

Q A R O A R A D F S

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin

Summer 2007 ~ Issue No. 37



2007 Eight Winds Mountain Earth Gathering

ADF Northwest Regional Gathering

Saturday, September 29, 2007

Co-hosted by the Sierra Madrone Grove and the Clan of the Triple Horses Grove
At Diamond Lake Resort - Oregon

Our Activities Include:

Workshops:

- Chaos and Cosmos - Bringing them together
- Symbols and Tales of the Arthurian Myths relating to Our Druidry
- Oregon Medicinal and Rare Plants
- Connecting with Nature Spirits of Locality

High Day Ritual:

Celtic Druid Fall Equinox rite led by ADF Vice Archdruid Kirk Thomas

Children are MOST welcome!

Lodging:

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Cost:

We are requesting a \$20 donation per family OR a donation of a dish to share with at least 8 people - this can be a side dish for lunch or dinner or a finger food or a dessert. Alternatively, Volunteer to help!

For more information, please contact:

Sierra Madrone Grove: seanthedruid@yahoo.com

or

Clan of the Triplehorses Grove: triplehorses@gmail.com

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Tent camping or campers. Nice restrooms with hot showers.

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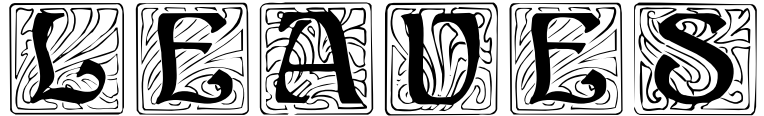
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For more information: <http://redoakgrove.org/FallFest>

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To be Solitary

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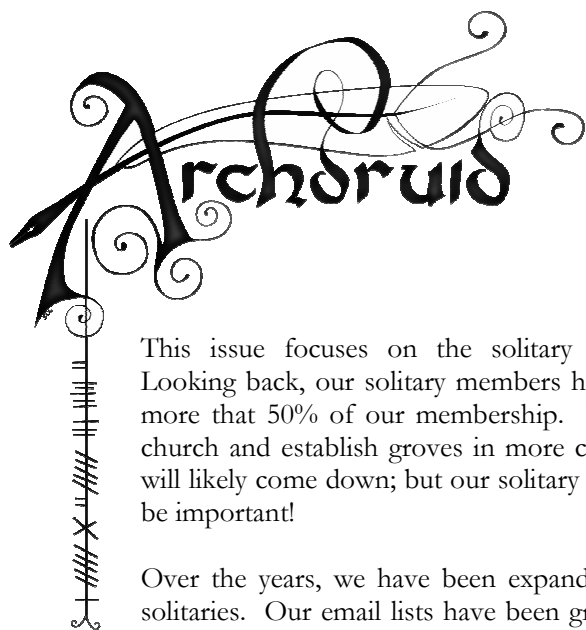
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This issue focuses on the solitary members in ADF. Looking back, our solitary members have historically been more than 50% of our membership. While we grow as a church and establish groves in more cities, this percentage will likely come down; but our solitary members will always be important!

Over the years, we have been expanding our services for solitaries. Our email lists have been growing, and we have added specialized lists for the various cultures. We have a search feature on the web that allows members to look for other members in their area. Our Dedicant Path material has been growing, and it has been expanded to include more resources to help people work through it. We now have the Initiates Program in place for the members that have completed the Dedicant Path work and want further magical/religious training, without going for Clergy consecration. Finally, there have been more books written by ADF members that can be utilized by our solitary members.

In the future, I would like to see our resources for solitaries expanding even further. On the Solitaries list, there is a discussion going on now about having small gatherings for solitaries. These would not be full festivals, but just a few members in the same area getting together for a weekend. If this idea works out, it can be expanded and publicized as we get better information on how to make it work well. In addition, I would like to see more videos on the web site, and available as DVD's, to help our new members better understand our ritual structure. Beyond that, as new ideas are brought to us, they will be considered and hopefully implemented. We can only keep getting better!

Bright Blessings,
Rev. Skip Ellison

OAK LEAVES

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How to Adapt Rites for ADF Solitaries

By Brandon Newburg

There are quite a few rites available to solitaries today. But despite the number, not all are as workable for solitaries as might be hoped.

In light of this, here is a short primer for adapting rites for solitary use. This is intended for both grove members adapting their rites for others, and solitaries adapting grove rites for themselves. I've drawn mainly on my personal experiences as a solitary to put together a brief list of tips. But first, a few myths need banishing.

Dispelling Myths

Myth #1: Solitaries require “I” in place of “we.” Some may think adaptation mainly consists of changing plural pronouns to singular forms. This is not as important as it may seem. In fact, in my personal rites I usually change them back to the plurals. When I consider all the helping spirits, patrons, and local land spirits who may choose to participate in my “solitary” rite, it is never just “I.” A few others on the ADF-Solitaries list have expressed similar sentiments. Certainly some feel more comfortable with singular pronouns. Yet the singular form is by no means necessary, and pronoun-changing should not be considered the primary concern in adaptation.

Myth #2: Changing All Parts to “Druid 1” Makes It a Solitary Rite. Only in the most technical sense is this true. Just because a single person can theoretically speak all parts doesn't mean it will be powerful for them to do so. More likely the result will be a wordy mush, difficult to memorize, and still more difficult to dramatize. Group rites often depend for their drama on the point-counterpoint of different speakers, and the interactive experience this creates. Changing all parts to a single speaker may be like flattening a 3-dimensional globe onto

a 2-dimensional map: it comes out distorted and not quite right.

Myth #3: Grove Members Can Provide for All the Solitary's Needs. Grove Members can do a lot, but they can't do everything. There has to be a certain amount of working together, and solitaries must bear the greater responsibility. This means grove members need not cry, “How bad are we, who don't do enough for our solitaries!” And solitaries need not whine, “Why isn't this all laid out on a platter for me?—groves must not care about solitaries.” Solitaries need to pioneer programs for themselves, and grove members need only facilitate that.

Tips

Now that those myths are out of the way, here are a few tips to make adaptations more effective.

Tip #1: Make It Memorization-friendly. One of the most daunting tasks of the solitary is memorizing the material (the other option being reading it from note cards, a considerably-less lively option). Incorporating mnemonic devices into the script can vastly reduce memorization difficulties.

For example, one of the simplest mnemonic devices is repetition. For example, in Skip's book, *The Solitary Druid*, all the speeches thanking the beings follow a roughly similar formula. Repetition not only aids memorization, but also contributes a charm all its own. Those interested might compare the refined beauty of Sumerian literature, where repetition is the primary poetic device.

Another memorization aid is effective transition. One cannot under-estimate the mnemonic value

of transitions. In a group setting, it's clear enough that a new OoR section is beginning when a new person steps forward to speak. But in a solitary context, the different parts may all-too-easily run together. Transitions may be as simple as "Now the grove is established in the triple center; may the gatekeeper be invited," or "The gates are open; let offerings flow to the Three Kindreds." These forge strong links to aid memory, and provide calm reminders of the shifts in energy between parts.

Finally, if you like a challenge, you can play with poetic devices. The history of oral tradition is the history of poetic device—it is certainly proven to help memorization. A not-too-difficult example is alliteration. Also called front-rhyme, this is the repetition of sounds at the beginning of words: "Now Beowulf bode in the Burg of the Scyldings, Leader beloved, and long he ruled." Poetic devices link words together in memory, and add a nice aesthetic touch.



overshadowed by the relatively lengthy establishing of the grove and winding down of the rite. For this reason, it may be well to make sure other parts, such as the opening prayer, clearly evoke the unique nature and spirit of the rite. Special activities may also be inserted into the key offerings section under "seasonal customs."

Tip #4: Consider the Logistics. Take a look at the list of tools and offerings. Can one person carry all that to the ritual site, assuming no car? One of the great things about solitary rites is that you can do them in places groups can't easily reach, such as deep in the woods or on top of a mountain. Being able to carry everything in one trip let's solitaries really get adventurous.

Logistics can be a problem from another perspective as well. If the solitary in question is elderly or differently-abled, excessive tools and offerings may become a burden. "Packing light" reduces this stress.

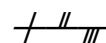
Tip #2: Keep It Short, But Not So That It Obscures Vital Elements. Keeping a script to a reasonable length definitely helps memorization. Yet it can be overdone. For example, the temptation may be to condense all the thanking of beings into a single, brief, catch-all statement. But solitaries need drama as much as anyone else. This includes a proper denouement. Building up and winding down should be approximately equal in length. Appropriate use of mnemonic techniques can make a long script much easier to memorize than a short but mangled script.

Tip #3: Consider the Brevity of a Solitary's Key Offerings Section. In a group rite, any number of devotees may come forward with poems, songs, and macaroni sculptures fleshing out the character of the season or patrons. But in a solitary rite, there are the humble gifts of just one person. The offerings section may be over all too soon, and the unique spirit of the occasion

Into the Future

These myths and tips highlight some basic considerations in adapting rituals for solitary use. I hope that with these, the task may be a little easier. Not only that, but I hope that rituals of all kinds will get better and better. Many of the tips above apply nearly as well to grove use as that of solitaries. It will really be interesting when techniques developed for solitaries start influencing grove rites! But that's another article entirely...

Finally, it should be noted that many solitaries are indeed using the ritual resources already available and having powerful experiences. More than half of ADF is solitary, and that figure would not be so if current resources weren't doing something right. So, this primer is offered in the spirit of ADF's motto: *Why not excellence?*



We are All Solitaries

By Deiniol Jones

In ADF, we make a distinction between "solitaries" and "grovies". Is this an accurate or worthwhile distinction to make? And, possibly more importantly, would our ancestors have recognised this distinction and set any store by it?

Personally, I'm not so sure they would have, as I have a theory that in fact, from an Indo-European perspective, we're all "solitaries" at heart.

Perhaps it might be useful to offer a few definitions to begin with. Essentially, a grove is a group of people who gather to offer public ritual. Of course, a grove offers more than that: fellowship and interaction are key aspects of the purpose a grove fulfils for its members, but its core function is the offering of public ritual. So from our perspective in ADF, solitaries are those who cannot or do not engage in public ritual.

In palaeopagan Indo-European societies, there was a distinction between the domestic cult and the public cult. At first glance, this seems to be an analogous distinction to the one we make between "solitaries" and "grovies". Not so. This distinction is one of behavior and practice, not a distinction between groups of people.

The Indo-European "domestic cult" was the worship which takes place inside the home, the day to day devotions that each household practised. In ancient Rome, the focus of this domestic cult was the *lararium* and was dedicated

to the family's ancestors and the household deities. The *Codex Theodosianus*, in banning the domestic cult of Rome, relates that practices included the veneration of the Lares with fire, a man's Genius with wine and the Di Penates with fragrant odors, that incense was burned for



them, lights placed before them and wreaths suspended for them (Quinn, 2005).

In Vedic India the *kalpasūtra*, the manual of liturgy, was divided into two sections: one devoted to public ritual (the *śrautasūtra*) one devoted to domestic ritual, the *grhyasūtra*. It's notable perhaps that transmigratory rituals such as name-giving, marriage and birth rituals were included in the *grhyasūtra* rather than the compendium of public rituals. Likewise, in ancient Rome, marriages were contracted in the home, not at a temple.

The most important thing about the domestic cult that it was not the practice of solitary

individuals, but of a household. Rituals were performed on behalf of the domestic unit, not on one's own behalf. As pointed out by Raimund Karl (2003), the ancient Celts saw communities and society in general as being made up of *tegesā, households, not individuals. Communities would gather to celebrate public festivals, but the day-to-day business of religion was the province of the household.

In our own daily devotions, we are engaging in the rites of the domestic cult. We are honoring our tutelary deities, the spirits of the home and our ancestors. And again, we are doing it on behalf of our household, not just ourselves: even if you live alone you're still a household. If we accept the identification of the domestic cult with the work of the solitary, in this sense we are all solitaries. It is in the home that the real business of pagan religion takes place, not in a grove. An isolated Celtic farmer who could not attend public rituals would not have considered himself to be outside the "community of believers" as he would be performing the bulk of his religious duties at home.

