coyote and Crow had to flip two coins two times to figure out a winner, but finally

Ed won because his story was true and about New Brunswick and tricky and they'd never heard it before. And they'd only made one medicine bag.

The day was growing long, but there was still more praise to be given, offerings to the city and to patrons and to spirits.

As a group offering, we were all asked to twirl madly and fall down laughing, as New Brunswick does so miss her drunken students.

For an omen, Lauren, Ed, Daphne, and someone else were asked to perform cloudomancy. However, the sky was beautiful and clear, so they were to take omens from other parts of nature. They took a long time and were subjected to much heckling, and in the end they decided that all their omens together meant Chaos, which was appropriate enough for the day.

Norma relieved her pent-up aggressiveness as Senior Druid by spritzing everyone in the eyes with the Waters of Life, and Rook distributed Swedish Fish of Knowledge to all attendants.

At the crossroads to the side of Scott Hall, Deb thanked everybody, and Josh asked Thunderbird to close the gates.

Then we tramped back up to Ed and Norma's house and devoured all the food on the table in about five seconds.

Later, we bashed Pat and Maggie's sunyata and ate of the chocolate omens inside. We also raffled off a donation by Chuck, a beautiful framed photo of Seaside Heights pier, which went to Loius.

All in all, I'm really happy and proud with how it all turned out. It was a bit long and a bit scattered, but that's the nature of walking rituals. But I think, most importantly, it was *good*.



Magicians Guild

The ADF Magicians Guild exists to study, practice and teach the traditional arts called magic, especially as practiced by the cultures of the Indo-European peoples.

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The Solitary Path

News, Resources & Rituals For ADF's Solitary Members

Solitary Druid

by Joey Bernard

Well, here I am again. Even after my display in the last issue, the kind folks here have decided to allow me to inflict myself on you yet again. So you want to be a solitary? Or you're stuck being a solitary? What next? We'll talk about some of the resources available for solitaires, whatever stripe you may be.

The best resource for a solitary is a grove. Of course if you had access to a grove, you wouldn't be here, listening to me drone on. So what options are there for the fresh, new solitary, just itching to get started? Well, there are several books available, journals, and also quite a few good websites. If I miss any excellent sources of information out there, please forgive the omission. It is entirely due to my lack of knowing, not anything nefarious. All of the resources I'll be mentioning are either from my own library, or from web sites and journals that I have actually read and used.

Books that are available, especially for the newcomer, tend to come from the British druid orders, probably just because many of them have been around for quite some time. Philip Carr-Gomm from the *Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids* seems very prolific. Two decent starter books that he has put out are *The Druid Way*, and *The Druid Tradition*. Neither is what I would call exhaustive, but then we are only getting started, aren't we? From the British Druid Order there are *Druidry*, by Philip Shallcrass, and *Spirits of the Sacred Grove* by Emma Restall-Orr. Again, all of these books are from the perspective of the British orders, and so don't translate exactly to the ADF, but they do provide some good information.

As for journals, there is of course this humble publication, *Oak Leaves*, along with its predecessor, *Druid's Progress*. Back issues from both of these are available to ADF members on the web site for viewing and are a great resource on how ADF does things. The Henge of Keltria used to publish *Keltria*, but unfortunately this is no longer. But back issues are still available from Tony

Taylor on the Henge's web site. Personally I've started collecting all of the back issues to add to my library. The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids also has a journal available for its members called 'Touchstone'. All of these are great resources to add to your library whenever possible.

What about information for the techno-pagans out there? And I have to admit, as a computer programmer, I'm about as geeky as you can get. There is a great deal of information out there, and it's increasing every day. Of course, we have the ADF web site. There are several articles detailing the beliefs and lore of the ADF, as well as several liturgy examples. ADF hosts quite a few lists, and there is now a wiki setup. Members can also access the back issues of 'Oak Leaves' and 'Druid's Progress'.

There are a few good British order websites out there. The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids has a pretty extensive site. There is a forum for members and non-members. There are several very well-written articles explaining the OBOD beliefs and theology. They also have quite an extensive list of web site links to several other good resources on the internet. The British Druid Order has quite a few articles that can help out a beginner.

As for American orders, we're not slackers. There are quite a few sites that have been created by us. The Henge of Keltria has some excerpts and articles from issues of 'Keltria' available on their site. The newly reconstituted Ancient Order of Druids in America, with John Michael Greer, has some very good articles posted. Isaac Bone-wits has an excellent site detailing the history of, for want of a better term, the neo-Druid movements. This site should be mandatory reading for any new Druid, simply in order to learn some history of where they've come from. And to round out your history lesson, no Druid's education is complete without visiting the Reformed Druids of North America, the group that started it all (at least on this side of the "pond"). On this site, you can

also find *A Reformed Druid Anthology*, a collection that should be mandatory reading for all ADFers. At least in my humble opinion.

To keep the text clean, I decided to place all of the URLs for the online resources below.

Resources

American Groups

ADF - <http://www.adf.org>

Henge of Keltria - <http://www.keltria.org>

Isaac's Homepage - <http://www.neopagan.net>

AODA - <http://www.aoda.org>

RDNA - <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/index.html>

ARDA - <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html>

British Groups

OBOD - <http://www.druidry.org>

BDO - <http://www.druidorder.demon.co.uk/index.htm>



Runes from the Unity Rite 09/19/04

Drawn by Michael J Dangler, Senior Druid, Three Cranes Grove, ADF

Have our offerings been accepted?

Hagalaz: Hagalaz is a rune of destruction and chaos. We have gone through a time of sometimes frightening, but certainly purgative chaos. What we have offered is not enough. We cannot, as an organization, subsist off the same old thing, time and again. Why not excellence? Why not give more to the organization? What are we holding back?

We must step forward and give, in service to the Gods, even as we weather times that do not seem fortuitous. Further offerings were made, and a rune was again drawn, asking the same question.

Have our offerings been accepted?

Uruz: Uruz is the rune of strength. In order to flourish and grow, to do service to the Gods and Kindred, we must find new ways to offer, and be courageous and persevere when we find ourselves wondering what road to take. As questions arise, we should have faith. We should seek the answers within our own strong hearts, and we should have the integrity to follow through on what we know is right. The Gods reward such integrity. ADF is a youth, given his first weapons, and we must be careful to use them well.

What do the Gods offer us in return for these sacrifices?

Fe: Wealth. This is a wealth that is passed down, the family herd of cattle. It is a movable wealth, and often strong. Still it must be guarded, for there are those who are jealous of the wealth of others, and covet it for themselves. the way in which we grow older and wiser.

Remember the previous runes, where the prevention of destruction comes from our strength, our creativity, and the way in which we grow older and wiser. This is a wealth that is best protected by generosity: she who gives will be looked kindly upon, and he who misers his horde will find it useless.

Finally, what further needs do the Gods have of us?

Suwilo: The sun, the brightening of the world. This may appear to be a simple omen, but its appearance at the Autumnal Equinox Rite should give us an immediate pause. This equinox marks the end of the sun's domination over the heavens, and it has finally lost the battle with the dark half of the year. So what are the Gods seeking to tell us? Looking back at the other runes, it seems that the Gods are reminding us that, even when all is dark, there is a remembrance of the light that can keep us forever smiling through the night. We should not focus on the hail and the storms, but on the bright days behind, and the promise of bright days ahead that they allude to. It is the sun that melts the ice, that shields us from the cold, and though ADF has seemed to have some rough times, we must not choose to focus on those times, but rather to focus on the good things that ADF has done, and the good things ADF will do. This rune seems to be calling to us to remember exactly why we are here.

The omen is good. There is much work for us to do.

