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Summer 2006 ~ Issue No. 33





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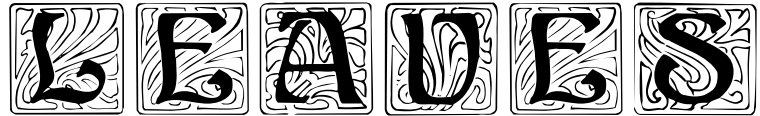
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~*Spiritual Healing*~

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Archdruid

As this issue reaches you, the festival season will be well under way and I hope that you have had the chance to attend at least one festival. If not, and the opportunity presents itself, go for it! Meeting with other members in person is one of the most enjoyable aspects of membership and there are usually ADF style rituals to attend at the festivals. Coming together to worship and learn, making new friends, and seeing old friends, always makes a festival a memorable occasion.

With the nice weather upon us, I further hope you are able to spend some of your time out in the woods and wild areas or at least in your local parks. Being able to sit among the trees and listen to the wind move through them and 'talk' to you is a wonderful way to refresh your spiritual center. Plus this is a very good time to give honor to our kindred from the natural world. As you meditate among the trees, you can scatter bird seed or leave peanuts for the squirrels and birds. Or you may choose to feed the fish in the ponds and lakes around you. Any way you can find to be among the spirits of nature is worthwhile!

And of course summer is also a great time to continue with your studies. Whether it's lying in the sun by the beach reading or sitting under a tree with a good book, it's always enjoyable to learn more about our ancestors and how they lived and worshipped. In all of your endeavors this summer, may the Kindreds be near you and may you feel their presence!

Bright Blessings,
Rev. Skip Ellison

OAK LEAVES

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Integrating Depression and Spirituality

By Brandon Newberg

The Witchtower Poll

I became interested in the relationship between Contemporary Paganism (hereafter, simply Paganism) and depression when it began to dawn on me, after years of dealing with depression, that I had been deeply changed by it. The changes were not only psychological or emotional, but also spiritual.

My view of depression shifted from psychological disorder to spiritual teacher. From this perspective, I went from resenting my depression to accepting it, even seeing meaning and value in it. I began to wonder if other Pagans have attempted to integrate depression into their spiritual paths.

High and low I searched for the ways in which today's Pagans are endeavoring to understand and integrate their depression experiences. I rifled through library shelves, asked as many of my Pagan friends as I could, and scoured the Pagan's best friend - the Internet. What I found was that although Paganism has evolved no ubiquitous beliefs about depression, many Pagans are struggling with its relationship to spirituality in various ways. Further, a rich cache of resources are available to help individuals attempt to integrate their depression experiences. What I present in this article is a survey of the most interesting resources I've found to date.

Please note that the information that follows is meant only to help integrate the experience of depression, not to treat or alleviate it. In all cases, spirituality should not take the place of conventional medical help, but should complement, support, or enable it. Those with severe depression symptoms are encouraged to seek professional assistance.

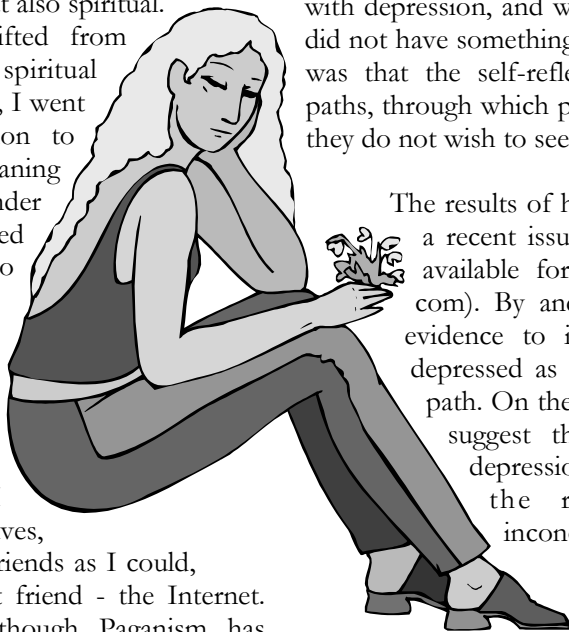
That said, we commence our survey with a curious poll, which inquired whether an Occult path might cause depression.

In the forums of Wicca UK's web site, columnist Obsidiana recently posted a poll asking whether respondents who had experienced depression believed that beginning an Occult path instigated, improved, or had no effect on their depression. Obsidiana had observed many Occultists struggling with depression, and wondered if their chosen paths did not have something to do with it. Her hypothesis was that the self-reflection demanded by magical paths, through which people may discover dark sides they do not wish to see, may lead to depression.

The results of her research were published in a recent issue of the *Witchtower* (#8 2004, available for download at www.wiccauk.com). By and large, Obsidiana found no evidence to indicate that people became depressed as a result of finding an Occult path. On the contrary, evidence seemed to suggest that they generally got over depression more quickly. However, the results were admittedly inconclusive.

A major finding of Obsidiana's study was that depression seemed to result less from Occult practice and more from one's internal make-up. In other words, depression isn't a place on the Occult path so much as it is a basic human phenomenon that Occultists may experience. Although nothing indicates that Occult paths are not capable of triggering depressions, depression as such is certainly a wider phenomenon than a purely esoteric understanding would suggest. An attempt to integrate depression into Pagan spirituality may therefore do well to approach it as a fundamental experience, like joy, childbirth, or death, rather than as an Occult-derived experience like initiation, revelation, or communion.

Another important note made by Obsidiana was that there are many different varieties of depression, including atypical depression, bipolar disorder, bipolar II disorder, and more. It stands to reason that



attempts to integrate depression ought to recognize and account for its many faces. Not all forms of depression may serve the same spiritual function. Attention should be given to the specific, perhaps even unique, manifestations of depression in a person's life. The authoritative source for disorders is the DSM-IV (the manual psychiatrists use to diagnose), of which a much-abridged version is available at www.psychology.net/dsm.html. Obsidiana's findings give us a direction in which to move our research. If depression is to be understood as a basic human experience, we can look not only for esoteric but also psychological understandings. We therefore turn to holistic practitioner Jonathan Zuess, who has recently published an understanding of depression in terms of vision-quest.

Jonathan Zuess and the Vision-Quest

In his book *The Wisdom of Depression* (1998), Jonathan Zuess, M.D., distinguishes between "major depressive disorder" and the "depressed response." Major depressive disorder is severe, with bouts that may drag on for years, and is likely to require medical treatment (Zuess discusses many alternative therapies in addition to medication). The depressed response, on the other hand, typically lasts no more than a week and should not be treated with medication. Why not? Because, says Zuess, the depressed response is nothing less than the body's natural impulse to go on a vision-quest. That is to say, depression signals a person's need to enter a new phase of spiritual fulfillment. Medication would only stifle a natural, inborn response.

In support of his theory, Zuess notes that many depression symptoms, including low appetite, desire to be alone, and preoccupation with inward contemplation, are analogous to time-honored techniques used by Shamanic seekers to bring on visions: fasting, isolation, and meditation. Depression, Zuess says, produces symptoms that encourage us toward vision-quests.

The "vision-quests" that Zuess has in mind seem to be confrontations of personal problems, like overcoming attachment to a departed loved one or dealing with the loss of a job—struggles worthy of spiritual value in their own right—but the door is also left open to higher and deeper mystical revelations.

Zuess's theory of the depressed response as a natural vision-quest integrates depression into a larger realm of human experience. As a holistic theory, it is agreeable to many Pagan palates. It may provide the beginnings of a foundation for an integrated understanding of depression.

What Zuess's theory does not provide is a way to integrate the more severe form of major depressive disorder. If depression is a natural, more or less, benign impulse toward vision-quest, it would seem that it has in major depressive patients gone horribly awry. Major depressives remain locked for years in personal hells, and the problem-resolving vision, like a light at the end of the tunnel, is not forthcoming. Although Zuess devotes a full half of his book to describing alternative therapies for sufferers of major depressive disorder, he stumbles to integrate their experiences into a vision-based understanding.

To enrich our psychological view of depression, we go now to renowned psychotherapist Carl Jung.

Jung and Endogenous Depression

In the view of Carl Jung, a distinction can be made between "reactive" and "endogenous" depressions. Reactive depressions are triggered by external events, such as losing a job or suffering the death of a loved one. Endogenous depressions, on the other hand, have no clear external trigger. They well up from within, and Jung associates them with a blockage in the "individuation process." In layman's terms, endogenous depressions have to do with frustrations in a person's path of personal development. Depression, in this view, is an obstacle or symptom of stagnation in that path.

The Jungian understanding of depression is sophisticated far beyond what may be presented here. For a general introduction to Jung's writings, see *The Portable Jung*, edited by mythologist Joseph Campbell (1971).

With Jung we arrive at a rich psychological understanding of depression, an alternative or complement to Zuess's vision-based understanding. Depression is, in Jung's view, integrated into the larger process of individuation, a quest that may very well be termed spiritual.

In addition to the Jungian approach, there are other schools within the larger field of transpersonal psychology which may be of help to Pagans. For a useful reader of transpersonal writings on the topic of depression, see *Sacred Sorrows*, edited by doctors John and Andrea Nelson (1996).

Psychology has thus far been helpful in our attempts to integrate depression and spirituality. For our next fare, we turn to a more specifically Pagan concern: magic.

Magical Approaches

One of the more widespread practices of Pagans is magic. Magic may be used to draw nearer to deity as well as for material concerns, and some Pagans are even using magic to help deal with depression.

With depression relief, as with any magical undertaking, the metaphysical basis is assumed that all things are deeply inter-connected. Even where no causal or empirical relationship is apparent to the orthodox scientific eye, objects and phenomenon in the cosmos are related by a web of energy. Manipulation of connecting energies is the essence of magic. By tapping the appropriate energies, depression may be affected. So goes the theory.

This understanding integrates depression into a world view where all things are interrelated. While this theory does not single out depression as a spiritual experience (any more than any other experience), it offers a practical foundation from which depression may be approached. Since magic is for many Pagans deeply tied up with spirituality, depression acquires a spiritual dimension by default. In any case, once this theoretical foundation is accepted, one may begin to take direct spiritual action in dealing with depression. For those who find magic effective in dealing with emotions, published spells and rituals are available. Dorothy Morrison's book *Everyday Magic* (1998) provides a spell for depression relief and a spell against apathy. Many magical treatments for depression have also been posted online. A simple search for the keywords "ritual for banishing

depression" will get you started.

It is worth noting that, rather than treating depression directly, it may be more effective to magically treat factors contributing to depression. For example, a person may conduct a ritual to explore issues of childhood neglect, loss of self-esteem, fear of success, or whatever other factors are tributaries to the river of depression. Rather than slashing at branches, this approach attacks the root. Depression is an extremely complex human phenomenon, and it would be well to treat it as such.



With magic we move from the realm of theory to that of action. For an alternative that combines both theory and action, we now take a look at the modern movement called Contemporary Shamanism.

Contemporary Shamanism and Soul Loss

Basing its theories and practices on those widespread in indigenous cultures, Contemporary Shamanism is an attempt to adapt traditional healing systems to a modern environment. The movement is also referred to as Neo-shamanism or simply Shamanism (though the latter uncomfortably leaves no distinction between it and the traditions on which it is modeled). In recent decades Contemporary Shamanism has been increasingly influential in Pagan circles. It is almost unique among Pagan paths in that it offers a specific explanation for the cause of depression: *soul loss*. Like other illnesses, depression is caused by the departure of a part of a person's soul. It is the shaman's task to retrieve the lost part so that the person may become whole again.

For sympathetic Pagans, the soul-loss theory offers an alternative or complement to the conventional medical model. Depression is found to have a spiritual dimension, and the pain suffered acquires meaning as an experience of the path to reunion and wholeness. Thus, Contemporary Shamanism is one Pagan path that is capable of integrating the depression experience into a greater world view and turning an otherwise painful ordeal into something of spiritual value.

On the other hand, one follower has noted that, "many who seriously follow a shamanic [sic] path find depression can become a constant companion" (www.shamanscave.com, 1993-2004, see bibliography for specific URL). The reason for this is not entirely clear. It may be that this highly individualistic path isolates a person from other people, with whom they can never fully share their ineffable other-world journeys or insights. It may be that "seriously" following the way predisposes a person to suffer more as a necessary trade-off of accelerated spiritual advancement. Then again, it would be wise to recall from Obsidiana's study that intense self-discovery is not necessarily associated with increased depression.

Contemporary Shamanism has also received criticism over issues of cultural appropriation. These issues are significant, and have yet to be worked out satisfactorily in the community.

All in all, Contemporary Shamanism offers a possible foundation for an integrated Pagan valuation of depression, though not without difficulties. For accessible introductions see Michael Harner's *The Way of the Shaman, Tenth Anniversary Ed.* (1990) and Sandra Ingerman's *Soul Retrieval* (1997).

With Contemporary Shamanism we come to the end of our published resources for integrating depression and spirituality. To conclude, I want to draw attention to a resource not accessible via the printed page: the wisdom of individual Pagans. But before we may arrive at that final resource, there remains an important question:

Why Integrate?

Until now we have surveyed the resources available to help Pagans integrate their depression experiences, but we have not yet explored why that effort may be undertaken.

The spiritualities of Pagans are as complex as those of any other faith, and there can be no definitive rationale defining tasks of this nature. However it is worth noting that depression, for those who endure its trials for long periods, amounts to a calamity of life. Theologizing calamities has a long tradition in the history of religions, Pagan or otherwise.

Writers of the Old Testament made sense of their people's conquest by foreign powers, and their deep distress in captivity. Ancient Pagans of nearby Mesopotamia did the same when misfortune befell them, though their writings are less well known today. As for personal suffering, the Book of Job hands down a mature and unflinching spiritual address to such trials. These are only a few examples, and since the focus of this survey is today's Pagans, these few shall do. Suffice to say that integration of suffering has precedent. Theological traditions have not always addressed psychological issues, just as those issues have not always been at the forefront of cultural discourse.



Nevertheless depression is a form of suffering which disrupts a person's world view, and calls into question the foundations upon which a positive view of life stands. An integrated view of depression may rectify the calamity, and restore a sense of positive order to a person's total experience.

