

O A R L F A D F S

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin

Winter 2005 ~ Issue No. 31



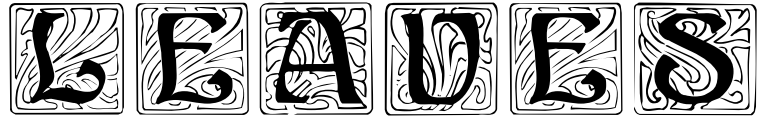


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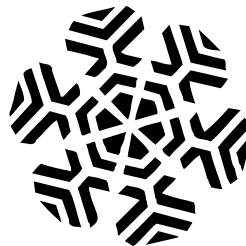
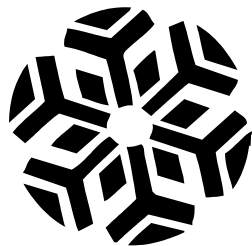
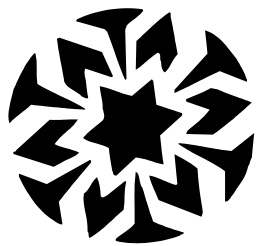
From the Archdruid

Jn the past few months my travels have taken me to Ohio where I presented a workshop at the annual Summerland Festival. I appeared as the guest author at the Pagan Pride Day event in Syracuse, NY. Then I traveled to Crystal Lake, IL to perform the consecration ritual for our newest Dedicator Priest, Pat Donlea. At all three, I had the opportunity to meet with ADF members and took parts in the rituals.

Our membership has remained steady this quarter at about 1060 members. Our Guild structure and their programs are working well and the number of people that have completed our Dedicator program is increasing rapidly. We have also seen the rise of a new Guild this quarter, the Brewer's Guild – all hail the brewers!

This next quarter, I will be traveling to Austria to attend the Walking With Fire gathering and meeting with other ADF folks. I am working on my latest project, a new book called "The History of  r nDra ocht F in: A Druid Fellowship - The First 20 Years." In it, I plan to describe the founding and growth of ADF, along with presenting a look at all the officers, guilds, kins, sigs, protogroves and groves that have been a part of ADF. The information in this book will be compiled from original papers from Isaac, interviews with long time members and my personal notes since I joined in 1990.

Bright Blessings
 Rev. Skip Ellison





Letter From the Chronicler

By Heather 'Vedis' Köerner

You know what really bugs me? I hate it when editors take up one to two pages in their own magazine to spout tripe about themselves and their 'adventures in publishing.' However, that is exactly what I am going to do here.

Let me introduce myself. I am the Artisan Guild's Archivist. It was the first position I held in ADF and I still enjoy it. I was recruited to *Oak Leaves*' Art Director back in 2003. As *Oak Leaves* doesn't really get a lot of art submissions, it was a pretty easy job. However, as those of you who were around know, things fell through and *Oak Leaves* got backed up by a year. Narabali volunteered to get us caught back up and did so spectacularly. She did not want the position forever though, so in January of this year, I took over as Chronicler. We are proud to say we are still caught up four issues later.

I plan on keeping it that way because I don't want *Oak Leaves* to be just ADF's quarterly journal. I want it to be a resource for all Neo-Pagans who are serious about their faith and scholarship. I want it to be a gem of a publication and frankly, it has a ways to go. Getting *Oak Leaves* out on time is just the beginning. We have also finally found a printer who can present *Oak Leaves* in a professional manner. These are two huge steps on the way to a great publication. But we need your help.

As this year has progressed I have noticed a few things about *Oak Leaves* besides that it is a LOT harder to be Editor-in-Chief than it was to be Art Director.

First, I would like to have more input from our membership about what they would like to see *Oak Leaves* become. Secondly, I would like to see more members submitting articles and artwork. More accurately, I would like our publication to become something our members would submit articles too. What would we need to do to make *Oak Leaves* something we can be proud of?

Without the submissions and suggestions from the membership as well as the Neo-Pagan community at large, I have to fall back on three or four authors¹ or myself, and I greatly dislike writing articles for publications I edit. It just seems unfair somehow. I really can't be turned down if I am the one who gets to decide what gets included and what does



not. You probably have noticed the comic 'Landwight Leif' created by myself to fill the space where a REAL comic artist should be. I would love to have another artist's work regularly in our publication. I put my work in, because those artists don't feel like *Oak Leaves* is worth submitting to. That really upsets me because I know what *Oak Leaves* could be. I also know that we are well on our way to reaching that goal. We just have to prove it and that takes time.

This journal is not about three or four authors and myself; it is about you and your spiritual journey with and within ADF. I have seen the most beautiful artwork from our members, both in and out of the Artisan's Guild. I have seen the most in-depth discussions on the email lists. Yet comparatively few pictures or articles are ever submitted to *Oak Leaves*.

We do, however, have our Graphics Department. We created the Graphics Department in hopes of creating regular covers for *Oak Leaves* and much needed Pagan/Heathen clipart. This assures I won't have to figure out which of my pictures to use to get a decent cover. Thankfully, Mike Luevane has agreed to take over the Art Director position, and in doing so, is now head of the Graphics Department². He

deserves a medal. As do all of my publications staff.

We should also be proud of the formation of ADF Publishing and the subsequent printing of our first book "A World Full of Gods" by John Michael Greer³. While the road has been less than perfect, it has been rewarding. ADF Publishing will give voice to those authors who are too scholastic for Llewellyn but too pagan for university presses.

"ADF Publishing shall publish new titles and reprints in the fields of Pagan theology, philosophy, practice, and historical research relevant to the contemporary Pagan community. We accept submissions from published and unpublished authors. All submissions must conform to generally accepted standards of scholarship, cite sources and relevant literature, and contribute constructively to the development of modern Pagan spirituality. We do **not** publish fiction, poetry, autobiography, or works based on undocumented speculation⁴."

With ADF Publishing we have entered a new era in our organization's history. I am glad to have been a small part of it. I am glad to have so many people to work with to create *Oak Leaves*, which really is a great publication.

So please, don't make me write another tripe article, send in your submissions and help to create a bit of ADF history⁵.

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<sup>1</sup> Who, it seems, can write articles in their sleep!

<sup>2</sup> If you would like to know more about how to help out in the Graphics Department, or would like to submit artwork to *Oak Leaves*, you can send Mike an email at [metrophage@gmail.com](mailto:metrophage@gmail.com). I am sure he would love to hear from you. For those artists who don't have a digital camera, I do have a scanner I can use for regular photographs, and negatives.

<sup>3</sup> While not yet up on the webpage by the printing of this issue, you can purchase the book from Regalia at: <http://www.adf.org/regalia/> or email: [adf-regalia@adf.org](mailto:adf-regalia@adf.org)

<sup>4</sup> From ADF Publishing's Handbook found on the ADF webpage at: <http://www.adf.org/cgi-bin/adf/wiki/view/Main/ADFPublishingHandbook>

<sup>5</sup> Yes, this was a cleverly disguised advertisement. As resident Editor-In-Chief, please accept my humblest apologies. Send your submissions to [oak-leaves@adf.org](mailto:oak-leaves@adf.org). See page 41 for submission guidelines.



## Oak Leaves 2006

Oak Leaves for 2006 will be focused on the Guilds and what they do for ADF. We would like to see articles from guild members for the upcoming issues.

OL #32 - Sacred Symbols - Artisan's Guild

Deadline: 1/1/06

OL #33 - Spiritual Healing - Healer's Guild

Deadline: 4/1/06

OL #34 - Warriors and Heroes - Warrior's Guild

Deadline: 7/1/06

OL #35 - Divination and Communication - Seer's Guild

Deadline: 10/1/06

I know it doesn't touch upon all the guilds, but if we have a decent turnout in 2006, 2007 might be the year for YOUR guild!

So start thinking about articles you would like to see, feel free to post your ideas to your guild lists or the Discuss list, and see what you come up with!

We look forward to seeing the Guilds at work!

# Sealing An Oath: Adding a Dash of Hearth Culture

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By Michael J Dangler

*"May the Three Worlds rise against me  
if I am forsworn!"*

Sounds ominous, doesn't it? That's how the example Dedicant Oath ends in the ADF Dedicant Program Handbook. In the ancient world, the way you sealed an oath was not only a show of your seriousness, but also a display of piety. There were formulas and common themes that were used in the composition of oaths, and these things displayed not only a knowledge of the contracts with the Gods, but an insight into the way the world worked.

Each Indo-European group, from the Celts to the Germans to the Vedics, has left us information on how to make oaths, and so we can draw on them to inform our own modern Paganism. Certainly we can use this for many different kinds of oaths in ritual, but one of the primary uses within ADF is probably as a Dedicant Oath.

When we make an oath to serve the Gods in the Old Ways, to commit ourselves to a form of Neo-Pagan Druidry, it is wise to use the formulation that matches our hearth Gods; because the Dedicant Program doesn't require you to choose a hearth culture, though, we may not know exactly which formations to use. That's okay, because you'll notice that there are a lot of similarities between the various IE groups.

Now, not all oaths would have ended in specific phrases. There would have been variations from tribe to tribe, or they could have been omitted entirely in some cases. Sometimes (as in the case of the Germans), rather than a common formula, an object or specific deity would be the common element. The point here is to provide you with something historical that you can use wholesale, or to give you a starting point to work out your own endings from the original source material. Either method, of course, is fine.

Because a large number of ADF members are Celtic, it would be a serious omission to leave out the most common form of ending an oath in the Celtic world, the one that is given by Conchobhar, who stated he would achieve his aim:

*unless the heavens fell, the earth burst*

*open, or the sea rise and overwhelm  
us.<sup>1</sup>*

This turn of the phrase is found consistently in Irish legal documents, as well, usually ending like this:

*We will keep faith unless the sky fall  
and crush us, the earth open and swallow us, or the sea rise and overwhelm us.<sup>2</sup>*

This is one of those key formulations that really shows us how the Celts thought. It shows that once an oath is made, it is binding, and there is no way to back out of it: the very nature of the world, the land, the sea, and the sky, all provide security to this oath. There is no possible way to break the oath and for the world to be maintained.

It has been extrapolated from these formulations in the past, however, that the Celts obviously were more interested in truth than in anything else, and believed that it would hold the world together. You will see, though, that the statement is not that "truth" holds nature together, but that the rending of nature is also the rending of truth: it is no longer useful to keep faith once the world has begun to unravel. . . but faith will be kept until that happens.

While good faith is indeed integral to the order of things, the order of things will break eventually, whether good faith is present or not. Once that order breaks, what use is it to keep faith? If these oath endings speak to anything, it is the implication that man, in all the order and faith he can create, will never stand against the chaos of nature.

The Germans, of course, are no less pious, and certainly no less frightened of the world ending if they break their oaths. Brynhild tells Sigurd, "Do not swear a false oath, because hard vengeance follows the breaking of truce."<sup>3</sup> Of course, her words ring true a short time later when Sigurd breaks his oaths to her, and we are able to see the consequences of a broken oath.

The Germanic peoples often swore their oaths on a ring that was sacred to Thor, and ended most oaths by swearing to pairs or groups of three gods, one of whom was

usually Thor.<sup>4</sup> A discussion on ADF-Dedicants recently asked about historical evidence for the swearing on objects. Davidson notes the following information about the oath ring: The ring itself was almost certainly an arm-ring, not a finger-ring (that is, it was large enough to be worn on the arm). In the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, Snorri wears one on his arm and uses it to deflect a sword-blow. The ring itself was kept in the temples where Thor was worshipped, and we know the rings to be sacred to him mostly because Irish sources state that a "ring of Thor" was taken from his temple in 994, and in 876, Danish leaders in England made oaths to Thor on a sacred ring. The ring in the *Eyrbyggja Saga* is said to be made of 20 ounces of silver.<sup>5</sup>

Adding an oath ring to your ritual tools might be a very nice touch to your work, and many Norse Groves might also find such a ring to be a very useful investment. At several ADF festivals, oath rings have been passed around during sumbles and blots. For a Dedicant Oath, you might invoke your personal patron first, and then invoke Thor, who would sanctify the oath, as seems to be his place.

The Greeks had an interesting view of the oath. They named Oath a goddess (as she often was in other cultures), but also made her a child of Eris, goddess of chaos and discord. It may seem strange to us now, that the ultimate expression of truth and honour would be a chaotic and dangerous thing, sibling to Lawlessness and Madness and Murders, but it is simple to see why when you read the context of the *Theogony*:

*Oath, which, sworn with willful falsehood, brings utter destruction on men.*<sup>6</sup>

Oath, to the Greeks, was dangerous for one reason: a false oath was the source of the greatest destruction. Murder, madness, lying words, battles: all these siblings of Oath were visited upon men by men in the heat of passion and anger. A false oath was cold, calculated, and always premeditated. In the catalogue of man-made disasters that Eris births, none is placed so prominently as a false oath.

With this in mind, it's no surprise how they treated oaths themselves: as sacred truths meant to be guarded closely and kept.

The Romans often conducted a sacrifice along with their oaths, in particular when concluding alliances. Each one would end with the death of an animal, and the priest or the magician would say something like, "Let him who breaks this alliance be killed like this pig."<sup>7</sup>

Fritz Graf describes this formulation as follows:

*The oath is always conceived as an imprecation against the one who utters it and against his entire group. This imprecation is always accompanied by a rite whose meaning is clarified by the accompanying words: what happens to the object of the ritual act will happen to him who breaks the oath.*<sup>8</sup>

These oath formulations were used by both priests and magicians in Rome, and are found throughout the Roman world in various magical and religious texts. Similarly to the slaughter of animals, the images of humans were sometimes used, as in the case of an oath in the city of Cyrene. The citizens had sworn never to return to the city they had come from, Thera. When they repeated the oath later, the inscription was recorded:

*After making figures of wax, they burned them, uttering together an oath and performing together a sacrifice, men, women, boys, and girls: 'Let him who breaks this oath and commits contrary acts, let him melt and be liquefied like these figures, him and his descendants and his fortune.'*<sup>9</sup>

Of course, one need not sacrifice an animal to have the same result: the Hittite (an IE culture rarely discussed in ADF) wording of a recorded oath is very similar. Rather than an animal or a replica of a human, the oath-maker peels an onion, repeating the words, "Let the offender be dismembered in this way."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, one of my favourite ways to end an oath comes from the Vedic traditions. We're remarkably lucky to have as much written down from the Vedics as we do, and as I was reading the *Vedas* one night, I came across the following end of an oath which caused me to look around for sources in other cultures:

*From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice and my gifts, my place, my good deeds, my life, and my offspring mayest thou take, if I play thee false.*<sup>11</sup>

While the translation is a bit out-dated and flowery, the central point is the same as it is in other cultures, but (to me) more beautifully expressed: if I break my oath, there is nothing I have left. You may have it all. It is total and complete surrender, the implication being that an oath broken allows all things to turn against you, as

you've broken a fundamental rule of nature. A broken oath disrupts the orderly world, bringing chaos and disorder into it: the ordained time between life and death, the order of sacrifice, the good deeds done, and the issue of a marriage are all things that cause order, and are all things that will be taken away.

Perhaps naming Oath as a child of Eris makes more sense than we might think.