However, it should not be thought that the domestic and public cults were considered to be wholly separate. Smith (1986) notes that in Vedic practice, the composers of the *kalpasūtra* recognised that there was a "unity of ritual" (*kalpaikatva*) between domestic and public rituals, that the form of one was derived from the other. Likewise in Rome, the public cult was seen as an extension of the domestic cult; the *aedes* of Vesta in the Forum with its sacred flame was seen as the hearth fire of the Roman people as a whole (Scheid 2003). In our public rituals, celebrants bring the domestic cult "out into the open" as it were.

I believe that our palaeopagan ancestors would not have made the distinction between "solitaries" and "grovies" as we do. They would have simply seen a community of believers, all practicing the same religion, some of which

gather to offer public ritual. In fact, I think they probably would have seen our community as being very much like ours, as attendance at public ritual wasn't always possible in the past either. So, we all engage in "solitary" work: the domestic cult. It's just that some of us gather to engage in "grove" work as well: public rituals.

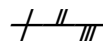
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Correction

In the last issue the Meal Blessing on page 30 was misattributed to Raven Wolfe. The actual author was Deilen Mor.

Our most sincere apologies to Deilen Mor.

A Solitary Dedicant

By Lesley Gary

Ever get tired because you are on a Dedicant path and there is no one there to teach you? Feeling of being alone set in and frustration because you do not know if you are doing your rituals correct or not. You have only the web and printouts as a teacher. Do not give up!

There are many of us who are going thru this very thing! We work at what we do know and strive to learn the rest. You may not practice with a grove but you are not the first to try to realize what to do. Many a day, I wonder if I am doing my rituals correct or not!

The very first one I did was with others that do not follow ADF or druidic ways. I showed up out to the place that it was to be held, set up the material to use, and felt some confidence because I had performed other rituals before, just not one in the style of ADF.

Soon I would find out that the ritual was not with me and I did not have it memorized. I also could not remember the outline of it. Therefore, we had to locate a computer and printer and see if we could locate it. Once that was done, we started. I had a gentleman who wished to learn there doing the actions of the ritual while I did the vocals.

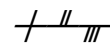


I told him before hand what to do and when in the pre-ritual meeting but when it came time for the ritual, I was not good at telling him what to light when. I had him lighting the candles at the wrong places and making offerings when none were to be made. It is funny now to look back onto.

I was so worried about getting it right and not screwing up, that I did just that. I messed up words and pronunciation of Gallic words left and right. But when all was said and done, those that came to watch and knew me best, said that it was the type of ritual and energy that fit me best.

I know that it is hard to learn something when there is no one to physically show you how. But then I think of our ancestors and the ones that first did an ADF style ritual, no one showed them how it is suppose to be done. They just did it!

So when you are getting down and think that there is no one there to help, holler out on the web! Relax and know that even though you are solitaire, you are not alone! There are many of us that are struggling to find our way thru the ADF Dedicant Program and we solitaires can lend other solitaires support!



Here Come the Solitaries

By *Brandon Newberg*

```
Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2005 09:17:08 +0900
From: <crickets@GMAIL.COM>
To: <ADF-SOLITARIES@lists.netSPACE.org>
Subject: Re: is anybody out there?
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Brandon wrote:
>is anybody on this list?
```

```
(chirp, chirp, chirp)
```

```
frith,
the crickets
```

When I joined in 2005, the ADF-Solitaries listserv was pretty quiet. Today, that is starting to change.

In January, ADF hosted a chat on the topic of solitaries. More than twenty users signed in and discussed their needs. The following week saw a flurry of new activity on the list. Then in March, a survey of solitaries garnered a whopping 90+ responses. A new generation is apparently ready to discuss solitary needs.

Why are solitary needs important? Research has shown that over half of ADF members are solitary. Out of over 1100 current members, more than 600 list no grove affiliation. Solitaries are not a minority. Furthermore, their needs may be vital to new-member retention. While ADF continues to attract new members, many of those members are not staying. Nearly 2000 members joined since January of 2003, yet the total current membership remains a mere half that. Of those 2000 new members, 60-75% are not currently affiliated with a grove, or were not at the time of leaving. This means the new members we'd like to retain are as much as three-fourths solitaries. Clearly, solitary needs are vital to ADF and its growth.

This gives us an important direction for inquiry: Is there more we can do to help new solitaries

feel at home in ADF?

To answer this question, we must first get to know the creature in question:

Druidicus Solitaris

Sub-specie:

1. Geographically-isolated Solitary – not within reasonable distance of a grove (I am one such creature)
2. Culturally-isolated Solitary – not within reasonable distance of a grove of the same hearth culture
3. Hermit – chooses to be solitary
4. Partial Solitary – may participate in a grove, but also devotes much time and energy to solitary activities

So, there is more than one kind of solitary, and thus more than one set of needs. Any attempt to help solitaries will have to take that into account.

Next, we should find out what the needs of solitaries actually are. The January chat and listserv discussions concentrated on four main concerns (thank you, Aelcian, for this summary):

1. Struggling with the Order of Ritual.
2. Difficulty finding information on hearth cultures, specifically mythology
3. Problems finding reliable scholarly reading

4. Frustration with geographic isolation, some as much as 300 miles from the nearest grove

This doesn't mean other concerns won't crop up very soon. The results of the solitaries survey, when they come out, should be quite telling. But for now it appears these are the most urgent needs among our new, vocal solitaries.

What can be done about these needs? Many ideas have already been put forward:

1. An online tutorial for learning the Order of Ritual
2. Mnemonics for remembering the Order of Ritual
3. More online videos, such as the Simple Shrine Ritual by Ian Corrigan, found here: <http://www.adf.org/rituals/videos/simple-shrine/>
4. Reliable reading: an already-existing resource is D.R.U.I.D., a searchable database of Druidry-related books; but to date only 222 titles of the thousand needed to be effective have been logged, so scholars please contribute more titles! <http://www.adf.org/members/guilds/scholars/DRUID/index.html>
5. Hearth culture information: a number of excellent Internet resources were suggested on the list—perhaps a centralized links page of these would be helpful?
6. Geographic isolation: if starting a protogrove is a realistic option, the Grove Organizer's Handbook is a good place to start: <http://www.adf.org/members/groves/starting/goh/index.html>

If any of these projects can be realized in the near future, it would be of great assistance. It may even help ADF retain more new members.

So, who should make these things happen? Well, help from grove members would be appreciated. But first and foremost it is up to us, the solitaries, to make these things happen. No one else knows our needs as clearly as we do, nor can

anyone better represent us. We need to discuss our needs with each other, decide what will help us best, and communicate that to the general ADF membership.

And the general membership *is* willing to help, by the way. It seems like every other week some grove member says, "I don't think we do enough for our solitaries," or "We need to do more for solitaries." And each time a Unity Rite is held, solitaries are mentioned right alongside all the groves and protogroves. So the willingness to help is out there. We solitaries just need to speak up and recruit that help.

With the help of grove members, solitaries can take responsibility for building a stronger ADF. Everyone, including grove membership, stands to gain from improved solitary outreach, whether in terms of higher new-member retention, or a richer variety of perspectives.

So, if you have an idea to help solitaries, or if you want to help an existing idea come true, then post to the ADF-Solitaries list, or email me personally (see address below).

If you are solitary and are feeling like ADF is just too much for one person, or too group-oriented, then let us know. You can email me as the new Solitary SIG Coordinator, or you can contact the Members Advocate, who voices concerns of individual members to the Mother Grove. I can be reached at SolitarySIGCoordinator@gmail.com. The Members Advocate may change due to upcoming election results, so look for the MA's contact information here: http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html#mother_grove.

Final suggestion for all ADF members: Join the ADF-Solitaries list and communicate!

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

—//—

An Olive Among the Oaks

By Tiberius

It has been my experience as a Greco-Roman pagan that the reconciliation between authentic Hellenic or Roman religion and the spirituality of ADF can initially be awkward. Indeed, the terms "Hellenic Druid" or "Roman Druid" seem to be contradictory in nature. In groves which are predominantly Norse-centric or Celtic-centric, Roman and Hellenic worshippers can feel isolated from the rest of the group or at odds with festivities which may not seem congruent to their own beliefs. The reason for this uneasiness is three-fold: first, the cosmology embraced by ADF may initially seem incompatible with Greco-Roman religion. Second, the calendar systems of the various Greek states and the Romans were structured differently from the "wheel of the year" adopted by ADF; and third, the connection between Greco-Roman religion and Druidry is not readily apparent. However, with study and personal practice, members of ADF who are drawn to Hellenic or Roman religion can certainly find a fulfilling way to not only practice Druidry, but also honor the ancient religions of Greece and Rome alongside their fellow Druids who follow other traditions.

ADF was founded upon the principle of celebrating Indo-European religion, and both Greek and Roman religions belong to this tradition. A full exposition of the Indo-European nature of Hellenic and Roman religion is beyond the scope of this article, but I will gloss some of the basics of Roman and Greek

rite as they are celebrated in the context of ADF, in the hope that Druids who find themselves drawn to these vibrant and beautiful religions will be reassured that the spiritual inheritance of ADF Druidry belongs as much to them as it does to anyone else. For the sake of simplicity I frequently use the term "Greco-Roman religion"--proper care should be taken to distinguish between the two, and each is certainly worthy of its own study. An excellent introduction to the Indo-European tradition of Rome can be found in *Archaic Roman Religion Vol. 1* by Georges Dumézil (1970, University of Chicago Press), and those interested in Hellenic paganism may refer to *Greek Religion* by Walter Burkert (Harvard University, 1985).



The argument that Greco-Roman religion and ADF Druidry are theologically incompatible is uninformed and insubstantial. Similarities between the cosmology and practices of ADF and those of ancient Rome or Greece far outweigh the differences. In all three cases we find a preoccupation with the relationship between humans and the spiritual beings upon whose favor we depend for survival. The Three ADF Kindred: the Ancestors, the Land Spirits, and the Shining Ones, are present in both Roman and Greek religion. In Roman rite, libations and offerings to the ancestors were central to Roman cosmology in the form of *manes* or *di parentes*, or protective ancestor spirits. Romans believed the world to be filled with other "divine spirits or power[s]," (Adkins, 164) called *numina*. And most notoriously, the Romans

celebrated an impressive pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. We can find the same parallels to the Kindreds in the religion of the Greeks. To them, the chthonic gods of the underworld must be appropriated in order to care for the dead and ensure the fertility of the land, and the deceased are offered wine so that as "libations seep into the earth, so the dead will send good things up above," (Burkert, 195). In Ancient Greece, the "gods were thought to control the forces of nature and have their own place in the natural world," (Buxton, 133) and some of the most well-known myths of all time come from Classical Greece, stories of powerful Gods and Goddesses who were very much involved in the lives of their worshippers, for good or ill.

In daily practice, too, do we find similarities between ADF and Greco-Roman religion. ADF urges its members to develop their own personal "hearth religion" within the home, as a form of daily devotion. For the Romans, the *lararium*, or household altar, was the place to honor the spirits of the home, the ancestors, and the Gods. For the Greeks, the hearth is "an offering place for libations and small gifts of food; the beginning of a meal is marked by these offerings," (Burkert, 170). Magic is another aspect of religion that ADF and Greco-Roman religion share. In his essay "Greek Magic, Greek Religion," Robert L. Fowler observes, "Magic was a normal and ubiquitous part of everyday life in the ancient world. This is an undeniable and important fact," (Buxton, 317). In regard to the Romans, he states, "the ever present fear of these dark forces is sufficiently attested by the ancient foundation of Roman law, the Twelve Tables, which specifically outlawed the use of charms to harm crops," (Buxton, 321).