What integration is not, is a sentimental affectation of depression, nor is it a romantic predilection for it. In all genuine cases depression is a horror, a debilitating experience from which the sufferer can only seek deliverance. What happens along the road to recovery is what is of value. Just as the examples cited from tradition do not reflect suffering for suffering's sake, but embed it within an ultimately affirmative world view, so too does integration of depression strive toward an affirmative value.

Thus the effort of integrating depression and spirituality is a complex one, not without precedent, belying recognition of depression's meaningful place in life.

Now with this question considered we finish this survey with notes from individual Pagans, since it is individuals who ultimately do the work of integration.

Unpublished Insights

Since Paganism is not an organized religion but a movement of individuals, I wanted to take my research to the opinions of individual practitioners. I consulted as many of my Pagan friends as I could, and found a general trend. Most felt that depression and Paganism do not have any necessary or causal relation, but that depression may be incorporated into Pagan spirituality at least as well as any other life experience (consistent with Obsidiana's findings).

Some of my friends made other apt points regarding the relation of Paganism to depression. First, depression can be an impetus for spiritual exploration. Depressed feelings of emptiness or pain may goad a person to seek a higher meaning to life. Second, Pagans may be slightly more apt than the general population to find spiritual meaning in depression, if only because they come to Paganism by choice rather than inheritance—they are seekers by nature, and therefore likely to seek meaning in experiences such as depression. Finally, a handy five-point guide to dealing with depression might run as follows: 1) face it head-on; 2) find out what makes you happy and what makes you depressed; 3) realize that there is no quick fix; 4) be honest with yourself and others, and find someone to confide in; and 5) understand that it's okay to feel depressed—don't let anyone tell you that what you're feeling is wrong.

In addition to these insights, one may find or form support groups to get further unpublished wisdom from peers. One such resource is the Yahoo! group called Bi-polar_pagans. This email-list forum offers a safe place for bi-polar people of various Pagan or similar paths. Discussions cover medications, herbal remedies, articles, prayers, personal experiences, and support for each other in times of trouble.

Conclusion

This essay has presented some of the most helpful information I could find relating to Paganism and depression. Obsidiana's *Witchtower* poll explored the question of whether Occult paths help or hinder struggles with depression. Jonathan Zuess' theory of

the depressed response as a vision-quest offered a starting point for integrating the depression experience into a larger, holistic world view. Carl Jung's theory of endogenous depression as a block in personal development gave a further basis for founding an integrated approach, and transpersonal psychology extended the avenues. With the practice of magic, our survey moved from theory to direct action. Contemporary Shamanism provided the first glimpse of an expressly Pagan approach to depression, though one not without problems. Among the published resources there also emerged the unpublished voices of individuals, bringing the survey home. These resources constitute a diverse store to draw on in the effort of integration. This effort has complex motives, precedents in tradition, and goals of supporting an affirmative world view.

Efforts are under way among authors, academics, and individuals. Pagans are working out the value of depression in myriad ways. Yet no commonly-shared beliefs about depression have so far evolved in the greater Pagan community. It falls to individuals to forge their own links between depression and their paths.

I would like to end this essay with a poignant quote from Lynna Landstreet:

Why some of us experience more than our share of darkness, I don't know. But it seems to disproportionately happen to creative, intelligent and/or spiritual people, and I tend to think that the capacity for depression is tied in with those qualities. People who are more conscious, more sensitive, more fully alive, experience the dark side of life with much greater intensity, because we have the capacity to experience everything with greater intensity! So it may in a strange way be as much a blessing as a curse—though I know it never feels like it at the time! (www.wildideas.net, 2001)

This essay, minus a few changes, was first published in The Witch's Voice, www.witchvox.com, on June 1, 2004. Since its first publication it has seen reprint on other sites and has appeared at two major Pagan conferences.

Thanks to all who responded with positive encouragement and insight. To those individuals whose wisdom enlightened the "Unpublished Insights" section, I extend special thanks.



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Key to Crossword Puzzle for Last Issue

Across

2. **ANIMALS**—Bull, Horse, Stag etc
4. **SPRINGS**—Castalian, Asklepios, Bath, etc
7. **MOUNTAINS**—Kailash, Fuji, Olympus etc
8. **DAVID**—The Hexagram is AKA the star of?
11. **CROSS**—A symbol of Christ
14. **DRUM**—Mother Earths heartbeat.
16. **YINYANG**—Symbol of balance
20. **EARTH**—Gaia, Tara, Tellurian etc
21. **OATH**—Solemn Vow
22. **DRINK**—Soma, Nectar, Ambrosia etc
23. **MISTLETOE**—Plant venerated by the Druids
25. **MECCA**—Sacred Kaba Mosque is here?
26. **WHEEL**—Earth's cycle of renewal is aka?
27. **STONEHENGE**—Famous stone circle
28. **BIRDS**—Corvus corax, Athene noctua, Parus atricapillus etc
29. **BODHI**—Tree of enlightenment

Down

1. **ANKH**—A symbol of life
3. **LOTUS**—A flower that grows in mud.
5. **GOLD**—Its symbol is Au.
6. **MARRIAGE**—Matrimony
9. **ACROPOLIS**—Sacred Greek Temple
10. **FIRE**—AKA Paewr or Egni
12. **SWASTIKA**—AKA -The Gammadion
13. **TEXTS**—Kabaka, Bible, Rig Vedas etc
15. **MYTH**—A traditional story accepted as history
17. **ELEMENTS**—Earth, Air, Fire, Water.
18. **RIVERS**—Boyne, Danube, Granges etc.
19. **DOVE**—Bird of peace
24. **TREES**—Fraxinus, Quercus, Olea etc
25. **MENORAH**—The 7 Branched Candlestick
26. **WELLS**—Brigits, Slain, Chalice etc
30. **OM**—Hindu Symbol of the absolute

Self Healing: Body, Mind, and Spirit Connection

By David Smith

What, really, does it mean to 'self heal'? For many, this may mean a journey of introspection, perceiving life lessons from emotional/psychological wounds (healed and unhealed), or culling wisdom from past mistakes and blunders. For others, it may be to find that spark of self-realization- finding the truest strengths and how to utilize them. And still, for others, it may be to deal with an illness- pulling life reserves up wherever they can be found to control and combat a sickness or disease. All of these journeys share the same dynamic- they all require an internal 'balance', a blending of will, focus, intention, energy, and a heightened level of awareness. That might seem like a lot for a human brain and body to deal with all at once, but it is not only quite possible, but natural (and even simple when balance is realized).

The most basic, underlying element to balance and internal healing on any level is the breath. Without the proper breathing, not only will we not find the balance, but we may find ourselves much worse off. Whole body breathing awakens the body's natural energy (or 'chi' as it is called in the Chinese arts), allowing it to flow throughout the body, nourishing cells and tissues. The breath is the unifying element of the body, the mind, and the spirit. Simply allowing yourself to breathe fully, deeply, and gently instills a sense of deeper calm, feelings of well-being, and greater awareness. Here is a very simple breathing meditation I share with my students:

Sit comfortably, hands resting on your knees. Close your eyes, and begin to breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth. As you inhale, feel your lower abdomen expand, as though your whole stomach is filling with air. As you exhale, allow your abdomen to contract again, all air leaving through the mouth. As you breathe gently and fully, see and feel a constant cycle, an unbroken circle of breath and energy. As you continue to breathe in this cycle, then see and feel your breath as a color (any color for this exercise that feels right for you). As you inhale, see and feel this color as your breath, filling your whole being with the color - feel its temperature, feel its vibration. Allow it to permeate every fiber of your body. As you exhale, allow it to leave completely. Continue this cycle of breath and color, feeling the balance of inhale/exhale, color filling/color leaving. After a few minutes, allow all of the remaining color to leave fully, leaving behind only the breath. As you return to normal conscious awareness, connect with your being- feeling at peace, calm and re-vitalized. Open your eyes and reflect on what this has to teach you.

This exercise is only a very brief example, but simple breathing meditation not only rejuvenates the

physical body, but sharpens both the conscious and subconscious minds (we need balance and healing there, too!) Many of my students have given me valuable feedback about the benefits they have gained from this process of

the breath integrating into the subconscious. It has become a crucial part of their coping processes, and has enhanced purposeful intention in their daily lives. This ability to focus mentally and energetically is a core skill in the martial arts (and within the magical arts too, as I have come to understand). If one's



mind is cluttered, disconnected to the physical body (in the martial arts specifically), and untouched by the resources of energy around, within, and throughout; then focus of any kind is unattainable. If focus is lost to you, then your intentions will stray as well. If one is on a path of healing on any level, this would become a very rough road indeed.

So, how does one maintain that crucial level of focus and intention, especially if things get rough? It can be very simple: self-trust. For some, that element in of itself is often wavering. But, there is truth in its simplicity. Perhaps connecting with that core of self-trust that's down there somewhere should be a pre-eminent healing goal in the first place (no matter what other dynamics are at play). I am always telling my students to 'keep their center', whether we are doing gentle internal work, or close quarters defensive tactics, the importance of maintaining that sense of intention is ever present.

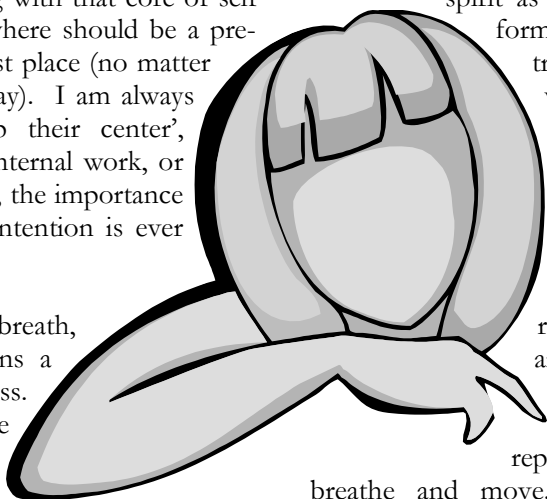
This process of balancing the breath, body, and mind also awakens a heightened sense of awareness. By bringing up all that life energy for self-healing, and mindfully directing it in a flowing current, we can also feel our deep connection to the vibrant, living world. It is an important understanding that we can not only tap into our own energy, but can blend into the living flow around us. Working within this balance and energy of mind/body/spirit, we can add healing to the life flow around us, as well as within ourselves. This circles back to intention. Just think to yourself- if I focus on self-healing with positive intentions, and I am after all integrated with the living flow around me, what effect will that kind of energy and projection have to that living world? By connecting with your own rhythm, you can connect with the living rhythms, energy (and needs!) of our Mother Earth. It then becomes truly a positive symbiosis: as we heal the spirit within, we add healing to the world (s) around us. This dynamic can also be reciprocal, if we allow ourselves to be open to it.

I have felt this on my own path: the more energy I have focused on my own healing has strengthened

my awareness to the life force of the world around me. It is a matter of making the connection. For example, just as I teach my students to flow with and utilize the energy of an incoming attack (rather than bashing themselves against it), we can also blend with the living forces around us. This integration awakens us to the love, compassion, and healing that we have to offer, and that is there for us to receive. As I share with my students, we can walk our paths with an open hand, and an open heart.

I see the powerful healing potential of mind-body-spirit as one with the simple internal forms my students do to begin their training. Each motion, in some way, expands beyond the practitioner's own circle, connecting energetically to that which is around them. As well as centering them internally, they expand physically and mentally. They reach skywards as they stretch and breathe, then twist again earthwards as their minds and bodies spiral in a circle. They repeat this constant cycle as they breathe and move. I have found this to be tremendous medicine on all levels - shifting the mind as we move the body and nourish the spirit. This also can be done as a ritualistic form - we build energy, we allow it to envelop us and flow through us, and we direct it in a positive direction. It is even a dance of life - celebrating our vibrant selves as a whole, balanced and aware being, connected to and an element of the living Earth.

That a person can mindfully direct their own consciousness towards healing and empowerment is a powerful realization. And, we all have this ability within us. We can unlock this if we have the self-discipline, the intention, and most importantly the love and trust to allow ourselves just to do it. To share a quote from my teacher, Grandmaster Yuen Khan: 'The empty hand can save your life, the empty mind can cause you to fail in all that you attempt, the empty heart will cause you to self-destruct. Seek the balance.'



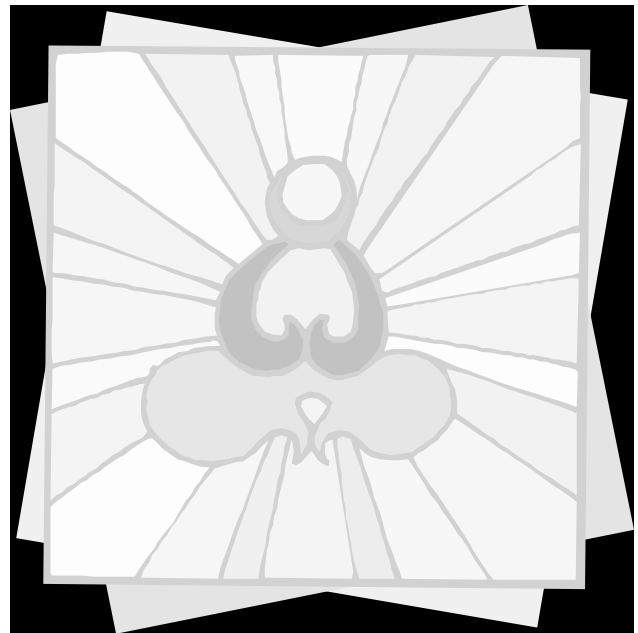
Healing Power of Myth: Personal Reflections

By Jason Cook

In late fall 2001, about the only real feeling I had was anger; otherwise I was numb. In the summer of 2000 I had found myself in the hospital for eight days, diagnosed with endocarditis, which is an infection of the heart wall. It's a silly disease arising from an infection in the bloodstream. In my case, I had a strain of bacteria in my bloodstream that had nested above a valve on my heart; it looked like cauliflower on the echocardiograms. This particular strain of bacteria exists in just about every human's mouth. I have a small heart defect, what many would call a heart murmur, which made me more vulnerable. It's the kind of thing many might have, where you take antibiotics prior to having your teeth cleaned. I took them; they apparently failed. A few months later, I'm in the hospital.