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¹ - Ellis, *The Druids*, p. 131

² - *ibid.*

³ - Byock (trans.), *The Saga of the Volsungs*, p. 71

⁴ - Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, pgs. 76-77

⁵ - *ibid.*

⁶ - Hesiod, *Theogony*, p. 59

⁷ - Livy, *Roman History* I.24

⁸ - Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, p. 208

⁹ - *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum IX*, no. 3. (lines 44ff)

¹⁰ - Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, p. 208

¹¹ - Keith (trans.), *Rigveda Brahmanas*, p. 332 (*Aitareya Brahmana VIII.15*)



Paradise Found

By Lori Donlea

For various reasons, Pat and I had not had a vacation in a number of years. We bought a camper and decided to look for a campground close to home, but not too close that we would be concerned with what may be going on at home.

Being Druids and running a Grove for the past four years, we wanted something as close to nature as we could find. Pat read a comment on the leadership list that lead us to check out a campground in northern Michigan. Pat got on the Internet and checked out Chain-O-Lakes Campground, in Bellaire, Michigan (www.chainolakescamp.com). It turns out it is owned by Flip, Debbie and Matthew Rutledge. Flip, as most of you know, is the Chief of the Council of Senior Druids.

We love being in nature and this campground is a wonderful place to stay. It's in the north woods of Michigan, 2 hours drive from the Mackinac bridge. In the area, there are many lakes for boating and fishing, bike paths through the wooded parks, 8 golf courses, skiing and

hunting. It's also Morel mushroom country.

There are campsites for tents all the way up to the large RV's. There are cabins for rent, too. The wash-rooms are the nicest I've seen in a campground. There is a pool, event pavilion and a large community fire pit, lots of trees and a petting zoo. The Rutledges are lovers of animals. There are goats, donkeys, cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, fish and I'm sure I missed a few. While sitting outdoors reading, four wild turkeys came into our site. At quiet times, turkeys come in looking for the corn Flip spreads out for them.

Debbie has beautiful gardens to enjoy. She has a fairy garden, a gargoyle garden and an elephant garden. The butterflies adorned the gardens and the flowers and statues were wonderful to look at.

We had a peaceful, quiet week, meet some wonderful people and fellow ADF'ers. We had a great visit and plan on returning each year.



The Two Powers: An Alternative for Large Rites

By Kirk Thomas

There has been some discussion on the Liturgy list about the effectiveness of the Two Powers Meditation at large rites. Often, not everyone at a large ritual is interested in a formal entrancement, and leading one is definitely dependent on the skills of the leader. While some of the participants can really feel the power of the meditation, others are totally bewildered.

I believe that we should continue to use the full, formal induction at our smaller rituals, where we probably get a more dedicated class of participant, but at our larger rites (like the High Day rituals in my Grove which usually attract 60-80 people), something shorter might be best, eliminating a possible 15-minute 'hole' in the ritual.

The primary purpose of the 2 Powers Meditation is to ground and center the people, to attune them to the powers of the earth and sky (or chaos and order) and to unify them for our common purpose (based on the Order of Ritual in the DP booklet and Isaac Bonewits' "Rites of Worship").

The following is a possible alternative to the trance induction for use in large rites:

Priest says: (Opening Prayer)

**O Waters of the Earth, deep and dark,
Arise, primeval powers, fill us now
With all your wondrous possibilities,
That through the Earth our Mother we may ground
and join as one.**

**O Fires of the sky, O blinding light,
Descend and crystallize within us all
That spark of order on which life depends,
That through the Sky our Father we may shine and
share as one.**

Priest says: (Centering)

For just a moment let us close our eyes and feel the

**life which courses
through us all.**

(pause)

**The beating of our hearts is at the center of our core.
Like sparkling blood, the coursing of the waters and
the light of life**

Now mix and swirl and energize us all.

(A single drummer begins an appropriate pattern)

Priest says: (Litany)

Chaos of the Earth, now fill us!

People say:

Chaos of the Earth, now fill us!

Priest says:

Order of the Heavens, mold us!

People say:

Order of the Heavens, mold us!

Priest says:

Join the powers deep within us!

People say:

Join the powers deep within us!

Priest says:

With the merging of these powers let us join as one!

Bard: (Unity)

The bard begins intoning and the people join in. The drumming continues. The Bard intones through the main English vowels, a e i o u, ending with "So be it" in the appropriate language. Or, a Unity song could be sung here, such as, "Unity In The Three Realms".





Arís Mundi

Ideas on Improving ADF

By Anthony R. Thompson

This article is an adaptation of a message I posted in our ADF-Discuss forum on the topic of improving ADF. Several people commented that the posts were excellent but unfortunately also a bit too long for the medium, and suggested that I submit the same content to Oak Leaves. The result is the article presented here.

Since my original messages were posted to ADF-Discuss, John Michael Greer has written an excellent article comparing ADF and OBOD which addresses some of the items I wrote about. You can view this article at www.adf.org/about/adf-and-obod.html

Acceptance of Fringe Beliefs, Hands-On Study Programs

One of the suggestions for improving ADF, made by Bardd Dafydd, was that we work on “true acceptance of fringe beliefs and practices,” and my response to this is that I think our acceptance of these is improving, albeit slowly. Some of the more extreme reconstructionists in our organization, who in my opinion were often quickest to criticize some of the more pragmatic Neopagan-oriented folks, have left over the past few years and while I hesitate to say this so plainly, I think their departure is ultimately a good thing. The tone of communication throughout ADF has been improving, and some of the newer leaders have been especially helpful in this regard. It’s a slow process, but I feel we’re moving in the right direction.

Another of Dafydd’s suggestions was that we emphasize more “hands-on practice” in our Study Programs, and I agree that we can *definitely* improve in this regard. The Initiate Program (introduced to the membership at the Wellspring annual meeting, and still under development) may help a great deal in this regard, but we might also have to be willing to either 1) revise the Dedicant Program again to expand it substantially, or 2) add a program *before* the DP, for people who want more hands-on practice and especially for those with no prior Neopagan background.

I think it’s fair to say that a transparent blinder on much of ADF is the fact that there is a general attitude

that people come to ADF as a “second step”, often after a group or solitary Wiccan practice, but also sometimes after another kind of Neopagan practice (e.g., Asatru or Imbas). The reason for this hidden assumption is probably that it is exactly what happened to the vast majority of our leaders. These leaders are also the ones designing the training programs, writing the articles in our publication and on our web site, etc., so it is no surprise that this assumption should be present.

As a corollary, we probably as a group—especially the leadership—tend to unconsciously engage in communication and behavior which discourages those for whom ADF would be their first Neopagan religion, and subtly welcomes those for whom it would be their second or third. This behavior thus results in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy where we assume people come to ADF as a second step, and discourage anything happening to the contrary. Optimistically, mere awareness of this behavior can help alleviate it, and consciously working to improve it can help even more.

That there may be some truth to this observation is supported even when one examines Isaac’s original intentions for ADF. From the beginning, he wanted ADF to be “better than” other Neopagan groups. He wanted it to stand out from the crowd of groups that didn’t really do what the ancients did, who made things up as they went along while claiming to be doing exactly what the Great Matriarchy did millennia ago, etc.

This attitude can even be seen in our current publications. For example, it is written in the Dedicant Program under the virtue of Study that,

“The Pagan revival has been troubled from the beginning by shoddy scholarship and indulgence in esoteric fantasy. From Atlantis to the Peaceful Matriarchy to White-Bearded Druids at Stonehenge, Paganism is harmed when wishful thinking and poor science take the place of true knowledge. Ár nDraíocht Féin was founded on the principle of respect for the actual



old ways of Europe. We believe that by starting with the foundational remains of Iron Age Paganism we can build a modern system that will serve modern needs and be true to ancestral spirit.”

All of that is indeed true, and I wouldn't want to sacrifice our “principle of respect for the actual old ways of Europe” solely as a means of bolstering our membership numbers to compete more effectively with OBOD, but I also observe that there may be gentler ways of bringing people into the fold, as it were.

While Isaac's original intentions did give us our drive to create something of quality, as well as to serve others in the larger Neopagan community, it also planted the seeds for a culture which often looks down on other organizations. Culture can change, but it is often slowly, and generally more effective when done from the top. As I said previously, I am hopeful in this regard as I feel we've generally been moving in the right direction for the past several years in terms of increasing acceptance of other paths.

Mailing Lists and Groves

I think another “transparent blinder” derives from our mailing lists. For many people, especially our leaders, ADF more or less *is* the mailing lists. In and of themselves, the lists are not bad things, for they do provide a sense of community for those who might not otherwise have it. This benefit is shared not only by our solitary members, but also those in groves who are able to have a sense of being part of something “bigger”, a larger movement beyond the confines of their local grove.

On the other hand, the lists are also limiting in many ways. A major element of this is the simple question of scalability. I don't think we could function if we had 50,000 members and most of ADF were on the lists, and I think this is a subtle reason for why we have just over 1000 members after 20 years. A normal level of attrition is expected to be part of that, of course, and I think many people looking at the membership numbers don't realize that most other organizations like ours lose the majority of their members every year as people move on to something else. However, I also think that the lists are a factor in our continued low membership count because we have unconsciously made them a central part of ADF, and the more members we have, the greater the chance of 1) con-

flicts on the lists, and 2) just too much traffic. As a result, people leave the lists, which would be perfectly acceptable if we hadn't made them such a central part of ADF. Because we have done so, when people leave the lists, they essentially drop out of ADF.



What can be done about this? Well, obviously I don't think we should get rid of the mailing lists. However, I think we really need to work on consciously understanding and improving the experience of ADF outside the lists. I think this is why OBOD is ahead of us in terms of providing an effective personal spiritual experience to people, because they never had the endless chatter of the lists to be a distraction and a substitute—however poor—for that experience.

I think we need to reframe our concept of the mailing lists from

forums that we expect most of ADF to be part of, to things that we expect 1) most of the leadership to be on, 2) some of the new members to be on, and 3) most of the over-one-year members *not* to be on. We really need to ask ourselves, “If someone wasn't subscribed to the ADF lists, and didn't have a grove nearby, what exactly would ADF *be* to them?” I think that if we did ask ourselves this question, we'd be disappointed by the answer we'd have to give right now, but we would also see an area that we have a lot of opportunity to improve on.

I believe that there's another, related factor in this discussion, which is that ADF as an organization has probably been relying far too much on its groves to provide a real spiritual experience to people. We've been saying, consciously or unconsciously, “Join a grove or start one, and then you'll get the ADF experience.” Aside from the fact that such an attitude leaves solitaries out in the cold, it also reveals that we've been using groves as a substitute for providing the type of personal training and guidance that OBOD has been providing for years. The difference is that for OBOD, groves are an afterthought, something that comes *after* the personal training and spiritual experience, which is provided by the main organization. For us, groves are so central because we've been relying on them as the main method of providing that personal spiritual experience and training for people.

Please don't misunderstand me. I love groves and think every member of ADF should be able to be part of one if s/he wants to. However, I think we also need to consciously work on providing a strong personal spiritual experience for people, regardless of whether they are in

groves. Being in a grove should be a bonus, not the ADF experience itself. If we can provide such a grove-independent spiritual experience successfully, I think groves will benefit too. They will have better-trained and committed people as members, people who already have an understanding of their spiritual skills and needs, and who also understand that the grove is part of something bigger, a larger movement to spread this kind of quality religious service and training, and a unique flavor of the Neopagan movement which straddles the ground between modern “anything goes” Neopaganism and “if it’s not historically documented, it sucks” reconstructionism.

In terms of reframing the concept of the mailing lists, especially in terms of making them scalable to 50,000 members, I think we should reconsider them as forums we expect most of ADF will never join. Ideally, in the future the lists will be comprised of two primary groups of people: 1) “newbies” who are looking for help with training and a feeling of connection to others when they are just getting started, and 2) the much smaller “core” group of leaders that make every group (including ADF) really run. By accepting that in the future most ADF members will never sign onto the mailing lists, we must then also accept our responsibility to develop an actual experience of ADF outside the lists.

Simple Bylaws

A point that Dafydd and others have expressed is a need to simplify the ADF bylaws. I frequently see this suggestion, but I don’t think it would actually have as large an impact as many think it will. I haven’t gotten the impression that the Mother Grove spends a lot of time debating bylaws, especially in the last few years. To the contrary, most of the activity I’ve sensed has been centered around revising the Dedicant Program, mentoring our Dedicants, and working on the Clergy Training Program and Guild training systems.

The solution many advocate is that we move large portions of the bylaws into the Policies & Procedure Manual, but I am again uncertain what that would really accomplish. We would still have a mass of policies that bind different portions of the organization to follow certain rules, and which need an administrative body to add or change them. The rubric those policies would be classed under would be different, but they’d still be there, and furthermore I’m not certain that these policies are necessarily awful things.

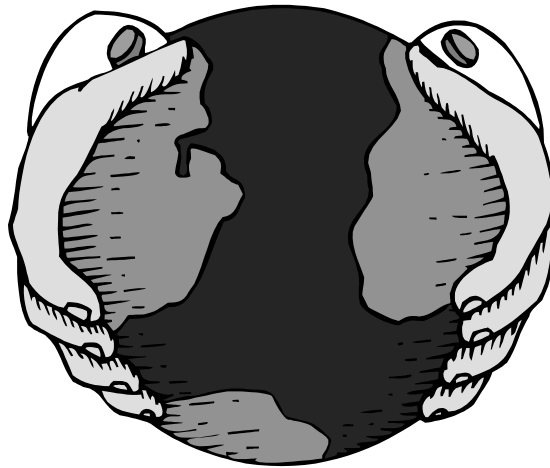
There are a lot of tasks that need to be done in ADF on a regular basis and for the sake of consistency we write

down the processes necessary to accomplish them. Why would that be necessary? One answer might be that we feel people shouldn’t just make things up as they go along, or that if they do, at least we can document what they did so the next person can do the same things.

The only way to get rid of the need to document these things (i.e., create policies, procedures, and bylaws) is if 1) we just agree to let people make things up as they go along, and/or 2) we reduce or eliminate turnover completely. These are interrelated, because the more turnover there is in various positions of leadership, the greater the need for some consistency in how the different people in those positions do things.

This may partly be a trust issue, specifically a lack of trust in our leaders to do the right thing if there’s not a policy in place, but I don’t think that’s a big part of it. I think it’s more a quality of service issue, in that we’d like to think (for example) that the standards of completing the Dedicant Program aren’t going to change as soon as someone new steps into the Preceptor office. The issue of turnover, and trusting leaders versus having written policies, gets into the next section, “benevolent dictatorship”. However, before we address that topic, I would make a few more observations on the bylaws issue.

I feel the need to reiterate that I fail to see how the bylaws prevent (or have prevented, within the last few years) anyone from doing more productive work in ADF. I will agree that the change from a continuous 24/7 Mother Grove e-mail meeting, in which anyone could bring a vote on any topic at any time, to a quarterly, agenda-posted-ahead-of-time real-time chat meeting, eliminated a lot of previous unnecessary tinkering with the bylaws. However, since the advent of the quarterly real-time meeting, I no longer see how bylaws are a significant problem preventing progress from being made in ADF.



I think the urge to tinker with the bylaws, to have the Mother Grove spend time debating whether to fix trivial wording in this section or that section, was pretty endemic to the prior continuous meeting format. In and of themselves, however, I do not think the bylaws are a real problem any more. The real issue, I think, is a

lack of affirmative vision and goal setting by the Mother Grove and other leadership.

In that sense, the bylaws and Policies & Procedure Manual are just distractions allowing people to spend time

on while avoiding the bigger issues. It's akin to when I have a list of things to do and I spend time on the trivial items just so I can get the faux-productive feeling of doing "something" and crossing items off my list. It's even worse when I fail to make a list of what I need to do, because then trivial things distract me *much* more easily.