Other facts, often overlooked, reveal an interesting connection between ADF Druidry and Greco-Roman religion. For instance, just as the tree is a central symbol in ADF cosmology, the Greeks often worshiped in sanctuaries where "[the] distinctive feature is a large, imposing tree," and despite the predominance of temples,

"an important part of religious life was enacted out of doors...processions would make their way to those places where the deity could appear in dance beneath the tree" (Burkert, 28). The Romans "thought of places such as woods, springs, or caves as supernatural or divine places," (Adkins, 165). The libations which we offer at ritual come by their name from Greek words *leibein* and *loibe*, acts in which the Greeks offered drink to their dead and to the Gods. In reference to the honor that ADF pays to the "Earth Mother" in the standard liturgy, Versnel observes of the Roman goddess Bona Dea:

The picture of Bona Dea as a goddess of fertility, as a goddess of fertility, a kind of 'Earth Mother,' whose cult focused on the protection and promotion of agricultural and female fertility, invariably involves reference to primeval antiquity. (Festival, 1992).

The Greeks also revered the Earth Mother. During the rites of Thesmophia, Greek women secluded themselves in order to worship and honor Demeter, whose festival was primarily meant to " [promote] human and cereal fertility," (Festival, 1992).

Despite the similarities in theology and practice between ADF Druidry and Greco-Roman religion, the main stumbling block for many Roman and Hellenic pagans in ADF is the "wheel of the year" feast cycle which is constructed of the agricultural and solar festivals of mostly Western-European or Scandinavian origin. Although Roman and Greek calendar systems incorporated many of the same elements, the cycle of feasts was considerably more complex, so much that it has been remarked that in Greece "there are virtually as many calendars as there are cities and tribes," (Burkert, 225). In addition, differences in climate and social structures, and the contrast between rural and urban societies resulted in agricultural celebrations and seasonal festivals which did not occur in synchronicity with those of Western Europe, the Slavic Lands, and Scandinavia. Fortunately, there is enough

correlation between the calendar of ADF and those of Greco-Roman religions that followers of these latter paths can raise their glass in unison with grove members of other traditions. For the purpose of this article, I will focus solely on the Roman calendar, though the Hellenic calendar can similarly be adapted for use within ADF.

In order to celebrate the Feast Days as a Roman pagan within ADF, it is necessary to make some changes to the Roman calendar. Although there

may not be a corresponding Roman feast for each of the ADF High Days, a willingness to depart from a strict Reconstructionist view is all it takes to enjoy a fulfilling feast calendar. For instance, while the Celtic Druids in your grove celebrate Samhain (November Feast), a Roman Druid might celebrate Lemuria and/or Parentalia. Although not occurring at the same time in the calendar year, Lemuria has many similarities to Samhain. During this time the Romans made offerings to their ancestors in order to secure their protection and blessings, while simultaneously engaging in magic to drive off the spirits of the restless dead, the *larvae*. George Thaniel explains:

In turn, we have a basis for distinguishing sharply between two different concepts of ghosts: the concept of the *Di Manes*, 'the good spirits,' who were honored under the official title of *Di Parentes* in the festival of Parentalia (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.533 ff.), and the concept of the Lemures, 'the noxious spirits,' who were propitiated in the festival of Lemuria. (Lemures and Larvae, 1973).

The Goddess of apple harvest, Pomona, can

perhaps also be honored at the November feast. A similar correlation can be found for all the ADF Feast Days, and there is no reason that there can't be other interpretations of what constitutes the most appropriate substitution. Examples of Roman feasts alongside similar ADF Feast Days can be found in the chart on this page.

Though there are countless other ways of organizing the Roman feast calendar in

November Feast	Lemuria , Parentalia Celebrations for the dead
Winter Solstice	Saturnalia, Feast of the Sol Invictus Winter Festival, Celebration of the Invincible Sun
February Feast	Lupercalia pastoral, agricultural, & female fertility
Spring Equinox	Liberalia Celebration of male and female fertility
May Feast	Floralia In honor of Flora, a vegetation goddess
Summer Solstice	Bacchanalia Celebration of grape harvest with drama, wine
August Feast	Ludi Apollonares Games in honor of Apollo
Fall Equinox	Opalia Feast in honor of the Earth Mother, harvest

conjunction with ADF, it seems to work best in a group setting when the elements of the celebration correspond with the most general Indo-European significance of the feast. In addition, followers of Greco-Roman religions may choose to honor other feasts within the historical calendar on their own.

Perhaps the most important aspect of establishing the importance of Greco-

Roman religion within ADF is the examination of the relationship of the ancient Druids to Greece and Rome. The intermingling of Greco-Roman and Western European religions is a controversial subject within academia, but it must be discussed here to illustrate the complexity of the relationship between Greco-Roman religion and ADF. In his article "The Druids and Romanization", Norman Dewitt states "The steady influence of Hellenic culture upon Gaul for generations before the Roman era, however hard it may be to define, cannot be overlooked by the historian. " He is speaking of the account in Strabo in which the Celts are described as Philhellenes. Dewitt asserts that "the integration

of the Greco-Roman and Gallic religions took place quickly and quietly". Dewitt does not suggest the total saturation of Gallic religion with Greco-Roman culture, but rather in political and social terms, the relative ease with which the two religions intermingled. As the Roman influence on Gaul deepened, the identity of the Druids began to change: "The [name] 'druid' became the generic term applied to practitioners of augury and old magic, inheritors only of the name and least rational and reputable functions of the greater Druids of a former age", he continues, "the true Druids were now educated gentlemen of Roman Gaul, who, as a class, had accepted and furthered what was best in the new order of things". Jane Webster discusses the intermingling of Roman and Celtic deities in her article "'Interpretatio': Roman Word Power and the Celtic Gods". In it, she claims that there are many instances of pairings between Celtic divinities and Roman gods, but also admits that for the Romans, "foreign gods were not simply viewed in terms of the Roman pantheon--they were converted to it by force".

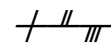


It is beyond dispute that the Greco-Roman religion and the religions of the Gallic peoples had a dynamic relationship, each affecting the other to some extent. This same symbiotic situation still occurs within ADF, as Greco-Roman Pagans practice alongside their Indo-European brothers and sisters all the while continuing to pursue the wisdom and practices of ancient Rome and Greece, seek the knowledge of their forbears, and engage in vigorous debate over established and emerging scholarship. It would be a great waste for Greco-Roman Pagans to set aside the liturgy, theology, and fellowship offered by ADF simply because it can be a challenge to find a place at the table. This is, after all, one of the most appealing aspects of ADF--followers of any tradition are continually challenged to unearth the religion of their forbears

and practice it in fresh ways, all the while preserving the integrity of that religion and those qualities that drew us to practice Neopaganism in the first place. Change is inevitable, but religions, like languages, will die when those who practice them cease to adapt and seek relevance for their religion in a changing world. Through dialogue, practice, and personal devotion, followers of Greco-Roman religion can embrace the vision ADF offers and take their rightful place in the dialogue between the Indo-European followers of Druidry.

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Dual Trad Daily Devotionals

By *Tanrinia*

One of the things that attracted me to ADF was the Dedicant Program. So, upon joining, I dove straight in, until I got to two things: meditation and hearth cultures. It is through my struggles with the meditation requirement, though, that I discovered a challenge and a potential solution for the problem of hearth cultures.

Many Dedicants have difficulty with the meditation requirement, and there have been many fine articles in *Oak Leaves* and on the ADF website that address this challenge. Those who administer the Dedicant Program have consistently stated that the purpose of the meditation requirement is, to paraphrase, to get Dedicants into the habit of daily mental training on the spiritual level. My problem though, was that even those limited occasions when I could attain the traditional meditation goal of either empty mind or extreme focus, it didn't feel all that "spiritually enlightening." I didn't feel that any greater strength of connection to the Kindred, and while many people reap great benefits, I was feeling left out.

Then I recalled a workshop given by Archdruid Skip Ellison at the Summerland Gathering on daily devotional rites. A simple rite was basically a mini-ADF rite, with Earth mother invocations, gates opening and closing, and offerings to Kindred and patrons. These daily rites are more active, and thus keep me focused, and also a

more direct way to improve my connections to the Kindred.

Skip suggested splitting the Kindred and patron offerings throughout the week, as in Earth mother on Monday, nature spirits on Tuesday, and so on. I decided instead that I would like to do the full rite (it actually only takes about ten minutes), and each day have a different deity from my hearth culture be the patron of the rite. That way, I could forge a relationship with many deities, rather than just my patron, and get to know them.



However, here is where I hit another snag. Like many others in the Neopagan community, one of the things that attracted me to Neopaganism was an interest in the mythology of my ancestors. Like many others in the Neopagan community, I'm also something of

a "Northern European mutt," with known ancestry rooted in Ireland, Wales, and Germany. I was familiar with Greek and Roman mythology, and at some point I began to wonder, "What did the people in northern Europe believe before the Christians came?"

I began my exploration where many of us did, with Wicca. Then I moved into an eclectic generic paganism, where I tended to focus on Irish and Welsh deities, leaving the Germanic ones aside, because they didn't seem to be interested in me. However, one visit to an Asatru festival later, and it became fairly clear

that I had just not been listening. And I had moved quite decisively from the duotheism of Wicca into a fairly strict reconstructionist polytheism.

The point, here, is that throughout my path, I have forged relationships with several deities, not all of the same pantheon. As ADF Dedicants, we are encouraged to develop a relationship with a pantheon, a hearth culture, as part of our training and spiritual practice. However, I was faced with some difficulty: I was interested in more than one pantheon. Three, in fact: Irish, Welsh, and Germanic. (Well, four, but we'll stick with the Indo-Europeans for this essay.)

On the surface, this is not an issue. Because they are all Indo-European groups, much of the important symbolism crosses cultural borders. Fire, well, and tree are important in all three, as is the inclusion of ancestors and assorted land, nature and house spirits. In addition, the underlying value systems are very similar as well: loyalty, courage, responsibility, and hospitality. However, therein lays one potential monkey wrench. If I've worked a lot with Bridhe and Rhiannon, do I just abandon them because Thunor comes along? That's not very loyal, and I doubt Thor would look favorably on relationships broken off just because something new and shiny comes along.

I decided to honor both Irish and German deities as key patrons in my home practice. Because of the nature of reconstructionist paganism (and the historic "tensions" between Celtic and Germanic tribes), I decided against mixing pantheons, with the exception of making praise offerings in larger ADF rites. For my hearth culture, I would keep Irish and German deities separate. This is fairly easy for the major holidays. The solstices and equinoxes get celebrated as Germanic holidays, and the cross quarter days are Irish. Some holidays don't correspond, but blend seamlessly. Winternights, an Asatru festival in mid-October focusing on final harvest and the ancestors blends nicely into

Samhain later in the month. In our home, the altar becomes dedicated to the ancestors from about October 15 to October 31, and they receive special honor every night in between. This seems to be the pattern among those who answered a very unscientific survey I sent out to various ADF lists a few months ago as well.

Now back to the daily devotions. With two pantheons, some decisions have had to be made. I decided first I would need to do two devotions, one in the morning and one in the evening. I decided the Germans would be in the morning, as it seems we have more information about them (and thus they are more illuminated for me). The Tuatha De Danann have always felt more elusive to me (yet still close), so it would seem right to honor them in the evening, before sleep. I then decided to choose a patron of the rite based on what day of the week it was. I borrowed heavily from ideas on an Asatru site (<http://home.earthlink.net/~jordsvin/Blots/Worship%20and%20Spirituality.htm>) where the deity after whom the day is named is honored (plus some others). I have made some adjustments to better fit both my own path (see below).

When it came to the Irish, I decided to try to fit figures from the Tuatha De Danann with the Germanic deity with whom they shared the most similarities. This is not to imply that they are the same deity seen through different cultural lenses. While I don't dismiss that as a possibility, I still treat each deity as a separate entity. This was a way for me to continue the same type of energy throughout the day, without abrupt shifts from say, "warrior" deity to "love" deity.

Below is an outline of my daily devotions. Names of gate keepers and Kindred are kept consistent within the pantheon.

1. Nine Breaths meditation to ground and center
2. I establish the three realms of Land, Sea and Sky, and the hallows of Fire, Well,

and Tree.

3. Earth Mother: Nerthus in the morning, and Tara in the evening. Tara is not a deity, but the name of the sacred seat in Ireland.
4. Open the gates: Heimdallr in the morning and Manannan mac Lir in the evening.
5. Kindred offerings, again with culturally specific terminology. Landvaettir, Alfar and Disir, and Aesir and Vanir in the morning. Sidhe, Sinsearach, and Tuatha De Danann in the evening.
6. Key offering to the patron of the day, listed below:

Monday - Frija (Frigga) and her handmaidens - Danu and Eriu-Banha-Fodla

Tuesday - Tiw (Tyr) - Nuada Airgedlamh

Wednesday - Wodan (Odin) - Lugh and Ogma

Thursday - Thonar (Thor) - the Dagda

Friday - Frau (Freya) - the Morrigan

Saturday - Fro (Freyr) - Angus mac Og

Sunday - Ostara - Bridhe

7. Other prayers as necessary.
8. Omen. In the morning, runes, in the evening, ogham.
9. Thank everyone and close gates.

So far, this split appears to have worked well. If



you've stuck with me thus far, you'll notice however a glaring omission. Where is the Welsh pantheon? For a time, I decided to leave them aside. Yet, they continued to poke me in the neck once in a while. "Psst! Remember us??" Especially, when I started to write this article.

Way back in my Wicca-eclectic-pagan days, I LOVED moon rituals. I still circle with a group that meets on the full and new moons, and still love the energy. So, as I was preparing to write this, I suddenly had a thought. There is a website, www.timelessmyths.com, which has fairly brief but still good summaries of many myths. The authors of the site have genealogies of several different pantheons (including three of the Tuatha De Danann!) and it was in looking at the Welsh pantheon, divided between the House of Llyr and the House of Don, that I had the idea to honor them at the full and new moons, respectively.

Hopefully, this essay has given those out there who struggle with "keeping everyone happy" some ideas. Being on a "multiple-pantheon" path can be demanding, but it can be done, and ADF actually provides a fairly flexible skeleton upon which to build this type of practice. Now, about those Lwa...



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Agnostic - Questions and Learning

By Talon Hawke

I was intrigued by ADF through a book entitled *Which Witch is Which?*, by Patricia Telesco. I consider this to be similar in content to *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans, and Witches Today*, by Ellen Evert Hopman and Lawrence Bond. After further research I decided to join. The reason for joining was the scholarship, nature based and the fact that through training you could become clergy.

I am solitary by choice and by geographic location. The nearest grove is a four hour road trip. That is the Grove of the Red Earth. The closes ADF member that I have been able to find on the ADF Member List is an hour and a half road trip.

Once I received my membership materials and started procuring some of the recommended materials I started to feel that I had gotten into something way over my head. There were several reasons for feeling this way. The primary reason was the fact that I have been agnostic for over 35 years. Being agnostic causes you to always question and then to learn and then to question again and to learn. It becomes a never ending process. The problem I have found is that my head understands, but my heart and soul have not matched up with what the learning has taught me. That is until I found out about ADF. It was the "Ah Ha" moment in my quest for enlightenment. I had tried other religions and found that they did not seem to be a good fit and that they did not strike a chord with what I felt were my spiritual needs. ADF is meeting those needs through their requirements and support network.

I have been a member for less than two years. When it came time to renew, I almost chose not to. I, in fact, did renew because I felt a calling. What caused me to hesitate is manifold. I hold a graduate degree so I do not consider myself illiterate, stupid, slow or any other adjective you may place in there for someone who lacks knowledge. Religion is a new experience of me. It is because of this that some of the dedicant material has seemed overwhelming. The reading has been difficult. Not because of the words, but

because of the unfamiliarity with the content. Rituals have been a sticking point because of personal issues that relate to having been in the military and the rituals imbedded within. One thing

that helped me to better grasp and understand the ADF ritual was the video that Ian had done for training purposes. I would highly recommend more training type videos. I am an auditory and visual learner for the most part. I can read and understand most material, but do not always visualize what is being explained the same way as the writer intended. Therefore, confusion and frustration becomes very real. I do have a mentor who has been very helpful and supportive.

Another concern is the Dedicants and Discuss Lists. I do not post to these very often due to the fact that some of the responses I have seen seem to be high handed and intimidating. I have worked in the education system for over 10 years working with at-risk adolescents. It is amazing how intelligent some of these young adults are, but were labeled as lazy, stupid, a trouble maker



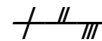
or difficult. The key was to find their strengths and work from there. When someone asks a question or has a concern that they post on the list it is being done for a reason. Try to assume that the post is coming because of lack of knowledge and not being stupid or lazy. As far as mythology and religion goes I lack a considerable amount of knowledge in these areas and as time permits I am filling in the blanks.

One of the things that I would find helpful is some recommended readings. These readings may not pass the scholarly test, but contain useful and pertinent information. Sometimes to get individuals to accept learning is to find something they can relate to and understand. If they are truly interested in learning more they will look for more in-depth material. I would find such a list posted on the ADF website very useful. If members would list some of the books they have used to gain knowledge it would, I think help not only the new members, but also the some of the more senior members. Expanding our knowledge about our chosen hearths, gods, goddesses and IE influences is to be embraced even if the source may not be as scholarly as some may wish it was. A scholar does not necessarily mean a learned person. It


can also mean student or pupil, one who wants to learn. Scholarly can also mean, to learn. Therefore, I submit to you that all ADF members are scholars in that they want to learn and as they continue to learn become scholarly.

I have considered, once I complete the DP, of working on becoming clergy. One of the drawbacks that I am seeing is the fact that I am more of a support type person than a leader. I have held leadership positions and did rather well at them. It is this weakness in me that would make it difficult to set up a grove and become a SD, which I believe is one of the requirements of becoming clergy. I will leave this in the hands of the gods/goddesses, the Shining Ones and the Kindred. They will guide me in what they require of me.

One thing that my mentor has tried to stress and what I am seeing on the lists is that not only do you need the virtue of perseverance to complete your DP, but you need the virtue of patience, with yourself and with finding the path. Everything will come in its own place and time. Now if only I can practice what I am preaching.



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Further information can be found at
<http://www.muinmound.org/muinmadness/index.htm>

An Anywhere Devotional

By Brandon Newberg

Here is a very short rite for daily devotions, designed especially for traveling, staying at friend's places, riding on a bus or plane, and so forth. It makes every effort to accommodate varying settings, social situations, time constraints, and availability of materials for offerings. It should be doable in the space of a smoke break. Yet it also follows the full Core Order of Ritual (COoR version from the ADF-Liturgists listserv, November '06).

Items needed:

*water (as it is the most readily available item I can think of, it is used for purification, offerings, and blessings; other items may be substituted where available and appropriate)

*omen method (use a method appropriate to the situation; travel-ready possibilities include drawing an item from your pocket, casting different-colored pens, looking in your surroundings for omens (signs, clouds, birds, colored lights, etc.), flipping three coins, or drawing runes/ogham from a set on a keychain).

1. Initiating the Rite

(take a deep breath and focus on the work to be done)

2. Purification

(dip a finger in the water and touch it to your body)

(optional: Appeal for Inspiration-- additionally touch your finger to your lips as a request for eloquence and inspiration, possibly naming a specific being as its source)

(optional: Outsiders Offering—dip your finger again and cast this bit of water over your shoulder.)

3. Honoring the Earth Mother and 4. Statement of Purpose

Hail, Earth Mother, whole and holy, honor unto

thee!

I offer now as the ancients did to the Kindreds Three!

(optional: Two Powers Attunement-- gesture to the sky above and the earth below while aligning with these energies)

5. (Re)Creating the Cosmos and 6. Opening the Gate(s)

(conjure a mental image of the Fire, and optionally also the Well and Tree)

By Land, Sky, and Sea,
And Fire, Well, and Tree:
O (gatekeeper's name),
Let the Gate(s) be opened!

(imagine the Gate(s) opening)

7. Inviting the Three Kindreds and 8. Key Offerings

(for each, dip a finger in the water and raise it in offering)

To the Ancestors: water, may it strengthen thee!
To the Nature Spirits: water, may it strengthen thee!

To the Gods and Goddesses: water, may it strengthen thee!

(optionally, do the same for any patrons of the occasion you wish to include)

9. Prayer of Sacrifice

O Kindreds, accept my sacrifice!

10. Omen

(take the omen-- if favorable, continue; if unfavorable, skip to 15 and try again later with other offerings or a revised perspective)

11. Calling (asking) for the Blessings

I give my gifts to the Kindreds Three,
Now let your blessings strengthen me!
Hear my prayer and give to me:
(desired blessings)

12. Hallowing the Blessing

Let your blessings come into these waters, that I
may drink them down.

(drink some or all of the remaining water, as
appropriate)

13. Affirmation of the Blessing

Hail the Kindreds, strong in me!
Thanks be to the Kindreds Three!
Peace to all beings, so may it be!

14. Workings (if any)

(optional)

15. Thanking the Beings

(included in #13 above, but if desired, a further
thanks may be simply: "Thanks be to the

Kindreds")

16. Closing the Gate(s)

O (gatekeeper's name)
Let the Gate(s) be closed.

(imagine the Gate(s) closing)

(optional: Two Powers Re-attunement-- gesture
once again to the sky above and earth below
while re-aligning with these energies)

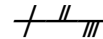
17. Thanking the Earth Mother

Hail, Earth Mother, whole and holy, honor unto
thee.

I've offered now as the ancients did to the
Kindreds Three.

18. Closing the Rite

The rite is ended.
Go in peace.



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Book Review

Solitary Druid by Skip Ellison
By Jason Cook

Our Archdruid, Reverend Robert Lee (Skip) Ellison, has entered the fray of “Paganism 101” books with an offering that explains in general terms the approach of Neopagan Druidism which ADF espouses. *The Solitary Druid: Walking the Path of Wisdom and Spirit* provides an overview of what historical information we have on the ancient Druids and explains what it means to be a Neopagan Druid. The strength of the book is that it gathers under one cover much of the information that before now a seeker might have to piece together by spending lots of time on the websites of ADF and its Groves.

The book proceeds through a review of the core beliefs of Neopagan Druidism including the nature of the spirits we worship, the types and uses of Druid magic and divination, and examples of typical practices for the solitary practitioner. There are even a few spells, including a love spell, which should appeal to many of those who are beginning to examine Paganism as a path. Ellison ties modern Druidic practice and belief to examples in historical sources in a powerful way that entices readers to find those texts and explore them for themselves.

Ellison also does an admirable job of providing new Druids a set of example questions and answers and other guidance for speaking to friends and family about their new path.

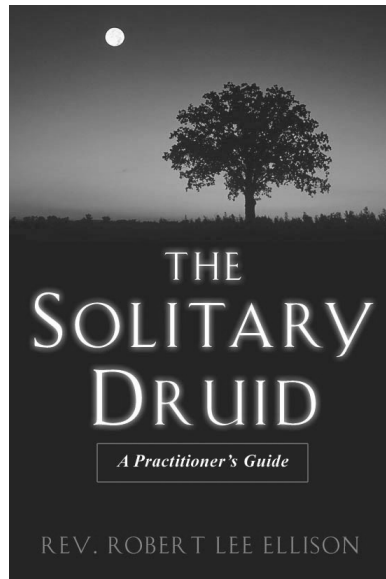
In keeping with an introductory text, Ellison provides a description of the eight holidays and

provides rituals for each. The book wraps up with a summary of texts where historical information on Druids can be found, resources for further study, and a comprehensive listing of organizations that follow the path of Druidry.

I found the sections on learning Druid skills particularly appealing and useful. Ellison directs the seeker to first begin to build relationships with the deities of their place, including the local river or land goddess before moving on to work with other deities, the Nature Spirits and the Mighty Dead. This approach allows us to first reach out to a deity who should be easily

accessible and has the added benefit of making us more aware of our surroundings and the ecosystem in which we live. A beginner should find the devotionals and rite of self-dedication as tangible activities to try that require minimal preparation and yet can have provide meaningful experiences. Of particular use for the ADF newcomer are the eight rituals composed in keeping with the ADF standard liturgy. They provide the clearest step-by-step “recipe” for understanding and performing the ADF liturgy I have found.

I have two minor criticisms of the book. The first is a heavy insular Celtic emphasis displayed with regard to the deities and practice (with a few references to Norse practices) while other Indo-European traditions receive little mention. The second criticism is the section on “The Druids

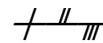


and Sex” where Ellison discusses historical Celtic attitudes toward sexuality. While he is at pains at the beginning of this section to note that Druidry embraces a wide variety of lifestyles and favors none, the bulk of the section goes on to establish that both homosexuality and polyamory were known and accepted in ancient Celtic society. To a less-than-careful reader, the tone and emphasis of this section could be read as an endorsement of polyamory in particular and an effort to link it to modern Druidic practice.

One feature of the book that I found interesting was a lack of a clear discussion of the differences between Neopagan Druidry as practiced by ADF and the practices of those organizations who are more closely associated with the Druid Revival.

There is some discussion of the errors made by the early Druid Revival (the Druids built Stonehenge, etc.) and the Iolo Morganwg forgery, but no more. A newcomer to Druidry might be confused by the differences in these approaches and could benefit from further discussion.

In addition to its usefulness for a newcomer, *The Solitary Druid* can serve those of us are familiar with ADF as useful recapitulation of its tenets. I also would recommend it as a companion text for those undertaking the Dedicant Program, in particular given that it provides straightforward ritual scripts and sources for further study.



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Solitary Survey Results

Compiled by

Diane Lynn "Emerald" Vaughn, Maria Stoy, & Sarina Agresta

When I first ran for Members' Advocate in 2005, one of my promises was to "see to it that the unique needs of our solitary members are met and that they know that as long as they are members of ADF, they are never alone." However, I spent the entire year of my first term simply reacting to whatever was thrown at me and learning how to deal with it. This left me very little time to pursue any sort of proactive goals. Since I had gotten acclimated to the MA's job, I decided to run for a second term because I felt that I would be able to devote more time to figuring out how to actually accomplish my promise of reaching out to the Solitaries and making sure their needs were met. But I realized that I did not truly know what the needs of ADF's solitary members are. I figured that the best way to find out was to simply ask. So I decided to create a Solitaries Survey. And from the overwhelming number of responses I received, it seems as though it was high time someone did.

I designed the survey with input from the ADF leadership and from members of the Solitaries email list. Maria Stoy and Sarina Agresta assisted with the qualitative analysis. I also want to thank Brandon Newberg (aka Brandon in Japan), the new Head of the Solitaries SIG, for his offer of help and all of his interest in this project. Although I was not ultimately able to take him up on it, his support meant a lot to me. And I especially want to thank all of the members who took the time to complete the survey. Your thoughtful responses will hopefully help ADF to better understand the Solitary ADF Experience and to help the leadership provide better resources and models of support for all ADF members.

Methodology

Based on the feedback I received, I decided on a relatively small number of questions (ten), including both multiple choice and short answer, presented in a Web-based format. I found that the online service Survey Monkey would best meet the needs of this project, especially considering that I had no software budget. In order to reach as many ADF Members as possible, I sent the link to the survey to the Discuss, Dedicants, and Solitaries lists as well as to all of the regional lists. I wanted to make sure that the respondents were all current ADF members. I later realized that the regional lists include non-members as well, but based on the responses to Question #2 (see below), it does seem that the vast majority of people who responded are in fact members. A total of 99 people responded to the survey, with 93 or more responding to every question. Also note that although the survey used the term "Dedicant Program," I have changed it to "Dedicant Path" in this article to reflect the recent change in terminology.

Results

Question #1: Are you solitary by choice, circumstance, or both? (multiple choice)

*two respondents skipped this question

According to the survey, ADF's solitary members are almost evenly divided into those who choose to practice as solitaries and those who are doing it solely because they are not able to practice with a group for whatever reason.

Question #2: What factors prompted you to join ADF? If you have renewed your

membership, what factors have prompted you to remain a member? (short answer)

The most common reason respondents gave for what factors prompted them to join ADF was that they shared ADF's values, beliefs, and/or approach to Neo-Pagan Druidism (34.7%). Specific examples given include the focus on Indo-European cultures, a polytheistic approach, reverence for nature, ADF's mission of providing public Paganism, encouragement of personal growth, the Nine Virtues, honoring the ancestors, and ADF's motto of "Why Not Excellence." One respondent replied, "Once I visited the ADF website and saw the honesty in 'we may not know all the answers, but we can help you to find them,' I wanted to be a part of ADF."

The second and third most common reasons given for joining ADF were to learn and a desire for fellowship, community, or feeling a part of something bigger than one's self (29.5% and 27.4% respectively). Types of learning included both ADF's formal study programs (including the clergy training program) and more general types of learning to promote spiritual growth and to increase knowledge and understanding of Druidism and ancient ways. Eleven respondents specifically stated that the Dedicant Path was a factor in joining. ADF's grounding in sound scholarship and "academic rigor" landed in fourth place (21.4%), with a telling response being, "I found the idea of requiring real, verifiable work refreshing." Other common responses included a desire for structure and organization (8.4%), encouragement by friends who were ADF members (7.4%), seeking guidance and support on their path (5.3%), intent to form a Grove (5.3%), and the people and leaders of ADF (5.3%). A few people also mentioned ADF's reputation in the general Pagan community as reliable and respected, ADF's rituals and ritual structure, ADF's orthopraxic instead of orthodoxic approach, and its cost in relations to other Druid organizations.

No one factor really stood out amongst respondents who explained why they have renewed their membership. Some reasons given include to continue learning, specifically to finish the Dedicant Path, the quality of the people, the support they feel from being a member of ADF and how connected their membership makes them feel to others of like mind, and a desire to see ADF continue to grow stronger.

One response sums up many common themes quite nicely: "thirst for scholastic knowledge and fellowship in a polytheistic context."

Question #3: How connected to ADF do the following make you feel: attending festivals, ADF email lists, ADF Web site, *Oakleaves*, membership in a guild, kin, or SIG (very connected, somewhat connected, not very connected, not connected, not applicable).

Clearly, the ADF lists are doing the best job of making Solitaries feel connected to ADF with 84% saying they make them feel very or somewhat connected. On the flip side, only 16% feel not very or not connected through the lists. The Web site runs a close second. Being that this survey was only distributed electronically, it is not surprising that electronic means of communication received the highest ratings. But the numbers are still significant. Only 19% responded that they do not read *Oakleaves*, indicating a high readership rate among Solitaries. Forty percent of those who have attended festivals said that they made them feel very connected to ADF, but 60% of respondents have not attended a festival at all. Guild, Kin, and SIG membership is relatively low among Solitaries, but these numbers would be more telling if they could be compared to the percentage of membership amongst ADF members as a whole, especially considering that the activities of these groups is primarily virtual anyway.

Question #4: How often do you perform ADF-style rites on your own? (choose all that

apply: Daily (i.e. morning/evening devotions, etc.), Monthly (Full moons, etc.), For each of the eight High Days, Occasionally (for specific purposes, as time allows, etc.) Never/Not yet, Other (please specify)

*Zero respondents skipped this question

Those who responded to “other” gave various examples, including biweekly, and “whenever ADF formats work well for the occasion.” Some expressed that they are still getting used to the ADF ritual format or are working on adapting it for solitary use.

Question #5: If you do ADF rites on your own, do you: use a pre-written script from an ADF source, write your own rituals, or some combination of both?

*10 respondents skipped this question

A majority of ADF Solitaries who are doing rituals are adapting existing material to their needs. From the answers to Question #10 (see below), it seems that at least some are doing this because of a dearth of ADF rituals written specifically for Solitaries and the need for solitary members to adapt preexisting group rituals for solitary use.

Question #6: In regards to the ADF Dedicant Path, please choose one that applies:

The “other” responses include: one who will not work through it and one who has completed it, a few who have been stopping and starting for various reasons, and two are just starting. About 68% of respondents have worked on it, are working on it, or have completed it.

Question #7: Do you think that including the Dedicant Path (DP) with the ADF new member information packet makes it appear mandatory?

*one respondent skipped this question

My decision to include this question stemmed directly from a discussion about this topic on the

Leadership list. Some of the Leaders were polling their Grovemates about this issue, and I wanted to know where the Solitaries stood.

Question # 8: Do you think the current materials new members receive, i.e. Membership Guide and Dedicant Path, provide enough explanation of how to practice as an ADF Druid? Is a simpler publication for new members needed?

Again, I included this question because of recent discussions about a possible change to the organization of the DP and the perceived need for a simpler publication for new members. A large percentage (42.7%) found the materials to be good or sufficient as they are. Of these respondents, 14.6% specifically stated that they do not need to be simpler, just clearer or better organized. One respondent wrote, “I think that to simplify the publication(s) will miss important information. It’s a good size right now.”

Some common suggestions for making improvements or additions included:

- 1 Clearer outline and explanation of the Core Order of Ritual
- 2 Make the Web site easier to navigate so members can better use the printed materials in conjunction with the content on the site
- 3 Eliminate contradictions within the print materials and between the print materials and the Web site
- 4 Eliminate repetitions within the Membership Guide and the Dedicant Path
- 5 More examples of devotionals and rituals would make it easier to get started

“I think that the order of ritual, in its present format, is a bit confusing. I’d appreciate a breakdown of the ‘standard,’ explaining why certain things are done at certain times.”

Question #9: What is your overall impression of ADF's leaders? How have you formed these impressions? Do you currently hold any ADF leadership positions? If not, have you considered taking on an ADF leadership position?

The impressions the respondents hold of ADF's leaders are in large part positive. About 30% expressed that their impressions were good or excellent, 22.3% found them to be interested, concerned, and helpful, and 20.2% said they appeared to be interesting, knowledgeable, and/or intelligent. Significant percentages also found them dedicated (13.8%), grounded and sincere (10.6%), and accessible and personable (8.5%). A typical positive response: "I'm amazed at how transparent ADF is as an organization, how accessible the leadership is, and how accountable they are."

A small percentage had a negative impression, with 5.3% finding them disinterested or arrogant and 4.2% calling them disorganized. One respondent pointed out that, "they seem to just be a group that goes to the Mother Grove meetings," but if they did regular postings or opened a blog, they may seem more accessible.

Some respondents said they had not had enough interaction with ADF leaders to form an opinion (21.3%).

A majority formed their perceptions of the leadership through online interactions (31%). Smaller percentages formed their opinions through conversations with individual leaders (13.8%), reading their articles or books (12.8%) and ADF events (7.4%).

Only 8.5% of respondents indicated that they had held a leadership position within ADF, although 24.5% said that they had considered taking on a leadership role. The most common reasons for not getting involved in leadership include not having enough experience, knowledge, or time. Some advice for getting

people to feel more qualified: "A more detailed description of the position, including statements from the current leader about goals both met and not met, successes, frustrations, and the qualifications they had that were important to the position."

Question #10: Do you think ADF is adequately supporting its solitary members? What sort of improvements do you think ADF can make in supporting its solitary members?

The largest percentage of respondents answered in the affirmative (30.1%) with answers ranging from "yes, very much so" to "pretty good." Fifteen percent responded in the negative, with one respondent answering, "not at all." Fourteen percent felt ADF was doing an adequate or "ok" job.

But even among those who feel that ADF is already doing well by its solitary members, there is a feeling that ADF can do better or do more. The ideas were quite diverse, but a few common themes did emerge. The most common response was that ADF and its leaders should be doing a lot more to reach out to its solitary members. Several people felt that the Regional Druids should take more initiative in contacting the Solitaries in their region. One person indicated that they had written to their RD but had never received a response. Some respondents also felt that the Groves should do more to engage Solitaries in their areas and that there needs to be more support for Proto-Groves. Some respondents wanted ADF to do a better job of facilitating connections between solitary members such as providing lists of Sols in each Region or matching people up with solitary buddies and mentors outside of the DP setting. Another common theme was the need for more solitary-oriented materials. Most of these respondents wanted to see more solitary rites, but articles, testimonials, and culture-specific content geared toward Solitaries were also requested. And some respondents hoped for

more regional gatherings or solitary retreats to be able to connect with other members.

A wide range of suggestions also centered around technology. Some respondents would prefer a forum-style communication system to email lists. Other technology-oriented suggestions included podcasts, more videos, blogs, more frequent solitary chats, and an ongoing live chat.

Over all, there were two prevailing attitudes among respondents, one being that Solitaries should reach out to ADF to get the support they need, and the other being that ADF should reach out to the Solitaries. The following quotes illustrate these two attitudes:

“I do feel that it is up to members to use the tools ADF provides. I have been here for a year and have not felt connected, but that is no fault of ADF. I have yet to reach out. The resources are there for me or any other member when we are ready to use them.”

“Although I am naturally a ‘loner,’ I do not feel as though anyone has reached out to me to see how I feel (until now, obviously) about the support I have gotten in my studies. There are a few members (not those who hold any offices) who have reached out to me personally, and I think it is sad that no one in a leadership position has done so. Some people are not solitary by choice, and cannot afford to attend festivals. What happens to people like that?”

Conclusions

Although it seems that we tend to think of ADF Solitaries as members who are simply isolated by geography, nearly half of those who responded to this survey have joined ADF solely to support their solitary path. They are solitary by choice. We need to change our thinking about the reasons why people choose to join ADF. Not everyone is here because they want to form a Grove. Although many would be happy to

worship with others if they could, many members of ADF are currently or solely here to promote their personal spiritual growth.

A core part of ADF’s mission is to offer a form of public Paganism. This has manifested as an emphasis on the formation of Groves. However, as Isaac Bonewitz writes in “The Vision of ADF,”

Everyone is expected to communicate with the Goddesses and Gods in her or his own way -- spiritual growth is not a monopoly of the clergy. Every human being needs to learn how to contact the divine fire within, how to talk with trees, and how to unleash the power of magic to save the Earth. If there is such a thing as "spiritual excellence," we need to be striving to express that as well.

The leadership of ADF needs to understand that “public Paganism” extends far beyond the Grove. As a public Neo-Pagan institution, ADF exists to serve the needs of all of its members, whether they ever intend to join or form a Grove or not. Our motto of “Why Not Excellence?” applies as much to the growth of the individual as it does to the growth of a Grove. We need to make sure that the needs of these members are being met by remembering to reach out and learn what those needs are. This survey has been a start, but it is my hope that it will be just that—a start. Hopefully others will build upon this beginning and continue the dialogue with the Solitaries so that ADF can continue to evolve to support their needs.

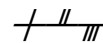
However, ADF espouses the ideal of reciprocity expressed in the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European word *ghosti, the concept of hospitality. As much as ADF’s solitary members need to be supported by ADF, they too must support ADF itself. Very few Solitaries are serving in positions of leadership, and this needs to change. Many members who responded to this survey said that they joined ADF out of a

desire for fellowship and support. Why not support others in turn? I freely admit that I included the question about whether or not Solitaries had considered taking on a leadership position in order to plant a seed. For the past two years, I have served both as an ADF leader and as a leader of my Grove. Most of the time I was able to balance the two positions, but when situations arose in each that demanded my attention at the same time, I felt on the verge of burn-out. Also, with the burden of reading both Grove and Mother Grove mail, I never felt like I had to time to be as active or visible on the other ADF lists as I would have liked (or as active as I was before I became an ADF leader). And as this survey has shown, the email lists serve as a vital link between ADF and its solitary members. It would seem that without the pressures of running a Grove, Solitaries could commit more time to ADF service without the fear of burn-out.

There is also a need for more solitary-oriented rituals. Who better to write these than the Solitaries? Solitaries should be just as involved in

the Liturgists and other Guilds as anyone involved in group rituals. The Guilds, Kins, and SIGs can be places of fellowship on a smaller and more focused scale, and Solitaries who wish to get the most out of their membership in ADF should not only take advantage of the resources they have to offer, but should contribute to those resources as well.

One respondent called ADF's Solitaries "the forgotten ones." It is my hope that through conducting this survey and writing this article that I have in some small way contributed to making sure the Solitaries are remembered. It is my hope that I will never again attend an ADF Unity Rite that reads off the list of Groves and Proto-Groves, but fails to reach out to the rest of ADF's members. I challenge both the leadership of ADF and all of the Solitaries to reach out to one another, and through the strengthening of this relationship, the blessings will flow for everyone who has chosen to make this form of Neo-Pagan Druidism truly their own. *Ghosti!



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A Solitary Yoginí

By Ashley Price

I have been a practitioner of Iyengar yoga for about 7 years. I began my studies as a solitary, and have recently found myself embracing a solitary practice once again. I had access to one of the best studios in the country and one of the most experienced and high-ranking teachers in all of Iyengar yoga. I loved this style of yoga, which emphasized precision and personal practice, which eschewed the newfound trendiness of this ancient discipline, and which rooted everything about yoga, as well as life, in an ancient and well-reasoned spirituality. I even had a personal relationship with my teacher, and had a great rapport with my fellow classmates, many of whom were teachers themselves.

I learned so much through my study under a teacher, and my practice soared to new heights. I was suddenly doing things that I had never thought possible. These were the intimidating but beautiful poses that I had longingly admired when I first began my practice, and I was doing them! I experienced such a thrill at that time, it was all I could talk about for quite awhile.

Why, one would wonder, would I leave this studio? Was this not everything that I was looking for in my yogic studies? Unfortunately, while my studio was by all standards amazing and I was lucky enough to have access to all these great resources, I realized that it wasn't what I needed.

My teacher is a very busy woman, and her classes are very popular. A self-described "yoga nun," she was a purist of the discipline, and people flocked to her for that reason. However, this emphasis on purity disallowed some acknowledgement of individual variation. I'm young, strong, and extremely flexible; yet I couldn't do some basic poses because of the nature of my skeleton. Notably, I was born with

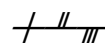
flat feet, and my teacher tried desperately to "correct" this by barking at me to constantly lift my "arches." This caused chronic pain, as she was essentially trying to reshape my skeleton. I acceded to her demands because I felt that I should listen to the extremely knowledgeable teacher. She must know what she's doing, right?

This and a few other reasons led me to realize that I would benefit from a solitary practice, away from any teacher.

I have long associated my yoga practice with my religion, and used yoga to enhance and deepen my understanding of Druidry. Because of this, I realized that while group worship is wonderful and one can learn so much from others, there are some tangible benefits to the solitary life.

As a solitary, especially a solitary by choice, you have to learn to trust yourself above all others. This leads to a great deal of self-reliance, which is a virtue in and of itself. Additionally, you can tailor your religious practice to what you need, rather than what the group needs. For those in the Celtic hearth culture, this can mean not celebrating the Equinoxes as there is no evidence that the Celts recognized them in a religious context. Or it can mean focusing your rituals your Patron without having to accede to group demands. As a solitary, the possibilities are endless, and you only have yourself to answer to.

While I love my grove and wouldn't trade it for anything, I can still recognize the benefits of being a solitary. Conversely, I see the benefits of having a teacher, but at this time prefer to study on my own. From both yoga and Druidry, I have learned that in all things, especially those of a spiritual nature, you have to rely first and foremost on yourself.



Solitary Spring Equinox Ritual

By Amanda Lynne Orcutt

(Orphic Hymns # 25, 27, 28, 39, 75 & 77 lifted from www.theoi.com and lightly edited.)

Offerings

- Seeds - Earth Mother / Gaia
- Beaded shells - Bardic Inspiration / the Muses
- Jalepeno peppers - Outsiders
- Silver coin - Well-gate
- Incense - Fire-gate
- Vanilla - Tree-gate
- Beer - Ancestors
- Spice mix - Nature Spirits
- Olive Oil - Shining Ones
- 3 feathers - Gatekeeper / Hermes
- Praise offerings - Demeter, Persephone, Eos

Other Stuff

- Salt - land purification
- Water - sea purification
- Feather - sky purification
- Candle - Fire
- Chalice - Well
- Maple (or whichever is preferred) - Tree
- Bell
- Divination tool (runes, ogham, cards, etc)

Preparation

- Light the Fire

- Fill the Well

(1) Opening

- Nine knells on a bell

- "This rite shall now begin."

(2) Statement of Purpose

- "I come today to celebrate the dawning of the springtime of the year. The time for new growth is upon us. May the beginning of the light half of the year bring inspiration to our spirits and hearts. Today is also a day of balance between light and dark. So too let us take stock of ourselves, releasing winter's frozen imobility in

favor of invigorating and refreshing warmth."

(3) Bardic Inspiration

- Orphic Hymn #75 : To the Muses :

"Daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, dire-sounding and divine,
Renowned Pierian, sweetly speaking nine;
To those whose breasts your sacred furies fire
Much-formed, the objects of supreme desire:
Sources of blameless virtue to mankind,
Who form to excellence the youthful mind;
Who nurse the soul, and give her to descry
The paths of right with Reason's steady eye.
Commanding queens who lead to sacred light
The intellect refined from Error's night;
And to mankind each holy rite disclose,
For mystic knowledge from your nature flows.
Clio, and Erato, who charms the sight,
With thee Euterpe ministering delight:
Thalia flourishing, Polyhymnia famed,
Melpomene from skill in music named:
Terpsichore, Urania heavenly bright,
With thee who gav'st me to behold the light.
Come, venerable, various, powers divine,
With favoring aspect on your mystics shine;
Bring glorious, ardent, lovely, famed desire,
And warm my bosom with your sacred fire.

- "Muses Nine, accept my offering of beaded shells. Inspire my spirit, let my words flow as water, and lend me your many blessings this rite and after."

(4) Earth Mother Offering

- Orphic Hymn #25 : To Gaia :

"O Goddess, Earth, of Gods and men the source,
Endured with fertile, all destroying force;
All-parent bounding, whose prolific powers,
Produce a store of beauteous fruits and flowers,
All-various maid, the eternal worlds strong base
Immortal, blessed, crowned with every grave;

From whose wide womb, as from an endless
root,
Fruits, many-formed, mature and grateful shoot.
Deep bosomed, blessed, pleased with grassy
plains,
Sweet to the smell, and with prolific rains.
All flowery daemon, centre of the world,
Around thy orb, the beauteous stars are hurled
With rapid whirl, eternal and divine,
Whose frames with matchless skill and wisdom
shine.
Come, blessed Goddess, listen to my prayer,
And make increase of fruits thy constant care;
With fertile Seasons in thy train, draw near,
And with propitious mind thy suppliant hear."

- "Accept these seeds, Gaia, and may all of your
children grow strong this season."

(5) Outsiders Offering

- "For those of you whose purposes
Are not akin with mine
For any of the energies
Who would work against my rhyme
I acknowledge that your purpose here
Is cause for perseverance
But today instead I ask of you
To give of your forbearance
Take this offering I give
And turn the other cheek
Turn away and take with you
Whatever makes me weak!"

- Place the offering of peppers outside the ritual
space.

(6) Purification

- Rub a pinch of salt between the palms.

- "Land firm beneath me, my body is as your soil
and stone. Grant me strength and health through
your bounty. Earth purify my body."

- Rinse hands with water.

- "Seas that surround me, my thoughts and
feelings are as your waves and currents. Grant
me your flexibility, and wisdom as deep as you
are. Sea purify my emotions and mind."

- Brush a feather over the face and hands.

- "Sky around and above me, through which I
see the stars, sun, and moon. My soul sings as the
many stars twinkle. May your numbers reflect the
wealth of my spirit. Sky purify my energy."

(7) Two Powers Attunement

- "Planting myself into the earth, I push my roots
down. Reaching into the soil, dark, rich, and
nourishing, they search for sustaining water. I
dive down deeply, touching the cool waters
below, the primordial seas of matter and chaos. I
draw this energy up, through my roots, into my
body. It fills me, my body, my mind, my spirit,
until I am overflowing."

- Pause to deepen this connection.

- "Reaching outward, into the sky, my branches
grow long and strong. My leaves bud and open
to the light of the sun, moon, and stars. From far
reaching heavens shines the light of creation
upon me. I draw this energy down, through my
leaves and braches, into my body. It fills me, my
body, my mind, my spirit, until I am
overflowing"

- Again pause to deepen this connection.

- "These two powers within me mingle and meld.
Becoming mine, combining with my own energy,
I am filled with the creative and destructive
forces of nature. May these energies and that of
the spirit in all things serve me well this day and
in those days to come."

- Pause to feel the energies within and flowing
forth from the self into the rite.

(8) Opening the Gates

- "Deep Well diving down below
Currents creating, springing flow
Through your depths my voice resound
Take my words to those I've found
Sacred Well of water holy
Take this offering now from me
And with it, with me here today
Help me to create the way."

- Offer a silver coin to the well.

- "Bright Fire flaming into the sky
Shining forth and dancing high
May my words follow your heat far up
To those who on ambrosia sup
Sacred Fire accept this gift
Incense with your own smoke lift
With it help me create the way
So spirits may hear what I've to say."

- Offer incense to the fire.

- "Mighty Tree spanning through all worlds
Roots reaching deep and leaves unfurled
Here at the center you grow tall and strong
Through you my voice to all carries along
Sacred Tree accept my offering of
Vanilla whose scent and spirits I love
Standing here at the crossroads of all
Make the way with me so they here my call."

- Anoint the tree with vanilla.

(9) Gatekeeper Invocation

- *Orphic Hymn # 27 : To Hermes :*

"Hermes, draw near, and to my prayer incline,
Angel of Zeus, and Maia's son divine;
Studios of contests, ruler of mankind,
With heart almighty, and a prudent mind.
Celestial messenger, of various skill,
Whose powerful arts could watchful Argus kill:
With winged feet, 'tis thine through air to course,
O friend of man, and prophet of discourse:
Great life-supporter, to rejoice is thine,
In arts gymnastic, and in fraud divine:
With power endured all language to explain,
Of care the loosener, and the source of gain.
Whose hand contains of blameless peace the rod,
Corucian, blessed, profitable God;
Of various speech, whose aid in works we find,
And in necessities to mortals kind:
Dire weapon of the tongue, which men revere,
Be present, Hermes, and thy suppliant hear;
Assist my works, conclude my life with peace,
Give graceful speech, and my memories
increase."

- "Hermes, divine messenger, help me open these

ways to the otherworlds. Accept my sacrifice,
and let the gates be open!"

- Offer three feathers to Hermes.

(10) Three Kindreds Invocation

- "Ancestors of my blood, those of my heart, and
those of this land. Join me in this celebration.
Guide me through your history, in this rite and in
days to come. Ancestors, accept this offering!"

- Offer beer to the Ancestors.

- "Hear me Spirits of Nature, nymphs, satyrs,
centaurs, and your kin; spirits of these lands, sky-
flyers, sea-swimmers, and land-striders. Join me
in this celebration of Spring. Guide me through
your forests and fields, rivers and lakes,
mountians and clouds. Nature Spirits, accept this
offering!"

- Offer a spice mix to the Nature Spirits.

- "Shining Ones unnamed today. You of my
hearth and home, those of this and other worlds,
I honor you all. Join me in this celebration and
be most welcome. Guide me in this life and
those to come. Shining Ones accept this
offering!"

- Offer olive oil to the Shining Ones.

(11) Deities of Occasion - Offerings and Invocations

- *Orphic Hymn #28 : To Persephone :*

"Daughter of Zeus, almighty and divine,
Come, blessed queen, and to these rites incline:
Only-begotten, Hades' honored wife,
O venerable Goddess, source of life:
'Tis thine in earth's profundities to dwell,
Fast by the wide and dismal gates of hell:
Zeus holy offspring, of a beauteous mien,
Fatal, with lovely locks, infernal queen:
Source of the Erinyes, whose blest frame
proceeds
From Zeus' ineffable and secret seeds:
Mother of Eubouleos, Sonorous, divine,
And many-formed, the parent of the vine:

The dancing Hours attend thee, essence bright,
 All-ruling virgin, bearing heav'nly light:
 Illustrious, horned, of a bounteous mind,
 Alone desired by those of mortal kind.
 O, vernal queen, whom grassy plains delight,
 Sweet to the smell, and pleasing to the sight:
 Whose holy form in budding fruits we view,
 Earth's vig'rous offspring of a various hue:
 Espous'd in Autumn: life and death alone
 To wretched mortals from thy power is known:
 For thine the task according to thy will,
 Life to produce, and all that lives to kill.
 Hear, blessed Goddess, send a rich increase
 Of various fruits from earth, with lovely Peace;
 Send Health with gentle hand, and crown my life
 With blest abundance, free from noisy strife;
 Last in extreme old age the prey of Death,
 Dismiss we willing to the realms beneath,
 To thy fair palace, and the blissful plains
 Where happy spirits dwell, and Hades reigns."

- *Orphic Hymn # 39 : To Demeter :*

"O Universal mother, Demeter famed
 August, the source of wealth, and various named:
 Great nurse, all-bounteous, blessed and divine,
 Who joy'st in peace, to nourish corn is thine:
 Goddess of seed, of fruits abundant, fair,
 Harvest and threshing, are thy constant care;
 Who dwell'st in Eleusina's seats retired,
 Lovely, delightful queen, by all desired.
 Nurse of all mortals, whose benignant mind,
 First ploughing oxen to the yoke confined;
 And gave to men, what nature's wants require,
 With plenteous means of bliss which all desire.
 In verdure flourishing in honor bright,
 Assessor of great Dionysus, bearing light:
 Rejoicing in the reapers sickles, kind,
 Whose nature lucid, earthly, pure, we find.
 Prolific, venerable, Nurse divine,
 Thy daughter loving, holy Proserpine:
 A car with dragons yoked, 'tis thine to guide,
 And orgies singing round thy throne to ride:
 Only-begotten, much-producing queen,
 All flowers are thine and fruits of lovely green.
 Bright Goddess, come, with Summer's rich
 increase
 Swelling and pregnant, leading smiling Peace;

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Come, with fair Concord and imperial Health,
 And join with these a needful store of wealth."

- "Today I wish to honor the lovely ladies of Spring. Persephone, your return from the underworld is celebrated, as is your mother, Demeter, for giving forth again of her earthly bounty. Demeter and Persephone, join your magics this spring and summer, and bring us fruitful, bountiful seasons. Show the busy honey bees your extra special care. Lovely goddesses, accept my offering!"

- Offer praise offerings to Demeter and Persephone.

- *Orphic Hymn # 77 : To Eos :*

"Hear me, O Goddess! whose emerging ray
 Leads on the broad refulgence of the day;
 Blushing Eos, whose celestial light
 Beams on the world with reddening splendors bright:
 Angel of Titan, whom with constant round,
 Thy orient beams recall from night profound:
 Labour of every kind to lead is thine,
 Of mortal life the minister divine.
 Mankind in thee eternally delight,
 And none presumes to shun thy beauteous sight.
 Soon as thy splendors break the bands of rest,
 And eyes unclose with pleasing sleep oppressed;
 Men, reptiles, birds, and beasts, with general
 voice,
 And all the nations of the deep, rejoice;
 For all the culture of our life is thine.
 Come, blessed power! and to these rites incline:
 Thy holy light increase, and unconfined
 Diffuse its radiance on thy mystic's mind."

- "Eos, goddess of the dawn, this is the dawn of the year, and thus your time. The transition from dark to light is one most welcomed by me and the land here. Spring is now upon us, may your light draw forth the green of growing things, and also draw forth my own inspiration, drive, and learning. Your light calls me to come into nature. Eos, accept my offering! May we all celebrate and sing in the time of Spring!"

- Offer praise offerings to Eos.

(12) Prayer of Sacrifice

- "Ancestors and Spirits of Nature
And Shining Ones most lovely
Here I have called unto you
With offerings made holy
Up with the fire, down through the well
Throughout with sacred Tree
My voice you hear again today
Sounding offerings to thee
For my mistakes I ask forgiveness
As I give the best I can
My wish is for your magics aid;
Guide me with your shining hands!"

(13) Omen

- "I take this omen so I may know the will of the gods, within this rite and within my life. May the Shining Ones be kind!"

- Shuffle and pull three cards/runes/ogham at random. Think on their first impressions and on their deeper meanings as interpreted.

(14) Return Blessing (given a positive omen)

- Calling - "I ask you now Shining Deities, to give of your many blessings. I call forth your gifts into this cup. May your energy infuse this drink, and thus infuse me with your magic. Behold the Waters of Life!"

- Drink from the chalice.

- Hallowing - "Make sacred the liquid within this chalice. Put into it your light and love. Into it pour your blessings to me. Within me may your gifts shine bright! Behold the Waters of Life!"

- Drink from the chalice.

- Affirmation - "Today I am blessed in this rite, in calling on you. In my life am I blessed in knowing you. As the Waters of Blessing flow through me, my body, my mind, and my spirit, they are filled with your very essence. Behold the Waters of Life!"

- Drink deeply this time and contemplate the

entire construct of the rite.

(15) Workings

(16) Thanking the Beings

- "I thank the lovely Shining Ones for their gifts and many blessings. Deities of the day, Eos, Demeter and Persephone, I thank you again and again!"

- "To the ancestors and spirits of nature who have also joined me this day, I thank you much!"

- "I also thank you, wild outdwellers, for staying outside of this space and leaving this rite in peace."

- "To my lovely Muses, I thank you dearly for your inspiring ways."

- "And I thank as well the Earth Mother, Gaia, for this land, your bounty, and my body, the vehicle through which I am able to give you honor."

(17) Closing the Gates

- "Hermes, I thank you as well for all your aid, and I ask you again to help me close these gates. Let the Sacred Flame be but fire, the Sacred Well be but water, and the Sacred Tree be but a tree. Until I call on you again, let the gates be closed!"

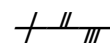
(18) Releasing the Two Powers

- "Now into the sky from me flows the powers of creation. Into the earth flows the powers of chaos. Into normal time and space I return, into the realm of man and earth, but within me remains the blessings of the Kindreds!"

(19) Ending

- "I thank all again as this rite comes to a close. This rite is done. May I go forth with blessings to bless the world in return!"

- Nine knells on a bell.





Festival Review

Three Realms, 2006

By Jenni Hunt and Kirk Thomas

In 2006, we attended Three Realms Festival in Calabasas, California. The event was sponsored by Raven's Cry Grove, ADF, with assistance from Awen's Breath Protogrove, on October 12-15.

This was not an easy event for us to attend; Three Realms falls after the end of the traditional festival season, when some of us had nearly run out of vacation and personal days from work and any funding to get there. But hail the Adopt-A-Druid program and ADF festivals' signal virtue, *GHOSTI*, for not only were we able to attend, but we were most warmly welcomed, well-provisioned and feted by all the hosts. It was one of the best organized and moving festivals we have had the pleasure of attending.

The site, Malibu Creek State Park, is stunningly beautiful, cradled in among the Santa Monica Mountains, just outside of Los Angeles. The valley is filled with gigantic oaks, and the sunrises are simply breathtaking. In October, the air is crisp, if not downright chilly, and we had a bit of rain, although nothing like the deluges we get sometimes at Brushwood or Camp Clifton.

The event schedule and rituals were carefully planned with a recurring theme of threes, activities well-balanced to stimulate the body: dance, movement for the pagan warrior and a nature walk – mind: workshops on Roman religion, chant creation, seers in Indo-European cultures, and cosmology – and soul: a trance workshop to find the sacred center within, and no less than five rituals.

The first ritual was an inspiring opening rite Thursday night, when participants reflected upon which of the three cauldrons of the person (head, heart or loins) they would focus for the weekend.

The highlight of Roman ritual on Friday morning was the wonderful omen taken by ZL Bennett with egg divination. On Saturday morning, Francesca celebrated a Slavic ritual honoring the Ancestors, where participants were encouraged to seek a bond with a particular Ancestor ally. Saturday night's Unity Rite was lovely – light-hearted and moving, with Meredith as the officiant. We sang, for the first time, while passing around the Waters of Life, a lovely new chant penned by Linda Costello. We stirred up so much buoyancy and optimism at that last Unity Ritual of the festival season that surely ADF members across the continent must have felt it. At the final closing ritual on Sunday, as everyone prepared to go their separate ways, we took the opportunity to make personal vows for the coming season.

Workshops included *Ager to Urbs*: Jenni's Roman perspective on urban paganism; Jack's inspirational (and productive!) chant creation session; Faolan's pagan warrior; Skip's talk on the role of Seers in IE cultures; Kirk's discussion of ADF cosmology; and Francesca's hands-on Polish paper cutting, where folks created offerings to be made at the Unity Rite. Doug led an invigorating nature walk Saturday morning for those intrepid early-morning hikers.

Faolan's Pagan Warrior workshop was a surprise. We weren't sure what to expect. It was to be about movement and sound for spiritual energies, but with the exception of a brave ZL Bennett, all the participants turned out to be men. Faolan had us stamp our feet, shout, and throw spears at a post in order to 'kill' it. This sounds like typical warrior stuff, but Faolan actually had a far deeper motive. What he showed us was that as long as we were willing to commit to the process, all this movement and

voice were actually keys to a form of ecstatic trance that could forge a connection with our primal selves. This exercise of his also forged a bond between us ‘warriors’ that let us share in each others’ ecstasy. Ancient war bands must have felt such things. This was a valuable exercise in self-awareness and unity that can benefit anyone, of either gender, and it is our personal wish that everyone could take this workshop.

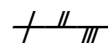
Saturday night’s activities began with a benefit auction, with some incredible items, and it resulted in several hundred dollars to offset the expenses of the festival and benefit the two local groves that worked so hard to make it all happen.

It has become an ADF festival tradition to have at least one evening of Bardic sharing, and this year’s Three Realms Bardic Circle was amazing. We never cease to be amazed at the talent of our members, from mead drinking songs to operatic performances. Skip started us off with his tale called “Harvest Home”, Jenni regaled us with a thought-provoking reminiscence about Ancestor-Nature Spirits; Linda performed her new Waters of Life chant; Modig made us laugh with his Dr. Seuss-style story about Egil -- Skallagrim's son,

called, “Norse, of Course”; and Gentry entertained us with an amazing Giant story. There were some standards by talented performers, Kirk Thomas and Meredith Richards – if you haven’t heard them sing before, boy are you in for a treat!

For all that there were so many rituals, workshops and activities filling the schedule, we never felt rushed; there was always time to sit and chat. There was plenty of time in between events, almost as if the event organizers had actually contrived a way to slow the passing of time so that we could fill it with as much eating, drinking, star-gazing, sunrise watching, and fellowship as we liked. The hospitality extended to those of us who’d flown across the country to attend was above and beyond the normal call of *GHOSTI* – our hosts thought of everything. The temperatures were cooler than we had expected, and we did have a bit of rain, but it was never enough to cool or dampen our spirits.

What an outstanding event to punctuate the end of an extraordinarily wonderful festival season for ADF!



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 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.

Medium of Submission:

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments, *not* copied in the body of the email, 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 errors

Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: Rich Text Format (RTF), or MS Word. Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender, unless specifically requested.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: January 1st, Summer: April 1st,

Autumn: July 1st, Winter: October 1st

For more information on Submitting your work for consideration, please visit the submission guidelines website at: <http://www.adf.org/publications/periodicals/oak-leaves/submissions.html>



News and Announcements

Dedicant Program Completions

René Lincoln of Beaver Hills Protogrove,
Completed January 26, 2007

Andrea Maurine Taylor of Sonoran Sunrise
Grove, Completed January 29, 2007

Cassandra Sparrold of Sonoran Sunrise Grove,
Completed February 2, 2007

New Protogroves

Forest of Tsalagi Protogrove, ADF in Athens,
Tennessee, October 26, 2006

Hemlock Vales Protogrove, ADF in State
College, Pennsylvania, March 22, 2007

SIG News

Military Outreach SIG

The Military Outreach SIG (MOS) is a group of ADF members established to guarantee that ADF members in the military do not feel isolated because of their religious beliefs. MOS will assist military members in meeting their religious and educational needs. MOS will provide support by networking, addressing relevant issues, and serving as an information source for all. Donations of funds and materials will be requested and used in assisting our members and other military pagans as needed. You can subscribe to the group's e-mail list ADF-MILITARY using the subscription page (<http://www.adf.org/members/forums/subscribe.html>), or you can contact the SIG coordinators, Francesca Hedrick (ladybythesea@YAHOO.COM) or Caryn MacLuan (carynmacluan@earthlink.net) directly.

You may also visit their web page at www.adf.org/members/sigs/military-outreach

Grove News

Grove of the Rising Phoenix

Grove of the Rising Phoenix has been very busy this past quarter.

In January, some of our female members attended the ADF Women's Retreat in Tucson, where we truly connected with our female power. We also did our first New Moon Ritual as well as sponsoring a Bardic Circle as part of Phoenix's First Friday activities. We also held our Imbolc ritual, our first Scottish high day, at the end of January.

February brought much activity, including a presence at Pantheon, where we participated in the ADF ritual, as well as helping out in ADF's hospitality suite. We also had a booth at the Phoenix Highland Games, and made connections to have a booth at the Prescott Highland Games in May.

With March came our annual campout, Medieval Madness. This year we offered classes as well as our usual Bardic Night and drumming circle, culminating in an afternoon at the Renaissance Faire. We had a fabulous weekend of camaraderie and joviality, and encourage others in ADF to join us next year. We already have the site reserved for Feb. 29th - March 2, 2008 so we can LEAP into the Madness of March and enjoy the revelry of medieval re-enactment.

March was a very busy month for us, as we also had a booth at a Local to Global teach-in at ASU. The permaculturists were especially interested in us, and we even had attendees at our Spring Equinox rite as a result of this outreach.

We also volunteered to help out with the Irish Cultural Center's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and Fair. We were again fortunate to have a booth for outreach and talked to many interested folks about our grove and ADF.

Our spring equinox ritual - our first Slavic ritual - went very well. In addition to several new participants, as well as some old friends, we had a group of Sunday-schoolers from a local UU Church join us. They had very insightful questions and all seemed to enjoy our celebration of Jarillo and Morena.

Our affiliation with the Irish Cultural Center is going well, and seems to be a beneficial relationship for all parties.

We are very blessed.

Grove of the Other Gods

Longtime Grove of the Other Gods, ADF member, seer, and friend Peg Eckert passed away from us suddenly on January 15th, 2007 at her home. Peggy was friend and "mom" to much of the central NJ Pagan community. Among many other things, she taught us divination, bellydancing, and how to laugh and enjoy life, sharing her skills with the Rutgers University Pagan Students Association, Grove of the Other Gods, the HOC Pagan Picnic, and her belly dance troupe, Fringe Benefits. Peggy's smile and humor and wisdom are very much missed."

Joanne Siwak-Ward, a longtime friend of Grove of the Other Gods, ADF, passed away from us on March 3rd, 2007, after a heroic six-year battle with cancer. Joanne was active in the central NJ Pagan community for nearly twenty years, and we will miss her beautiful voice, her eloquent words, her common sense, her analytical skepticism, and her sense of humor. (And I imagine we will also miss her weatherworking.) You may have met her at GOG rituals, at the HOC Pagan Picnic, Pagan

Pride Day, or at the Free Spirit Festival. Joanne is very much missed.

Three Cranes Grove

From Samhain to Imbolc, we took in 61 canned goods. While this is lower than our usual count (we generally count about a little over 100), we also had the toy drive for Yule instead of the normal canned good collection.

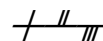
Of course, you can double the number of canned goods we took in: the Grove in Ann Arbor, MI, Shining Lakes Grove, ADF, agreed to match our canned goods "take" if Michigan lost the OSU-Michigan game. Which, of course, they did. On reflection, we think that this bet was better than last year's bet, because while we may not get to see our friends from SLG, we get to help more of the community. Recently, their SD reported to me that this donation has been made.

We took in 37 toys at Yule, which were donated to FireFighters4Kids shortly before Christmas. Special thanks to Maggie, who enjoyed the shopping trip and brought far more than just her fair share of toys for donation.

Our Senior Druid, Michael J Dangler, has also begun prison ministry work with an ADF member. He has found that this work enriches and refocuses him on the local community as well.

More of our members are leading rituals, and it's good to see our members becoming more deeply and actively involved in the Grove's spirituality.

We have found ourselves receiving excellent omens during the past quarter, with runes like wunjo and jera cropping up. It is important to us that our omens be positive, because as we grow in service to the Kindreds, we hope to see their blessings increase as well. It is with a joyful heart that I report that the Grove is, indeed, growing in Columbus!



The 6th Night Grove, ADF
Hosts our 9th Annual

S*ummerland*

An ADF Unity Festival and Pagan Spiritual Retreat

August 23rd – 26th, 2007

Camp Clifton

Yellow Springs, Ohio

Meal plans are available hosted by the 3 Cranes Grove, ADF

Pre-Registration Deadline: August 13, 2007

More details available online:

<http://www.6thnight.org/summerland>

Come Share Your Magic With Ours™

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Brewers Guild

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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.)

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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:

Red Oak Grove, ADF invites *you* to Party like the Devil!



(The Jersey Devil, that is)



Yep, we might have some stinky oil refineries in the northern part of the state, but down south we got the famous Pine Barrens and our very own mythical(?) creature who has been terrorizing campers in our woods for almost 400 years! If you come to one of our events we can't guarantee that you'll actually be chased by the Jersey Devil, but we do promise to tell you some spine-tingling tales about him and the thousands of people who have been scared out of their wits by his sudden appearances, disappearances and un-godly screams over the centuries.

We'll also treat you like an honored guest, feed you well, make sure you're never thirsty and invite you to share in a pretty cool Druid Ritual that features one or two of our Gods actually speaking to us!

2007 Event Schedule

Date We call it: aka: Featuring:

May 5-6	Calan Mai Beltane May Pole Dance, Mead, Flowers, Fertility, Fun!
June 23-24	Alban Hefin Summer Sol. ROG Birthday Party, Water Gun Fight, Wet T Shirts
Aug 4-5	Calan Awst Lughnasadh Games & Contests, 1 st Harvest, Swimming Hole
Sept 21-23	Alban Eilir Fall Equinox Fall Festival, Turkey Dinner, Bardic Contest
Oct 27-28	Calan Gaeaf Samhain Candy, Ancestors, Spooky Stuff!
Dec 21-23	Alban Arthan Yule In a big, toasty cabin, Tons of food, Caroling

Most of our events cost about \$15 a day for adults, half that for kids under 18, and are free for children under 10. For exact event fees, detailed descriptions, maps, directions, and lots more helpful information, please see:

www.redoakgrove.org

or send an email to:

officers@redoakgrove.org



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For information about our store, products, services, ritual dates and times please contact:
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For more information about our grove please visit:
[Www.awensbreathgrove.org](http://www.awensbreathgrove.org)