In short, I was working too hard and ran myself near into-the-ground the month of that dental appointment. I got my teeth cleaned. That's all. The antibiotics failed; my system just wasn't up to the task and I was vulnerable. I almost worked myself to death. The time between the dental appointment and the hospitalization was one of steadily, but subtly, declining energy. I began to fall asleep at my desk. I finally went for a physical at a practice set up to do physicals and got a misdiagnosis. Later, I went to a doctor for an initial visit in order to get set up with a local physician. I brought the report from the physical. Halfway through the appointment as I am describing my symptoms, she leaves the room. Turns out she called the head of infectious diseases at the local hospital. I went to the hospital and had about a gallon of blood taken out of me for cultures.

That day, my left hip began to hurt. My doctor keyed into that. It got steadily worse over the course of the day. After I had been to the hospital, I climbed the stairs to my apartment and got inside the door. Lying on the floor because I was exhausted from dragging my left leg up the stairs and my general lack of energy, I fell asleep until my wife came in. The next morning I couldn't get out of bed and the paramedics took me in. Eight days spent in the bed and barrels of intravenous antibiotic fluids later, I left the hospital with a walker, a pump that kept antibiotics in my



system 24/7 and a limp. I did get rid of the walker and the pump.

So, this brings us to late fall 2001. I worked then at a large, international investment bank. While I didn't work in lower Manhattan, a lot of people I know did. I was in Midtown Manhattan on September 11th. I got to Grand Central from Time Square as quickly as I could and caught the last train before the city was shut-down. I needed to be home; I never have figured out if I was a coward.

So, feeling completely a wreck, fairly sure that I was headed for somewhere I didn't want to go, I called the employee assistance program for a referral to a therapist. I went to a guy who listened and told me something to the effect of "sounds like you are having a mid-life crisis." Mid-life crisis? I was 30. But, apparently a serious illness can have similar effects on a person he explained. Not to mention, he said, he was seeing a lot of people in my industry those days who were dealing with varying degrees of depression following the attack. We had lost friends, colleagues, rivals. We had walked those halls; we had drunk heavily at Windows On the World, pretending we were Masters of the Universe. We could have been there.

He recommended I read *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell. I did and as I followed his recounting of the shared themes of these myths, of the various archetypes, I came to understand a message that life is a journey, a struggle. Always has been, always will be. The reward of this journey isn't wisdom, or enlightenment, or anything of the sort, it is, as Campbell so famously put it, not about "the meaning of life, but the feeling of life". I needed to feel alive. Healing is a process, one that in some instances may never be complete. My journey has continued. I've taken up climbing. I now have a daughter through whom I came to truly hear the voice of the Gods. Like everyone else, I have bad days and times when I feel depressed, or angry, or frustrated, but I've come to accept that this is part of the deal, part of the package. So are the days when my hip hurts and the limp is worse. I just now try not to be angry about

being angry, or frustrated by feeling frustrated.

Why is this relevant to you? It may not be, but as I continue to build my practice, my spirituality, I am looking at how I've gotten to where I am now. As I close my first year of being consciously Pagan, I look back and realize that I may have found my way onto this path through a therapist who knew that the power of myth could heal. Through understanding ancient tales of how humans relate to the cosmos, tales so true that they are timeless, I came to grasp that all we have is the feeling of life and therefore it is life itself that is sacred. My Pagan belief was thus unknowingly born. Our religion, with its embrace of the sacredness of life, the conscious contact with the divine in each moment of our lives, allows, nay, compels us to feel alive in each moment. Grasp that and you can heal yourself.

A Test of Faith

By Moonhawk

There is no greater test of faith than tragedy. To have your hopes and dreams suddenly ripped from you is very difficult to face. You ask yourself why, you ask yourself what you did to deserve this, and you try to make sense of the world again. On January 12, 2006, we had our hopes and dreams ripped away. On that night our much wanted baby girl was taken from us – and the world stopped making sense. These things happen to other people, you never imagine that they could ever happen to you.

One of the first things I remember thinking when they told us she had died was "why?" That, unfortunately, is the one question that is almost never answered, and that leaves you with another hole in your life. Most of us want to have our world in a nice, neat package, and having unanswered questions just doesn't sit well with us. When the people around you are not able to provide you with answers, you turn to someone – or something – else. You start to ask yourself what you did to deserve this, who you angered and why they would be so cruel. You blame yourself, your partner, the world around you... your Gods. This is a huge hurdle for your faith – do you lose your faith in your Gods?

In the past weeks I have met a number of women who have experienced this type of loss, and I've come

to realize that I am one of the lucky ones. I have come out of this experience with my faith intact. I admit that it was very, very hard, and I admit that I could not bring myself to celebrate Gwyl Ffraid. It just didn't seem right to me to be celebrating hearth and home when mine was so in shambles with an empty nursery waiting for a baby that wasn't coming home. But slowly I began to remember other things. I remembered thinking in the hospital that Danica was safe with her family, knowing that my grandmother and grandfather would be taking care of her in the Otherworld. Once I started to let these thoughts surface, others began to surface too. I know in my heart that my Gods are not so petty as to punish me in this way for an insult; their displeasure could be made known in other ways. And with these thoughts come healing.

Life is full of challenges that we need to face, and these challenges will either break us or make us stronger. This is a challenge that I survived, with my faith intact, and perhaps even stronger than before. I am looking forward to Alban Eilir and the celebrations I have planned. I am moving on, though I will never forget my firstborn daughter. With luck, in the future, we will be blessed with another child – maybe even another daughter. Once again, I turn to my Gods for guidance on the path of my life, a path full of bumps and detours, but I a path am happy and proud to be walking.

A Norse Runic Meditation Rite

By Wayne Earl

“Know how to carve them, know how to read them,
know how to stain them, know how to wield them,
know how to ask them, know how to bloody them,
know how to send them, know how to sacrifice
them” (Havamal 144)

(Author’s Note: All Eddic quotations in this article are from Chisholm’s translations of the Eddas, listed in the bibliography. This translation and its accompanying commentary is an excellent resource for anyone called to the Aesir and Vanir – I recommend it highly).

The Havamal, which means “The words of Har”, is one of the most important primary sources of lore for those called to worship and work with the gods of the Germanic peoples. Har is one of the many names of Odin, and the Havamal is essentially a collection of folk wisdom, very similar in form to the Judeo-Christian book of Proverbs. Within the Havamal is Odin’s tale of how he sacrificed himself to himself and discovered the runes.

Today, the runes (specifically, the runic set known as the Elder Futhark) are most often used in an ADF context as a tool for divination. Using the runes in this manner is barely scratching the surface of what the runes are and are capable of. The runes themselves are alive – they are powerful, concentrated symbols of the magical forces that shape the nine worlds. Their might is endless.

As members of ADF, we are called to spend time in meditation and mental training. As pagans called to worship and work with the Teutonic gods and goddesses, we are called to know the runes and how to use them. This rite seeks to do all of this – we shall sharpen and train our minds using rune lore, practice meditation on a daily basis, become intimately familiar with ADF cosmology and how it applies to the Norse hearth culture, and if we are consistent

with our practice, we just might end up fulfilling our Dedicant Program meditation requirement with this rite. That’s quite a deal, huh?

Runic Study and Object of Focus

What we are absolutely not doing here is divination. The point of the exercise is to draw the rune deeply into one’s being – to connect and commune with the rune, to make it a part of you. Divination is a fine usage for the runes, but it is my firm belief that until one is very intimately familiar with the forms and beings of the runes themselves, one cannot wield the runes for divination very well at all.



What we also aren’t going to do is spend a lot of time each day doing this. I suspect there are people who are so spiritually evolved, they can spend hours each day in meditation. I’m not one of these people. The Norse gods are, above all else, practical beings. Jobs need to be

completed. Families need to be fed. Pets need to be walked. It is important that we be consistent with this, but this rite only takes a couple of minutes to do.

We are going to examine and meditate upon one rune a day in a systematic, precise manner, for only when approached in this manner can the runes be known. What I do is prepare a series of index cards, one for each rune, and take them one at a time, one a day, in order, from Fehu to Othala. Here’s an example of how you make a set of runic focus cards.

First, you must have a copy of Thorsson’s *Futhark: A Handbook of Rune Magic*. If I were to invent a statistic, Edred’s books and his work with the Rune Guild is probably the source of 95% of the runic work out there. This book is a must have. Yes, there are other works, but when starting in the beginning, it is better to start with the book that started it all.

Take the first rune – that’s Fehu. On one side of the index card, write the rune for Fehu. On the other side, jot down information about the rune – turn to page 20 in Futhark for what you’re looking for. Take a couple of notes from Edred’s commentary, take a couple of notes from his magical workings and key words list. Got that? Then, you do the same thing for each rune, until you have one for each rune.

You use one card per day, in the order that the runes come (at first). I suggest going over each card, in order, a couple of times before mixing them up. Once you’re comfortable with them, then you can randomly pick a card for meditation. There is no race, no rush, and no finish. The point is slow, steady progress and effort.

After a few months of practice, you will see that you can easily recall the basic meanings of the runes, and that if you do employ the runes in divination, you’ll find you’re connecting with them on levels you were previously unaware. At this point, you may want to begin to meditate upon the various rune poems, and use them in substitution for your set of rune cards. At some point, you might want to make a new set of cards, using instead the commentaries of other authors (Diana Paxson and Freya Aswynn are both good sources for this). This will give you another perspective on the runes, and deepen your understanding.

The Runic Meditation Rite

Note: This meditative rite was inspired by the runic meditation work laid out in Edred Thorrson’s, *The Nine Doors of Midgard*, which is the study curriculum of his Rune Guild. Though it was inspired by this work, this rite is entirely my own, and was designed to fit within the context of ADF cosmology. The only item that Edred’s work and my own share in common is the bordering of the actual runic meditation with certain stanzas from the Havamal. That being said, I suggest that anyone wanting to dive deeper into runic studies take a good look at Nine Doors – it is an extremely comprehensive work, integrating ceremonial magic with runic works.

I recommend this rite be performed once a day, every day. Once you get the swing of things, it shouldn’t take any more than 5-7 minutes to complete. I recommend being consistent with this, and work it into your daily routine, either in the morning or at night. This rite is suitable to be performed any time (I do it in the morning, myself). The longest time spent will be in the construction of the runic focus item, but those can be saved and reused indefinitely.



Items Needed

- Bell
- Altar
- Candles, or other source of flame
- Object representing tree
- Drinking horn or cup
- Offering bowl (well)
- Liquid for the horn (purified water, milk, mead, ale, etc)
- Runic study/focus item (flash card, etc)

Text *in italics* is meant to be spoken out loud.

The Start of Ritual

Participant is before the altar. The candles are not lit, the horn or chalice is full of liquid, but the offering bowl (the well), is empty. The bell is sounded.

Thus begins the rite.

May weal be worked with my working.

The Tree of the World

Participant gestures towards the image of the World Tree.

Mighty Yigdrasil! The axis of the world!

Har's steed, the nine worlds touched!

May my rite be done in your blessed shade

And nourish your knotted branches!

The Sacred Fire

The fire/candle is then lit.

Sacred Fire, may your warmth fill my halls

May the kindreds be drawn near by the light of my harrow

The Three Kindreds

Each of the three kindreds is then welcomed to the

hall. The drinking horn is raised, and participant takes a drink from the horn.

*Gods and Goddesses! Aesir and Vanir! My Eldest Kindred!
I welcome you to my home and hall!
May I walk with you today in wisdom and might!
Hail the Gods! Hail the Goddesses!*

A measure of drink is then poured into the empty offering bowl for the gods.

Participant takes another drink from the horn.

*Mighty ancestors! The root of my heart and family!
I welcome you to my home and hall!
May I prove myself worthy to be called your descendant!
Hail the Ancestors!*

A measure of the drink is then poured into the offering bowl for the ancestors.

Participant takes another drink from the horn.

*Land Wights and Spirits!
I welcome you to my home and hall!
Bring fruit to my rite, as you bring fruit to the fields!
Hail the Land Wights and Spirits!*

Participant empties the horn into the offering bowl. The well is now filled.

The Sacred Well

Participant gestures towards the offering bowl.

*Sacred well, kindreds blessings filled
Waters wyrd, of secrets known
Whisper your wisdom into mine own ear
Hail the well!*

At this point, the cosmology is complete. Note that I do not open a gate here, as this is intended to be a rite of meditation, not a magical working. If you feel the need for a gate, feel free to open one here.

The Centering of Energy; Preparing for Meditation

At this point, I spend a few minutes before the altar in silent meditation. I generally use the Two Powers meditation here, or a simple silent breathing meditation will do. Use whatever technique works best for you. Once you've reached a quiet state

(usually takes no more than 2-3 minutes or so), continue with the rite:

*"I know that I hung, on a wind swept tree
for all of nine nights,
wounded by spear, and given to Odin,
myself to myself,
on that tree of which no man know
from what root it rises.*

*They dealt me no bread, nor drinking horn.
I looked down, I drew up the runes,
screaming I took them up,
and fell back from there" (Havamal 138-9).*

At this point, the rune focus item is, well, focused upon. If you've made the runic cards as per my example above, you might spend some time repeating out loud the qualities and meaning of the rune. You might want to sing the name of the rune over and over. You may want to examine the card a few times, then close your eyes and attempt to repeat this information from memory.

If you're focusing on the rune poems, you may want to read them out loud. You may want to sing them. Once you know their English translations well, you might want to attempt them in their original languages. The point here is that the work should combine as many senses as you have – you want to see the rune, say the rune name, hear the meanings.

One thing that I often do at the end of my meditation is to silently meditate for a few moments upon the meanings of the rune, and see what other associations come up for you, based on your own life's experience. Oftentimes, I jot down the results of this in a notebook once I'm done with the rite. You'll find that the meanings of the runes evolve over time as you grow and mature.