The thing that keeps me on focus, and from wasting time with trivial things, is periodically creating a list of priorities with *important* things to focus on, and reviewing that list regularly. Without such a list, and group buy-in to the items on that list, getting distracted by making minor bylaw or P&PM changes will be far too easy. Furthermore, even if we trim the bylaws significantly, this will not help us accomplish significantly more because something else will just fill the space of trivial "busy work" that doesn't accomplish much but sure feels productive.

Please don't misunderstand me; I do not mean to be critical of our current leaders. If anything, I am remembering how bad things were before the quarterly real-time meetings, and praising our leaders for having the discipline to set agendas for the meetings and stick to them. In fact, these meetings and their corresponding agendas are mostly why I believe we no longer have much of a problem with the Mother Grove spending too much time on the bylaws.

However, those compliments given, I do think that the Mother Grove—and really, the larger leadership too—would benefit from a strong vision and clearer goal-setting on a regular basis. I tried to accomplish this the last time I was on the Mother Grove, by successfully pushing for a quarterly agenda that would be created by the MG and shared with the members. I think it was a bit over-structured, and that's probably why it never really took off, but I don't think abandoning the concept altogether is the right thing to do either.

What I'd really like to see is something like the following: For the first month or so after the annual meeting, after whatever elections are done, the Mother Grove just focuses on setting goals for the year ahead. This would obviously include reviewing past goals, progress toward them, etc. After the MG achieves a rough consen-

sus, it can share this prospective list with the leadership asking for comments. This is especially important because many on the MG also serve in other leadership positions, and many in leadership positions affected by these goals will not be on the MG. Taking the feedback of other leaders into consideration, the MG can then post and publish to the wider membership these goals for the year ahead.

A few notes on this suggestion. First, these goals should probably *not* be decided by a formal vote. Rather, it should be a discussion moderated and guided by the Archdruid, who would have final say on the list. Second, it's entirely possible that the items appearing on the list will not be things the Mother Grove can do, at least not directly.

For example, for the year ahead perhaps "Get a first version of the Initiate's Program published" is at the top of the goals list. Obviously the Mother Grove can't do that itself since it is being authored primarily by Ian Corrigan, but it is possible that the MG might be able to *support* that goal in some way, perhaps by revising the budget (or empowering the Administrator to make such a revision) to make an allowance for the new publication.

What if the majority of the goals that the Mother Grove decides on are not items the Mother Grove itself can do anything about? That's perfectly fine and, I think, probably a good thing. What it means is that for the next year the Mother Grove should actually not be doing a lot

of stuff. The people on the Mother Grove should be working outside the MG, such as in the Clergy Council, to make those goals happen. Further, by publishing these goals to the membership at large it would also help other leaders focus their energies on achieving these organization-wide goals.

In this way, the Mother Grove would mainly be a leadership body, determining the goals for the larger organization on a yearly basis. If, as is probably likely, those goals are not tasks that can be accomplished by the MG itself, then what it means is that the best use of the MG members' time is actually spent on non-MG matters, which is a conclusion perhaps shocking in its obviousness but perhaps also very useful to state plainly.

I think it would be a good thing if the Mother Grove were to, in effect, give its members permission to spend



the majority of their time on non-MG issues, instead of the current situation where MG members may feel the need to find tasks that the Mother Grove can do in order to feel that they are doing their jobs as elected officers. Of course, if something relating to the agreed-upon goals arises which the Mother Grove *can* do something about, it would go to the top of the agenda for the next MG meeting.

Benevolent Dictatorship

Some have said that ADF suffers from endless committees, but I'm not exactly sure this is the case. The few committees I can think of (the Grove Coordination Committee, the Clergy Council, the Council of Senior Druids, etc.) seem to have specific, well-defined and useful purposes. One might be able to make a case to eliminate some of them (I'm personally not sure what, if anything, the Council of Lore actually does, or why we need one any more), but I think we'd have to consider it on a case-by-case basis.

On the issue of benevolent dictatorship, I think this is an area where ADF is probably not able to really compete with OBOD. When an organization's founder is still around and he never really creates any leadership structure other than himself, then it's pretty easy not to have politics because what the founder says goes, period. If someone doesn't like it, too bad—in essence, “benevolent dictatorship”. There's no arguing that it works. If Isaac were still around, he could probably fill the same role for ADF, though he did seem somewhat enamored of committees himself.

Unfortunately, Isaac isn't still around, so we have had to adapt and create a broader, more distributed leadership structure. The simple fact is that no one will ever have the cachet that the founder does, and once one has elections, one creates politics. Maybe the best thing would have been for Isaac to pick a successor (Fox), who would have then picked a successor (Skip), etc. That might have worked, but I don't think it would have worked too well. I can't say why, exactly, but I suspect it has to do with our democratic American society. I think once Isaac stepped down, enough members would have demanded elections that it was probably inevitable. It may be that the benevolent dictatorship concept is more accepted in Europe, which is historically more accustomed to monarchies, and that this is a way ADF differs from OBOD due to having different home cultures.

Having made those observations, I should also say that we may simply have too many leadership positions for our current number of members. We may have broken up the authority of the founder too much, and it might be best to combine some positions and eliminate others. I would certainly be interested in a discussion of which positions could be combined or eliminated, as I obviously have some opinions on the matter.

On the whole though, I think the cat is generally out of the bag with the number of leadership positions. I've found that once one creates a position it's very hard to eliminate it because doing so can be viewed as insulting to the person who held the position. I felt that way with the addition of the Regional Druids to the Mother Grove, as well as with the Guild Master position; once someone was elected to these, the positions were more than likely going to exist forever. Since it is relatively easy to create new positions but very hard to eliminate them later, I think this problem (politics in ADF) will be a one that is difficult to solve quickly.

To tie this section together, I personally agree that we can eliminate some positions and committees which are no longer necessary, but I don't think there will be many of these, and we will also need to be ever-vigilant against the urge to create new positions. On the issue of having a benevolent dictator, I really think it's too late to go that route. I think having distributed power (spread out among a group of leaders) is too central to our culture to change it now; a lot of members would not *want* a dictator, however benevolent s/he might be. I think the best we can hope for, which itself might be a substantial improvement, is to eliminate some leadership positions and provide a bit more autonomy/ empowerment to the ones that remain.



As yet another side note, I am *not* in favor of a Massive Reorganization of ADF. I think that would be a colossal waste of time and energy, especially as everyone has different ideas of what the Ideal Way should be. Our current system could be simplified a bit and tweaked here and there, but it's largely fine the way it is. A reorganization would just be a huge distraction from the important work we should be doing, which is mentoring Dedicants, building groves, creating the Clergy Training Program, sharing rituals, creating new material to help ADF appeal to first time Neopagans, etc.

Better Mentoring

Many on ADF-Discuss suggested this as a way to improve ADF, and I agree wholeheartedly. My question in response is, "How is OBOD able to do it?" It seems to me that OBOD's mentoring system is fairly similar to ours in that everyone who completes the program can be a mentor to someone going through it. Actually, now that the point is raised, I am not sure that *is* what we are doing in terms of mentoring. Who can be a Dedicant Mentor? Is it anyone who finished the DP, or is it limited to a list of people the Preceptor approves? Unfortunately, this information does not seem to be documented or readily available, though I hope this will improve in the future.

If we want to be like OBOD, we should allow anyone who finished the Dedicant Program to be a mentor. Limiting mentorship to a smaller list might seem better in theory, since the Preceptor could ensure that only very qualified people get on the mentor list, but in practice it would probably mean that 1) those few mentors will get very busy very fast, 2) the quality of mentoring will actually suffer as a result of the few mentors being overworked, 3) those few mentors will probably burn out from taking on too many students, and 4) many students will request mentors and either be put on a long waiting list or (worse) just never get a response at all.

There is also the issue that letting more people be mentors to others actually helps those mentors learn the material better themselves. I have heard that the best way to learn something is to teach it to others, and I really believe that to be true. On a related note, those who become mentors to others may discover a leadership ability they didn't realize they had, and decide to form groves, lead local rituals, represent ADF in Pagan Pride Days, take leadership positions in Guilds, etc. Opening up the Dedicant mentoring program could help develop the next generation of ADF leadership in a much wider and more in-

clusive manner, which could also help some of the cultural issues which have been mentioned in this article.

Recommendations for Improving ADF

To summarize, my own recommendations for ways we can improve ADF are the following:

- Develop the Initiate Program to provide further, post-Dedicant "hands-on practice", for those who like to *do* their spirituality instead of reading about how others have done theirs
- Either expand the Dedicant Program, or create a separate pre-DP program, for those people with **no** prior Neopagan experience, in order to introduce them more gently and completely to the Neopagan culture and perspective
- Provide better mentoring for those in our training systems, especially by opening up the ability to be a mentor to more people; actively promote this ability and recruit new mentors
- Streamline and focus the leadership structure by coming up with, and sharing, yearly goals for ADF, allowing Mother Grove members to not feel guilty for spending most of their time on non-MG stuff
- Examine and improve the non-mailing list experience of ADF; envision ADF as an organization where most members are *not* on the lists, and make sure the non-list experience is something worthwhile

May the Gods and Spirits help us make it so!



Landwight Lief By Heather 'Vedís' Koerner 



On Shadows

By Terry Warnock

*With thanks to Karri Ann Allrich
and Magenta Griffith*

Everything has a shadow. Night is the shadow of day. Winter is the shadow of summer. Sickness is the shadow of health. Old age is the shadow of youth. Last year is a shadow of this year. Death is the shadow of life. A world without shadows would seem flat and stagnant; one-dimensional. Indeed if it were not for the shadows we might not much appreciate the light at all – it is the contrast which illuminates. Our world grows deep with shadows now, another cycle is completing its course. The days are shortening and the nights are filling with whispers.

It is the shadow of death which offers us insight to comprehend the vast continuum of life, it is what empowers us to understand our own place in the eternal procession of the ages. The living and the dead are linked together in one unbroken chain – we feast our dead tonight to honor that connection and keep it intact.

Samhain exposes a crease in time. It is a fissure between summer and winter, between the old year and the new, between this world and the next. We bid the God

farewell until Solstice and wish him well on his sojourn to the Other Side, our sorrow at his passing is well balanced by the Goddess' comfort, sustenance, and the joyful anticipation of his return we all share.

As it wanes, now is the time now to take the years' lesson to heart and to face our inner world alone. The coming winter season brings a turn inward. We descend to the underworld to confront our fears and to hallow our wisdom. The Goddess feeds our intuition and, waning, deepens our secrecy. Let us give in to our true passions, develop our instinctive natures, and explore the mysteries that call to us. Pray honor your complexity and your value. Trust your heart.

Let us feast, then, on the fruits of the harvest to support our bodies and deepen our connection to the Goddess' supple guise. We do so in joyful gratitude for the abundance of love and kinship around this table tonight, wholly understanding that contemplating death is neither morbid nor scary. Tonight we celebrate the blessing and liberation in the lesson that the greatest gift of the shadow of death is the challenge to live with full consciousness and conscience. To those who have traveled this way before, we toast our thanks.



Invocation to the Three Kindred for a Druid Ritual

By Carey Reynolds

Ephemeral are the leaf and bud,
But roots that nourish live on and on.
So live the ancestors of our blood!

Like sigils on stone, once clearly drawn,
Our grandfathers' faces slowly fade,
Fading back into history's dawn.

Memories calling by oath and blade,
Powers of blood that strike like a spear,
Blessed forerunners, lend us your aid!

Mothers and Fathers, be welcome here!

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When Mother Earth's birthing first began,
And from that cauldron life did occur,
The first children born were not human!

Deep in the wild the animals stir;
The fey-folk, land-spirits also rise:
Our kindred of scale, feather, and fur.

Cousins thriving on land, sea, and skies,
We ask that you listen and draw near,
Free-living creatures, untamed and wise!

Children of Nature, be welcome here!

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Though plants do not see the sunlight's glow,
Still they reach toward it with their leaves.
Thus do the Gods inspire us to grow!

Not eye nor ear, but the heart perceives
The will and wonder of the Divine
Called by ancient names, the soul believes!

We stand tall before you at this shrine
As chieftain, sacrificer, and seer.
May your light and blessings always shine!

Gods and Goddesses, be welcome here!

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Taliesin

By Mary Jones

"As soon as Elphin saw the forehead, he said, 'behold the radiant forehead!' (i.e. tal iesin)."
- *Ystoria Taliesin, 16th C.*

The figure of Taliesin is a complex one, as it seems to encompass both a god and a sixth century bard, both of whom seem to have been combined into one figure. He is the ultimate bard in Welsh myth and legend, and his story of transformation is one of the great Celtic tales.

The first written reference to Taliesin is found in Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*, from the ninth century:

§62. ...At that time, Talhaiarn Tataguen was famed for poetry, and Neirin, and Taliesin and Bluchbard, and Cian, who is called Guenith Guaut, were all famous at the same time in British poetry. The great king, Mailcun, reigned among the Britons, i.e. in the district of Guenedota[.]

Here we see reference to Taliesin, Aneirin, and Talhaiarn, placed in the time of Maelgwn Gwynedd, which is later corroborated in the "History of Taliesin". As Maelgwn is said to have died in 547, this puts Taliesin squarely in the middle part of the sixth century. At this time, Urien of Rheged is also said to have lived (ca. 530-590), and thus the hypothesis that Taliesin served as bard to Urien (as is demonstrated by the poems in the 14th century manuscript, the *Llyfr Taliesin*) would also fit into this time scheme. It would also locate much of the historical Taliesin's life in Northern Britain and North Wales.

This historical Taliesin, it is thought, was probably born in Powys, as demonstrated by the poems to Cynan Garwyn king of Powys (also of this time period). Based on the content of the *LT*, it is thought that later he went to the court of Urien of Rheged in the north; many of the poems in the *LT* are praise poems to Urien and his son Owein (the Uriens and Yvain of Arthurian Romance). It is typical for these particular poems to end with

And until I fail in old age,
In the sore necessity of death,
May I not be smiling,
If I praise not Urien.

which lends credence to the theory that at least one of the Taliesins had been a bard of Urien.

The mythological "History of Taliesin", in which we encounter the godlike figure, places his birth during the time of King Arthur, at Llyn Tegid (modern Lake Bala) in Gwynedd. This would agree with a northern home for the historical Taliesin, but this could also be a later interpolation. At any rate, this Taliesin was originally named Gwion Bach. He was a boy recruited to stir the magic cauldron of inspiration, belonging to the witch Cerridwen. In this cauldron was a potion that would make Cerridwen's son Afagddu into the wisest man in Britain; unfortunately, three drops splattered out while Gwion was stirring it, and he instinctually stuck them in his mouth. These were the three drops of awen, which resulted in Gwion's enlightenment. Upon learning this, Cerridwen pursues him; they go through numerous shapeshifting phases, until finally he is a grain of corn and she is a hen who eats him. This impregnates Cerridwen, who gives birth to the boy and sets him out to sea. He is then found by Elphin, son of Gwyddno Garanhir, who raises the boy and names him "Taliesin" for the radiant brow the infant possesses. The infant is preternaturally gifted, able to speak at birth, and at thirteen is able to win a contest against Maelgwn's bards.