Synopsis: Though there has been much chaos and discord in the organization, it is ADF's strength that will pull us through. We must be aware of the wealth we have, and share it with the rest of the world, not horde it. Finally, we must remember that though the world may not always be a cozy, bright place, there is always a light, should you choose to see it.

Little Acorns

Autumn Equinox

by Dame Julian Green

How do we teach our children Our Druidry? Dame Julian Green provides an example of a lesson plan for teaching young Druids our ways

First session:

Equinox – facilitated discussion

Instructor:

The equinox is a time of balance. It has the same root word as the word “equal.”

Who can tell me what “balance” means?

Who can balance on one foot for me?

Instructor demonstrates when child is in position on one foot.

What keeps him/her from falling over? (concept of distributed mass)

If we change that (teacher demonstrates using own self), such as moving the arm, or straightening the leg, what happens? (mass shifts and person is off balance)

Balance is about things being equal.

Does anyone know what is being balanced on the Equinox?

Demonstrate & explain planetary light using a ball and a flashlight.

Discuss how different light affects/creates the seasons.

On the autumn equinox, day and night are the same number of hours.

Fall is turning into winter. The days will grow shorter, and the nights will grow longer. (Compare to Midsummer)

Another concept of balance is about harmony. Harmony has to do with the balance between chaos and order. Can anyone tell me what chaos is?

When things are noisy and crazy, we sometimes call that chaos.

When things are quiet, and everyone is working, we call that order.

But it wouldn't be much fun if everything was one way or the other.

Chaos always wants to be the boss, but Order meets it (using gestures) and balance is struck.

Let's hear a story about balance.

Tell a story about balance from the hearth culture (for instance, the story of Manawydan and the mouse). Child friendly version below.

Manawydan Restores the Balance

Things were getting really crazy in the land of Dyfed. The Lord Manawydan had lived many happy years with his lovely wife, Rhiannon, and her son, Pryderi. But one day crazy things started to happen.

Pryderi was out riding his horse when he found a magic fort. He peeked in the window and saw a magic cauldron. He went into the fort to take a closer look, and the cauldron was full of treasure! So Pryderi decided he would take the cauldron home with him. But when he put his hands on it to pick it up, he stuck fast to it! He tried and tried, but he couldn't get loose.

Back home, his mother began to worry about him. Manawydan told Rhiannon that he had seen Pryderi going inside the magic fort. The Lady Rhiannon wasn't at all happy that Manawydan had left Pryderi alone, so she went out to look for him.

She came to the magic fort, and when she went in, she saw her son stuck there to the cauldron. She rushed to free him, but she touched the cauldron and got stuck, too!

Back home, Manawydan was pacing the floor, worrying because neither Pryderi nor his mother had come home. Suddenly, a great cloud of mist came creeping over the land, and when the mist was gone, Manawydan found himself standing on a bare hill. Not only was his own house gone, but he looked off toward where the magic fort had been that Pryderi and Rhiannon had gone into,

and it was gone, too! Then he began to look around and he found that everything was gone – the fields, the cattle, every tree, plant, bird or fish – everything had disappeared!

After a while, the Lord Manawydan decided he couldn't live without eating, so he went to another place where he bought some seed, and the things he needed to plant and till a field, and he came home and planted corn. The corn grew and grew and became tall and the ears came out and ripened. It was time for his first harvest. Manawydan went out early in the morning to pick his corn, and lo! and behold! Something had stripped the corn from the ears and carried it all away. There was not one kernel of corn to be harvested.

Manawydan was greatly puzzled, but he was a patient man, so he went to the next village and bought more seed corn and planted it again. When it came time to harvest the corn, the very same thing happened! The corn was stripped from every ear, and there was not one kernel to be found.

The Lord Manawydan was very unhappy, but he was not going to give up. He got more seed corn, and planted yet a third time. This time, though, the night before he was going to harvest the corn, he waited out in the field so he could see who or what was stealing his corn.

As he sat in the corn, a creeping mist came over the cornfield, and the mist was made up of thousands of tiny mice who, in an instant, before Manawydan could even move, had completely stripped the field of every kernel from every ear, and were leaving the field.

The mist had made Manawydan sort of sluggish, but he finally jumped up when we saw the last mouse -- a big, pregnant mouse waddling out of the field. He grabbed her by the tail.

"Aha! Since you are the only one I could catch, you will pay for what you and your friends have done."

You see, the Lord Manawydan was a very wise Druid. He was a true Druid with the heart of a judge. He wanted to see justice done. The world was out of balance, and order needed to be restored.

The next morning he took the mouse, two forks and a string with him and went up on a knoll beside the road. As he stuck the forks in the ground, a teacher came along the road, looking at him strangely.

"What is that you have in your hand?" asked the teacher.

"A fat mouse," replied Manawydan, returning to his work.

"And why is a great man like you handling a mouse?" the teacher asked.

Manawydan told the teacher, "This mouse has stolen from me, and I'm going to hang her until she is dead."*

The teacher looked mortified, and said, "Why would a great man like you trifle with a mere mouse, no matter what she has done to you?"

"She and her friends destroyed my crops three times and left me without food. If I could have caught them all, I would have hanged them all. As it is, I only caught this one, and she shall pay for them all."

The teacher looked exasperated, but said at last, "Well, I have no reason to defend this creature. I'm just trying to save you from embarrassment."

"I thank you for your sentiment," said the Lord Manawydan, "but I mean to destroy this creature."

The teacher moved on along the road, and Manawydan returned to his work of tying a rope into a noose.

Before too long, a priest came down the road and saw what Manawydan was doing.

"Why are you tying such a tiny noose, m'Lord?"

"I intend to use it to hang this creature in the form of a mouse who stole from me."

The priest looked horrified.

"My Lord," said the priest. "I will redeem the mouse. What price will you have for her?"

“That creature is not worth anything,” said the priest, “yet I will give you \$6 to let her go.”

Manawydan looked shrewdly at the priest, then slowly shook his head again. “No, the creature is worth nothing to you, but she is worth my field, so she must pay with her life.”

The priest shrugged and moved on down the road.

Now Manawydan was stringing the noose between the two forks. A very important man came along the road.

Seeing what Manawydan was doing, the man asked him, “Why have you created that tiny gallows? What will you hang from it?”

So Manawydan showed him the mouse and told the story yet a third time of how the mouse and her friends had robbed him of his corn.

“I see you are aggrieved,” said the important man. “Let me make it right. I will pay you for the price of the corn in your field if you let her go.”

Manawydan looked at the man curiously. “What is this mouse to you that you would pay such a ransom for her?”

“She’s nothing to me. I’m trying to make it right for you.”

Manawydan shook his head. “No amount of money can make it right. She must pay with her life.”

With that, the Lord Manawydan took up the noose and began to tie it around the mouse’s neck.

The man became agitated. “Please, Lord. Your fields were stripped thrice, I will pay you three times the amount of the corn in your field.”

“No,” Manawydan said, still working the noose around the mouse’s neck. He began to tighten the knot.

The man was fully alarmed now, and moved closer to Manawydan. “What will you take to release her?” he yelled.

“Don’t pay me for my land,” Manawydan cried. “Restore my land and home.”

“I will! I will restore your land and your home,” said the man, nearly beside himself.

Manawydan grabbed the man by the arm and, looking him straight in the eye, asked, “Who IS she to you, that you care so much to ransom her?”

The man’s eyes were fairly popping out of his head as he saw the mouse dangling from Manawydan’s hand.

“She’s my wife! She’s my wife!” he screamed.

“Then to get her back, you must restore my wife and her son, Pryderi; you must restore order to the land.”

“It’s done! It’s done!” said the man, and suddenly the land was green again, and Manawydan saw his house, and his cattle and his corn restored, and he saw the Lady Rhiannon and her son, Pryderi, coming toward him.