Once the period of meditation is complete, the participant says the following:

*"Now are Har's sayings said, in Har's hall
needful for the son's of men
unneded by ettins' sons.
Hail the one who speaks them, hail the one who knows them
useful to he who gets them
hail they who heed them" (Havamal 164).*

*This runic meditation has now ended
Hail Har and his gift of the runes!
May their might enter the very marrow of my bones!
May their wisdom nourish my mind and my heart!
May their joy echo laughter in my home and hall!*

At this point, the flame is extinguished, and the water from the well is given as an offering, usually outside to a living tree or whatever is appropriate for your own situation.

May the runes bring might and life to you, your home and halls.



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A Call To Heal

By Jude Howison

When I sat down to write this article, I wanted to say something about what it means to be an ADF Healer. I thought of discussing the mental and spiritual aspects of disease. I thought of discussing healing rituals and calling upon the Gods to aid our clients. As I thought of all the things I could talk about, I started thinking about the more fundamental questions of what are disease and healing.

Every time I turn on the TV or leaf through a magazine, I'm bombarded with ads for drugs. There are drugs to treat everything from acne to wrinkles and everything in between. And if you have side effects from one drug, there are other drugs to fix that too. Our society seems to equate any and all physical or emotional discomfort with disease, and disease should be "cured" with drugs. If the drug company advertising is to be believed, every one of us should be taking some kind of drug regularly. I'm not saying that all drugs are bad or unnecessary. I, for one, am happy that we have ibuprofen when I pull a muscle, and I certainly would not withhold chemotherapy from cancer patients. Most drugs are indeed helpful to many people. What I question is marketing medications as though all you need for a happy life is to take the right pill. But is this truly healing?

For many people the word healing is synonymous with curing disease. Certainly that is part of healing, but is it the only goal? I think not. In many cases complete cure is not a realistic goal. For instance, we

can't cure extreme old age. Instead our efforts as healers would be better directed toward relieving suffering, improving quality of life and, in the end, easing the transition to the next world. But how do we do those things?

For me, healing is more about returning the patient to a state of balance in their mind, body and spirit. A state where they can enjoy their day to day life without letting the illness take over. Alternative therapies such as Reiki, yoga, crystals and chakra meditations are very good at helping patients to achieve this mind-body-spirit balance. These forms of therapy, and many others, treat the patient as a whole being. By addressing the energy flows of the body and acknowledging the power the mind has to direct every body function, they reach deep into the person often addressing an underlying cause of illness.

The ADF Healer's Guild exists to encourage the study and development of alternative therapies. Using our talents we can help people manage medication side effects and relieve suffering. When a patient is encouraged to be involved directly in the healing process, they gain a sense of control over their condition thereby making the mind-body connection. By addressing their spiritual needs, we can help them to tap into their inner strength and call upon the aid of the deities to bring peace and comfort. Working in conjunction with western medicine we have the ability to make a significant improvement in a patient's outcome, allowing them to lead as long and fulfilling a life as possible. That is what I see as the true calling of a healer.

A Wonderful Weed

By Patricia Combs

As a child I had the luck to grow up on a working farm. We had acres of fruit orchards, a hay field, pastures and a small forest with a pond.

My grandparents had fled from Kentucky in the 1920's after my grandfather was involved in some less than savory activities which included running "shine", also known as moonshine. Grandpa bought our farm in a very rural section of Oregon.

Grandpa did quit running shine, but he never quit making hooch*. For those who don't know what exactly hooch is, it's poor man's wine. He made it by picking up buckets full of the overripe fruit that had fallen from the trees (he'd sell the best fruit), and dump them in an old bath tub out in the wood shed. Grandpa would take a wooden shingle and smack the fruit around some, pour a twenty pound sack of sugar over it, then fill up the tub with water from the well. He'd let that 'work' for a few weeks and have hooch. A hillbilly's delight!

During the late salmon run, our local Native Americans would bring beautiful fish to grandpa's farm to trade. I remember it taking almost all day to finish their trading. This must have been over 40 years ago because I was a small girl at the time. Grandpa would trade buckets of hooch, and wooden lug boxes of apples and potatoes for enough salmon, which we canned, to last all winter. I continue making salmon patties for supper in the winters like my grandpa taught me.

So how does "The Weed" come into the story?

I didn't mind my parents and grand parents when they had told me never to run around in the barn without shoes on. Sure enough, I stepped on a great big old hand made nail!

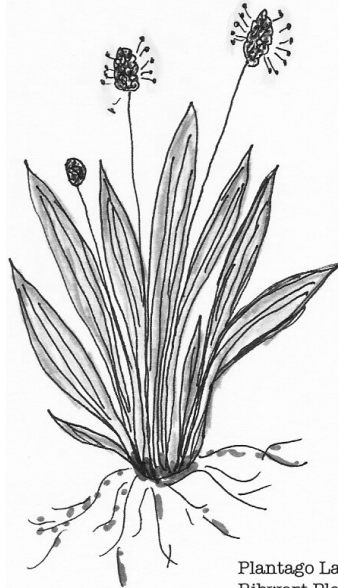
That old rusty nail went so far up in my foot you could just see it from the top. You probably could

have heard me howling in the next county. My foot bled really well so all the adults figured I'd be OK. Back then, the common thought was that if a wound bled a lot, you didn't need a tetanus shot... (Yeah right. No matter what, if this happens to you, get one!) Within hours I couldn't walk on the foot.

Like it was yesterday I remember sitting on the back porch bawling about my foot when the Native Americans pulled up in an old truck to see about trading with my grandpa. The men paid me no heed at all and walked around the house to find grandpa. I kept bawling.

I hadn't noticed the Native American lady in the truck but, suddenly there she was standing in front of me and staring. Like any child I showed her my 'owie', I remember she had very gentle eyes. She examined my foot and the nail hole carefully. My mother came out to check on me and the Native American lady made a signal with her hand. (I never knew what she meant.)

The lady then walked around the yard looking in the grass, and finally picked some leaves of a weed. Somehow the lady let my mom know that she wanted a wrapping and a clean covering for my foot. When mom brought everything, the lady took the leaves and pressed them firmly to the sole of my foot over the nail hole, wrapped it with gauze, and put a white sock on over the top. She said some words and held up three fingers to my mother. She kept repeating this until even I understood she meant – for us to change the leaves every three days. (Please note, that when I was a child the older Native American women usually spoke only their tribal language.) After that she showed my mother the specific leaves to look for in the grass. Then she just turned around and walked back to the old truck to wait for the men. I never saw her again.



Plantago Lanceolata
Ribwort Plantain

Before you think that my parents didn't do *anything* about my foot wound let me assure you that they had treated it with bag balm, iodine, and, by soaking in salt water which was a common folk remedy of the time.

After three days, with the treatment of leaves I could limp on my foot, and after six days I could run on it. Within nine days my mom told me I was cured. The leaves had stopped turning black in a circle matching the nail hole which meant the wound was healed.

After my foot wound, my whole family began to use the weed regularly on the farm. We found it works on wounds of man or beast. It is good for many skin problems including scrapes, burns, cuts, etc. You can make a poultice or salve out of it. Over these long years I have never forgotten that Native American lady and the weed that healed my foot.

So what *is* this magical wonder? The lowly Plantain. The species used on my puncture wound was '*Plantago Lanceolata*', also known as Ribwort¹.

The Plantain is a common and hardy weed that grows on roadsides and in lawns. The *Lanceolata* variety is most common in the dry regions of north central Oregon. The leaves are a medium green in color and rather deeply ribbed on one side. The plant shoots up seed spikes topped with a brown cone shaped head with tiny hairs jutting out from around the center which end in golden pollen. In my region of Oregon, The Dalles, I have never seen the Plantain grow more than one foot high. Even when you mow it low, it will forgive you and grow back.

In my travels to the more moist areas of Oregon, like between Hood River and Tillamook, I have found the more widely known variety *Plantago Major* instead. It also has ribbed leaves, but the leaves are shaped more like a spade. The third variety of Plantain, *Plantago Coronopus* or Bucks Horn, I have not seen in my region of Oregon.

A quick way to make a poultice of Plantain is to pick a generous handful of leaves and put them in a blender with about one half cup of water and chop until it has the consistency of spinach dip². In fact, once on a camping trip in the middle of nowhere our bulldog got stung by a wasp in a very tender area. I noticed a Plantain. So I picked some leaves and chewed them, then pressed the mass on her sting. She quit crying and the sting healed quickly.

I think the Plantain is a useful plant and certainly one worth studying. It has proven itself to me and my family to be a wonderful weed.

*Moonshine is a cooked grain alcohol 'run' through a still. Hooch is a fermented alcohol, made from fruit or vegetables.



¹ Nicholas Culpepper, *The Complete Herbal*. 1649. As translated in Culpepper's Color Herbal. Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. New York. 1983.

² Kathi Keville, *Herbs for Health and Healing*. Berkley Books, New York. 1998

As some of you know, October, our list moderator, is stepping down effective this Wellspring. We would like to thank him for his dedication to and work for ADF. We wish him the very best in his other ADF endeavors.

Observations of an Irish Druid

By Kelly O'Connell

To begin, I want to state that I am sticking specifically to the use of mythology to justify my personal observations about the holy days (fire festivals) currently observed by Irish Pagans. As this paper is relating specifically to myth I will only be addressing those days that have direct mythological connection as referenced in the Wooing of Emer, a story of the Táin Bó Cuailgne¹.

I open these observations speaking of Samhain. Samhain (gaelge for October) is honored as a festival of the New Year which starts on the eve of November 1st². It is also the festival of the dead, but that may seem to be an odd reason to celebrate. If death is the ending of life why celebrate it as a new year? It is for this very reason that I will address the significance of Samhain as part of my closing. I believe the festival will be easier to understand if put in the context of completing the circle of life.

From the time of Samhain we move on to La Fheile Bride (Brigid's Day/Imbolc/Oilmele) which is traditionally honored beginning the eve of February 1st³. La Fheile Bride is a celebration of the coming of spring. This is the return of the light from the darkness of winter. In spring we prepare and/or create the fields which will produce our crops throughout this year. Because of this time of preparation it can be said that spring is the season of creation. What about Brigid in Irish mythos relates to creation? It is Brigid's relationship to her child. During the Cath Maige Tuired, Brigid's son, Ruadan, is sent into battle and is killed. Upon hearing of his death, she makes the trek to find his body on the battlefield. When she finally comes across it, the power of her love for her son is so strong that her lamenting (keening/wailing) over his body can be heard through all Ireland. This myth puts her in the role of the loving mother and her child as the symbol of creation. Perhaps this return of light can also be seen as the emergence of the child from the dark womb.

As we move on, the next festival honored is that of Bealtainne. Bealtainne (gaelge for May) is traditionally honored beginning on the eve of May 1st. The festival also referred to as Beltane or May Day.

This celebration is in recognition of summer. During summer the fields begin to produce crops, the trees become a lustrous green and we see the wildlife frolicking in sexual euphoria. Life begins to flourish. For these reasons, this season is generally associated with the time of fertility.

It is this flourishing of life that connects summer with Danu⁴ (the mother the Gods) and Bile (the father of man). It has been the popular misconception that Danu and Bile were consorts. There is no such myth for this couple. They are never directly associated in any Irish story. My contention is that their connection lies in the story of the Invasion of Ireland (referenced in the Annals of Inisfallen) by the Sons of Mil (Milesians) to which it is believed that all Irish ancestry traces back. Bile, in this myth, is the father of Mil, the grandfather of his sons, directly making him the father of mortals (man). It is this conquest of the people of Bile over the clan of Danu that leads to the flourishing of Ireland. Unfortunately, with this triumph brought mortality, reminding us that with life there must be death. Every beginning has an end. Summer is a time of fertility and light, keeping in mind the balance of the dark times.

Soon summer gives way to autumn. This is the time of Lug and the festival of Lúnasa (Lughnassadh) which is celebrated beginning on the eve of August 1st. In the Cath Maige Tuired Lug is known as Lug Lamfhada (of the Long Arm). In this story Lug is the god of all arts who eventually becomes the new ruler of the Tuatha De Danaan after Nuada, the De Danaan ruler, steps down. To end the battle, Lug faces off with Balor, a Fomorian who is subsequently his grandfather. Balor had one eye that required 4 men to lift open the lid. Anyone within gazing distance of his eye would become helpless, leading to their death. The myth states that upon the opening of his eye, Lug throws a rock (or spear) directly into it, causing not only Balor's death, but the death of the Fomorian king, Indech mac De Domnann, thus ending the 2nd Battle of Moytura. It is this victory over impending death that makes Lug significant to autumn. As the leaves around us turn shades of red, we are reminded of the blood Lug spilled to save the lives of his people. At this time we destroy the fields

in harvest to get us through the coming darkness as our fields will no longer be fertile. This is the time we face our past and prepare to move on into death then into the Otherworld.

As I stated in the opening, I have left my observations of Samhain to the end to show how the year comes full circle. Samhain is the festival of winter honored beginning on the eve of November 1st. Samhain is the time of darkness and of death. According to the Cath Maige Tuired, the Dagda (all-father/creator) consorted with the Morrigan (death) over the river Unshin on this night in order to ensure the fall of the Formorians and the return of prosperity to the De Danaan. On this night, the Morrigan vowed to stain her hands with the blood of Indech mac De Domnann. This joining of the Gods is a statement of the time. In winter, we enter the darkness and infertile times. This is the time that we face the death of the vegetation around us and the disappearance of general life all around. However, it is also the time that we prepare for the re-emergence of light and the coming of spring. It is a time to prepare for the new life. Samhain is not only the dark times of death, but is also the dark times of life. The New Year is the celebration of our return to the womb and our preparation for re-birth. Samhain is the beginning and end of the circle, or perhaps, in a

more Irish sense, the passing point of a spiral of life.

¹ “No man will travel this country,” she said, “who hasn’t gone sleepless from Samain, when summer goes to its rest, until Imbolc, when the ewes are milked at spring’s beginning; from Imbolc to Beltine at summer’s beginning and from Beltine to Brón Trogain, earth’s sorrowing autumn.” (The Tain, translated by Thomas Kinsella)

²This applies only if one honors the holy days according to the calendar currently in use and does not honor the holy days by lunar significance, seasonal experience, or an adaptation of the Coligny Calendar.