The early portion, wherein his awen is gained from Cerridwen's cauldron, is also seen in the *Llyfr Taliesin*:

I will address my Lord,
To consider the Awen.
What brought necessity
Before the time of Cerridwen.
- "The Childhood Achievements of Taliesin"

Shall not my chair be defended from the cauldron of
Cerridwen?
May my tongue be free in the sanctuary of the praise
of Gogyrwen.
- "Song Before the Sons of Llyr"

There will be a slaughter, let there be the speech of
Avagddu.
- "The Hostile Confederacy"

While the subject of his delivering of Elphin from prison is also explored in the poems:

I am Taliesin,
I will delineate the true lineage
Continuing until the end,
In the pattern of Elphin.
- "The Hostile Confederacy"

A task deep (and) pure
To liberate Elphin.
-“The Chair of the Sovereign”

There is even the rather curious two stanzas in the *Black Book of Carmarthen's* “Stanzas of the Graves” which would seem to indicate that it originally was penned as if by Taliesin:

Truly did Elffin bring me
To try my primitive bardic
lore
Over a chieftain-
The grave of Rvwawn with
the imperious aspect.

This is not the only poem connected to Taliesin in that manuscript; a portion of “Tenby” is also there, as well as a poem called “The Dialogue of Taliesin and Ugnach” are also found.

Then there is the mythical history of Taliesin given in the *Llyfr Taliesin*, wherein he claims relationships with Pryderi, Pwyll, Gwydion, Math, and Lleu--all different, and at times opposed, figures in Welsh mythology. A small--and I do mean small--example of mythological persons in the *Llyfr Taliesin* shows the following:

I was enchanted by Math,
Before I became immortal,
I was enchanted by Gwydion
The great purifier of the Brython
-“The Battle of the Trees”

I have been in the battle of Godeu, with Lleu and
Gwydion,
They changed the form of the elementary trees and
sedges.
I have been with Bran in Ireland.
I saw when Morddwydtyllon was killed.
[snip]
Complete is my chair in Caer Siddi,
No one will be afflicted with disease or old age that
may be in it.
Manawyddan and Pryderi know it.
-“Song Before the Sons of Llyr”

Math and Eunydy, skilful with the magic wand, freed

the elements.
In the life of Gwydion and Amaethon, there was
counsel.
-“The Death-Song of Aeddon”

And then there is his elegy for Dylan eil Ton, Lleu's twin, his elegy for Uther Pendragon, and his references to Annwfn and a magic cauldron.



As for his association with Gwydion, Math, and Lleu, it is also interesting to note that in the Latin history of the Breton king St. Iudicael, “Taliosinus bardus filius Donis”--that is, Taliesin the bard, son of Don--appears, having been visiting with St. Gildas (it is interesting to note that in the *Vita Merlini*, Taliesin is also said to have just returned from Brittany, having studied with Gildas). He acts as a prophet, certainly fitting his mythology. Moreover, being claimed as a “son of Don” would make him a brother to Gwydion--something not supported elsewhere, but interesting nonetheless.

Other figures referenced in the *Llyfr Taliesin* include Myrddin, Arthur, Arianrhod, Owein ap Urien, and other figures familiar (and some not so familiar) from the Mabinogi and elsewhere.

There is also reference to Taliesin in the Mabinogi, wherein he is listed among the seven survivors of the Battle of Ireland; he is in the company of the Blessed Head of Bendigedfran, in the story of “Branwen uerch Lyr”. This story, when in context of the rest of the *Red Book of Hergest*, would take place around the end of the first century BCE; thus, we see a Taliesin active some five or six hundred years before the supposed days of Gwion, and it associates him with heroes from southern Wales, not necessarily northern Wales. This could, of course, be an interpolation (there is no other mention of Taliesin in the Four Branches), but it could also point to his god-like status, for the poems of the *LT* also indicate the belief that Taliesin has lived in many times and incarnations.

The Mythical Taliesin

As a mythological figure, Taliesin is similar to Fionn MacCumhilla, who gained knowledge from the Salmon of Wisdom. He is a shape-shifter, and is often associated with the Children of Llyr. His original name was Gwion Bach--literally, "Fair Boy" - "Gwion" and "Fionn" are the same name, but in different branches of the Celtic languages. However, upon drinking the magic potion of Cerridwen, he became enlightend - "gained awen" (poetic inspiration), much like Fionn's eating of the salmon of wisdom; both became enlightened by sticking their burning thumbs in their mouths.

The Historical Taliesin

A 6th century bard, possibly from Powys in Wales, but later migrated to Rheged where he became the court bard to Urien of Rheged and friend of Owain (the Arthurian Yvain/Ywein). This Taliesin is said in some manuscripts to have been the son of a St. Henwg and descended of Llyr, and to have raised the church Llanhenwg at Carleon. He is said to have been at the battle of Catterick (The Gododdin), and comforted Merlin/Myrddin at the Battle of Arthuret. His son is said to be variously named Aeddon, Adaon, or Afaon.

In these traditions (preserved in manuscripts which may or may not have been forgeries of Iolo Morgannwg), Taliesin is originally the bard of Urien; as he is out fishing one day with Elffin ap Urien, a storm comes up, and his coracle is washed up on the shore of Gwyddno Garanhir's lands. In another version, he is (like St. Patrick) kidnapped by Irish pirates, but escapes to Gwyddnon's kingdom.

The Literary Taliesin

An anonymous scribe who composed poems in the 9th century and took on the persona of both the mythical and historical. From him come the majority of the poems in The Book of Taliesin, dating to the thirteenth century.

The amalgamation of these different Taliesins has also been seen in fantasy literature; in the Prydain Chronicles, Taliesin is Chief Bard of Prydain and leader of the bardic college - much in line with his medieval character. He is the one who gave Fflewddur Fflam the truthful harp, and it was his son Adaon who was killed in *The Black Cauldron*. In Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series, he is bard of Gwyddno Garanhir in *The Silver on the Tree*. Also called Gwion, he helps Will Stanton and Bran Davies gain the sword Eirias and end the enchantment on Gwyddno and his submerged realm.

* * *

To say that Taliesin was a bard is to admit that what we know of the status of "bard" in the sixth and seventh century is very small. Originally, bards were a subset of the druids, the priestly caste of the Celts. As such, they had a religious and social function. What of this function continued into the Christian era is up to debate. Certainly, even in the very late *Llyfr Taliesin*, which was presumed to have been transcribed at a monastery (Strata Florida is the general supposition), yet the poems are filled with allusions to gods and druids. One doubts that the monks were ignorant of the original role of the bards. However, whether this reflects the role of the historical Taliesin is unknown.

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What to do if Meditation isn't for You

By Michael J Dangler

Not everyone is cut out for passive meditation or the emptying of minds. Some of us prefer to focus on a single point: a mantra, a mandala, a candle flame. Still others prefer to actively call to the deities, to hold ritual and seek out that which we love.

I am one of those last. I cannot sit for hours with an empty mind, nor can I focus on one thing for more than a few minutes. I have learned through trial and experience with other methods that the only truly useful form of daily practice available to me is daily ritual.

A parallel for what I do might be found in the daily puja of Hindu people, where each morning the household "wakes up" the gods and honours them. I do something very similar.

Each morning, I wake up, shower, put on clean clothes, and get ready for my day. Before I leave the house, though, I stand in front of my altar and begin to breathe in a 4-2-4-2 pattern (in for four, hold for two, out for four, hold for two, repeat).

I check the Well on my altar for an appropriate amount of water. If it is low, I pour some extra in. If there is enough, I simply take note.

I strike a match and light the three candles upon my altar that symbolize the fire.

I dip my fingers into the well and anoint the tree, and then I wave the heat of the flames onto the tree as well.

The wetness of the well, the heat of the fire, and the contact with the tree serve to transfer my mind from one world into the next.

Depending on how I feel, I will either open the Gates and make offerings, or I will not. The decision is one

based on a feeling of what the Gods and Powers request, and it is impossible to describe how I make the choice, but I do not consider the making of offerings to be always integral to the daily ritual.

I open my mind at this point, and call out to my Gods. I ask that they bless my work in the day, and that they remind me of their presence.

Following this opening (which may take between a second and an hour), I do fifty push-ups and a hundred situps (sometimes more depending, again, on what I feel the Gods wish). While physical exercise may seem out of place in a ritual, I very much feel that they are integral to my worship. Not only is my altar a temple to the Gods, but my body is as well. It does not have to be perfect, but I feel that I must make an effort.

Once I am done with my exercises, I open once more, briefly. I place a triskel necklace around my neck as a symbol to myself of my devotion that I can feel all day long. Then I close out the ritual by extinguishing the flames, and go about my daily work.

In the evening, I repeat this process, the only difference being that I remove the necklace before bed.

I have found that this process has helped me remain mindful of the Gods, and to think on them more often in my daily life. It helps me to see things in a different light, one that reminds me that there is magic in all things, from a child's laughter to a hawk perched royally in a tree. Daily ritual practice, like meditation and mantras, is not for everyone, but I hope that, if it is for you, that this short description of my own practice will help you to develop yours.



Uncertainty and the Dedicant's Journey

By Arthur Shipkowski

Some of you who are reading this know full well who your Patrons are and what Hearth Culture appeals to you. If you are one of these people, this brief essay will likely hold less use for you.

On the other hand, some of you have been exploring information about Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF). Perhaps you found ADF in a quick search online, or perhaps you read about this group in a book such as *Drawing Down The Moon*.¹ You're intrigued, but after looking at the Dedicant information you're thinking that you're not quite certain what Hearth cultures interest you, let alone who your Patrons might be.

I'm certain that some of you are out there because I have been one of you. Still am, in fact, though to a lesser degree. You see, I was interested in aspects of the Vision of ADF, but the Dedicant Program scared me. It seemed to be designed for those who were more certain than I.

The funny thing about certainty is that most people appear to have more of it on the outside than on the inside. You might think that the Dedicant Program is full of people who know exactly what they practice and why, are certain in all of their relationships with the Kindreds, and in general march along a road toward the horizon.

Mind you, you'd be wrong.

My first real clue that there was uncertainty and exploration involved was through reading the public Dedicant journal of Michael J Dangler.² When I read it, I discovered that the Dedicant Program is full of human beings. A few of his entries indicate difficulty in teasing out who one of his Patrons was. He didn't start out with the specific aim of building a relationship with Esus.

Reading through his journal made me realize that I had falsely read the public information on the Dedicant Program as being a travel itinerary, complete with vouchers redeemable for tickets to the Hearth Culture and Patrons of my choice, provided I walked into the travel agency knowing where I was headed. But that wasn't it at all; it was a travel brochure. It pointed out some of the highlights, but didn't get deeply into all possible variations. Some people might be interested in the continental Celtic culture, but not have any idea who their Patrons are. Others, like me, might be more drawn to other parts



of the Vision of ADF, such as the commitment to public ritual, or even the commitment to excellence. You can see the range of others' experiences in the Dedicant program via the many public online³ Dedicant journals.⁴

So, I joined.⁵ Let me tell you; if you like the brochure, you'll love the travel guide with guest commentators and fold-out maps.

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<sup>1</sup> Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (New York: Penguin, 1997) 325-8

<sup>2</sup> Available online at <http://www.chronarchy.com/mjournal>

<sup>3</sup> There is no requirement that you post your Dedicant journals publicly. Doing so offers a means to get feedback as you go.

<sup>4</sup> A list of online Dedicant journals may be found at <http://www.adf.org/training/dedicant-journals.html>

<sup>5</sup> If you are a non-member who would like to join, there is a membership form in this issue, or join online at <http://www.adf.org/joining/>



# Dancing In The Mud

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By Aigeann and Chelle

(A review of the "Cob and Sacred Space" workshop held June 18-19 in Talent, Oregon, sponsored by House Alive -- by Michelle Thorla and Aigeann)

How many of you always wanted to design and build your own home, but were been intimidated by the myriad of skills and equipment required in such a massive project? Not to mention the cost. If so, it is time you were introduced to "cob".

What is cob?

Some jokingly refer to it as the building of a mud hut, but that's essentially what it is. It's a building material comprised of clay, sand, water and straw. The clay is the sticky glue, the sand gives it structure, and the straw gives it strength. This is mixed in small batches using bare feet until the desired consistency is achieved. You use this mixture to essentially sculpt your structure.

Since it's mixed in small batches, and applied in loaf-shaped "cobs", small enough to toss along an assembly line, you don't need a whole work crew, or heavy equipment. You build primarily with what you have on

site, and it stays on site, making it very economically, as well as ecologically, sound. It's incredibly manageable. When wet, cob is pliable and sculptable; and once dry, cob is incredibly strong with fine insulating and fireproof qualities.

Building a project with cob is a slow, creative process involving your entire body in the physical labor, as well as your mind and your spirit. It frees you to really become a part of the surroundings, the place you're building. Your structure becomes a living, growing artistic creation in itself. Truly rising from the earth where it eventually stands.

There are many health benefits to working with cob as well. The clay draws toxins out of your body, and the action of mixing the cob acts as a reflexology treatment for your feet.

Cob building workshops are normally a week or more, in order to cover all the details involved in building a cob structure. This abbreviated and specialized 2-day workshop went through the basics regarding the best straw and similar substances for specific uses, how to compensate for the less than ideal clay that you may find for use on your own property, the different mixtures for different uses, do's and don't's of building walls, trimming and fin-

ish plastering. This seminar also touched on the topics of wiring to code, preparing the cob walls for door and window frames, appropriate roofs and roofing material. Additionally, the discussions regarding the finding and using of recycled materials including how to create virtually earthquake proof foundations out of "urbanite", creating windows from broken panes or even glass jugs, building your own doors from used lumber along with what logs work best for the rafters makes this the ultimate earth-friendly shelter.

Cob is often used in combination and in conjunction with other "alternative" building techniques such as cord wood and straw bale.

The other half of the workshop was the integration of Sacred Geometry into your building plans. Also referred to as the Golden Mean or Golden Proportion, Sacred Geometry is the mathematical relationship of proportions. Shapes following this relationship are pleasing to the eye in Western Cultures and are reflected all around us. Examples in Nature include the human fetus, petals on flowers, snail shells, crystals, the number of needles in a bundle on a pine branch, as well as the structure of planetary systems, etc.

In summary, even after just taking this very abbreviated weekend workshop, you will feel confident about building a cob structure all by yourself. How can one be any more self sufficient than having the knowledge of how to create a permanent structure for yourself?

A special thanks goes to Coenraad Rogmans, Lead Instructor, House Alive.

For more information about Cob, please feel free to review the following websites:

<http://www.housealive.org/>  
<http://www.cobcottage.com/>  
<http://www.greenhomebuilding.com/>  
<http://www.cobworkshops.org/>

And for your personal library:

*The Hand-Sculpted House: A Philosophical and Practical Guide to Building a Cob Cottage* (The Real Goods Solar Living Book) by Ianto Evans, et al, ISBN: 1890132349

*A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe: Mathematical Archetypes of Nature, Art, and Science* by Michael S. Schneider, ISBN: 0060926716



# Outdwellers and Snakes

By Laura Cunningham

I am new to ADF, but wish I had discovered the group earlier. I have really enjoyed reading through the material on the website, and have joined. What a great group of people with inspiring articles and thoughtful ideas. I thank ADF for spurring me into more practice and piety — I am modifying much of my ritual after reading the liturgies on the website.

I have been on a somewhat parallel course studying the religions of the Central Asian steppe horse cultures of the past, such as the Scythians and Sarmatians. So I wanted to add my two cents about the Outsiders, especially after reading *Oak Leaves #29* and the many views offered.