The man lunged for the mouse, but Manawydan stepped away, still holding the mouse.

“I must know why you did this,” the Lord Manawydan demanded.

“It’s because of trick the Lady Rhiannon and her first, now deceased, husband played on a friend of mine. I am a sorcerer, and he asked me to strip your fields at harvest time.”

“Then to get her back, you must do one more thing,” Manawydan said, dangling the mouse just out of the man’s reach. “You must promise to never work magic again in the land of Dyfed.”

“I assure you I will never do magic again in the land of Dyfed.”

Manawydan nodded, and released the mouse into the hands of the sorcerer, just as Rhiannon and Pryderi approached. “I free her gladly, for order is restored to my lands.”

**if you believe this portion about the possible hanging of the mouse*

might be upsetting to children, simply say that he kept her in a cage, and that the men entreated him to set her free.

Post story discussion

Instructor:

Do you think Manawydan really wanted to hurt the mouse?

Why did he go to the road to set up the gallows on which to hang the mouse?

Who do you think the men were who came along to free the mouse? Remember, no one had been in that land since the day the mist came and took everything away.

Why did these men appear now?

How did Manawydan know all this would happen? (He was a wise Druid.)

How did he restore order and balance to the land?

When we do magic on this day in our rituals, it is to restore balance to the land.

What is going on right now that you think might make the world off-balance? (war, pollution, etc., etc.)

What can we do to help restore the balance?

Make an amulet for balance:

Materials for each child:

Small bag (organza, felt, cloth, or burlap)

Ribbon, string or thin twine to tie it

Have small containers of various small items, perhaps various sizes & weights of colored beads or coins, pebbles, etc. with the various sizes mixed together in a single container.

Have other items which have correspondence to balance such as:

Malachite and hematite beads

Rose petals

Dried Orange peel

Jasmine flowers

Have them choose which items they want in their amulet. Stress that they must find two objects (beads or coins) of equal size and weight to put in their amulet bag.

When they are finished filling them, help them tie them off. Tell them they are going to charge them, and after they are charged, that whenever they feel things in their life are “out of balance” they should wear the bag or

carry it in their pocket until they feel the balance is restored.

Charging:

Light a candle.

Have a vessel of water representing the well, and a representation of the bilé.

Talk to them about how the well is the unformed power from the Underworld, and how the fire of the Heavens makes order out of chaos, and how the tree connects the two worlds and brings balance.

Have a child put their finger into the well and say or repeat after you, “I reconnect you to Brigid’s sacred well, and to all sacred wells everywhere.”

Have another child touch the candle holder and say or repeat after you, “I reconnect you to the Sacred Fires of Kildare, and to all sacred fires everywhere.”

Have a child touch the bilé and say or repeat after you, “I reconnect you to the tree that stands in the sacred nemeton and acts as a conduit between the worlds.”

Show them how to pass the amulet bag high over the candle flame (fire).

Then have each child come up individually and sprinkle their amulet with a drop or two of water from the well, and say,

“I charge you by the waters of chaos.”

Pass the bag high over the fire, and say, “I charge you by the fire of order.”

Touch the bag to the bilé, and say, “I charge you by the tree that brings balance between the two worlds.

Second Session

First ask: Who can tell me what we learned about balance last time?

Let them tell what they can recall of the Manawydan story and of the demonstrations of balance.

Story time:

A Whacky Day

Aurora and Brennan had been fighting all day. It had started before school when Aurora had taken too long in the bathroom, and Brennan didn't have time to brush his teeth.

On the way to school, Brennan had shoved in front of Aurora to get on the bus, and Aurora had dropped her books. The bus driver had had to wait while she gathered her books and flying papers, and he wasn't happy about it.

"Why didn't the bus driver glare at Brennan?" Aurora wondered. It wasn't her fault.

They were both in the same class at school – their class had two grades in it, and even though Aurora was a year older, Brennan was now in her class. They had been disruptive all during school today, pinching each other when the teacher wasn't looking, making faces, getting their friends to take sides. The teacher finally separated them in the middle of the afternoon, but they still glared at each other and made faces. At lunch, Aurora had spilled Brennan's milk on purpose; and, in return, he took her coconut macaroon, which was her very favorite cookie. And he didn't even eat it! She saw him throw it in the garbage as they were leaving the cafeteria.

Aurora was getting pretty tired of the game when it was time to go home, but as soon as school was out, the chaos escalated. She was walking down the hall with two of her friends, and they were heading right toward a whole line of boys – Brennan and all his friends.

The girls tried to walk around the line, but as they swung to the left, the boys let go a barrage of paperwads, dripping spitwads, and other things that felt nasty and slimy. The girls shrieked.

The P.E. teacher came out in the hall to see what was the matter and blew his whistle long and loud. It was silent for a second, and the teacher said, "What's going on here?"

Immediately a cacophony of voices raised, shrill, accusing girls' voices, and angry, defensive boys' voices.

"Whoa, whoa!" shouted the teacher over the top of it. "Time out! Time out!" he hollered with his basketball cradled beneath his arm and making a T sign with his hands.

Silence fell on the group. Brennan stepped forward and glared at his sister. "This is the last straw," he said, angrily. "You stole my best ruler during the last class, and then you broke it!"

"I did not!" Aurora said.

"Then what's that?" asked one of Brennan's friends, pointing at Aurora's backpack.

All eyes turned to look at the backpack. There was a zippered pocket on the outside of the backpack made of clear plastic. Inside the pocket, clearly visible, was the broken ruler.

Aurora looked shocked. "I didn't put that there!"

"Sure y' didn't," said another of Brennan's friends, and the shouting started again from both sides.

"All of you!" said the P.E. teacher, blowing his whistle again. "Get in the gym and sit down on the bleachers. We'll get to the bottom of this."

Stop the story at this point, and tell the children, "Everything's out of whack. Everybody's mad at each other. They're doing nasty things to each other. How can the teacher get to the bottom of this? How can he find out the truth so that peace (harmony, balance) can be restored?"

Let the children work out the solution and tell the rest of the story. If there are just two or three children, let them each tell how the story might end.

Visualization:

Do an abbreviated version of the Two Powers. Ask them beforehand to close their eyes and to try to picture in their minds everything you are saying. After you finish the meditation, ask them what they think the meditation was about and how it all fits together with the notion of balance.

Have them draw pictures of balance:

It can be as simple as two children on a see-saw or as complex as a picture of fall progressing into winter.





Poetry

Samhain

Chill day;
and the crows rise from their food
and the mist stays low on the fields.

(Where are they gone?
Under the ground.)

Empty branches;
and wind that will not rest
and water growing quiet.

(Where are they gone?
Inside the hills.)

Brittle grass;
and the thistle flies away
and the snakes go to their holes.

(Where are they gone?
Into the dark.)

-Cei

The Ocean (Song for Aphrodite)

The waves come soft at first upon the shore;
Subside in gentle ripples once again,
And vanish in the dark and silent depths
To be called forth once more with loving touch
And the whisper of the wind's silent caress.

And now the tide comes in, a subtle surge
Of power rising upwards from the deep
And holy places only lovers know,
To touch the land for one brief space of time
And return to the fountain-source below.

The wind repeats her timeless words of love,
Whips up the first flecks of wave-crested foam
And brings the sea more firmly to the sand;
Her touch is more insistent, less unsure
As she frees the sea to follow her command.

The waves are breaking now upon the shore ^
The crash and rumble with a deep, full laugh
Like a god at play. They toss and touch and tease
And kiss the sand, lay salt upon the skin,
And still the whispering wind says, "I am pleased."

The storm is passing, ocean falling still,
And the wind speaks only as a gentle breeze
Blowing across the storm-tossed reach of shore.
But still the ripples come, caress the sand,
With the promise of the storm to rise once more.