³As a side note, I would like to point out that if one conceives during the time of Bealtainne they would ideally, 9 months later, give birth during the time of Brigid, creation and new beginnings.

⁴When referencing Danu I find it easier to stick to the popular use of this name. I am also using the popular belief that she is the mother of all the De Danaan as opposed to the possibility that she is simply the mother of the 3 Children of Danaan/Danand as referenced in the Cath Maige Tuired.

When Kindred Meet

By Hedgewizard

*Circles glowing; turning, ever stone, and ever burning
The moon is full on harvest night.
How fade the spheres of wrong and right
When kindred meet*

*The earth in oneness spirits flashing across the land
Leave no room to lay or stand
No tracks upon the drifting sand
When kindred meet*

*The Avin glows in streams of emerald green
Lights upon all who breathe are seen
It's then the living becomes the dream
When kindred meet*

Nerthus

By Wayne Earl

*I wake to the sound of my name
The sound leaping from the leeks
Barren fields are blessed
And sister Sunna dances across the land*

It is my time again to rise.

*Attend me and prepare
I will bathe in the running river
Soil freed from my fingertips
And wrap myself in morning's new dress*

I am nearly ready now.

*Weave me a gift, my child
Jewels of green and red and blue
Tie back my hair with ripened vine
And place a garland around my neck*

Kiss me, my child. Live again.

Run Valdr

By Rodney Cox

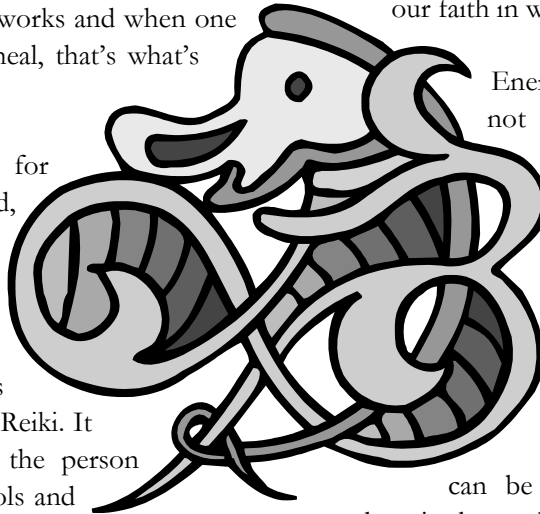
How does energetic healing relate to ADF's dedication to Indo-European studies? Good question. I'll just come out and say that it probably has very little to do with it. But that's ok. Energetic healing, such as Reiki, has become quite popular in recent years and can be a powerful tool for health. It is a good thing to learn because it works and when one is dealing with being able to heal, that's what's important.

I have been a Reiki master for many years and have developed, with the help of my Gods, Freya and Odin, a Reiki-like way of using the Norse Runes and other symbols to heal and to work magic. Rún Valdr is similar to, but not the same as Reiki. It does not use the energy of the person using it, it makes use of symbols and the system is passed on with an attunement.

Putting together the system I call Rún Valdr took a long time and was almost a spiritual quest. It first started with Freya giving me a symbol. After that, to quote Odin, "Word from word gave words to me. Deed from deed gave deeds to me." From this one symbol, I received more. After a time, I realized that I could make a comprehensive system that would rival Reiki. And so I asked for an attunement process and this was given to me by Odin. Unlike Reiki with its three attunements to pass the entire system, Rún Valdr has only one attunement. It is not split up and after the single attunement; the recipient is then able to not only use Rún Valdr, but to pass it along to others.

I must give thanks to my Gods for Their great gift of allowing me to develop Rún Valdr. It has brought me much closer to Them in so many ways.

But what does this mean for a healer? It's like Reiki, but it's not really. So what? Well, Rún Valdr is a very versatile energy system. It can be used for healing as well as for magical purposes and is especially well versed in the making of magical or charged objects. Rún Valdr can be used to work on healing of the body, mind and subconscious. The system was given by Norse Gods, and energy system or no, it is tied to our faith in ways that Reiki cannot claim.



Energetic healing systems, while not as ancient as herbalism, and perhaps not entirely Indo-European, are very useful. They can be used anywhere with little or no preparation. Thus they have a place in ADF's Healers Guild. Energy work can be used to charge objects to impart healing or magical effects. It can be used at a distance to heal anywhere in the world.

There is another aspect of Rún Valdr that is of great use. One can use meditative and/or journeying techniques to visit their Gods and gain a symbol representing Their presence. When used, one can be instantly within the company of one's Gods, filled with Their might and love. Being in the presence of beings of such power can change you in fundamental ways. While Rún Valdr is useful and powerful for healing and for magic, this is the ultimate use for this system as I see it. To allow us to become closer to our Gods in ways we have not experienced before, without actually channeling Them.

So, with this brief explanation Rún Valdr I hope I have shown that it, as well as other energetic healing systems, have a valid place within ADF and the ADF Healers Guild.

The Trees: Teacher and Guardians Part 1

By RavenWolf

The quoted poem is one that came to me while I was sitting underneath some Trees, communicating with them, and looking for information and inspiration. Trees are a great source of creativity for me, and I do my best to spend as much time with them as I can. I believe most people can develop intense relationships with trees, and do so at some point in their lives. watching children play around trees is informative, it is as if they are making the trees apart of their games. They often talk to them, climb them and even speak with them. I had a favorite tree when I was a child, and those of us who were lucky enough to be around Nature when young, will undoubtedly remember that special tree we went to- to dream under, to share thoughts with, and to feel protected when vulnerable.

Much of this article will be anecdotal, because I'm basing a lot of it on my experience with Trees, and what small teachings I've been privileged to learn from them. Therefore, all of this is directly linked into my actual experiences with Trees - if yours differ, that's great! I'm not trying to say I have the truth about Trees - I leave that to them.

I am reminded of a wonderful book on the healing properties of various trees; where Jacqueline Memory Paterson said, "A tree is a memory bank, just like humans and the earth itself. All store by various means data from life as it is lived around them. By working with trees, their memories emerge, in a process somewhat akin to telepathy." (Tree Wisdom, 1997, p5) This brings us to the first question: How do Trees "talk"? Modern culture is fixated on the visual and the audible - experiences that can be verified. Trees communicate more on what I would term an emotional level. In order to understand them, you have to be willing to take things at their pace. Sit underneath a tree, relax, smell the earth, grass and leaves around you, watch the way the sun (or rain!)

plays through the branches, listen to the wind move the tree and clear your mind. Allow yourself to slow down - especially your thoughts. Trees view time differently from us; they are much more in tune with the seasons, and the cycles of the climate. Individual

days or hours may mean nothing to them. When sitting underneath a Tree's branches you are directly within their energy field - which can be quite large as it encompasses the space taken up by the interaction between branches, the trunk, their roots and slightly beyond. So , when you are relaxed and receptive, a tree can communicate with you.

*Hold Aloft the sky,
Patient companions.
Knit the world together,
With your roots.
Whisper forgotten tales
As your leaves move.
Dance in Friendship
With our love.*

When I mentioned that I believe that trees communicate on an emotional level, it is that you probably will not hear a "voice" in your mind, for trees communicate in a holistic fashion. The way the leaves sound, the way the shadow patterns of the branch change, and the interaction of the animals and birds around them can be a part of their communication. Trees are a host to an amazing amount of other life - birds, animals, plants, and fungi are all to be found within their environment and seem to form an important part of the tree community. Often a sense of something, like a vague feeling of deja vu, might come over you. We are far too liable to dismiss such things as fanciful or just an idle thought. Act on your instincts, learn to trust them. The more you work with trees the easier this will become.

I believe that part of the reason we find it hard to imagine anyone could relate to trees as another, different but equal race, is that we have been taught that trees are not "alive", that is to say that they do not possess "consciousness". Many early cultures has an animistic approach towards nature- i.e. they believed that everything (including rocks, plants, animals, etc) had a Spirit, and therefore we could communicate with them. This is a common Shamanic belief and one I share.

Before leaving you with these thoughts I would like to share another useful way to communicate with a trees, one I have found to be a very helpful tool. When you are ready, bring a sketch book, or writing pad with you. Sit down, relax and really look at the Tree in its entirety. You might see some formations of bark, shadows and light which draws your eyes Pick up your pencil and draw it. It does not have to be accurate, and don't concentrate on making it pretty - go with your feelings. I really have no talent for drawing and anyone can do this, no college

degrees required. Eventually you will not need the paper and pencil anymore, though you may still enjoy sketching them.

In Part two of this series I will discuss the importance of trees within different societies, what they can teach us and how they even communicate between themselves. We will bring all this together with what trees have to do with Druidism. Look forward to seeing you then...

Garanus Meditation

By Michael J Dangler

When Three Cranes Grove, ADF, started doing public ritual, we chose not to call on a deity for a gatekeeper, though there were many available. We wanted to build a relationship with a nature spirit, helping to spread our worship across the Kindred. We spent some time working with various nature spirits, and as I look back on it I'm a bit surprised how long it took us to see the perfect nature spirit: we needed to look no further than our name.

For two full years, we invoked the crane, named Garanus after the Gaulish word for "crane." This past September, we added a new piece to the invocation: a meditation that precedes the actual invocation.

The meditation is a trick I learned at Trillium in 2005, when Kirk Thomas gave a workshop on circles of concentration in ritual. The meditation helps the ritual participants to focus on the opening of the gates, and helps put them into a frame of mind where the energy raising of the gate opening is more accessible.

This meditation is done just before the invocation of the Gatekeeper, and gives a set of visual cues that help to keep everyone on the same page.

This particular meditation is designed simply to re-

center the Grove on the gates of the ritual, re-establish the cosmos, and confirm each participant's frame of reference. It slows the rite down in preparation for opening the Gates.

In your mind's eye, see the mists that hover between the worlds as they roll in around this sacred space. In all directions, the mists close you off from the mundane world, leaving nothing but this Grove.



At the edge of the mists, there is a parting. The mists roll back to reveal the waters, deep and undisturbed. They stretch far into the distance, disappearing into the farthest mists.

In the shallows before you, where the land meets the waters, stands a tall, watchful crane. One foot stands upon the land, and the other is in the water. His eye is raised to the sky.

This is Garanus, the crane.

He has dominion over the three realms: he walks upon the land, feeds in the waters, and flies through the sky. Garanus, the crane, will guide us and protect us as we walk to meet the Kindred at the boundaries of this sacred Grove.

Healing Properties of the Ogham Trees

By Caryn MacLuan



What is the Ogham? You will get different answers from different sources. Some say its: an alphabet of twenty-five characters used for stone and wood inscriptions in Celtic Ireland and Britain; a group of twenty sacred trees that give names to the letters of the Ogham alphabet; a system of hand-signing used by Druids that relates to the alphabet; a calendar of thirteen months named for some of the trees; or a system of divination in Celtic paganism that may or may not relate to the alphabet. There are lots of sources around but one of the closest and readily available to ADF members is Skip Ellison's *The Druids Alphabet* for further study in the Ogham. This article is only going to focus on the physical and healing properties of the Ogham trees and even there you will find one source listing one tree and another listing a different tree or a couple of trees in the same family. This is just a general overview and much more in-depth knowledge is required before going out and making your own medicines from the trees in your neighborhood.

One of the first things that struck me as I was compiling this information is that the trees with more uses and healing properties are at the beginning of the Ogham and less uses and healing (most poisonous) is at the end. Some authors say this was intentional on the part of the Druids, others say the choice of trees was completely random and simply corresponding with the letter. You can draw your own conclusions.

Disclaimer: Before taking this or any other advice on healing plants as cast in stone, please do your homework and research what you are thinking about putting into your body. This generally means sources not usually found in neo-pagan bookstores. When in doubt, double and triple check your sources.

B BEITH ~ Birch ~ *Betula Pendula* aka Silver Birch

Physical Properties

- Pioneer tree, colonizer, breaker of new ground
- Wood is unusual in that the inner and outer wood looks the same
- Light leaves carried by the wind, rot easily to give nutrition back to the earth
- Light canopy allows other trees to grow up underneath, sacrifices itself to benefit others.

Healing Properties

- Tea made of steeping ~6 young leaves in a pint of boiling water
- Good for arthritic & rheumatic condition but is also a diuretic
- Helps break down kidney & bladder stones
- Powerful antiseptic & can clear up infections in these areas
- Sap is a natural shampoo
- Oil is an insect repellent

L LUIS ~ Rowan ~ *Sorbus Acuparia* aka Mountain Ash



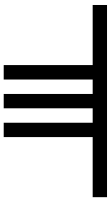
Physical Properties

- Also known as the quicken tree, not a true member of the ash family but resembles it.
- Can grow 65 ft tall but usually smaller. Mountainsides and rock out-croppings
- Distinctive clusters of red berries, favorite food of birds
- Yellow gray wood is strong and flexible
- Commonly used for tool handles but also a substitute for yew in long bows

Healing Properties

- Berries edible but bitter
- High in Vitamin C used as a cure for scurvy
- Juice is both astringent and antiseptic & can be used internally or externally

F FEARN ~ Alder ~ *Alnus glutinosa* aka Common Alder and *Alnus incana* aka European or Gray Alder



Physical Properties

- Found on river banks where its roots help to hold the soil & bind nitrogen
- When cut the wood appears blood red, turning yellow when seasoned
- Was considered evil by early woodsmen
- Dyes can be obtained from the bark, fruit and the leaves
- Wood is good for carving and lasts a long time in water w/out rotting
- Popular in construction of the pilings for the lake dwellings of the Celts

Healing Properties

- Distillation of the leaves is a remedy for burns, inflammation and impetigo
- Fresh leaves are excellent insect repellent, especially for fleas

S SAIL ~ Willow ~ *Salix caprea* aka Goat Willow/Pussy Palm or *Salix alba* aka White Willow or *Salix fragilis* aka Crack Willow



Physical Properties

- Usually found along river banks, dark gray bark
- Has long thin stems, useful in making fences, baskets, lobster pots, etc
- Mature trees are “Pollarded”. Top is cut off so that more long, straight young branches will grow.
- Irish Celts made walls of homes by “Wattling”. Willow branches were woven on inside and out and the middle was filled with earth to make a strong weather resistant structure. Houses made this way required 5 miles of willow rod.
- Therefore the Celts had a reasonably successful way of harvesting and reproducing these rods. Usually found along river banks, dark gray bark
- Has long thin stems, useful in making fences, baskets, lobster pots, etc

Healing Properties

- Bark contains a chemical that is the source of aspirin, an analgesic
- This chemical is also known to decrease sexual desire
- Conversely, a concoction made from the leaves or sap, when applied to the sex organs can increase sexual ability
- A weak solution of sap or crushed leaves can be used as a gargle for stuffy nose
- A strong solution is effective shampoo for dandruff, flakey skin, spots and blemishes

N NION ~ Ash ~ *Fraxinus excelsior* aka Common Ash



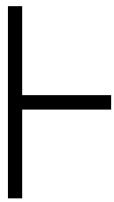
Physical Properties

- Can grow 130 ft high, grows in all climates but thrives in a lime rich soil.
- Has long roots that often strangle its neighbors
- White wood is excellent for burning, also strong and pliable for ax handles, oars, hockey sticks and skis.
- A favorite for spears of the Celts because it could be hardened in fire to make it very strong

Healing Properties

- The juices and sap are good for relieving conditions related to stones in the bladder and are a mild appetite suppressant
- The leaves are a laxative and can help arthritic and rheumatic conditions
- If the leaves are not available, the bark can substitute

H HUATH ~ Hawthorn ~ *Crataegus monogyna* aka Hawthorn/May Tree or *Crataegus monogyna 'Biflora'* aka Glastonbury Thorn or *Crataegus laevigata* aka Woodland Hawthorn/Midland Hawthorn



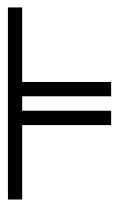
Physical Properties

- Distinctive profusion of white flowers in May which turn into red berries called 'Haws'
- Can grow 45 ft high but often cut back to form hedges.