My main difference of opinion concerning the Outdwellers came after several years of comparative religions study, both Indo-European and non Indo-European. My interpretation is that the Outdwellers are members of the family of gods, often reducible to a pair of brothers, twins, one a trickster who often causes bad things to befall mankind, and the other a more moral figure. There is usually also a culture hero, often a nephew of this family. The whole family is often described in rather terrifying terms such as ogres or giants.

An extremely ancient story is “the theft of fire” motif, found worldwide, and pre-dating the separation of Proto-Indo-Europeans from their nearest linguistic relatives. The story is variable, but often involves the culture hero or trickster brother stealing an important item from his own family, the ogres-giants-serpents. This may be the first fire, or life-giving liquid, or a golden fleece, or cosmic jewel, etc.

The ogres-giants-serpents may be killed, but they come back to life, like the serpent shedding its skin to appear new and shiny, since they are in fact the gods themselves.

Here in Nevada where I live, the local Paiutes have a story about Coyote and Wolf: Coyote is the “bad” trickster brother, Wolf the older wise chief brother. Coyote one day went across the Western Ocean to an island to try to marry the daughter of the Old Woman (who was his mother), but the daughter turned into a toothed ogre and tried to kill him. He ran, grabbing a bag tied closed (the “fire”) he found in their house. Back home, Wolf told him not to open the bag, but Coyote was curious and did it. All the people came out, populating the world. Wolf told him if he had kept the bag closed there would be no death, but

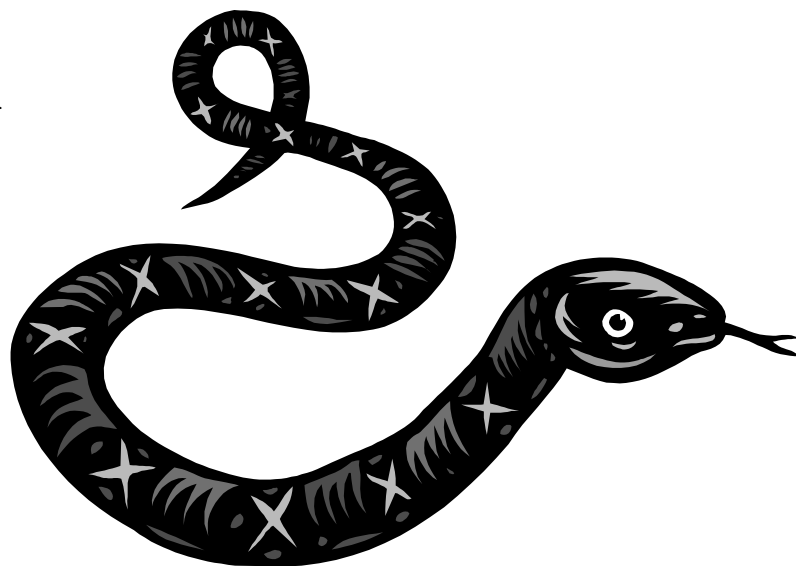
now people will die. Nevertheless Coyote is thought of as a creator along with his brother. This reminds me slightly of the Odin-Loki story in some of its elements.

Deeper searching reveals that worldwide this family is solar, a group of sun gods and goddesses, that are also associated with the sky, water, the earth, and other things of power. They can be beautiful

and kind, or turn terrifying, powerful, and monstrous. In other words, they encompass both “good” and “evil.” They may appear as two brothers fighting, or two clans or tribes, and I think at times turn into a dualistic Good/Evil separation as happened in Zoroastrian thought. But it is interesting to see how the gods evolve in different cultures, branching into divergent forms.

In Vedic religion there are the gods (devas) and their brothers the antigods or demons (asuras). But in ancient Persian religion the opposite evolved: the great good god is Ahura Mazda, and the demons are “daevas,” the chief being the serpent Angra Mainyu, the twin brother of Ahura Mazda (Boyce 1979). Asura and Ahura come from the root *asu*, “life” and *as-*, “to be” (Danielou 1985). The root div-means “to shine.”

The Vedic Varuna may share the same root for his name as the serpent-demon Vrtra: *ver-*, “to bind.” Varuna’s rope is a long serpent, used to turn the mountain at the churning of the ocean (Dumezil 1959). As Lord of the Waters, Varuna has been identified with Apam Napat.



I do not like to use the snake/serpent as a symbol of Outsiders in my own worship, as I have found a lot of evidence in Indo-Iranian past cultures that the snake is actually a form of divinity. For instance, the ancient Persian fire god Atar, son of Ahura Mazda, is shown as a bearded man holding a snake in his right hand, with flames issuing out of his upper body on Kushan coins (Hinnells 1973).

Among the Scythians, an Indo-Iranian group who lived north of the Black Sea from the 10th to 5th century BC, their great ancestress was Scythia, half woman, half serpent, daughter of the River Dneipr (Rice 1957). Their most important deity was Tabiti-Vesta, the fire goddess, goddess of the sacred hearth. Oaths were sworn by her; she anointed chiefs and kings. She was again, half woman, half serpent, and is often shown winged and holding lions and ravens (ibid.). A beautiful golden horse bridle ornament apparently shows her: a woman whose lower body turns into three pairs of dragons, one pair goat-horned; on her head is a fire pot with curls of smoke issuing out of it (Rolle 1980). A dish-shaped gold ornament like that said to be worn on the belt of kings, from Kul'-Oba kurgan, shows gorgon heads with lolling tongues and winding serpent hair (ibid.). This serpent goddess holds a belt, cup, and bow--symbols of royal authority (Fol and Marazov 1977).

The Thracians, called the "western Scythians," have artwork depicting the snake as the "invariable attribute of deity" (ibid.). Scenes show horsemen coming with offerings to one, two, or three women standing by an altar and tree with a snake coiling on the tree; a woman holds a mirror and next to her a giant three-headed dragon sits; a horseman holds a rhyton, as an eagle and serpent float by his head, symbols of his divinity according to the authors; the protectress of the hearth was a mother goddess, and archeological finds show three snakes at the center of a square hearth at one site.

I could go on with evidence from the Sarmatians and Armenians, but this is getting too long, so I shall end. I just

wanted to show some other theories concerning the nature of the outsiders. I am reading a book on Mongol shamans (non-Indo European), where "demons" are usually thought of as angry ghosts, women who died in childbirth, people who died violently, dead souls who had some sort of trouble reaching the Land of the Dead, and so bother the living and their rites. Incense was usually sufficient to keep them from interfering. Sometimes the shaman would help them achieve "crossing over" (Humphrey 1996). This is my own personal use of the term "outdwellers." To me, the dragon-slaying myth is one god killing another god, whose great sacrifice makes the creation.

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# Festival Review

Trillium 2005  
By Michael J Dangler

I attended Trillium first last year on the recommendation of several of my friends from the Heartland Region. This year, I attended it based on last year's experience.

This particular festival is truly enjoyable. Before we had even chosen a place to camp, we had met up with old friends and encountered new ones, including Modig, the Senior Druid of Raven's Cry Grove, who had traveled over 2,500 miles in order to be at the festival, and to share in our fellowship!

This year, Trillium was in a new location, a campground owned by two ADF members. It was a beautiful camp, with plenty of room for the festival attendees to camp apart, but not so much that anyone was isolated.

I didn't manage to attend many workshops myself, but this wasn't because I didn't want to; rather it was because I was dead tired and working on my workshops for Desert Magic that was two weeks away. The workshops I did attend, though, lived up to the expectation I've grown to have from ADF festivals: they are always informative.

The most memorable workshop that I attended was Kirk's workshop on Clergy Craft. It brought new ideas and new paradigms of ritual to my mind, and I've found the skills taught to be useful and easy to learn (if still difficult to master).

The warrior games were quite the spectator sport. There are some pictures floating around of the games, and you can see the crowd in the background enjoying the show. I really enjoyed teaching archery to a few people that weekend.

The whisky tasting and bardic circle were excellent, and I was pleased to find that we hadn't missed it when we rolled in late on the first night. I always appreciate the chance to hang out and try new and varied burning sensations as the whisky rolls down your throat.

Trillium isn't a large festival, but it's very tight. You learn names and get to relax with people on a much more personal basis than you do at other festivals. You can have an intimate conversation with people you won't even get close to at the larger festivals like Wellspring. Everyone is always friendly and always willing to help.



"Behold! The waters of life!"

The weather was strange, ranging from warm, dry sun to drizzling rain to an impressive blizzard of snow on our way home. Even the trip to and from the festival was fun and eventful! This festival really helped bind the group of new Grove members I took, too. My Grove gained at least one new member from the festival's feeling of closeness and camaraderie, and we enjoyed singing gospel, chatting about knife-fighting monkeys, and sandwich schedules on the way down and back.

It is Trillium that kicks off the festival season for me each year, and it always shows me what to expect in the coming year, and reminds me of why I'm in ADF: there is a fellowship and a level of trust and joy that you simply don't find anywhere else, and at \$25 (pre-registered), this could very well have been the best deal of the festival season. If you have the chance, come next year!





# Book Review

*The Mabinogion by Lady Charlotte Guest*  
By Linda Costello

I read this version of the Mabinogion for the DP requirement because it had been given to me several years ago, after I read Mary Stewart's Arthurian Saga, which were basically taken from four of the branches of the Mabinogion – the stories of Pwyll, of Branwen, of Manawyddan, and of Math. I did find Lady Charlotte Guest's version a bit awkward to read, but found myself just as delighted with the stories.

I will post here brief summaries to each of the myths contained in the book.

## *Lady of the Fountain*

This is the story of Owain and the Countess of the Fountain and the adventures that led them to live together as husband and wife in Arthur's court.

## *Peredur, the Son of Evrawc*

This tale tells how Peredur became one of King Arthur's court due to his unyielding persistence, how he met and wooed his lady love, and how he came to slay the sorceress of the Castle of Wonders.

## *Geraint, the son of Erbin*

Geraint defends Gwenhwyvar, a maiden who was insulted by a dwarf, which leads him on many adventures that prove his bravery.

## *Kilhwch and Olwen*

This is the story of the adventures of Kilhwch, cousin of Arthur, and how he obtained Olwen as his wife by performing many tasks, which Arthur and his knights helped him to complete.

## *Dream of Rhonabwy*

Rhonabwy slept on a yellow calf skin for three nights and three days, and dreamed of Owain and Arthur, and the truce that was reached after much playing of games.

## *Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*

Pwyll follows a magical stag, and meets Arawn, with whom he trades places, and lives in Annwvyn for the space of a year and a day. This story also introduces us to Rhiannon, Pwyll's wife, and their son, Pryderi.

## *Branwen, the Daughter of Llyr*

This story portrays how Branwen became married to Matholwch, and the treachery and deceit that took place by those who wanted to mar the alliance between Ireland

and the Island of the Mighty. In the story, Manawyddan gifted Matholwch with the cauldron of life and death. After years of battle and misfortune, the head of Bendigeidfran, her brother, is buried in the White Mound to protect the lands.

## *Manawyddan the Son of Llyr*

Pryderi, son of Rhiannon, arranges for Manawyddan to marry his mother. Pryderi and Manawyddan have many adventures together, where they learn many new skills and crafts. This story tells how they follow the white boar to a magical castle, where Pryderi, then Rhiannon get stuck, and Manawyddan rescues them from a revengeful magician.

## *Math the Son of Mathonmy*

Math's nephews, Gwydion and Gilvaethwy, connive to win Goewin by using magic to trick Pryderi, and earn Math's wrath, wherein they are changed to animals each year. We are also introduced to Llew Llaw Gyffes and also the story of Blodeuwedd, the maiden made of flowers, who conspires to kill Llew.

## *The Dream of Maxen Wledig*

Maxen went hunting and fell asleep. Under protection, he dreams of a large city with a great and beautiful castle, wherein he met a maiden and fell in love. He commanded his men to seek her out, and became emperor of the lands.

## *Lludd and Llevelys*

Lludd and his brother, Llevelys, work together to stop the plagues in Lludd's kingdom.

## *Taliesin*

This is the story of Taliesin - how he came to be raised by Elphin and his wife, and how he used his great talent as a Bard to rescue Elphin and his wife from wrongdoing.

Although all of the stories are interesting, my favorite of all of them is the tale of Manawyddan.

Thus ends my book review on the Mabinogion.



# I'll Remember My Dad Complaining

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(A Eulogy for Dad)

I'll remember my dad complaining,  
But not about how tough a row he had to hoe.

I'll remember my dad complaining,  
But not about the polio, the wheelchair, the crutches, or the limp.

I'll remember my dad complaining,  
But not about the number of mouths to feed, or the second or third jobs it took to provide.

I'll remember my dad complaining,  
But not about leaving in the middle of dinner, or a night's sleep, to pull a drunk from a ravine, or to visit a sick parishioner.

I'll remember my dad complaining,  
But not about how tough a row he had to hoe.

I'll remember my dad complaining  
About tripping on the coat hanger I left in the hallway.

I'll remember my dad complaining  
About the high cost of mechanics and appliance repairmen.

I'll remember my dad complaining  
About the tools I left out in the rain to rust or just lost.

I'll remember my dad complaining about tripping on the coat hanger I left in the hallway,  
And I'll remember to consider other people's special needs.

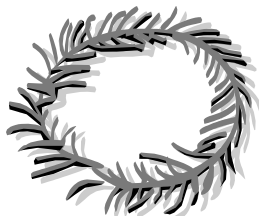
I'll remember my dad complaining about the high cost of mechanics and appliance repairmen,  
And I'll remember to do like he usually did, and repair it myself.

I'll remember my dad complaining about the tools I left out in the rain to rust or just lost,  
And I'll remember how important is to have the right tool for the job,  
And to put things in their places, so the right tool can be found.

But I've learned much more from the things he did not complain about.  
Instead of complaining about the damage from Polio, he defied the doctors;  
And walked...then ran...then hiked.  
Never did I hear him say, "Why me?"  
He worked hard to provide for his family's needs,  
While he worked to improve the lives of his students, his community, his congregation and his family.

I'll remember my dad complaining  
But *NEVER* about how tough a row he had to hoe.

Brian Long  
January 23, 1999  
In honor of my dad, Wayne Long, at his passing



# The Sovereign Song of Flíodhías

---

*By Jan Curran-Jones*

I am deep within the woods of this verdant land  
We share a bond that all of your mundane mystics  
Can never slash, burn or tear asunder  
Was I born of the Earth Mother or was she bourne of me?  
Ask the scholars as they debate  
Their academic phallusies, lying laurel wreaths hung dry and dusty  
Around my shoulders as I watch the endless invasions.  
The land is still possessed by my hordes unseen  
Teeming in the night they breed  
My wild children of the wood.  
Nature Spirits, hush, strangers draw near  
(That's you in case it wasn't clear)



I once was loved within the legendary conquests of tribal kings  
We shared a bed, some bairns, and lives though no eye  
Could see beyond my guise, illusions  
Of all womankind, which names were mine?  
They are long lost to lecherous lore, or guarded,  
Sealed within a box of sacristy, Illuminated by the lies of ancient heresies  
While My children, Shining Ones remained veiled from the Sight  
Of thine eyes, despairing o' sons begat of One True canon  
Sons, daughters visit but rarely when the fairies do ride  
Upon my fae steeds of stag and roe  
Sidhe children, o hush, unbelievers draw near  
(That's you in case it wasn't clear)

I wait here young yet unborn for my Fergus to return  
We share a desire so deep that my embrace is that of seven  
Women of thine sore tried, turning pleasure to scorn  
Wailing assistance from tonsured eunuchs they condemned  
All enchantment as lost to man and branded by holy righteousness  
Consigned me to the realms of legend, while they raise sacred fools in heraldry  
Their god died, and I live, silently watching man's folly as they now lift  
Golems of silvered metal in a toast to their own finite health, soon to moulder,  
Still dying far from West, yet in endless Summerlands my soul kin rest unworried  
And I await patient, whisper wise when Fergus appears Lover, come quiet, outdwellers are near  
(That's you in case it wasn't clear)

# Norse ADF Ritual Template

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By Susan "Ratatask" Eaves

As you prepare to lead your first Norse ritual, you may start to wonder about the differences between Norse and the Celtic rites your Grove has been doing. Fortunately, there is plenty of lore in Norse mythology that works quite well with the ADF liturgy. In this paper, I will go through many of the different options you may want to consider in your Norse ritual. Even if you have run some Norse rituals, I am hopeful that you will find new ideas here that you may not have thought of previously. Before starting, however, one important thing that should be mentioned up front is that there is always a lot of yelling in Norse rituals. The Norse were never known for being demure, and neither are most Pagans who follow Norse paths, in my experience. So, use a blow horn whenever possible, speak in your loudest voices and, at the end of each evocation, yell "Hail <appropriate Spirit>!" Instruct your guests and grove members to repeat your Hails as loud as they can as well.