-© 1989 by Erik M. Dutton



Beltane

Brigit weaves her way through the forests
Leaving a path for Lleu to follow
As summer follows spring
As the groom follows the bride
As we follow the seasons
As life follows life.

Calan Mai, Beltane
When spring rises into summer
And the days grow longer and hotter
And the clothes come off
And couples draw together
Under the starry skies.

Summer shrugs off the storms of spring
The pale green buds of trees
Come full in emerald leaf
So that beneath the branches
The sunlight is green and heavy
With chlorophyll and sap.

The trees stand tall like spears
Ready for Lleu's advantage.

-Mary Jones

"Ancestors come and sit by our fire"

Oh Ancestors come and sit by our fire
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

And tell us your stories our hearts to inspire
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

The battles, the glory, the joy and the pain
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

Please tell us your stories again and again
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

The wisdom you teach us so bold and so true
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

We cherish your lessons as we honor you.
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

In this holy time, at this sacred place
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

We honor your memory in loving embrace
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

Grandfathers, grandmothers who once bore
the flame
Chorus: Oh Ancestors we remember.

Let us all gather and evoke the name
Chorus: Of Ancestors we remember.

-Grey Badger

Things are not as they seem,
for angels hide in insect clothes
and quickly forget where they've been.

Examination is difficult to begin.
Consider poor, bovine Io
and learn things are not as they seem.

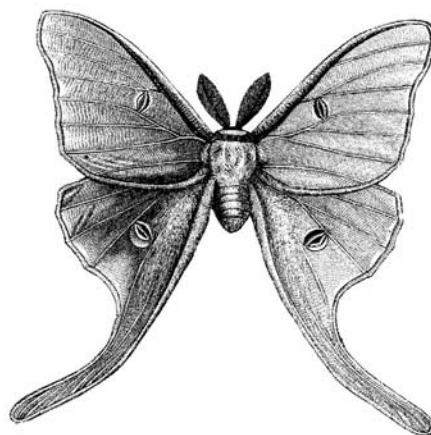
Cerura Vinula holds much within:
as horn-tail to Manduca grows
he forgets just where he's been;

in a cocoon's ooze, a thing obscene,
which reeks decaying death, although
things are not as they seem.

¹Titled for the novel of the same name by A.S.Byatt.

²The Greek insect names refer to different stages of Metamorphosis. Cerura Vinula, meaning "horn-tail," is a type of caterpillar whose cocoon is called Manduca in reference to the dissolving of the caterpillar body and regeneration into the body of the moth --Notodonta, a combination of the words for teeth and back.

Angels and Insects¹



for Manduca's larval fright is fleeting.
From that stew Notodonta² grows,
and has forgotten where he's been.

Gloriously vicious fanged wings
carry an angel in their dusty cloak

for things are seldom as they seem
once we realize where they've been.

-Aesa



Reviews

Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion

by Michael York

ISBN 0814797024

List Price \$38.00

Michael York is a lecturer in religious studies at Bath Spa University College, and as such approaches his subject from an academic perspective. This is primarily an academic book, rather than a religious or theological one, but one apparently aimed at the educated general reader as well as the professional, and thus pleasantly free of the unnecessary jargon and professional “in-group” references that characterize so much academic writing. In the Preface, Prof. York disclaims any particular religious affiliation, although in the Introduction he refers to himself as a “pagan practitioner” (p.4), a term that as we will see is somewhat ambiguous. In any event, the book is certainly pagan-friendly, with the caveat that the primary emphasis is on traditional ethnic paganisms and “pagan” behavior patterns in established religions rather than on the evolution of modern Western Neopaganism (ground that has, in any case, been covered by Ronald Hutton, Margot Adler and others).

Given that the word appears twice in the title, it seems appropriate to ask what Prof. York means when he says “pagan”. The answer to this question is to a large extent revealed over the course of the book – indeed, the central purpose of the book is to define “paganism”, and to suggest criteria for determining whether a religion or practice might be defined as such - but he provides a fairly concise working definition at the end: “Paganism is an affirmation of interactive and polymorphic sacred relationship by an individual or community with the tangible, sentient and nonempirical.” (p.162). He notes that this is a reworking of a definition offered (he doesn’t say by whom) on the Nature Religions e-list, and is clearly offering it as simply a formal definition. He does, however, assign a number of characteristics or “markers” for paganism, including (but not limited to), “polytheism, animism, idolatry, corpospirituality, local emphasis,

recognitions of geosacred concentrations, perceptions of soul duality, and either nature worship or nature as a chief metaphorical register expressive of the divine.” (p.13). He offers other markers elsewhere in the text, and notes that not all will be present in any one pagan religion. The remainder of the book is an expansion on this concept, in three chapters: “Paganism as Religion”, “Paganism as Behavior”, and “Paganism as Theology” (this last chapter is extremely short).

Prof. York’s starting point for defining which religions are pagan is a 1982 statistical survey of world religions, broken down by percentage population, contained in the “World Christian Encyclopedia”, by David Barrett (also including a projection for 2000). From these numbers, he extrapolates a 5-6% world “pagan” population, a grouping that includes the following (taken from the section sub-titles in ch.1): Chinese folk religion, Shinto, tribal religions, shamanism, American Indian spirituality, Afro-American spiritism, and contemporary Western paganism. The bulk of Chapter 1 is a survey of each of these traditions or groupings, with an eye to extrapolating the common elements (other than the statistical) that led him to include them in his “pagan” category. At the front of this chapter he identifies five such markers: “In comparing classical and related pre-Christian paganisms with Christianity, we find that paganism includes (1) a number of both male and female gods, (2) magical practice, (3) emphasis on ritual efficacy, (4) corpospirituality [a term he never defines, but that I take to mean an “embodied” spirituality such as is exemplified in shamanic practice – ED], and (5) an understanding of gods and humans and codependent and related.” (p.14). The rest of the chapter expands on this in the context of each sub-category as mentioned above. This seems to be good, well-researched information, when checked

against what knowledge I already had of the topic areas (primarily Shinto).

Chapter 2 is a survey of the rest of the world's traditions that do not fall into the pagan grouping, specifically in a search for behaviors that can be categorized as "pagan" in spite of the generally non- or anti-pagan officially promulgated beliefs. He begins by defining "cultic" or "venerative" behaviors that are "directed inside nature" (i.e. to humans or other tangible objects – he uses the cult of the Virgin Mary as one example) as pagan, and behaviors that are "directed outside nature" as transcendentalism (or gnosticism – see discussion of ch.3 below) -- the absence of which is one of his markers for classifying a belief or behavior as pagan.

Interestingly, since ch. 1 would seem logically to have been the heart of the book, this chapter is almost twice as long, and comprises the bulk of the text. One reason for this quickly becomes clear: as Prof. York notes in the preface, the majority of his experience and expertise is in the religions of the Far East and South Asia, and he spends a commensurately greater amount of time on these traditions than on the rest.

Like ch. 1, this chapter is also broken down into sub-headings based on Barrett's survey: Hinduism, Buddhism (separated into Theravada and Mahayana, with a short section for Vajrayana and "other"), Christianity, Islam, and Agnosticism/Atheism/Secularism. This chapter contained some conclusions that I questioned, and (I believe) also revealed a bias that may or may not be conscious on the part of the author: Christianity was

dealt with in a mere three pages, over against 30 for Hinduism and 28 for Buddhism, and in that section he allowed himself for the only time to speak negatively (and gratuitously, in my opinion) of the religion under discussion, referring to the Christian conception of God as "a physical deity that psychoanalytically appears to suffer with schizophrenic delusions of grandeur and paranoid jealousy" (p.135).