Healing Properties

- The leaves make a pleasant tea which is good for circulatory and cardiac problems.
- Its also a remedy for those suffering from sudden emotional distress or long term nervous conditions.
- The juice of the berries can be used in the treatment for asthma, rheumatism, arthritis, and laryngitis

D DUIR ~ Oak ~ *Quercus robur* aka Pedunculate Oak or *Quercus petraea* aka Sessile Oak



Physical Properties

- Can grow to 150 ft high.
- The acorns are important food for both wildlife and domestic animals
- Wood is hard and that nearly caused its extinction to provide wood for Elizabeth's navy.
- Makes high quality charcoal for smith's forges
- Laws passed to protect it in one of the earliest documented attempt at ecological preservation.
- Bark produces tannins used in the tanning industry
- Take 70-80 years before it begins to produce acorns

Healing Properties

- Acorns can be used to make a powerful antiseptic & the juice from the crushed leaved can be used for the same purpose and applied directly to a wound.
- A gargle made from the inner bark can be use do to relieve sore throats.

T TINNE ~ Holly ~ *Ilex aquifolium* aka Common Holly or *Ilex opaca* aka American Holly



Physical Properties

- Can grow to 65 ft but usually turned into hedges
- Evergreen, prickly leaves, only the female produces berries
- Wood is white & sometimes has a greenish tinge. Its very hard and heavy
- Suited well for carving and inlay work.

Healing Properties

- Tea made from the leaves is invigorating and stimulating, it will induce sweating which helps expel toxins and fevers.
- The berries if eaten when ripe have a strong purgative effect, excellent at clearing all unwanted wastes from the body.
- If dried and powdered, they have the opposite effect, relieving diarrhea and heavy menstrual flows.
- The bark and leaves can be made into a poultice for setting broken bones.

C Coll ~ Hazel ~ *Corylus avellana* aka English Hazel or *Corylus americana* aka American Hazel



Physical Properties

- Only about 30 ft tall, often coppiced.
- In Feb it takes on a strong yellow hue with the male catkins and tiny female flowers.
- Nuts grow in clusters of 3 or 4
- Wood is used for many of the same purposes as the Willow and is cultivated and harvested in the same way.
- Forked shaped branches are a favorite of dowzers
- It takes 9 years for a hazel to bear fruit

Healing Properties

- Nuts are rich in mineral salts
- Can be ground and mixed into a drink that is soothing to a sore throat and helps relieve a head cold.

Q Queirt ~ Apple ~ *Malus sylvestris* aka Crab Apple or *Malus domestica* aka Orchard Apple



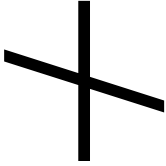
Physical Properties

- All varieties of apple owe their existence to the original, native crab apple.
- Some crab apples still bear the thorns that the original crab apples had.
- Wood is good for burning and carving

Healing Properties

- A poultice made from roasted or boiled fruit relieves pain in the side and burn marks from the skin.
- The same poultice when cooled is good for sore or inflamed eyes.
- The raw fruit of the hybrid tree is good for asthma or lung congestion.
- It keeps the bowels regular
- The leaves make a pleasant tea
- The fruit of the hybrid trees is used to make cider both hard and soft.

M MUIN ~ Vine ~ *Vitis vinifera* aka Grape Vine



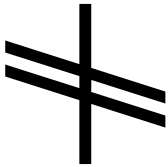
Physical Properties

- Despite preference for hotter climates, does grow successfully in the British Isles
- Can grow to a considerable size and develop a rough brown bark
- Fruit is the grape

Healing Properties

- Dried fruit is good for coughs and chest disorders
- Fermented fruit in the form of wine or brandy, is good for distraught nerves, aiding digestion, inducing a sense of well-being and is a pleasant tonic if taken in moderation
- The boiled leaves make a good lotion for a sore mouth as well as a soothing poultice for inflammation and wounds
- A decoction of leaves is good for helping to rid the bladder or kidneys of stones.
- The ash of the burned branches makes a good toothpaste which helps remove stains from blackened teeth

G GORT ~ Ivy ~ *Hedera helix* aka Common or English Ivy



Physical Properties

- Like the vine, it often depends on a host plant. It's a binding and uniting plant.
- Has thin tendrils that are strong enough to force their way into plaster and brick
- Evergreen, a persistent and enduring plant

Healing Properties

- The berries have medicinal properties but must be taken carefully as they can be poisonous if taken in too large a dose.
- Seek expert advice before attempting any self-help with internal uses of ivy
- A Brew of fresh leaves in vinegar is good as a pain relief compress for a stitch or a headache
- A similar portion of fresh leaves is good for cleaning a wound or sore on any part of the body.

nG NGETAL ~ Broom ~ *Cytisus scoparius* aka Common Broom/European Broom



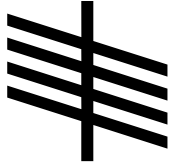
Physical Properties

- Yellow-flowered broom grows all over the British Isles
- Rarely above 7 ft tall, but a very bushy shrub
- Is related to the gorse plant and is similar in appearance
- Often used as a broom.

Healing Properties

- A decoction of the young branches or seeds will cause violent vomiting if taken in too large a dose, but a controlled amount can relieve gout, sciatica, & painful joints
- Its also a diuretic and helps break down stones in the kidneys and bladder
- Oil from the stems is good for relieving toothaches
- The same oil, if boiled and cooled, is good for removing parasites from the skin such as lice.

St STRAIPH ~ Blackthorn ~ *Prunus spinosa* aka Blackthorn, Sloe



Physical Properties

- More a large shrub than tree, found throughout the British Isles
- Covered with strong, sharp thorns and grows in dense thickets
- Traditional wood for the Irish shillelagh
- Fruit is round, shiny, deep purple berries know as sloes
- Used in jams and in flavoring sloe gin
- Juice can be used as an ink that is difficult to remove or erase

Healing Properties

- Sloes are very bitter but are a good astringent and can stop both internal and external hemorrhages
- Boiled decoction of leaves, when cooled, make a good gargle for tonsillitis or laryngitis
- A tea made from the powered bark has a calming effect on the nerves

R RUIS ~ Elder ~ *Sambucus nigra* aka English Elder



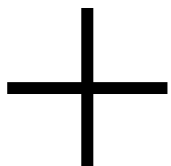
Physical Properties

- Can grow 30 ft high,
- In autumn the tree is covered with bunches of black berries
- The berries and leaves are used in wine and jam
- The bark provides a deep black dye, the leaves a green and the flowers a lilac or blue dye

Healing Properties

- Berries and leaves are rich in vitamin C.
- A tea made from the flowers is good for irritated throats and coughs
- A shampoo made from the boiled berries darkens the hair as well as cleaning it.
- Boiled laves when mixed with olive oil are good ear drops for inflammation and pain.

A AILM ~ Fir ~ *Pinus sylvestris* aka Scot's Pine or *Abies alba* aka Silver or European Fir



Physical Properties (Scot's Pine)

- The Scot's pine is native to the British Isles and can grow 120 ft tall
- The tree can have 3 years growth of cones on a single branch
- Wood is strong but manageable. Good for manufacturing, furniture, construction and poles.
- Source of turpentine, resin, and tar and makes a good charcoal

Healing Properties (Scot's Pine)

- A tea made from the fresh shoots, boiled gently, is good protection against kidney and bladder infections.
- Is also a cure for scurvy
- It also make s refreshing bath, and can soothe aching muscles if gently massaged into them.
- An inhalation of the hot vapors can clear the sinuses and stuffy noses

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Fir continued from last page.

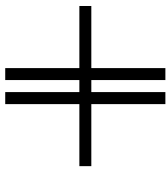
Physical Properties (Silver Fir)

- A tall tree with a long clear bole surmounted by a pyramidal crown that becomes flat-topped with age, growing to a height of 46-50 m.
- Native to the mountains of southern and central Europe east to Ukraine's Karpaty Mountains. It is also found in Byelorussia, Asia and the Caucasus Mountains; prefers fresh, moist soils in higher altitudes
- It occurs at altitudes of 300-1,700 m (mainly over 500 m), on mountains with a rainfall of over 1,000 mm.

Healing Properties (Silver Fir)

- There is an essence aromatherapy made from it.
- There are much more medicinal uses from the Pacific Silver Fir than the European.

O ONN ~ Furze (Gorse) ~ *Ulex europaeus* aka Common Gorse or *Ulex gallii* aka Western Gorse or *Ulex minor* aka Dwarf Gorse



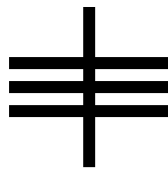
Physical Properties

- Gorse is the more common name for Furze
- Its wood burns fiercely but its spines make it impractical to gather
- Flowers have strong scent resembling coconut oil
- Prolific plant, & spreads quickly.
- Still common to burn it back to control growth.

Healing Properties

- Has few medicinal properties
- A decoction of the flowers is effective against jaundice, & helps clear the kidneys of stones and obstructions.

U UR ~ Heather ~ *Calluna vulgaris* aka Common Heather or *Erica cinera* aka Bell heather or *Erica Trtralix* aka Cross-leafed Heather



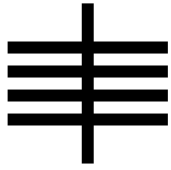
Physical Properties

- Heather is a twisted tangles plant that grows in profusion on the open moorland, hillsides and heath.
- Has small purple, red or bluish flowers, favored by bees
- Its tough stems and roots are still used to make ropes in the highlands
- The Picts were believed to have brewed an exceptionally pleasant but very potent ale from heather

Healing Properties

- As a medicinal plant, its not always necessary to actually administer the plant, just walking through the aromatic blooming countryside is enough to calm nervous conditions
- Other uses are mainly in the treatment of cardiac palpitations

E Eadhadh ~ Aspen ~ *Populus tremula* aka Common Aspen



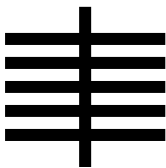
Physical Properties

- Distinctive tree with trembling leaves that turn brilliant yellow in autumn.
- Can be 65 ft high
- Has both male and female trees
- Was a favorite tree for making shields

Healing Properties

- Has no medicinal uses however its dried, powdered bark mixed with a liquid has been used to rid internal parasites in both humans and animals.

I IDHADH ~ Yew ~ *Taxus baccata* aka Yew or *Taxus baccatafastigiata* aka Irish Yew



Physical Properties

- The yew lives the longest of all the trees we have examined.
- Research is beginning to indicate that some yew trees in British churchyards may be as old as 4000 years which far exceeds the Giant Redwoods and the Bristlecone Pines
- These trees were ancient when the Romans invaded
- Only gets about 50 ft high but spreads widely and can have multiple trunks
- Much favored in medieval times for making long bows and was harvested to such an extent that its existence was threatened.
- The Stone Age man found in the alps in 1991 had a bow made of Yew.

Healing Properties

- The needles, bark, sap and seeds are all extremely poisonous.
- You should wear protective clothing when handling or cutting and should wash your hands thoroughly afterwards
- Only one substance used in medicine that come from the Yew – Taxol – a chemotherapy used in the treatment of ovarian cancer. Extremely toxic.

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2. [Sacred Trees](#) By Nathaniel Altman
3. [The Wisdom of Trees](#) By Jane Gifford
4. [Celtic Tree Mysteries](#) By Steve Blamires
5. [The Druid's Alphabet](#) By Skip Ellison
6. www.botanical.com The electronic version of "A Modern Herbal" by Maud Grieve.
7. www.borealforest.org Tree Species of the World's Boreal Forests
8. The Oxford English Dictionary

-And a few personal or commercial websites which were sometimes more, sometimes less helpful

9. www.tarahill.com/treelore/index.html Sacred Woods and the Lore of Trees
10. <http://www.csupomona.edu/~jcclark/ogham/ogham-orig.html> The Origins of Celtic Ogham by Curtis Clark



Festival Review

Wellspring 2005

By Michael J Dangler

I admit it: I was waffling a bit on Wellspring this year. Everyone knows the drill: go, get cold, get wet, wish you were somewhere else, right?

Wrong. Oh, so wrong. So wrong I'm embarrassed of myself.

This year's Wellspring blew away my idea of what a festival is supposed to be like. The weather was generally warm, it rained one morning out of five days, and the fellowship? Dear Gods, I can't begin to describe it!