As with all ADF rituals, a Norse ritual usually starts with a **musical signal**. Probably the best instrument for a Norse rite would be a horn blow (or three). The horn is reminiscent of Heimdall's Gjallar-horn, the horn he uses to alert the gods of coming danger. We can deduce that it may have also been used to alert them of anything of interest going on in the worlds outside of Asgard in which they may want to take note. Bells are also appropriate when the deity of the occasion is a Vanir as Saxo Grammaticus mentions tinkling of bells in sacrifices (presumably to Frey) in his History of the Danes.

Next, **the Earth Mother is honored**. The most common choice for this is Nerthus, a female deity who was said to visit villages each year bringing growth and prosperity for crops. Another option is Jord, who is a literal representation of the Earth (similar to Gaia) and is the mother of Thor. Both Freyr and Njord are also very much associated with the Earth and fertility, but they are male, so that could present a problem for the Earth Mother section.

Next is the **Bardic Evocation**. Perhaps the best choice here would be Bragi. Bragi is the poet of the gods and is known for his wisdom, eloquence and command of language, and is especially knowledgeable about poetry. It is his job to put the gods in the best light and to keep harmony among them. So, in asking for help in praising the glory of the gods, he's a natural. Another option here would be Odin, since he is a god of wisdom

and inspiration. However, he is a god of wild inspiration, so he should be called on only for rituals where you are looking for very high energy. Saga could also be used here, as a goddess of story-tellers and the goddess of writers. If you are not concerned about people being especially wordy in your rite, then she may be the goddess you want. Lastly, Kvasir is a very good choice to call on here. Kvasir is the embodiment of wisdom, and is said to be the wisest of the Aesir. Kvasir was made from the spittle of the gods, which they had spat into a vat to solidify their truce between the Aesir and the Vanir. He was so wise that he could answer any question asked of him. He was very giving with his knowledge and traveled around teaching people until he was killed by a couple of dwarves. They poured his blood into vats and mixed honey with it, turning it into mead. Whoever drinks his mead becomes a poet or a scholar. Because of this, poetry can be called Kvasir's blood or dwarfs' drink. Eventually Odin managed to "acquire" most of the mead and he gave the mead to the Aesir and to those people who are skilled at composing poetry. So, according to Snorri, poetry is also called Odin's booty and find, and his drink and his gift, as well as the Aesir's drink. Therefore, passing a horn of mead as part of the bardic inspiration would be quite appropriate.

For **Centering, Grounding and Merging**, I like to use a chant that many of the East Coast Kindreds use. It is a monotone chant of the words "Odin-Vili-Ve" three times. During the chant, people can focus on Odin, Vili and Ve - the three brothers, sons of Bor and Bestla, who together created Midgard and Mankind. Another option here is to choose runes that fit the purpose of the rite and to chant the names of those runes. This works well as long as a number of the people in the ritual are familiar with the runes and the pronunciation of the runes in question are agreed upon beforehand. Some folks use a hammer rite during this portion either instead of, or in addition to the chanting, as a good way to merge the group into a single mind/purpose. The hammer rite is a rite that uses a representation of Thor's hammer, Mjollnir, to bless and hallow the ritual space. Besides being used to slay giants, Mjollnir is shown in the lore to bless Thor's goats in order to bring them back to life, and to hallow marriage vows. So it seems appropriate to use it to hallow the space on which a rite is performed. In many cases, the hammer rite is done in four directions, as well as above, here and below (Asgard, Midgard and Helheim). If done in addition to the chanting, it will probably be preferable to do this in just one direction - I prefer standing either facing the altar, or facing the participants, or possibly in two directions - representing Fire and Ice, the elements of creation, according to Norse lore. The hammer rite, of course, requires some

sort of representation of a hammer, and is done by holding the hammer in the air and drawing the symbol of an upside-down hammer, while saying something like "Mjollnir, Slayer of giants, Mighty Hammer of Thor, hal-low and hold this stead. Hail Mjollnir!" I have also seen cases where the four dwarves who hold up the sky are used for is portion of the ritual. The dwarves are named Nordri, Sudri, Austri and Vestri (Norse, South, East and West), and they can be used in general the way of calling quarters, or more specifically in calling them at once. A call to the dwarves that I particularly like that I saw done at a blot during a festival I was at recently was "Nordri, Sudri, Austri and Vestri, Dwarves in all direc-tions dwelling. From the center here we sum-mon. Watchers of the world, now ward us."

For **offerings to the sacred center**, the imagery is fairly conducive to Norse mythology. The tree would represent Yggdrasil - the world tree that stands in the center of the worlds and connects all nine worlds together. There are a number of important wells in Norse lore. One such well is Mimir's well, which has wisdom and intelligence contained in it and is guarded by Mimir. Another is the Wyrd's well, which is the well that nourishes Yggdrasil and is "so holy that all things that come into that well go as white as the membrane called the skin that lies round the inside of an eggshell" according to Snorri. Lastly, since the well is for the offerings to the ancestors, it would be appropriate to view this not exactly as a well, but as a burial mound. Both historically and in the lore, there are references to people making offerings (often of silver) to their ancestors in burial mounds. There are references to a hole cut into the mound into which offerings were poured. So, an earthenware well, or one made into the earth, would be quite appropriate, if you plan to use the visualization of the well becoming a burial mound when the gates are opened. As for fire, referring to the fire as "the fire of Bifrost" is probably the most appropriate reference in a Norse rite since Bifrost is the rainbow bridge that connects Midgard to Asgard, and the red in the rainbow is said to be burning fire. So opening the fire as a gate can be visualized as the rainbow bridge rising up out of the fire to bring our words to the gods. Fire is also one of the two elements present at creation in Norse lore - the world began as fire and ice, and where the two met, life formed. Snorri refers to the two worlds as Muspelheim



(the world of fire) and Niflheim (the world of ice) and the place where the two met as Ginnungagap, and this is where our world, as well as the world of the Gods is built. So, in one sense Muspelheim is a great source of fire imagery, however it is also the realm of fire where the fire-giant, Surt, lives and guards with his fire sword, preparing to burn the world at Raganarok. So, in this case, fire is not seen as especially friendly to the gods.

For the **Gatekeeper**, Heimdall is the clear choice as he guards Bifrost for the gods. I don't believe there is anyone else who really works as gatekeeper. Heimdall's primary purpose is to keep the Jotuns (frost-giants, mountain-giants, etc.), so word your request carefully. He will not likely be willing to open the gates wide and let anything through. It is better to ask him to carry your words to the gods, or to open the gates, while he stands guard against hostile beings. Heimdall is the ideal guard because he needs less sleep than a bird, can see a hundred leagues by night as well as by day, and he can hear grass growing on the earth and wool on sheep. He is called the father of men, the shining or fair one, white As, Gjallar-horn guardian, and Guardian of Bifrost. Using a horn as a means to signify the opening of the gates evokes great imagery of Heimdall at the gates to Bifrost, blowing his trumpet, Gjallar-horn, the blast from which can be heard in all the worlds.

The **outdwellers** can be done in a variety of ways using Norse lore. In the traditional way of offering to something/someone that you want to stay away, the Jotuns (commonly seen as the more destructive forces of nature) fit, however it may be futile to ask them to stay away. They are not known for listening to the will of others, even the gods, and are notorious for being uncontrollable (such as tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.). It may make more sense to, rather than asking them to stay away, to ask someone to guard the rite against the Jotuns or other ill-meaning spirits. This may give rise to visions of "casting a circle" or creating some sort of safe space that would be wise to stay within, so it is up to the person running the ritual whether they want to do this. If this option is chosen, there are many protective gods in the Norse pantheon who can be called upon. Thor is a great choice as he frequently battles against the Jotuns. Hlin is a goddess who assists Frigg in protecting humans, whose name means 'protectress' in Old

Norse. Syn is another protective, guardian goddess, whose name means ‘refusal’ or ‘denial’. Both could also be used as gatekeepers if desired. Especially if a female gatekeeper would be more appropriate. There are still other things you can use as outdwellers. Since there are few ADF Groves that are completely Norse, there’s a good chance that many of the people in the ritual work regularly with other Pantheons. So this would be a good time to give an offering to them and to let them know that they will be honored soon, just not right now. There are also some spirits that are known to be trouble makers. House-ghosts or land-spirits, known as nissen or tomtes, are usually very helpful spirits to have around, but sometimes they have ill-will, or are just mischievous. However, you can give them an offering during nature-spirits, so this could be redundant. Lastly, I want to touch on Loki. Being a god of chaos and, at times, destruction, many people see Loki as a dark, negative part of Norse Lore and they may want to view him as an outdweller. However, being a god is one of the Aesir, Loki will be grouped into the shining ones portion of the rite, so it may be inappropriate to offer to him here. On the other hand, Odin swore he wouldn’t drink without Loki. So if you are going to honor Odin as your deity of the occasion, you should either offer to Loki here, or at least be sure to offer a drink to Loki at another point in the ritual; possibly during the praise offerings.

Moving on to the Kindreds, we come to the **Ancestors**. For Ancestors, people may want to mention the Einherjar. These are the fallen heroes who dwell in Valhöll awaiting Ragnarok. It should be clear that these are great heroes. Everyone who dies does not go to Valhöll, and not even everyone who dies in battle goes there. Only great chieftains and elite warriors (think marines vs. army) go to Valhöll. These are who are being honored when the Einherjar are called upon. The Disir are our ancestral mothers who stay with their descendents and give them guidance. They are concerned with the life of their descendents, especially with things like births and deaths, as well as with daily household concerns such as cooking, cleaning and weaving. The Alfar are male ancestral spirits. They tend to be more concerned with the health of the community or the land and are often more attached to the land than to families. The house-ghosts and farm-spirits mentioned in the previous section are alfar who care for the prosperity of home and land. They can be

vicious when they are offended, so take care to offer well to them.

**Nature-Spirits** are known as Landvaettir or Landwights in Norse Lore. They are seen as spirits who often take the form of animals and who live in places in nature such as streams and stones. They usually live harmoniously with mankind, but they will defend their land against hostility if necessary. Some places such as Iceland are said to have particularly strong Landvaettir guardians. In Iceland, the primary Landvaettir (who are still portrayed on their coin) are a dragon, a bird, a mountain giant and a bull.

The **Shining Ones** in this case would be the Aesir, the Asynjur and the Vanir. The Aesir are the gods who live in Asgard, including Thor, Odin, Tyr, Heimdall, etc. The Asynjur are the goddesses in Asgard and mostly include Frigg and her handmaidens (such as Hlin, Syn, Fulla, etc.). the Vanir are more nature-based gods and are quite possibly older gods who were later incorporated into the newer lore. The gods best known of the Aesir are Nerthus, Njord, Freyr and Freyja. However since Njord, Freyr and Freyja moved to live with in Asgard with the Aesir after the battle of the gods, they are also called Aesir at times.



I am not going to discuss the **Deity of the Occasion** much since it would lengthen this article immensely and would wind up being the whole article. There are references on the ADF webpage about what type of Norse rite can be done for each of the High Days. The main thing I want to mention here is

that I have found that reading part of an Edda or a good translation/interpretation of one of a story involving the deity of the occasion is a very good way to honor the deities. It is also a good way to familiarize some of the participants with the deity in cases where they may not know that particular deity well.

The next part of a Norse ritual would be sharing a horn of mead with the god(s). This part does not quite fit with the ADF liturgy perfectly. It is similar to a request for the blessings of the god(s), but it is also a beginning for the praise offerings. This part must come before the praise offerings because the first drink should always go to the god(s), and because the horn should be hallowed to the gods before the praise offerings. The way it is done is to first fill a horn full of mead, hold it high in the air, and toast to the god(s) of the occasion, saying something about

hallowing the horn to the god(s) and inviting him/her to share the sumbel with you. Wait until you have sensed that the god has taken his/her fill of the drink. Some people draw the sign of the hammer, a sun-wheel, a valknot or a rune over the horn at this point. Once this is done, pass the horn so that everyone may take a drink (silently) from it. It may be a good idea to give people the option of two horns (one non-alcoholic) or tell them that it is okay to kiss the horn, or touch it to their foreheads if they don't want to drink from it. At the end of the round, pour the remaining mead in to the blotbowl. The blotbowl is usually a separate bowl from the well into which all the liquid offerings are poured.

For the **praise offerings**, I have always found it most appropriate to do a mini-sumbel here. A sumbel is a ritual where a horn is passed and toasts are made to gods, ancestors and/or landvaettir, and boasts and oaths are made. The traditional form of a sumbel is to have rounds. It is usually done sitting at feast, but for the purpose of the ritual, we change it slightly to having everyone standing and passing a horn around the circle. It may be a good idea to give people the option of two horns (one non-alcoholic) or tell them that it is okay to kiss the horn, or touch it to their foreheads if they don't want to drink from it. The first round is to the god of the occasion, the second is to the ancestors, and the third is a boast or oath. This is not set in stone, however. The first round could be to any deity (preferably Norse, though, since they're the ones we're talking to), or the third round can be open to whomever people want to toast. Or a fourth round could be added as an open round. However, the second round really should not be changed. The toast can be as simple or as elaborate as people want them to be. People can read poetry, present artwork, sing, or do anything else they may do during other praise offerings. The only difference is that it is done with a horn in their hand and with a "hail <whoever>!" at the end. Remember that every time someone yells "Hail <insert name of ancestor, deity, etc. here>", everyone is to echo that hail as loudly as possible. It important not to let the horn go empty during sumbel as the last sip is for the gods. So have people watch it and refill the horn when it gets low. At the end of each round, pour whatever remains in the horn into the blotbowl, and refill the horn.

Runes are the easiest source of **divination** in Norse lore. There are many who practice spæcraft, or seidhr, a trancework type of divination. However spæcraft is not a quick and easy endeavor and would require a ritual in itself, so it is not really appropriate in a typical ADF ritual. In my grove, three runes are typically drawn to represent past, present and future.