Chapter 3, as noted above, is quite short at 12 pages, and is as much a conclusion as a separate chapter. I wish it had been longer, as this is where he expands on the idea that I think is actually at the heart of his argument – namely, that as ideal religious types, the polar opposite of paganism is gnosticism, and that all religions fall on a continuum between the two. He identifies gnosticism with the idea of a wholly transcendent Other and of the material world as a place to escape; against this he proposes that "paganism" is at its heart celebratory and focused on the life in and of this world, and our relation with Deity in the here and now rather than in the afterlife.

All in all, I found this to be a very interesting and thought-provoking book, and have definitely added it to my permanent collection. According to the author bio, Prof. York has also written "The Roman Festival Calendar of Numa Pompilius", "The Divine versus the Asurian: An Interpretation of Indo-European Cult and Myth", and "The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neopagan Movements"; I plan to look for these as well.

Review by Erik Dutton



Oak Leaves



Your Article, Art Work Or Advertisement Could Have Been Here!

Oak Leaves accepts all sorts of materials on any subject related to the Indo-Europeans and Our Druidry. We look forward to receiving your poetry, stories, art work, rituals, travel stories and religious experiences.

We also have a sizeable membership base which would be glad to see your advertisement of your wares, services or events!

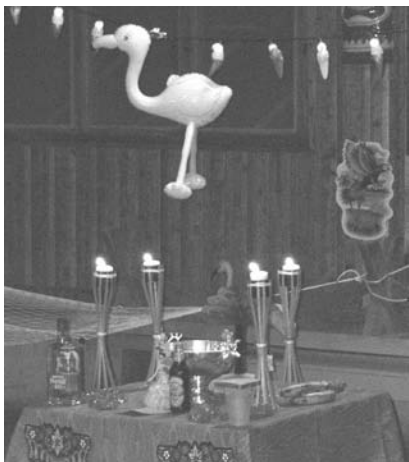
Please contact us for details: adf-chronicler@adf.org



Festivals & Festival Reviews

The Summerland Gathering 2004

by Michael J Dangler



Buffet ritual altar.

Summerland was my first festival five years ago. Back then, it felt like coming home, being with people I loved and respected, and simply being respected for who I am. There was no pressure to be someone at Summerland. Everyone simply was who they were, and nothing more. It is

still like that today.

Summerland is run by 6th Night Grove, ADF, a Grove that has mothered (in some way or another) many of the Groves in the Heartland Region. Being a part of 6th Night for a few years might be part of why I always feel so at home, but it certainly isn't all of it. 6th Night continues to set a standard for excellence with Summerland that I haven't yet seen exceeded.

The workshop lineup at Summerland is usually one of the best in ADF. This year was no exception. Skip Ellison, Ian Corrigan, Errach of Pittsburgh, Jenni Hunt, Diana Paar, Selene Tawney, Nuggie and Rowana Starshine all gave workshops, making the presenter line-up second to none in this festival season. Unfortunately, due to ritual setup and takedown, I was not privileged to attend as many workshops as I would have liked, but I was able to attend a few, and also able to see the faces of people leaving workshops (some of which were so good that they ran a half-hour over due to questions and discussion!), and the faces said it all: "We've just been to a great workshop! You shoulda been there!"

The band this year was a change from the previous years. Anam Cara was this year's headliner, and they played a good show (with many people finding their way to the open bar or catching a mead bottle as it passed from one hand to the next). There was much dancing and relaxing, and lots of time to talk with old friends and make new ones.

On Friday night was the (in)famous Buffett Ritual. With cheeseburgers and margaritas, the Gods were worshiped in a somewhat new manner, but the omens showed no complaints. Apparently, even the Kindred need a party once in a while.

Just before the main rite on Saturday, the skies opened up, and a deluge poured from the sky. We stood for a while in the pavilion, waiting for the rains to die down a bit, and we laughed and talked and joked amongst ourselves. This turned out to be better than any amount of grounding and centering I have ever experienced, as there was so much fellowship and closeness that one couldn't help



Archdruid Skip Ellison performing during the bardic portion of the Buffet ritual.

but be ready for a ritual. Leave it to 6th Night to turn a thunderstorm into a spiritual experience.

Of course, one of the best things about Summerland is the number of Groves that are represented every year. All but two of the nine Groves in the Heartland Region were represented, and several Groves from outside the Heartland Region were represented, as well.

In short, when I'm asked about a festival by other Pagans, I point out Summerland for all these reasons. I plan my festival season around it, rather than fitting it in, and every year it pays off better than the year before.

I'm already looking forward to next year.

For more information about the Summerland Gathering please contact 6thnight@6thnight.org or visit their web site at: <http://www.6thnight.org/Summerland>



ADF Festivals

Fall Festival & Druid Gathering

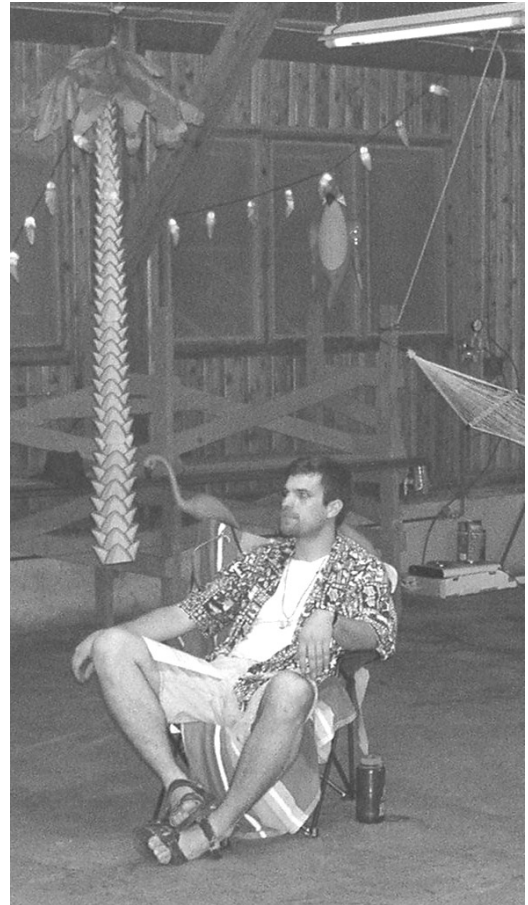
When: September 16 - 19, 2004
Where: Four Quarters Farm, Artemis PA
Organizers: Red Oak Grove, ADF
Contact: officers@redoakgrove.org
Website: <http://www.redoakgrove.org/fallfest/>

Three Realms: A Pacific Druid Festival

When: October 7 - 10, 2004
Where: Sage Hill Campground, Santa Barbara, CA
Organizers: Raven's Cry Grove, ADF
Contact: ThreeRealms@ravenscrygrove.org
Website: <http://ravenscrygrove.org/3realms.htm>

Walking With Fire: An Eastern Indo-European Conference

When: October 15 - 18, 2004
Where: Prattsville, NY
Organizers: Eastern Gate and Slavic Kins, ADF



Michael J Dangler at the Buffet pre-ritual briefing.