The festival included several Guild competitions. First, the Warrior's Guild held their finals at this festival, and those games were quite enjoyable. I broke with my usual avoidance of the games and participated in a few, mostly just having fun. Rodney Cox and I managed to entertain a few people doing shirtless archery, too. I didn't manage to see the Artisans Guild competition, but the occasional piece I saw at the Sumbel was quite good. Also, the Brewers had a competition, and as usual they managed to get many people a bit tipsy. Oh, and it tasted great, too!

One of the best things about Wellspring is that you always get to meet those people you always talk to on the lists or over email, but never see in person. The size of the festival makes this quite easy, actually, as this is the largest of ADF festivals. Also because of the size (and it's standing as the ADF Annual Membership Meeting), you get to hear about new projects that are going on.

One of my favourite workshops of the weekend was Ceisiwr Serith's Proto-Indo-European Religion. I can't begin to describe how much I learned from this workshop, and I just sat and listened! Next time, I'm definitely taking my notebook with me to take notes!

I also got to see the channeling that Red Oak Grove does in their rites at the Friday night rite, which was a new experience for me. The bardic circle the next night showed off a lot of talent, and the frogs joined in the revelry from outside the pavilion.

The Symbel was also excellent, and many good oaths and boasts were made. Since I can't transcribe them all, I'll just point out mine: ADF has the greatest community of Dedicants it could possibly want, and I learn new things from them every day. Keep up the great work!

Ian also outlined the Initiate's Program for us again this year, and we finally received a final Clergy Training Program from the Clergy Council!

This was also the first Wellspring where ADF has had more than 1,000 members, as well as the first Wellspring that has seen a Provisionally Chartered Grove outside the USA (congrats to Red Maple). We're seeing a lot of movement in ADF, and it's amazing how much you see here at Wellspring. In the end, Wellspring shows the heartbeat of ADF.

The highlight of my weekend, though, was the Two Powers workshop that Ian led. It was simply amazing and the best experience I have had with that attunement since before I joined ADF. Words cannot describe the feeling I got from that workshop! If you'd like to experience it

yourself, it's available in audio form on the ADF website.

I came out of this festival with new friends, a new appreciation for nature (even when tree bark gets stuck in your hair), and some valuable memories of certain escapades in the Nemeton. I wouldn't trade this year's Wellspring experience for anything, and I'm looking forward to next year, as well.





News and Announcements

Dedicant Program Completions

Anne Lenzi,
Completed, January 10, 2006

Medb Aodhamair of Sonoran Sunrise Grove,
Completed January 21, 2006
Z.L. Bennett of Raven's Cry Grove,
Completed March 05, 2006

New Protogroves

Riversong Protogrove, ADF, Spotsylvania, VA,
March 5, 2006

New Chartered Provisional Groves

Grove of the Midnight Sun, ADF, Bellaire, MI,
February 18, 2006

Guild News

Brewer's Guild

It is with great pleasure and honor that I announce that as of December 21 2005, the Council of Lore has approved the Brewers Guild Study Program. Illious, the Brewers Guild Preceptor, and the entire Brewers Guild should stand proud at the rapid approval of this program.

Liturgist Guild

The Liturgist Guild is once again gathering rituals performed in 2005 for their annual Yearbook. Guild Scribe Carrion Mann is leading the effort this year. Please send all scripts to her at carrionmann@aol.com

Magician's Guild

This is to announce the posting of the Magician's Guild Study Program, 1st Circle, which was recently approved by the Council of Lore. We are now officially accepting students. The website for the MGSP is <http://lairlibris.tripod.com/mgsp>

Grove News

Grove of the Rising Phoenix

Our grove has been very active as of late. In addition to our bi-weekly meetings, our monthly drumming circles, and our high day rituals, there have been several events.

In January, a few of the female members of the grove headed out to Tucson to attend the first Chenille Canopy West – a meeting of the female members of ADF. We did all sorts of things, including rituals, games, and crafts. It was a lot of fun.

We also started hosting Druid Meetups in the Phoenix area during the month of January. We have had three of them now, and will continue to hold these on a monthly basis.

February brought Pantheacon, and two of our members attended that, one of which took part in the ADF Unity Rite. Isaac Bonewits also attended Pantheacon this year, and it was great to hang out with him some and discuss ideas about our Druidry.

At the end of February, we were lucky enough to secure a non-profit booth at the Highland Games held annually in the Phoenix area. We also volunteered to help with setup and cleanup of the Games. In addition, our Senior Druid did an educational talk about Druidry in the education tent. All in all, we got some great exposure, and are making inroads so that we can be invited back next year.

The first week of March was our first annual Medieval Madness Camp-Out. This isn't really a festival, although it has some elements of one. The basic premise was to get together in fellowship out in nature, in a place that was fairly close to our local Renaissance Faire, and then attend the Ren Faire as a group. We got together with about two dozen other Neo-pagans for a wonderful weekend of camaraderie. Potluck, Opening Ritual and Bardic Circle on Friday night; Renaissance Faire on Saturday, a full ADF ritual on Saturday night, then drumming circle, and a nature walk on Sunday morning before our closing rite. Everyone who attended had a great time and can't wait for the next one! Next year, I hope that more ADF members join us from other parts of the country.

After all this activity, we are quieting down so we can enjoy the festival season. Many of the grove members plan to attend Desert Magic Festival, and

some of us are heading out for Wellspring.

Raven's Cry Grove

On February 19, 2006, Ravens Cry Grove had its very first official Warriors Lodge meeting. A Lodge is the term used for a warrior group within a Grove, which functions under the banner of ADF's Warriors Guild. Ravens Cry Grove's Lodge is also the first of its kind in ADF. This Lodge was organized for the purpose of studying all aspects of the Indo-European warrior tradition with an emphasis on modern practical application. Our ultimate goal is to develop individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to protect and defend the pagan community whenever necessary.

Raven's Cry Grove has also held, the first of its kind in ADF history, a Slavic Ritual! The Dedicants Group is making overall excellent progress and meets once a month, as well as our Discussion Groups picking back up on a monthly basis. Our Warrior's Lodge meets twice a month, rain or shine, and has been rather successful. In efforts for more a more Grove-bonding experience, we have once a month as well, Grove movie night. Some of our members will be attending Desert Magic this year as well.

Sassafras Grove

Sassafras Grove has had a busy six months. The Autumn Equinox marked our first attempt at a rite using the Roman Hearth Culture and was dedicated to Ceres. Utilizing and synthesizing various mythologies that explore this theme, our Yule rite continued the grove tradition of calling the Cosmic Mother to bring forth the Sun. Two grove members also made their dedicant oaths at this rite. Our Brigantia rite also followed grove tradition and both our main rite and women's rite were well attended. One grove member made a dedicant oath at this rite as well. At the moment of the Spring Equinox, Earrach and Diana unearthed our Nerthus idol, which had been buried in their garden since the moment of the Autumn Equinox. Nerthus and Eostre were the primary deities at our public Equinox rite.

In addition to High Day rites, we continued our monthly events at moonstones. We've hosted two Bardic Circles and two blessing rites. Earrach presented "Druidry 101" and most recently Alaric led a workshop on traditional herbalism. We continue to

host Lore Meetings before each High Day.

In addition to our public events, grove members have gathered monthly for Druid Moon rites and, starting in January, Dedicant Meetings. Our Divination Chat covered various methods of divination as well as implications of omen taking in a ritual setting. With generous assistance and input from Earrach, Sarina, and other grove ritualists, Maria facilitated a "Liturgical Intensive" designed to explain the What, Why, and How of ADF and Sassafras-specific ritual structure.

Diane Lynn Bronowicz (Emerald) married Justin Thomas Vaughn, her boyfriend of seven years, in an ADF ceremony on November 5, 2005. The nuptials were presided over by Earrach of Pittsburgh and Diana Paar. Also participating in the ceremony were Sassafras Grove members Maria Stoy and Deana Swendsen. The rite was written by the bride with input from the groom and officiants. The mixed Pagan and non-Pagan attendees all agreed that it was "a lovely ceremony."

Shining Lakes Grove

SLG hosted a hospitality suite at ConVocation, a local NeW Age convention, providing a quiet place for folks to rest during the usual convention craziness. A lot of convention attendees who don't usually get the chance to attend our events in Ann Arbor finally got a chance to meet us and find out about ADF. We also hosted a ritual dedicated to Odin, and our members led several workshops. The highlight of the weekend was Senior Druid Rob Henderson dressing up as Hermes and delivering flowers before and during the masquerade ball. (So they keep telling me anyway!)

Our Spring Equinox rite was well attended, with twenty people joining us, including five first-timers. The ritual honored Ana, our local river goddess, as we told the story of how she saved the land from Winter. We also did our traditional egg hunt, with the 40 degree weather inspiring us to find them quickly and get back inside to the ritual space! And we blessed out emmer wheat seeds, which we will plant and tend throughout the summer.



Arís Mundi

Where's the Belief: Piety in the Dedicant Program

By Michael J Dangler

The Dedicant Handbook defines Piety as follows: "Correct observance of ritual and social traditions, the maintenance of the agreements (both personal and societal) we humans have with the Gods and Spirits. Keeping the Old Ways, through ceremony and duty."

Wait, something is missing here: Where's the belief?

Every so often, ADF goes through an episode of, "What do we all have in common?" We go back and forth, throwing around big words like "orthopraxy" ("right practice") and "orthodoxy" ("right belief"). The majority opinion seems to be that what unites ADF is not our belief, but our practice.

It is sometimes hard to understand why we take this route. In reality, this is nothing new to Paganism, and it goes back as far as we have records for Indo-European societies.

In discussing the Vedas in his paper *The Development of the Vedic Canon and its Schools: The Social and Political Milieu* (a good read, I must say, and available in .pdf online), Dr. Michael Witzel indicates the following:

"Most of these canonical texts were composed by Brahmins for Brahmins. The texts stress proper *praxis* rather than belief, and one would be justified to speak of *orthopraxis* rather than *orthodoxy*. However, the Kuru system of *śrauta* ritual comes along with a complete set of mostly *unstated* (and largely unstudied) presuppositions and beliefs, which are the basis of this authoritative system, an orthodoxy of sorts. The most important among them, perhaps, is the very act of *belief* in the efficacy of the system itself, by *śraddha*. In this sense, I think, we can speak of a Kuru *orthodoxy*. Other peoples of Vedic Northern India did

not believe (*śrad-dhā*) in these tenets of Kuru orthodoxy and therefore did not follow Kuru orthopraxy (the post-Rgvedic *śrauta* ritual)."

This particular passage makes an interesting point about an early Indo-European society. What it basically says is that most of the Brahmins of the Vedic world found the *practice* of ritual to be more important than the *belief* behind it. Some, of course, were interested in the belief, but the majority merely (as we would say today) *went through the motions*, and this was perfectly acceptable.

The Vedics aren't the only example, and you can go further afield than just IE societies in order to find ancient peoples *going through the motions*. Christ said, "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." There is no native Mesoamerican word for "religion," and yet we have elaborate rituals and sacred centers.

Things have changed, though, and now piety means many different things to many different people. To some people, belief is the key to piety. To others, piety is about action. For many people, piety falls somewhere in between the actions of worship and the belief in the ability of those actions to re-create the world and reconnect us to deity.

In our modern world, we are more likely to be concerned with the belief behind what we do. Not only do many people who come to Paganism cite that the members of their previous church had merely *gone through the motions*, but they come to the religion with a renewed belief system that is very important to them. Because of this, the idea of *going through the motions* as the extent of piety does not sit well.

Yet others involved in Paganism are more interested in their practice than their belief. They see ritual as re-ordering the world, and thus a responsibility that they must fulfill. Like the Brahmins who were faced with the threat of their wife dying if they did a ritual

wrong, those Pagans focused solely on practice are more interested in *getting it right* than in *getting the feeling*. To them, the integrity of the world depends on their correct observance, not their belief.

ADF members are likely to know this split best as the pair of statements, "Sincerity is no substitute for competence," and its corollary, "Competence is no substitute for sincerity." It says a lot about ADF that we are more likely to quote the former than the latter.

These may seem like two divergent schools of thought that can have no middle ground, but many of us have found one. We can believe that correct observance is important, but so is your belief and your feeling. Piety generally deals strongly with doing a ritual for each High Day, as well as (depending on the person) more frequent rituals, whether those rituals be daily or corresponding with a moon phase. But it also deals strongly with our belief, and with the feeling that we get from the rituals we do; most Neo-

Pagans, myself included, are unlikely at best to continue working in a system that doesn't bring us fulfillment on a spiritual level.

While it may have been enough for the ancient Pagan to go through the motions, it no longer seems to work for the Neo-Pagan. We tend to *want* that belief, that feeling of religiosity that our ancestors may not have needed. It's important to remember that we need it, and to seek it out wherever we can.

So while piety may be defined *sans belief* in the DP, it is never without the feelings in our hearts. It's just up to the individual to decide how much belief they need in their rituals.



¹ Witzel, Michael. *The Development of the Vedic Canon and its Schools: The Social and Political Milieu*. P. 260 <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/canon.pdf>

What's Happening to the Wild Life? How The Nature Spirits React to Ritual

By Lori Donlea

Every time we have an ADF ritual at our home, things happen with the wild life around here. Good things happen. The energy we build through the ritual causes a energy change in the house, the yard and whole neighborhood.

The area we live in was special when we found it and decided to buy. The energy here is really good and powerful. So, it makes sense that creating more would have its affect.

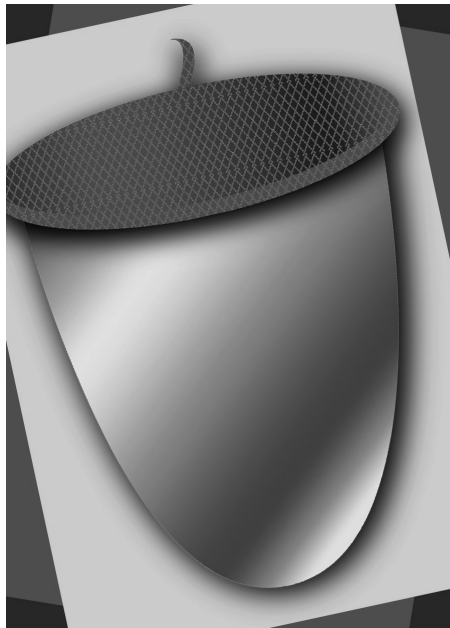
The first time we noticed the change in the wild life was at the Vernal Equinox ritual in the spring of 2003. We did our ritual indoors because the weather was still cold and rainy, as it was March. Afterward, the priestess took the offerings we had made out to the yard and poured them on the ground in front of a very large Blue Spruce, where Esters hare lives. The rabbit came out and seemed calm enough. It didn't run. It looked at us in acknowledgment, then left. We all thought that was very special, but had no idea it would happen again.

Later that year, we had our Lughnasa ritual in the back yard. This time the outsiders, in the form of Blue Jays, harassed us with their noisy cries until we finished and left the yard.

For a few years I have had owls appearing in my dream and meditation. I didn't know why and I spent some time trying to figure out why they keep showing up. I knew it was a message and because Llew is my husband's patron, I concluded that it could be Bleodwyne, Llew's wife. She may be hanging around because of Lugh. At Yule that year, I had decide to make an offering in the fireplace for Bleodwyne and ask her to please let me know if she was here. Three nights later, I was awakened by an owl hooting right outside my bedroom window. It was the first time I had ever heard an owl, let alone so close. I listened for 45 minutes to the hoots. When the sun started to rise about 4:30 AM, the hooting stopped. Merlin has been my mentor for years and from the things I have read about Merlin, he also has an owl. Did Merlin come to me as an owl or was it Bleodwyne looking for Llew? I'm still working on that one. I feel it's possibly both.

In the spring of 2004, we had our Summer Solstice ritual. After the ritual the Cardinals became very excited to the point of pecking at the windows. After the Spring Equinox, we had a Coopers Hawk come live in the wood of our yard all summer. After Yule of 2004, a Doe and her yearly moved into the yard. There are deer in the area, but in 11 years, we had never seen them. But for a month, this Doe and her daughter lived in our yard, nesting in the wood and feeding on bird seed.

As we were preparing for the Autumnal Equinox of 2005, we were visited again. The ritual was a special occasion because Archdruid, Skip Ellison was coming to consecrate Pat, my husband, as a Dedicate Priest. We had just walked out of the house about noon to go get a few things we needed for the ritual, when above us was a hawk and an falcon circling over the house and yard, and screeching. It was just our place, not the neighbors. They circled and screeched three times then left. Wow, what an omen. Three is a magical number representing perfect balance in mind, body and spirit. The hawk represents visionary, its messenger of spirit, and is a symbol of leadership.



That night, the owl came back, too. But not just one, there were two hooting, answering each other. The owl is a messenger of spirit and represents wisdom. These two omens told us we were doing the right thing.

We did our Samhain Ritual at the full moon on October 16, 2005. On the second day, in the early morning, just after sunrise, we had a group of 12 squirrels show up to indulge in the nature spirit offerings we left. They had been there the day before as well, but, what we didn't think of, and had never seen here before, was a red fox came to indulge on the squirrels. He didn't get one, but he was beautiful to see.

I have learned to listen to the wild life and now I am trying to learn how to interpret the omens that they bring. They are showing up in my dreams more, the owls specially. There is a reason why our Grove is the Ravenwood Grove. When we decided to start a grove, we looked out the front window one morning and there where 7 ravens (or seven extremely large crows) sitting on the hood of our truck. We live in a wooded area, so it seem like the logical name. How right we were.

Awen's Muse

By Brian Long

*With starry eyes and trembling lips
And tingling in his fingertips
His heart forgets to take a beat
His rhymes and rhythms falter*

*He sits in awed befuddlement
Gazing upon what heaven's sent
Her radiance pure and honey sweet
His choice is to exalt her*

*When breath finds home and blood flows new
The bard at once knows what to do
He kneels at once between her feet
And worships at her altar*

*This avatar of Goddess light
Brings Awen's inspiration bright
With joy the Druid takes his feet
But fears that soon the scene will alter
The glorious beauty now before
His hungry eyes will be no more
For precious moments their eyes meet
He knows he cannot halt her*

*But never shall his heart despair
To close his eyes means she is there
To make the author's feather fleet
With poems to assault her*



Little Acorns

The Great Storm
By Lady DragonStar

It was a very frightening night at Little Acorn's Grove. All the family was gathered in the root cellar as a terrible storm raged outside. Collin and Aidan jumped as a loud crash of thunder roared and a flash of lightning ripped through the sky. Little Brigid was crying in her mother's arms as Collin and Aidan drew close to either side. Mama was singing a lullaby as mama Selu chanted a prayer for protection under her breath. Even the earthy little family of gnomes who lived in the cellar seemed nervous.

They knew this storm was coming of course, and had been preparing for days. They had been boarding up windows and clearing the yard of toys and other things that could be sent flying by the high winds. They brought food and water, blankets and pillows into the cellar, and finally, just as the rain was starting to pelt down in sheets, they all gathered in the shelter to ride out the storm. "The only thing to do now is wait," said Mama as she bolted the cellar door from the inside, "wait and pray."

So they waited. "Mama," said Aidan with worry in his eyes, "what about the dryads and the faerie folk? Will they be okay?"

"They're doing their best to protect the trees and plants in their care, sweetie. We can only hope they'll be alright. Nature spirits stay out in the storm to help his or her charge. The gnomes are here because they are underground creatures.

It was a long, restless night filled with frightening noises and crashes, but at long last it was over. Mama unbolted the door and pushed it open. It took some work, because there was something blown up onto it, but eventually it came open.

The sight that greeted them looked much different than what they remembered. Trash and splintered wood were everywhere, and large puddles of water were all over the yard. What wasn't a puddle was mud and muck. Quite a few trees were uprooted, their dryads sat on their overturned trunks weeping.

"Mama!" shouted Collin, tears streaming down his face. "It's horrible! What do we do?"

"We've got a lot of work ahead of us, boys," said Mama, "but at least we're alright. Look around you, what do you see the faeries doing?"

Collin and Aidan looked around. All the faeries and dryads were moving about, bedraggled and filthy. Some

were sorting through the mess, freeing those who were trapped. Others were tending to the wounded, and still others were surveying the damage, trying to figure out where to start.

"That's what we're going to do, boys," said Mama. "We're lucky to be alright, but we need to check on everyone else, join together, and make a plan as a community."

"Our house is still here!" smiled Aidan, and then his smile faded away, "Oh, no! There's a tree branch through my bedroom!"

Sure enough, a large branch from a tree had crashed through the roof and into Aidan's bedroom, and everything inside was wet.

"I'm sorry, baby," said Mama, as Aidan wept into her arms. "Things can be replaced, and the house can be fixed, but aren't you glad you weren't in there?"

"Yes," sniffed Aidan.

This story is dedicated to all who have been affected by Hurricane Katrina, and to all who have ever experienced loss due to natural disaster. May they all rise back up stronger than before.

“I think we should go to the Grove,” said Collin, “that’s where the people of the village always go when we want to gather together.”

“I think that’s an excellent idea, Collin,” said Mama Selu. “Then we can see what to do from there.”

“The walk to the Grove took much longer than usual, with all the mud and muck and puddles and trash. There were many uprooted trees in the forest, and they began to get a bit worried about the trees of the Grove. Eventually, however, the Great Tree and the Grove came into view.

People were already there, hugging and healing the hurts, as well as making plans for rebuilding. More and more people from the village gathered. Soon, the Senior Druid of the Grove appeared, and began passing candles through the crowd in silence. By the time everyone received a candle, the sun had set, and it had grown quite dark. The Senior Druid lit his candle, and began passing the flame around the circle. Soon, the flame had passed all around the circle, and the Grove was bright from the warm light of so many candles. Only then did the Senior Druid speak.

“One flame, one candle gives off just a small amount of light. It helps, but doesn’t make much of a difference you might think. When one becomes

many and we all share our light, soon all can see, soon all can be helped and healed. We will all work together. We will all rebuild the village together. The sacrifice of the trees will not be wasted, as we will use their lumber to rebuild our village.”

At that moment, the sound of hoofbeats could be heard approaching. Soon, a magnificent centaur

emerged from the underbrush. “I am Argus, and our herd has seen the damage done to your homes. I am here to offer my help, and the help of my herd.”

Just then, a great horned owl swept down with a note attached to his leg and landed on a branch next to the Senior Druid. He paused for a moment to retrieve and

read the letter.

“This correspondence is from the Arch Druid,” he said with a smile on his face. “Even more help is on the way.”

“You see, boys,” said Mama as Brigid was playing with a leaf. “When we all work together, we are all healed and stronger than before.”

They all gazed around the candle lit circle. Mama Selu said with tears in her eyes, “In every ending, a new beginning is born.”



Discordian Meal Blessing:

By Michael J Dangler

Eris Good and Strong and Bright,
Make this food safe tonight.
Anthrax, chicken pox and hugs,
Please keep at bay such thugs.

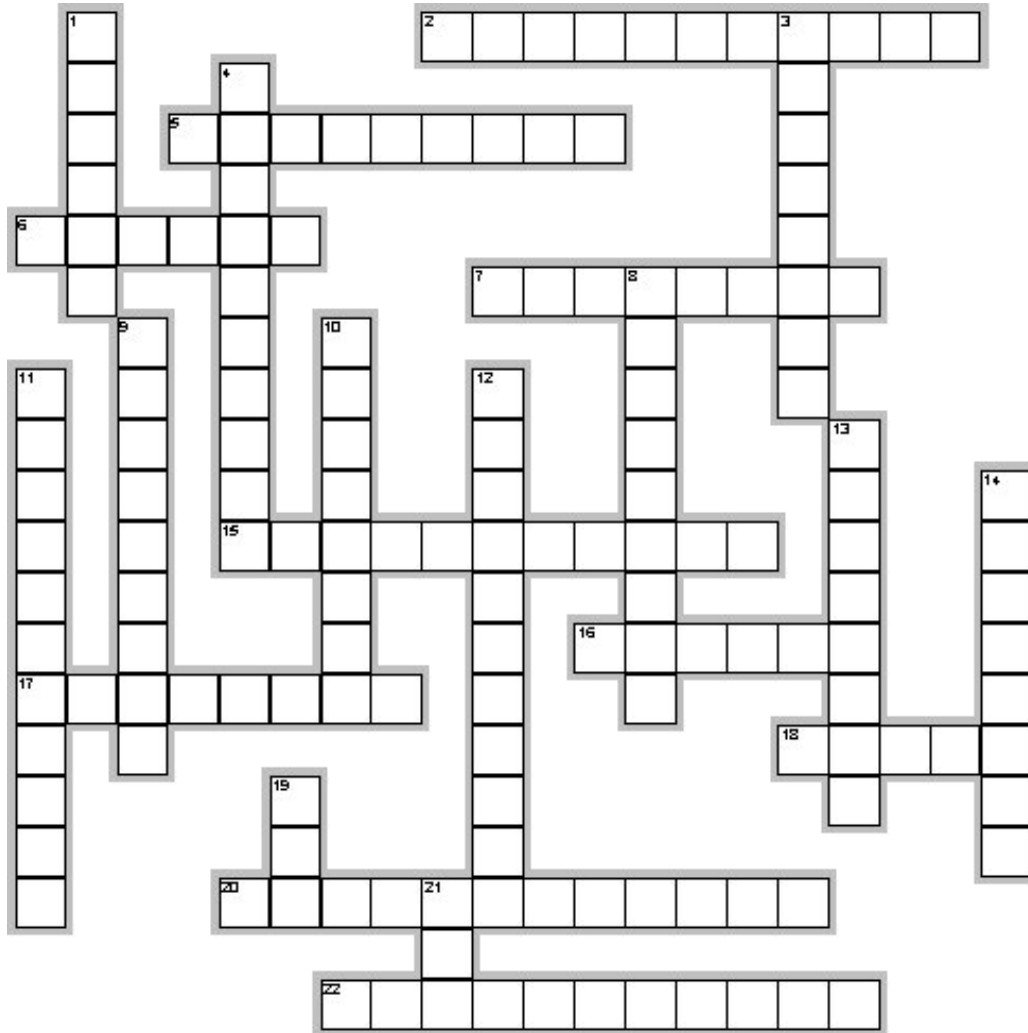
Kitty claws and dragon teeth
Do not contaminate my beef.*
My veggies and salads green
Are not replaced with dolphin spleen.

Eris, O Mother Discordia and Poof
Take this as prayer, not spoof.
Through your guidance and strife
May we see our lessons in life!

*Vegetarians may change this to:
Kitty claws and dragon sneeze
Do not contaminate my cheese.

Crossword Puzzle

This basic healers puzzle covers various areas, ...and yes 'Physitian' is spelled right



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Across

2. He's credited for the modern medical oath
5. The art of combining medicinal herbs
6. Sister of Miach
7. Venerated as the Father of Chinese medicine
15. Treatment that emphasizes natural remedies
16. A licensed medical practitioner
17. Wrote "The English Physitian" in 1652 (last)
18. A modern healing system of hands on touching
20. Use of fragrances to affect mood or health
22. CIMICIFUGA RACEMOSA

Down

1. Take 2 and call me in the morning...
3. Wrote "The Cannon of Medicine"
4. Alexander Fleming is credited with discovering this drug.
8. The scientific study of food and drink
9. Anthemis Nobilis
10. A herbal extract or concentration is aka?
11. This treatment uses fine needles for therapeutic use
12. hypericum Perforatum
13. Chrysanthemum Parthenium
14. This herb is used for sleep disorders
19. A Norse Goddess of healing
21. The "group" was founded May 7, 1847 in Phili. (abbr)

Submission Guidelines

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

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 17874
Tucson, AZ 85731-7874

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. 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

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Prisoner Relations Committee
Chair: Vacant



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Bardic Guild
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Warriors Guild

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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

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)
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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 @ \$20/year = \$ _____
 Prisoner Membership _____ years @ \$10/year = \$ _____
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____
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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:

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Thank you for all of your hard work! It is your
submissions that keep Oak Leaves thriving!

The Publication Team



Next Issue:

OL #34 - Autumn - Warriors and Heroes

Deadline for Submissions:

July 1st, 2006