At this point blessings of the gods are received (**receptivity**). A number of Asatruars use the tradition of

asperging the celebrants to pass on the blessings of the gods. This is a very appropriate tradition to use for this portion of an ADF ritual as well. Recall that each time the horn has gone around, the remainder of its contents has been poured into a bowl. At this time, the bowl will be carried around the circle along with a twig of an evergreen or another deciduous tree. This twig is dipped into the bowl and used to sprinkle a bit of the liquid in the bowl onto the participants. As the person asperging the participants is doing this, he/she can say something like "I give you this gift from the gods". The one concern some people have with asperging is that it is usually mead that is being sprinkled on them and that can get a bit sticky. It may be appreciated if you allow the participants to hold their hands out to receive the blessing on their hands, or some may want to opt out. Also certain meads could stain certain light colored carpets. So, if the mead proves too troublesome, a bowl of water may be used for asperging instead. A few drops of the mead from the blotbowl could be added to the bowl of water to connect the two together. If the asperging is going to be done using a separate bowl than the blotbowl, lift the bowl and make the sign of a hammer over it while requesting that the water be hallowed before sprinkling it on the participants.

Before **thanking the entities** and **closing the gates**, the mead poured into the blotbowl must be libated (although this could be done after closing the gates as the very last and final act of the rite, if preferred). The blotbowl is taken to a tree or a special spot on the ground and is poured out. Some of the Asatru Kindreds in the east use a saying as they libate that they originally adopted from an ADF grove, but I don't know which grove it is from. So, as we libate, we say "From the gods, to the earth, to us; from us to the earth, to the gods. A gift for a gift."

We now thank the entities in reverse order and close the gates. The rite is ended!

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Special thanks to Leesa Kern of Three Cranes Grove and to Aesa of Grove of the Seven Hills for their input.

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The Troth: *Our Troth*, [www.thetroth.org/resources/OurTroth](http://www.thetroth.org/resources/OurTroth)



# The Beginner's Guide to Genealogical Research *Or How I connected to my Ancestors.*

By Meghan Edith McNamara

As far back as I can remember I was fascinated with stories, especially those about my family. My Irish cousin Maureen told me that one person in every generation is called to remember the family. I met her in 1993 during my first trip to Ireland when I stayed with her family for a week. During that time I listened to my father and her husband, Tom, talk. Late into the night I sat at their kitchen table, sipping tea with cream, and absorbing the stories.

Each time I visit Maureen we talk about family. It's intrinsic to our relationship and I credit her for igniting my passion for genealogy and research. Even though we live quite far away our kinship is clear.

Family is very important. The ancestors deserve our remembrance. I honor them by discovering their names, birth places, and occupations. I piece together their stories for my descendants. Even if I never have children, there are many, many cousins out there who may appreciate my effort. If they do not, research simply for the sake of honor is a very good thing. I want to share a method of genealogical research that I have found to be useful so that you might feel this ancestral connection as well.

First, gather all information that you and any family you can approach might have. Once family stories, names, dates, etc. are lost, they are gone forever. Second, take what you have and use it to search the internet. This is a step that is useful for gathering possible leads. I caution you not to take any information you find outside a primary source (like county records) as certainty. I made that mistake, and it had some interesting consequences.

One night, early on in my research, I discovered that one of my mother's ancestors is a descendant of Charlemagne. After gloating until dawn I started to wonder where my distant relations found their information. I

soon realized that any given person in the western world could be a descendent of Charlemagne; he lived many centuries ago and was in the ruling class (making his genetic fitness much more than that of the average serf).

I was quite put out, since I spent an entire night cruising Rootsweb and entering data into genealogical software. My pride was a gushing wound. After I got over my snit I realized that there had to be information from more reliable sources. I gathered the information that I was fairly certain about and started writing to historical societies.

Historical societies have given me the most valuable information – copies of primary documents and stories

gathered by very distant cousins. You will end up with more questions than answers no matter how prolific your family was. Unless you live near the places that have the records you're looking for you will be expected to pay for copies and postage. If you are concerned with the price call up the source in question and ask before you send away for information. Remember, a self addressed and stamped envelope is appreciated.



ciated.

If you cannot afford to request documentation directly from the source, it can be extremely useful to see if distant cousins have provided sources for their information. Websites put up by people you never realized existed, but share your genetic material, will provide useful information if you take my hubris into consideration. Email people. Ask them how they found their information and if they'd be willing to share copies of primary source material.

Besides these resources, some public libraries have subscriptions to online paid genealogy services. This is a great way to explore those databases without paying exorbitant fees.

Researching genealogy is fun. It's a passion of mine. I cannot imagine not having and sharing the stories I've discovered. Through my research I found that one relation was kidnapped by Indians and survived to escape. Another was purported to play the fiddle for George Washington. My tenth great grandfather was the pastor of the

first church in Queens, New York. One of his descendants wrote the poem *The Night Before Christmas* and an uncle from that line started the first Methodist Church in Ohio. My father's paternal grandmother was a distributor of *poitin* (Irish potato liquor) during Prohibition and his maternal grandfather was a prisoner of war during World War One (Canadian RAF). My Welsh family was among the first Quakers to come to the colonies.

I may or may not be related to Charlemagne, but that doesn't matter. I understand how I've come to be where I am at the moment and why veneration of the ancestors is appropriate. By uncovering their lives I give them their due respect and love. It is in part because of them; their choices, their courage, their fortitude and adventuring spirit that I have the opportunities that are mine. It is my duty to assure that they are remembered.

Note- For online research I suggest starting with <http://www.rootsweb.com/>. This site is easy to work with. There are many other ways to successfully navigate genealogy online but that's the easiest way to start. Please do not automatically take out an expensive subscription to a pay site. Get involved on forums, check out bulletin boards on your common family names, research newspaper archives and look for census and military records. Above all, be creative.

Here are some other sites that you can explore. This list is not inclusive of all potentially useful resources.

- <http://www.afrigenas.com/>  
(African-American Resource)
- <http://www.cyndislist.com/>  
(General)
- <http://www.familysearch.org/>  
(General, run by the Latter Day Saints)
- <http://www.genealogytoolbox.com/>  
(General)
- <http://www.genhomepage.com/>  
(General)
- <http://www.genuki.org.uk/>  
(UK/Ireland Resource)
- <http://www.islandnet.com/~jveinot/cghl/cghl.html>  
(Canadian Resource)
- <http://www.jewishgen.org/>  
(Jewish Resource)
- <http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/>  
(National Genealogical Society of America)
- <http://www.umssystem.edu/shs/nativeam.html>  
(Native American Resource)
- <http://www.usgenweb.com/>  
(US GenWeb Project)



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# Poetry

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## The Morrigan

By Robin Maclir

Standing in darkness smiling  
shadows creep and recede  
sweet temptation is calling  
sly is the Phantom Queen

Feel her hand on my shoulder  
fading deep under her spell  
frightened to turn and embrace her  
flooding emotions swell

Raven on Hawthorn branch laughing  
raining crimson floods the land  
roaming allusive about me  
remembrance is driving me mad

Testing my will by challenge  
trooping fairies dance unseen  
tempting, sweet is her ballads  
through nighttime and land of dreams

Inciting to battle fury  
intricate lesson to learn  
inner vision clouded and blurry

## Hymn-Prayer to Hecate

By James Lock

Lady of mystery, moonlight and magic  
Guardian of crossroads, blessed torch-bearer  
She who guides true through the darkness  
Goddess in twilight, hear now my call.

Beautiful Hecate, of Titan-might born  
Crowned by Olympus, most honored one.  
Against your own in great battle fought,  
In Zeus' winning cause much glory you gained.

Friend of Persephone, cherished flower  
Taken to dark Hades, her Mother weeping,  
Your great torches, divine light pure  
Brought forth the Daughter, spring to the Earth.

Light in the darkness, magic power wielding,  
Patron of walkers in mystery's night.  
Guide at the crossroads 'tween this world and yon  
Hear me, O Hecate, I am thine own.

illusion in nightmares returns

Pulling me closer to her  
plead and resist my best  
pleasure and pain run together  
playing a strange game of chess

Ancient hag roar! ms shrieking  
awesome wolves bay at the moon  
ask me how I am grieving  
ailing from my deep wounds

Looking always behind me  
lady in black standing by  
learning now to embrace thee  
laughing moon hangs in the sky

Wisdom found in the darkness  
willing to follow her lead  
wild, yet focused her magic  
walking tall in the unseen

Standing in darkness smiling shadows  
creep and recede  
sweet temptation is calling  
sly is the phantom queen

## 12,000 Ghosts

By Penelope L. McFadin

12,000 Ghosts sleep  
Deep and quiet  
Deep in the ground  
Under the silt and fill  
Under the great sea wall  
Protecting us the living  
From the great storms  
That took them  
Long ago  
Hear their voices  
In a shell  
In the howl of the wind  
The voices of the storm  
In the crash of the surf  
The echoes  
Of the dead  
The peace of sleep  
And the sea

## Cernunnos: A Poem

By Aicerno OCathasaigh

The Power of the Word,  
Reflect on the nature of life,  
death, and change.

Changing view of scene and  
space,  
Walking through peace and  
strife.

See an antlered man  
Astride the junction  
Wonder what is his function:

A cauldron at his feet,  
As people and animals meander  
the street.

Some go straight,  
Some go left, some go right,  
While others yet go back the  
way they came.  
While some go into the caul-  
dron.

A gray tree with oak-like bark  
While flame flows through the  
crown  
With one stroke.

He feeds the tree with the gruel  
from the pot,  
While some go on shamanic  
journey,  
And others yet will be reborn.

Cernunnos.



# Poetry Continued

## Morning Motivational / Inspirational Prayer

By Wren

(On every morn that I be FORCED awake. I bite my tongue lest I curse the light of dawn, and I whisper to myself:)

I am pretty, although I may not be the prettiest.  
I am strong, though I may not be the strongest.  
and I am Wise, in spite of my arrogance.

And if anyone should go on, it should be me.  
For I am the descendant of those who first stepped out onto the ice.  
Those who turned their backs to the Sun, to walk into shadows.

And although I am a servant of Man, I am an equal to the Gods.  
And just as the Ocean has become a drop, so too will the drop become an Ocean.\*  
I am not afraid...So I go on.

\*(this line is derived from star trek ds9. const. odo finds his home world and his people. they are fluidic in nature, known as the founders.)

## ~wander~

by Anne M. Lenzi

No man shall hold me  
No woman lay claim  
For I am the wind  
and the oak  
and the rain

Walk paths made more lonely  
Face fears I don't need  
No one shall own me  
not by want, lust, nor greed

my hearth stands without me  
new kin feed the fire  
by flame, well and tree  
hold close old desire

my face becomes windblown  
stumbling feet find a way  
the wanderlust calls me  
and I know I can't stay

Look to the sky, love  
put your hands in the sea  
watch the flame flicker  
and you shall find me

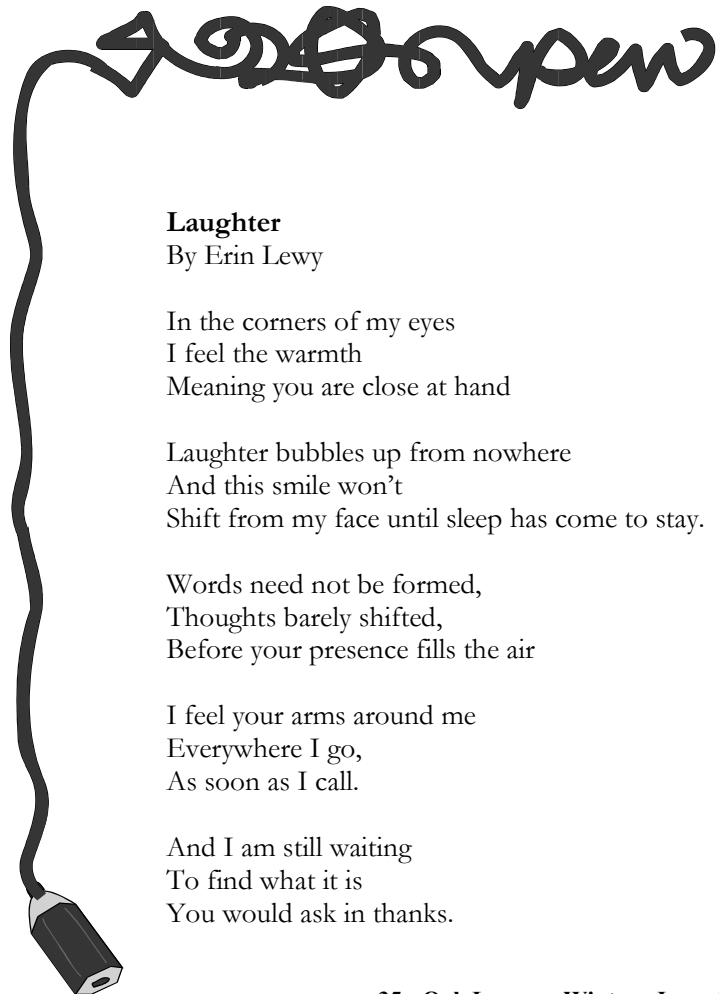
## mahope la o na make loa

By Lilith Maeve Crow

I want to wrap myself  
in the black lace from samhain  
sit between my altars  
between the ocean and death  
where everything is forever  
Strew star anise, violets, and  
rosemary everywhere I go  
If I do enough rituals  
If I sing the right songs  
Wail until I can't

...

Could I be anything  
Other than  
[death maiden]



## Laughter

By Erin Lewy

In the corners of my eyes  
I feel the warmth  
Meaning you are close at hand

Laughter bubbles up from nowhere  
And this smile won't  
Shift from my face until sleep has come to stay.

Words need not be formed,  
Thoughts barely shifted,  
Before your presence fills the air

I feel your arms around me  
Everywhere I go,  
As soon as I call.

And I am still waiting  
To find what it is  
You would ask in thanks.



# News and Announcements

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## Dedicant Program Completions

Patricia Combs of Abhainn Glass Grove,  
Completed June 30, 2005  
David I. Foster (Gannd) of Sonoran Sunrise Grove,  
Completed July 4, 2005  
James Lock of ProtoGrove of the Red Earth,  
Completed July 5, 2005  
Ann Shaffer of Black Bear Protogrove,  
Completed July 11, 2005  
Julian Enfys Cheek of Longleaf Pine Protogrove,  
Completed August 14, 2005

## New Protogroves

Moon Flower Protogrove, Clarkston, WA, August 4, 2005  
Hollow Hills Protogrove, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire, United Kingdom, September 12, 2005

## New Chartered Provisional Groves

Grove of the Red Earth, Norcross, GA,  
Chartered August 3, 2005

## Guild News

### Bardic Guild

The Bardic Guild is pleased to announce that, through dedication and perseverance, Jenni Hunt has attained the rank of Fochlóc Filidh on August 1st, 2005. Please join me in congratulating our newest ranked Poet and seek her out when you can to experience her poetry for yourself.

### Sig News

#### Brewer's SIG

The big news for the Brewers SIG is the application for Guild status. Elections have been held and we are adding a couple of missing sections to the bylaws.