Contact: ratrija@perfumedscorpion.org
Website: <http://www.walkingwithfire.org/>

Winter Nights Festival

When: October 29 - 31, 2004 (tentative)
Where: Jenny Jump State Forest, NJ
Organizers: Grove of the Midnight Sun, ADF
Contact: winternights@groovemidnightsun.com
Website: <http://www.groovemidnightsun.com/wn/>

WinterStar Symposium

When: February 26 - 29, 2004
Where: Atwood Lake Resort, Dellroy, OH
Organizers: ACE (with StoneCreed Grove, ADF)
Contact: webchameleon2@rosencomet.com
Website: <http://www.rosencomet.com/winterstar/>





Falling Acorns

Announcements

Dedicant Program

Congratulations to the new Dedicants!
Bard Dafydd of Red Oak Grove
Linda Costello of Grove of the Rising Phoenix
Emerald of Sassafras Grove
Patrick Keeler of Grove of the Other Gods

Provisional Grove Charter Granted

Abhainn Glas Grove, Portland, Oregon, chartered April 30, 2004

New Protogroves

Thunder in the Sky Protogrove, Salina, Oklahoma, founded April 18, 2004
Tir Anwylyd Protogrove, Round Rock, Texas, founded May 18, 2004
Sarcen Circle Protogrove, Chilwell, Nottingham, United Kingdom, founded June 16, 2004
Oak Wyse Protogrove, Kenbridge Virginia, founded June 22, 2004
Protogrove of the Red Earth, Atlanta, Georgia, founded June 22, 2004
Wild Hare Protogrove, Shawnee Mission, Kansas, founded June 22, 2004
Acadian Oaks Protogrove, Lafayette, Louisiana, founded June 29, 2004

Protogrove/Grove Reports

Abhainn Glas Grove, ADF, Portland, Oregon

Beltaine 2004 was held in Lewisville Park, near Battle Ground, Washington. Attendance was high. We had 17

people at the ritual, most of them first-timers. Welcome! The weather cooperated and the sun was out - appropriately. Sunny, partly cloudy. Not too hot. Perfect ritual weather. The ritual itself went very well. It was the first ritual where we actually felt like we weren't just reciting lines. Two guests from the Lyceum of Trees gave us a gift of a new altar tree. Many thanks, friends! We also swore in our officers:

- * Michael Luevane, Senior Druid
- * Anne Lenzi, Grove Administrator
- * Paul Asbury, Scribe
- * Ron Lenzi, Pursewarden

After the ritual, we feasted. And a good day it was.

Summer Solstice 2004: We held our first Summer Solstice ritual in Champoege Park, near St. Paul, Oregon. It was the perfect location - beautiful scenery, trees, right next to the river.

We had visitors from the neighboring campsite come for a visit. We also had 2 new members join ADF. Thanks to Aigeann and Chelle for showing, as well. Always a welcome sight.

Lughnassad 2004: Lughnassad 2004 was held on the coast in Lincoln City, OR. Before the ritual we held a beach cleanup. With only 5 people in attendance, we still managed to clean about 20 pounds of garbage from the beach. The ritual was very well done and we had a new attendee.

Autumn Equinox 2004 (Winter Finding): Winter Finding was held at Rooster Rock State Park. The weather did not appear to want to cooperate, but once the ritual started, the rain slacked off and we went ahead as planned. Two new attendees joined us this time, and we had a wonderful ritual. The ritual was broken into two parts, with a feast and story-telling break in the middle.

We have started a DP study group. Four of our members

are actively working towards the DP, with hopes of finishing soon and starting the SP. Several of us are interested in the Clergy Program as well.

We are currently looking at the possibility of sponsoring a section of the Willamette River, the namesake of our grove. This is through Oregon SOLV and would involve a twice-yearly cleanup. More on this as things develop.

Michael Leuvane
Senior Druid
question@abhainnglas.org

Raven Wood Grove, ADF, Crystal Lake, Illinois

Raven Wood Grove, just this last Fall Equinox, had an evening Nordic ritual of “The Hunt”, at sunset. It was our first campout for the grove. We had a large feast, did the ritual around a bonfire and afterward had drumming and storytelling. We are planning on making this an annual event.

We do have two people working on the DP and welcome visitors to join in to judge for themselves if they would like to join ADF and the Grove. We also have two members that are very interested in Gnosticism and are studying that in addition to working on the ADF Study Program.

We are planning Samhain now and hope to make it an outdoor activity at a Christmas tree farm that is local and has a very good energy, followed by a feast and drumming. It will be held on October 31 at 2pm.

Lori Donlea
Senior Druid
info@ravenwoodgrove.org

Sassafras Grove, ADF, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Sassafras Grove, ADF has had a busy summer, beginning with our Annual Beltain Picnic. Sixty people attend this event, which has been going strong for about fifteen years. Attendees made flower crowns, enjoyed a huge potluck feast, and the picnic culminated in the rite that included a traditional Maypole dance. We also hosted our bi-monthly Bardic Circle at Moonstones, a local pagan

store. A spontaneous “Battle of the Bards” ensued when Earrach and Maria started running through their repertoires of bawdy songs to the amusement of the other participants. With the cooperation and encouragement of the owners of the store, we decided to make the Grove at Moonstones a monthly event, alternating between bardic circles and workshops presented by grove members.

In June, Earrach led our first workshop at Moonstones with “Druidry 101” touching on the history of Druidism. Five people attended. Our lore meeting for Summer Solstice gave folks an opportunity to discuss their traditions and thoughts on the holiday and touched on the astronomical significance of the quarters that included a lively debate on astronomy vs. astrology.

On Midsummer’s Eve, Maria hosted a dinner in honor of the Fair Folk. Six grove members attended to feast and toast our Immortal kin. A sunrise Summer Solstice rite was held at our sacred Tor and eleven brave souls praised the Sun as it rose in glory over the hill and made sacrifice to the source of life and light.

July’s Bardic Circle was a lively, but small event, filled with songs of summer. The lore meeting for Lughnassad focused on legends of Lugh and a discussion on the nature of Sovereignty. Emerald Diana and Rowan began DP study group that plans to meet monthly to encourage and support those who are working on the program.

The Lughnassad rite was held on a lovely Saturday afternoon and focused on Lugh and the Lady of Sovereignty. Earrach and Diana were primary liturgists. Games, organized by Deana were held in their honor and included rock throwing, potato carving, a nine-man morris tournament and, of course, a bardic competition. Prizes were awarded to the winners of each competition, and for the third year in a row, Eric walked away with the title of Grove Champion. Earrach presented our second workshop at Moonstones, “Druidry 102,” which covered modern Druid practices. Later in the month several grove members attended the Summerlands festival where Earrach and Diana presented workshops.

September was a busy month for the grove. Diana, Maria and Deana were on the organizing committee for Spiral, a local pagan retreat. Diana and Maria coordinated and facilitated the retreat’s three main rituals. A number of

grove members presented workshops at the retreat, including Diana, “Images of the Divine,” Emerald “The Faces of Dionysus,” Maria, “Pop-Culture Mythologies” and “Rounds for Fun and Ritual” and Earrach on neo pagan ideas of “God.” Earrach also led an early morning pilgrimage to Frankford Springs, Raccoon State Park’s historic and sacred spring.

Our Autumn Equinox rite was dedicated to Dionysus, and focused on aspects of death in life and life in death. Emerald facilitated the lore meeting that included discussion of various Dionysian myths and a craft element where attendees created thyrsus, pinecone tipped sticks decorated with ivy and ribbons, to be used in the rite. About thirty people attended the rite at Friend’s Meeting House, where we danced (a lot) and sang praise to the god. Many of our traditional invocations and prayers were replaced by Orphic hymns and writings from classical sources. Emerald, Rowan and Diana were the primary liturgists. Earrach created a stunning Mask of Dionysus that was hung from a giant thyrsus as a symbol of the god’s presence. Fruit and bottles of wine were blessed during the ritual for participants to enjoy at home. Following the rite at Friends, twelve people made a pilgrimage to the home of Andrew and Kathryn, friends of the grove, who hosted a sacred wine tasting. Wine from was rite was carried to the house and set on a table with the Dionysus mask, the blessed fruits and other foods for feasting. As each bottle was opened, Kathryn, as lady of the house, made libation to the gods, offering the first taste to them. The celebration lasted until midnight when the revelers (and designated drivers!) made their way home.

One of the things that make Sassafra Grove unique is the number of hearth cultures adopted by its members. Within the past year we have held rites honoring Irish, Welsh, Norse, Greek and Romano-British traditions. It gives grove members and the public an opportunity to experience the lore of many cultures, and to explore the similarities and differences of a variety of myths, legends and cultures.

Maria Stoy
Steward
ivybrigid1@aol.com

Grove of the Seven Hills, ADF, Lynchburg, Virginia

Our biggest news of late has been our ADF renewal—we renewed as a Grove so that our Grove anniversary would also be our renewal date. Doing this as a Grove inspired many of our new members to join ADF as well so we ended up with three renewals and 9 or 10 new subscriptions for ADF—a fact of which we were pretty proud.

Lately, Friday Sept. 24 to be exact, we held a Bacchanalia with some Nova Roma folks. The Museum for which I work held a wine festival on Saturday so on Friday night we donned wine colored clothes, filled up jugs and bottle with wine and blessed the festival grounds chanting Ia Ia Iachus (after a few rounds it became “Ia Ia Iachus, we’re Ra Ra Racous!”).

We offered up the energy to be raised to Bacchus, the twice born and then retired to a nearby hotel for fermented revels and grape-y good fun.

Our Grove celebrated the wedding of two members in July and the birth of our smallest nut, Aiden, in April. Aiden’s blessing ceremony text may be found on our website, <http://www.SevenHillsADF.org> at the bottom of the Basic Liturgy page.

Aesa
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Protogrove of the Mystic Ash, ADF, Amelia, Ohio

We have served at the Robin Hood’s Community Center. We had a Standard Celtic Ritual in July, which was attended by 4 people; our omen was the following:

Past - Tyn’ur - Clear Wisdom
Present - Duir - Strength
Future - Straif - Harsh realities, calming, new beginnings.

We also just held Fall Equinox, which was a Norse Ritual. It was attended by about 27 people. We had a fellow who is well versed in Norse Ritual and the Norse language perform the opening and closing Hammer Rite, he also pulled the Runes for us. It was a VERY powerful ritual, so powerful that after eating some of the feast food I found myself becoming extremely tired and excused myself and went to bed. I slept the whole night through.

The Runes that were pulled follow:

Past - Naudhiz - took appropriate actions to alleviate distress.

Present - Hagalaz - a change or transformation of our life situation.

Future - we must control the power within ourselves wisely, excess can cause us to burn out our creative energies.

Our future events include a Samhain event in which all of the Groves/Protogroves in our region have been invited to attend; it is our hope that this will become an annual event in our region.

Selene Tawny
Grove Organizer
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White Birch Protogrove, ADF, Westminster, Vermont

White Birch Protogrove, ADF, was first gathered with three people in March of this year. Our focus is Celtic and so far we have been pursuing the Welsh tradition. We began with planning meetings, which quickly evolved into DP Study sessions. We have read the Mabinogion together and are now beginning *The Druids* by Peter Beresford Ellis.

Our first ritual took place on a bright and sunny Midsummer Day on private land in Alstead Center, New Hampshire. We had decided to follow the basic ADF outline of ritual, each of us taking the various parts, but we would speak them spontaneously from the heart. This seemed to work out very well... all too well, for the ritual itself lasted more than two hours! Included in the ritual was a dedication of the grove and welcoming of founding members. We each stood before the great Birch tree with our hands on the smooth, powdery and peeling bark, and spoke our name (pagan or otherwise) and stated our personal oaths of dedication to the grove and our Druid spirituality. The sense of being in sacred space and the warm connection between the three of us stayed with this writer for many days following.

Our Lughnasadh felt very different. Perhaps this was because it was held in a different grove, also on private land

in Westminster, Vermont. However, it was also because we simplified the order of ritual after struggling with making the outline of ritual more intuitive for all three of us. We had struggled with reciprocal nature of the ritual, giving offerings in order to receive a blessing from the kindred in return. Nevertheless, the experience this time led to a group revelation: Gods and Goddesses are present to us, in a personal way, guiding us as individuals, when we invoke them. These relationships are growing in each of us and as a grove.

After attending a study session, a new member joined us during our recent Mabon ritual, which took place back in Alstead Center, New Hampshire. Now we are balanced, two men and two women, and the feeling is more complete and grounded. Again, we conducted the ritual spontaneously and no one of us "led" more than any other. This seems to be the culture we have developed so far. Our omen from the tree oracle was Reed, Spindle and Oak. We agreed that as each of us reaches for a deepening connection with the Kindred and with wisdom, we are growing, and we must remain flexible and open as the grove develops and grows.

This writer is enjoying the journey of organizing a grove immensely, and we welcome new visitors and members to our intimate circle.

Art Bradan
Grove Organizer
druidsgrove@adelphia.net

Guild Reports

Liturgists Guild

The Liturgists Guild continues to operate the ADF-LITURGISTS list as a resource for members interested in improving their skills as writers and organizers of ritual. The list is a particularly useful forum for soliciting feedback from fellow liturgists on ritual texts.

The officers of the Liturgists Guild are in the final stages of creation and approval of the Guild's official study program. The outline of the program's curriculum was approved by the ADF Council of Lore this summer and the complete requirements for the First Circle of the cur-

riculum are expected to be ready by Samhain of this year, with the courses for Second and Third Circle to follow.

The current officers of the Guild are Todd Covert, Chief and Preceptor; Hekatatia, Scribe; and Kirk Thomas, Archivist. The election of officers for 2004-2007 is already underway at this writing and will conclude at Samhain. Any ADF member may join the Liturgists Guild simply by sending a request to the Guild's Scribe at the e-mail address linked from the Guild's homepage at:

<http://www.adf.org/members/guilds/liturgists>.

Todd Covert
Chief
ravenbard@aol.com

Naturalists Guild

The Guild held our annual meeting at Wellspring and discussed the status of the Study Program. There have also been significant contributions on the e-list that are of interest to our members.

Matt Goodfriend was appointed Archivist, Matt Ducar was appointed Pursewarden, and Bladesmith was appointed Registrar. The position of Scribe is still open to anyone interested. Please contact Epona at epona@mysticdruid.com for further information.

Epona
Chief
epona@mysticdruid.com

Warriors Guild

The results from the Games at Wellspring can be located at:

<http://www.adfwarriors.org/04championship.html>.

We have also instituted a Guild Membership fee. This fee is to cover the cost of archery equipment and other equipment that will be needed for the National Games, trophies for the winners of the events, and also for a Guild Insignia, once we decide what that insignia will be. There have not been any advancements of rank since April. We have a total of 28 members as of today within the Guild.

Selene
Scribe/Registrar
selenetawny@adelphia.net

Rin Reports

Aus Dhwer, Eastern Indo-European Kin

Since Wellspring we have been working on getting the Eastern Indo-European conference, Walking With Fire (<http://www.walkingwithfire.org>), up and running. It has been a great pleasure to gather together so many interesting and intelligent presenters and we look forward to a successful event.

In addition our Preceptor/Liturgist has been working on an Eastern IE Dedicant Program to provide a basic foundation for anyone seeking to learn more about the ancient Eastern Indo-Europeans. Building upon the ADF Dedicant Program, it will introduce students to the rituals, beliefs, mythologies and history of the various cultures Aus Dhwer encompasses.

The Kin has decided to create video, in a Quicktime format, of various Eastern Indo-European rituals for our members to view online. As not everyone is able to see a Vedic ritual, especially with myself and the Preceptor/Liturgist moving to Austria, we felt it was important to share as much information as we can and to give people the opportunity to view rituals they may not otherwise be able to see.

A complete overhaul of the Kin web site is set to take place soon. New information will include book reports, training materials, basic information, art work and various methods of worship.

If you would like to join the Kin please send an e-mail off to our Archivist or visit us at:

<http://www.ausdhwer.org>

Adhitin Ratrija
Director
ratrija@perfumedscorpion.org



Crossword Puzzle

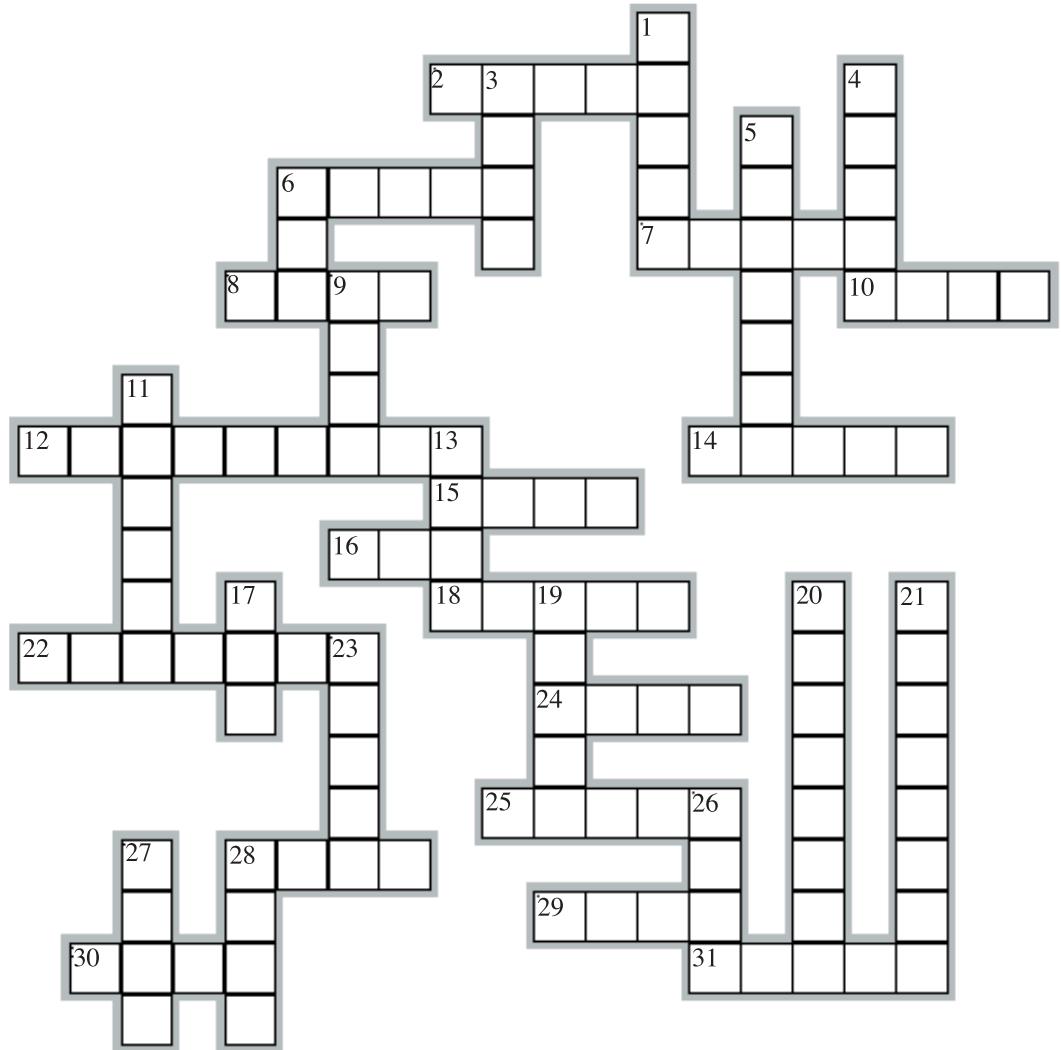
Across

2. You can lead a _____
to water....
6. There is a time and a
_____ for every thing
7. Where there's _____,
there's fire!
8. Give them an _____,
and they'll take a mile!
10. The _____ McCoy
12. Trip the light _____
14. The _____ of the crop
15. _____ shade of winter
16. _____ of these days
Alice...
18. A bird in the hand is
_____ two in the bush
22. You've got to be
_____ me?!
24. All that glitters is not

25. The _____ that broke
the camel's back
28. To make a _____ story
short
29. Let sleeping _____ lie
30. There's a sucker _____
every minute
31. _____ caution to the
wind

Down

1. Not in a million _____ !
3. Come in, we're _____ !
4. Time to pay the _____
5. One way or _____
6. The _____ is mightier than the
sword
9. Don't put the _____ before the
horse
11. A friend in need is a friend _____
13. _____ the fat
17. The Whole _____ and ca-
boodle
19. Two wrongs don't make a
_____ !
20. Put two and two _____
21. Here today, gone _____
23. It ain't easy being _____ !
26. Go _____ young man
27. As the _____ flies
28. Hook, _____ & sinker



**Answers to
the Crossword
appearing in
issue 25 of
Oak Leaves
may be found
on page 44 of
this publica-
tion.**

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submission guidelines

Oak Leaves seeks to provide a forum of sharing, learning and community growth through the content within its pages. You can help by submitting your articles, essays, art work, poetry, recipes, travel stories, reviews, thoughts, rituals, and announcements. Oak Leaves welcomes submissions from both non-members and members of ADF. Submissions may be sent to: Oak Leaves Submission c/o ADF, P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874 or as attachments to: oak-leaves@adf.org. Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender. Oak Leaves cannot be responsible for manuscripts, photographs and art works. The content of all submitted material remains the property of the author/artist. Copyrights should be respected, and articles should not be reprinted without express permission from the author. All opinions expressed in Oak Leaves are those of the authors, and not necessarily of ADF.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: January 1st

Summer: April 1st

Autumn: July 1st

Winter: October 1st

Answers For Crossword Puzzle In Issue 25:

Across

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 3. Hermes | 21. Hel |
| 7. Gjall | 22. Pigs |
| 8. Lugh | 23. Frnrir |
| 13. Sidhe | 24. Poseidon |
| 15. Frey | 27. Bouyan |
| 16. Perun | 29. Loki |
| 18. Helen | 30. Cormac |
| 19. Frigg | 31. Hephaestus |
| 20. Etain | |

Down

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Ferdiad | 12. Mannanan |
| 2. Hesperides | 14. Falias |
| 4. Skidbladnir | 17. Aeneas |
| 5. Conall | 21. Heimdal |
| 6. Aonbarr | 24. Pwyll |
| 9. Grendel | 25. Artemis |
| 10. Techduinn | 26. Zaltys |
| 11. Elphin | 27. Baba |
| | 28. Miach |

Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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Legal Name: _____ ☐ P ☐ S ☐ C
Religious Name: _____ ☐ P ☐ S ☐ C
Address: _____ ☐ P ☐ S ☐ C
City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Post Code: _____
Country: _____ Phone Number: _____ Birth Date: / / (mm/dd/yy)
Email Address: _____ ☐ P ☐ S ☐ C

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- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Revival of Expired Membership
- ☐ Information Update (if name/address changed indicate previous:)

If this is a new membership, where did you hear about us? _____

If this is a membership renewal please state your ADF membership number: _____

In which ADF Grove do you intend to participate in, if any? _____

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If you are under the age of 18, you must have a parent or guardian sign this waiver to indicate her/his permission for you to join ADF, and that signature must be notarized.

I am 18 years of Age or Older: ☐ Yes ☐ No (Check one)

To whom it may concern: (enter child's name here) _____ has my permission to become a member of ADF, and I am fully aware of the Neopagan nature of this organization.

Parent/Guardian's signed name: _____ Parent/Guardian's printed name: _____

Notary Seal :

This form may also be found online at: <http://www.adf.org/joining/join.html>