### Grove News

#### Rogue River Grove

Based in Medford, Oregon, the Rogue River Grove, ADF holds monthly rituals on the second Saturday of every month. The pagan-friendly public is always welcome as well as children when accompanied by a parent or guardian. During the winter months these will be followed by video

presentation related to Druidry, such as the BBC's series on "The History of Britain", etc. For details, please send an email to: [RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net](mailto:RogueRiverGrove@earthlink.net) or see our website at:

<http://www.adf.org/groups/groves/rogue-river>

Blessings, Aigeann (Senior Druid)

#### Whispering Well Protogrove

Whispering Well Protogrove, ADF continues to meet 2-4 times a month for education, ritual and fellowship. Our online group is growing at a steady pace and new folks locally have shown an interest in our local group. We held our Autumn Equinox Rite at the shores of a local park with a lake and had 22 people in attendance. Our teens performed the legend of Persephone in a comedic rendition that was enjoyed by all. Mabon marks our 1yr anniversary. We continue to network with other groups in the area which is fostering some good relationships. 3 of our members are working towards the completion of the DP while another is working on the requirements of the Study Program. Our teens are actively developing a basic understanding of our religion and practices of our spirituality. Two of them are enrolled in Oberon-Zell-Ravenhearts School of Wizardry. Over all we've had a fairly good year as a new Protogrove and have confidence that next year will prove fruitful as well.

Sharon Braswell

<http://groups.msn.com/GroveoftheWhisperingWell>

#### Raven's Cry Grove

Raven's Cry Grove is meeting more frequently, once a month for work on the Dedicant's Program. One of our members is finished with his DP, and waiting for it to be approved, and many more are working towards completion. We celebrated both Lughnasadh and Mabon with Awen's Breath Protogrove, and our efforts at the Los Angeles Pagan Pride Day brought forth a wonderful joint ritual between the two. We hope to see more in the future.

#### Grove of the Rising Phoenix

In the last quarter, the Grove of the Rising Phoenix has done some outreach by participating in the EPIC meetings in town - a pagan networking group that meets twice a month. We have also had the good fortune to be asked to speak with some 7th and 8th graders (ie 12 - 14 years old) of one of the local UU churches on paganism, as part of their comparative religious studies.

As this is going to press, we are preparing for another Pagan Pride Day, where we will have an information

booth as well as doing one of the morning rituals. We are all looking forward to spending a fun day together.

Our grove elections are in process, and our final elections will be held within the week. Some new officers will probably be serving in the next year.

Our attendance has been down at our rituals and drumming circles, which usually happens in the summer in Phoenix. Hopefully Samhain will herald the larger crowds that we had been getting last spring, prior to summer hitting Phoenix. Even with the decreased attendance, however, we continue to attract new members.

In addition to our drumming circles, we are hoping to start a free lecture series at the public libraries on sustainable living as part of our community service. More about that as it happens.

We have been getting out quarterly newsletters, which are distributed around town. The latest newsletter is also available online at:  
<http://www.risingphoenix-adf.org>.

Bright autumn blessings,  
Linda, Sr. Druid  
Grove of the Rising Phoenix - ADF

### Regional News

This quarter has seen the inception of two new Protogroves here in the Northwest; Great Land Protogrove, ADF in Alaska and Moon Flower Protogrove, ADF in Washington, which brings the total number of Groves and Protogroves in the Northwest region to 8.

### Alaska

Anchorage: Great Land Protogrove, ADF

### California

San Jose: Amber Oak Protogrove, ADF

San Francisco: Otter Bay Protogrove, ADF

Sacramento: Sierra Madrone Grove, ADF

### Oregon

Portland: Abhainn Glas Grove, ADF

Medford: Rogue River Grove, ADF

### Washington

Clarkston: Moon Flower Protogrove, ADF

Spokane: Whispering Well Protogrove, ADF



Speaking of Washington, the ADF members in the Puget Sound area of Washington have created a yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pugetsoundadf/>, for those interested in networking and events.

As I look out my window this afternoon and see the leaves begin to turn golden, I am reminded of just how beautiful our region is, and how we will soon be gathered around our hearths before crackling fires during the long winter. I am also reminded of our hardworking ADF members, who have worked tirelessly to bring Our Druidry to the community and how incredibly grateful I am to be a part of it.

-Anne Lenzi  
NW Regional Representative



## NOTICE:

If you're a Regional Druid for ADF or the leader of a Grove, Protogrove, Guild, Kin or Special Interest Group and has information to share, please send it to our News Director at: [amairgin@pacbell.net](mailto:amairgin@pacbell.net)

We also except birth and death announcements, engagements, weddings, man/woman making rites and other life marking events.

If you are interested in advertising your groups upcoming events, our Advertising Director Selene Tawney would love to hear from you. Send your inquiries to her at: [selenetawny@adelphia.net](mailto:selenetawny@adelphia.net)

We Want To Hear From You!



# Little Acorns

## A Trip to the Ocean

By Lady DragonStar



Collin and Aidan were excited. Mommy had taken them to see the ocean. They were laughing as they flew their kites in the autumn breeze, and Brigid played in the sand. The cool wind was blowing with just a hint of crispness in the air.

After a long day of playing, they sat down to a picnic on the sand. “This is a very special place,” said their mother as she spread out a blanket and began to unload their dinner from her wicker basket. “Does anyone know why this is such a special place?”

“Because it’s fun!” shouted Aidan.

“Well, that’s one reason,” said Mommy, “But there’s another. You see, a beach is a place where the Three Realms that are sacred to Druids meet. Can anyone tell me what the Three Realms are?”

“The Sea, the Land, and, umm...” said Collin.

“The Sky!” said Aidan.

“Very good. The Three Realms represent many things. The Sea represents the past, our ancestors and the waters from which life evolved. When we want to talk with the ancient Mother, the sea is a good place to do that. We can float on the water as Mother Ocean rocks us like a baby in a crib, and even the most strict grown up can play like a child in the surf.”

“This sand,” continued Mommy, letting the sand flow through her fingers, “represents the Land, the present, the now, our lives every day. See how the sand slips through my fingers? No matter how tightly I hold it, it will keep slipping through. In fact, the tighter you hold on, the more quickly it slips through. The future is always slipping through the present and into the past, which is why you should always make the most of the time you have.”

Collin and Aidan giggled as the sand slipped through their fingers. Brigid threw the sand in the air.

“The sky represents our future. The scent of what’s to come always blows in on the wind. You can smell it in the air, you can feel it on your skin, but you cannot see it, except in the clouds and in the stars that guide us along our journey.”

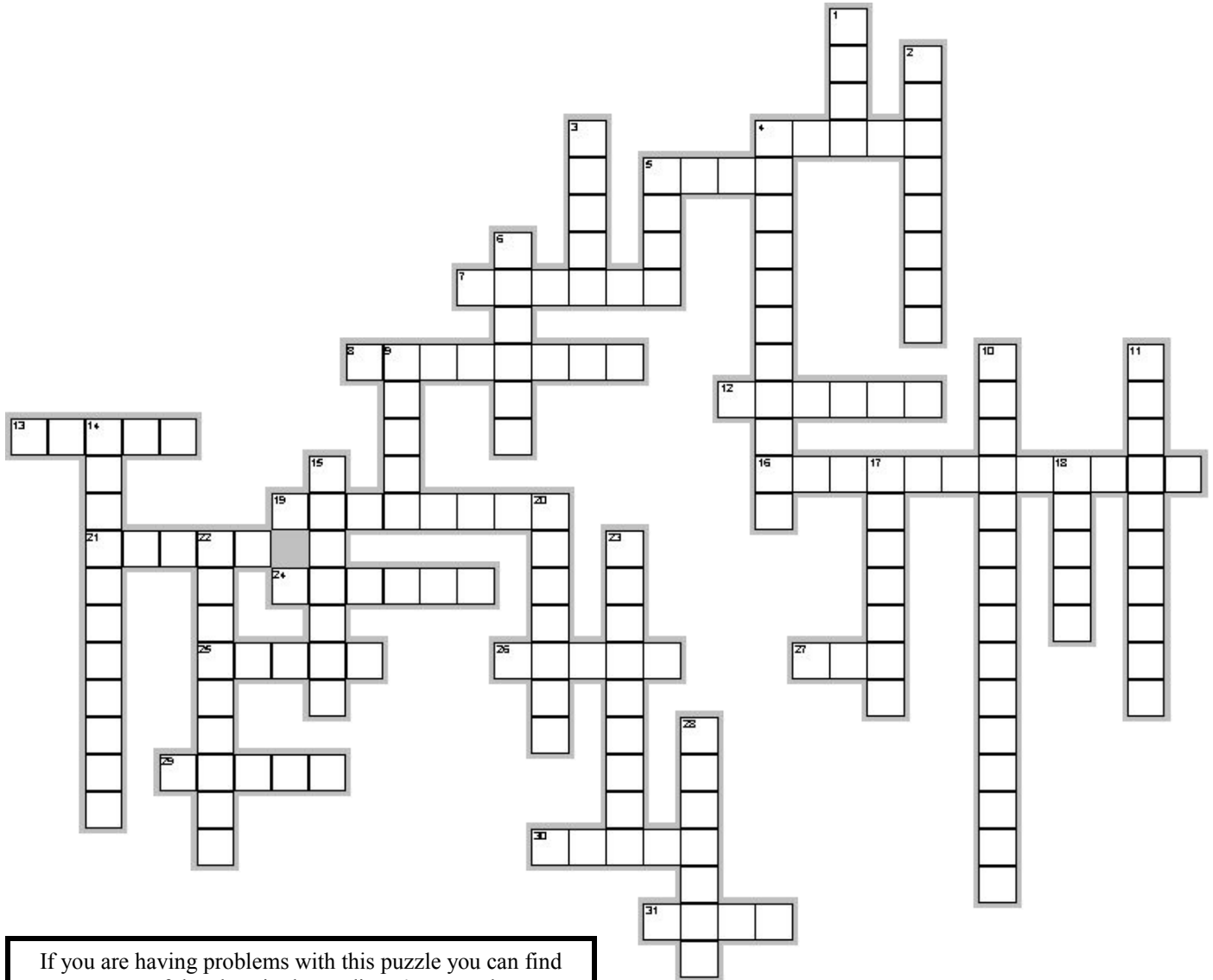
“We can of course experience the Three Realms everywhere every day,” said Mommy. “Remember that when we get home, and try to see how many ways we can contact the Realms every day.”

---

ACTIVITY: How do you experience the Three Realms every day? Try listing some of the ways.



# Crossword Puzzle



If you are having problems with this puzzle you can find most of the clues in the Dedicator's Manual.  
Good Luck!

## Across

4. Beltaine is the feast of the?
5. The culmination of the DP?
7. He set up the ADO in 1717 (last)?
8. RDNA was formed at what college?
12. Midrealm = the cauldron of?
13. Manaz, Wunjo, Ansuz etc?
16. Edward Williams' legacy ended up being this?
19. ADF's most famous Bard?
21. Keeping the old ways?
24. In ADF "to do right & live well" is AKA?
25. He spoke of Druids cutting Mistletoe in white robes?
26. Sorbus Aucuparia is aka?
27. Bonewits' 3 initials
29. The Perceptors name is (first)?
30. He set up the AOD in 1781 (last)?
31. The Transformer?

## Down

1. Fasti author?
2. The 3 deeds- the grove, the sacrifice, the?
3. Gardner's creation?
4. The first family?
5. Ross Nichols' creation?
6. The Archdruids name is?
9. Drawing down the moon - author (last)?
10. ADF in Irish?
11. Spring Equinox is AKA? (2wds)
14. Wicca, Druidism, Asatru, etc are forms of?
15. This Celtic calendar was found in France in 1897?
17. The uncommon opposite of deasil?
18. Huath, Coll, Onn, etc?
20. ADF formed out of a small group surrounding the Archdruid in what U.S. city?
22. ADF's basic meditation
23. The big dipper is aka?
28. He proposed the 3 classes of warrior, priest and provider? (last)

# Contributors

---

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*What to Do if Meditation isn't for You*,  
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*Trillium Review* pg. 24

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## Other Contributors:

Chris:), [2paws@telus.net]  
Crossword Puzzle



# Submission Guidelines

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Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of artwork, articles, poetry, letters to the editor, and anything else that might be of interest to our readers. Submissions, and especially artwork, relating to the turning of the wheel of the year and the celebration of the High Days are particularly encouraged. Submissions from non-members will be accepted, however, if space is constrained, preference will be given to submissions from ADF members. Certain pieces may receive preference, depending on available space.

## References and Notations:

Since excellent scholarship is one of ADF's goals, please document sources of ideas and materials that you used for your writings. Detailed endnote references are preferred rather than simply providing a bibliography. Please follow the standards for references in the MLA Handbook or Style Manual. We will not accept submissions with footnotes, as they require considerable editing to convert to endnotes.

## Medium of Submission:

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments to the Oak Leaves submissions address:

**[oak-leaves@adf.org](mailto:oak-leaves@adf.org)**

Please send one submission per attachment specifying the format, author's name, your email, and membership status. Be sure the title of the piece and your name are at the top of the page, and you have checked it over for spelling and grammatical

We will also accept electronic submissions on IBM PC-compatible diskettes, sent to:

OL Editor,  
P.O. Box 112,  
Colfax, IL 61728.

Please do not upload the article directly to the wiki as this has caused some confusion. Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: Rich Text Format (RTF), PDF or MS Word. Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender, unless specifically requested.

## Art Submission Guidelines:

We now accept photos as well as drawings and computer generated pictures. Some of the color pictures will need to be modified to black and white but we will do that as necessary. We would like to have pictures submitted at 300 dpi, and in a useable format such as .jpg, .png, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at [metrophage@gmail.com](mailto:metrophage@gmail.com). We are not currently accepting hard copies of your art.

## Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: January 1st,  
Summer: April 1st,  
Autumn: July 1st,  
Winter: October 1st

# Crossword Puzzle Key for Last Issue

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## Across

4. **HADES**—Greek Underworld
5. **ELJUDNIR**—Norse: Hel's hall
8. **CREMATION**—AKA Funeral Prye
9. **DRAUGR**—Norse: Walking Dead
11. **SUMMERLANDS**—"Pagan" otherworld
15. **CAESAR**—Roman: He died March 15, 44BC
16. **DOMOVOI**—Slavic: Household spirit
17. **TIRNANOG**—Land of the young

## Down

1. **CHARON**—Greek: The Ferryman
2. **CERBERUS**—Greek underworld guard
3. **ELYSIUM**—Greek Paradise
6. **WILDHUNT**—IE: (2words) Oskorei, Herne etc.
7. **BARROWS**—AKA- Tumulus, Kurgans etc
10. **YAMA**—Vedic God of death
11. **STURLUSON**—Norse: Composer Prose Edda (last)
12. **LARES**—Roman: Deceased ancestors
13. **BRIGIT**—Irish: Keening is attributed to her
14. **HELHEIM**—Norse underworld

# ADF DIRECTORY

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Grove Organizing Committee  
Chair: Vacant  
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Brewers SIG  
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Children's Education and Parenting SIG  
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# Ár nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874



## Membership and Subscription Form

One form per person please.

Beside your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, please indicate whether the information is: Publishable (P), meaning it can be printed in ADF publications and we can give it out freely to people who wish to contact you; Sharable (S), meaning we can give it out to ADF members who request it; or Confidential (C), meaning that only the Mother Grove and ADF office staff will have access to it.

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

The information on this form represents a:

- New Membership 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am 18 years of Age or Older: { } Yes { } No (If no, see waiver below.)

### ADF Membership Rates:

Regular Membership \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$15/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prisoner Membership (includes Oak Leaves) \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$15/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$15/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Non-Members \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$20/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Due \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form with your check or money order (made payable to "ADF" in U.S. dollars only.) Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. There are special rates for Prisoners. Please contact us if you are a prisoner or are assisting one. This form may also be found online at: <http://www.adf.org/joining/join.html>.

### Under 18 Membership Waiver

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.

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 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Notary Seal:

