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Fall 2012 ~ Issue No. 58





Harvest Nights Gathering

November 9 - 11, 2012

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Camp Bonnie Brae

Otis, MA



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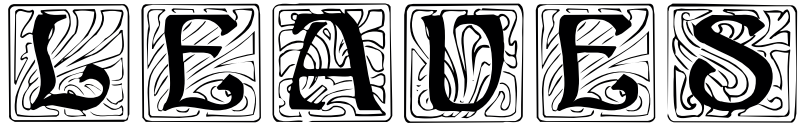


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We're halfway through festival season and many of us are preparing to attend one, if we haven't already. Some of us have even attended a few of them. They're a lot of fun and a great opportunity to see old friends and make new ones.

But the most important thing about festivals is that they give us a chance to come together as one folk, to make our offerings jointly to the Kindreds, to join with each other in fellowship, and to truly feel that we are a people united.

Unity is something that we in ADF have that must be cherished and nourished. We share many things, from our Order of Ritual to our interactions on the lists and forums, through email and Facebook. Many of us have made friends across groves and with solitaries. Attending an ADF festival can be like a great family reunion.

But what of those members who cannot attend festivals, or even join into public grove High Day rituals? While they may make friends on-line, what could we do to help them feel a part of ADF?

This could be a tough nut to crack. The Clergy Council has discussed this over the years, and one solution might be to hold simultaneous, or near simultaneous, Unity Rites, where folks can hold their own rite at home, or together in a grove, while a larger, public rite is held at a festival somewhere.

In time, what I really hope to see is an on-line, streaming Unity Rite that anyone with a broadband Internet connection could access in real time. Barring that, occasional Unity Rites could be recorded for playback on YouTube with people watching at a specific time that was advertised in advance. While a bit difficult technically, both of these options are possible.

And I think Isaac would be pleased.

Rev. Kirk S. Thomas
Archdruid, ADF

OAK LEAVES

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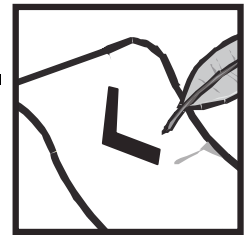
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Series

A Welsh Wheel of the Year: Part 4

by Rev. Kirk Thomas



The goal of this exercise is to create a system of Eight High Days that would fit the Welsh climate using Welsh tales that also incorporated some Welsh folk customs. There are many possible tales that could be chosen for this sort of project, and I have decided to stick with the Four Branches of the Mabinogi (with one exception) for this interpretation, and when I could not decide which tales would be most desirable for what High Day, I would turn to the Irish High Days for inspiration. In many cases, a solitary practitioner could use the customs I have chosen, but in others, a group or Grove would probably be required to enact them. Please note that this is merely one of many ‘possible’ structures for a Welsh Wheel of the Year.

The Wheel of the Year

A wheel, or circle, has no beginning or end, so we can start wherever we choose. As a result, we might come across the end of a tale in this paper before we hear the beginning of it, but who’s to say where we must begin when the circle is endless?

We have already covered Alban Gaeaf, Calan Gwanwin, Alban Eilir, Calan Haf, Alban Hefin, and Calan Elfed. Now we continue starting with the High Day for the Autumn Equinox.

September 21 (Equinox – March 21 in the Southern Hemisphere)

GŴR CYNHAEF (GOOOOR CUHN-hive) – ‘Feast of Harvest’

Other possible names for this holiday are *Alban Elfed* (‘Autumn Equinox’) or *Alban Hydref* (meaning the same thing). But this is the feast of the completion of the grain harvest, and even today villages across the UK have a ‘harvest supper’ celebration between this date and mid-October.

Customs - There is one primary custom for this time of year (Owen 119):

1. *Caseg Fedi* (CA-seg VEH-dee – ‘Harvest Mare’) – The ‘harvest mare’ is actually a decoration made out of the last grain harvested in the fields. There is a game of skill in which the workers throw scythes at the last sheaf of grain and this determines who the winner will be.

The winning reaper, accompanied by his fellows, must sneak the ‘mare’ into the house without getting caught. He often hides it under his clothes, and the other reapers all pretend that they might have it.

The people in the house have a pan of water to douse the ‘mare’, and should they succeed in doing so, the reaper has lost the contest. Should the reaper get the ‘mare’ inside the house successfully without it getting wet, he gets to have all the beer he wants.

But if the ‘mare’ gets wet, he must sit at the foot of the table, with no beer, and be an object of derision for the evening. The ‘mare’ is then used as a decoration for the next year.

Groves could have a group of folks try to get the ‘mare’ into the sacred space without it getting wet while everyone else tries to find it and douse it with water. This could be a fun, if wet, game.

Lore – There is a wonderful tale that takes place during the harvest from the *Third Branch of the Mabinogi* that we could use here. It’s the tale of ‘Manawydan and the Mouse’. The deity of the occasion could be Manawydan fab Llŷr (man-uh-WUH-dan VAB KLEER), and Rhiannon (hree-AN-on), or even Pryderi (pruh-DAIR-ee) or the mouse or any of the other characters could be added! This is also a good tale for a children’s rite.

Synopsis – After burying the head of Bendigeidfan in London, Pryderi offers Manawydan his widowed mother’s hand in marriage. Manawydan agrees and Rhiannon, Pryderi’s mother, is delighted at the alliance.

One day after feasting in the hall at Arberth (AR-berth) in Dyfed (DUH-ved), they decide to visit the Mound, and when they get there a great mist descends over everything. When it clears, all other people and domestic animals in Dyfed have disappeared, and only Manawydan, Rhiannon, Pryderi and his wife, Cigfa (KIG-va) remain.

To support themselves they go to England to work as shoemakers for a time, but soon return to Dyfed.

One day, while out hunting a boar, Pryderi and Manawydan discover a castle they had never seen before. Manawydan counsels caution, but Pryderi follows the boar inside the walls. There he sees a fountain with a golden basin, connected to four golden chains that ascended up into the sky. Pryderi grasps the basin and finds himself paralyzed and stuck fast to it.

After a time, Manawydan gives up waiting outside and returns to Arberth. There, Rhiannon is furious to discover that her son has been left behind, and she rides out after him. On finding the castle she goes inside and sees her son, but leaning in to him she grasps the basin and is stuck fast to it. A great mist descends upon the castle, and when it clears, the castle has disappeared.

To support himself and Cigfa, Manawydan plants three crofts with wheat, and when harvest time comes, he determines to harvest the wheat in the first croft the next day. But when he returns in the morning, he discovers that the field has been trampled and all the wheat is gone. The same thing happens to the second croft the next day, so Manawadan determines to guard the third field that night.

In the middle of the night he hears a great commotion as a horde of mice descends on the field, taking all the wheat. He chases after them but can only catch one rather fat mouse that is slower than the rest. So he determines that the mouse should hang for theft, and he builds a small gallows to do the deed.

But while he is preparing to hang the mouse, a scholar appears on foot on the road (where there have been no people at all these many years) and he offers Manawydan a pound of silver if he would release the mouse. Manawadan refuses and the scholar sadly departs.

Then a priest appears on horseback and offers 3 pounds of silver for the mouse. Manawydan again refuses and the priest departs.

Finally a High Priest appears (he's a Bishop in the tale) and offers 24 pounds of ready money for the mouse. When Manawydan refuses, he offers all his horses and the baggage that they carry for the mouse. When Manawydan once again refuses, the High Priest asks what price would he take?

Manawydan replies:

1. The freeing of Rhiannon and Pryderi. The Priest agrees.
2. That he remove the magic and enchantment from the land. The Priest agrees.
3. That he tell him who the mouse is. The Priest tells Manawydan that the mouse is his wife.
4. And that the Priest never seeks revenge nor put enchantments on them or the land again. The Priest agrees.

The High Priest is actually Llwyd (KLOO-uhd – 'holy', 'brown') the son of Cil Coed (KIL KOID), and the enchantments were in revenge for that game of Badger in the Bag played on Gwawl (GOO-owl), son of Clud (CLEED) by Rhiannon and Pwyll at the wedding feast all those years ago.

When Rhiannon and Pwyll are released, Manawydan releases the mouse, who becomes a beautiful and very pregnant young woman.

The servitude that Pryderi and Rhiannon suffered was that Pryderi had the gate-hammers of Llwyd's court around his neck, and Rhiannon had the collars of the asses that hauled hay around her neck. (Ford, 75-87)

November 1 (May 1 in the Southern Hemisphere)

CALAN GAEAF (KAL-an GAI-av) – *'Beginning of Winter'* (Owen 95)

This is the time of the slaughter of the animals in the herds that would not survive the winter, either through weakness or because of a lack of feed. It was also the Feast of the Dead (though this may be due to the Christian holiday of All Soul's Day on November 2 – as usual, the question becomes which came first?).

This is also one of the three *Y Tair Ysbridnos* (uh TIRE uhs-BRID-nos), or The Three Spirit Nights (Owen 97). This was a time when the spirits would walk among the living, and tales of the *Ladi Wen* (LA-dee WEN), or 'Lady in White' would be told. She was seen out in the countryside or at the tops of trees. Another spirit that frightened folks at this time was the *Hwch Ddu Gwta* (HOOCH THEE GOO-ta), or 'Tailless Black Sow', who was connected with bonfires and who terrified all who saw her.

Customs – There were three main customs for this time that could be observed by any enterprising grove or solitary:

1. 'A Mash of Nine Sorts' – This mash was made of potatoes, turnips, carrots, peas, parsnips, leeks, pepper, salt, and enough new milk to make it the proper consistency. This mash was also used for divination. A wedding ring would be hidden in the mash, and the person who found it in their dish would be the first to marry. A grove or solitary could make the mash for their ritual supper and the ring could be optional (Owen 125).

(NOTE: It must be said that most of the examples of Welsh divination I ran across concerned marriage – who would get married, to whom, and when. It was obviously something that everyone cared very much about.)

2. Soul Cakes – While this may be a Christian custom, somehow giving food to the living was acceptable to the dead. The phrase concerning this is *hel bnyd cennad y meirw* (hel BOO-wuhd KEN-ad uh MAY-roo), or 'collecting the food of the letting go of the dead.' (Owen 136-7)

Lore – The tale I picked for this High Day comes from the *First Branch of the Mabinogi* and is the story of Pwyll and Arawn. They could be the Deities of the Occasion for the rite. This tale (and all the others) can be found in Ford's *The Mabinogi* (see the bibliography).

Synopsis – Pwyll (POO-ulk), Prince of Dyfed (DUH-ved), is out hunting with his hounds one day and comes across a stag being brought down by another pack of hounds. These other hounds are white with red ears. He kills the stag and lets his own hounds feast on it, driving off the white ones. A horseman approaches in anger, for Pwyll has killed his stag. This horseman is Arawn (AR-own),

King of Annwfn (an-OO-vuhn). To make peace, Pwyll agrees to do what is necessary. Arawn asks him to switch places with him for one year and Pwyll agrees. Arawn takes him down to Annwfn and changes his appearance so that he looks like Arawn. Arawn warns Pwyll that during the year that he will be in Annwfn he is to fight with a rival king named Hafgan (HAV-gan) in single combat, but he should only give one blow, no more.

In Annwfn, everyone thinks that Pwyll is Arawn. And at the end of the year, the battle with Hafgan takes place. They meet at a ford in a stream, a liminal place, where Pwyll strikes one great blow against Hafgan, knocking him from his horse. Hafgan begs to be finished off, but Pwyll refuses to strike him again, and Hafgan dies (ending a war between Arawn and Hafgan). Pwyll returns to Dyfed where he trades places with Arawn once again. At his own home of Arberth, Pwyll discovers that no one realized that Arawn had been impersonating him, and when they learn of Pwyll's adventures, his people name him Pwyll, Pen Annwfn (Pwyll, Head of Annwfn). (Ford, 37-42)

And now we come around to Alban Gaeaf and the Wheel of the Year begins once again. Enjoy!



Rev. Kirk Thomas has been a member of ADF since 2001. He has completed the Dedicator Path, the Clergy Training Program, the first circle of the Liturgists Guild Study Program, and was the first to complete the Initiate Program. He is active in the Welsh Kin and in the Scholars Guild. He currently serves as the Archdruid of ADF.

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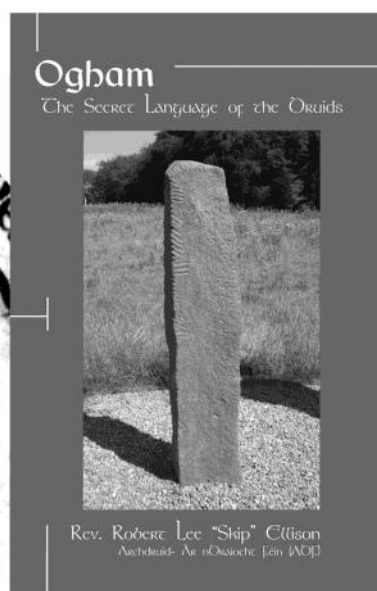
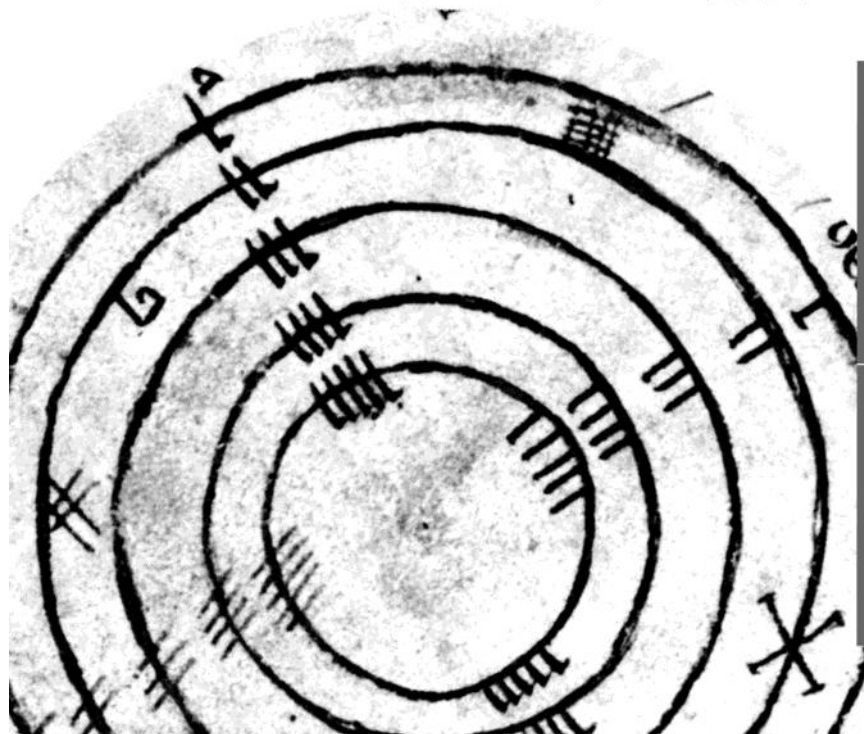
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DISCOVER THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF THE DRUIDS OGHAM BY REV ROBERT LEE "SKIP" ELLISON

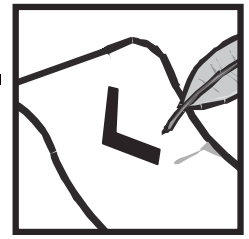




Article

Adventures in Meditation with an Injured Brain

by Virginia Carper



A few years ago my career as a Pagan vendor and teacher ended when a wall fell on me causing a traumatic brain injury. After this accident, there were times when my brain felt as if it was “on fire.” Frequently, my brain would zip around turning into an electric current, which then would repeatedly zap me. After one of those episodes, I usually passed out. To alleviate this condition, I was advised by my doctor to try different forms of meditation. Thus began my adventures to find which type of meditation would be the best for me. Since ADF encourages its members to practice meditation, I decided to share my experiences with several types of meditations that I tried. What I discovered was that the effectiveness of each depends on both the personality and the particular brain wiring of the person doing the meditating.

At the beginning of my adventures, I decided that I needed to find a meditation that would both stop the “fire” and help maintain good health for my brain. I found that not only did all of the meditations help to calm the brain; they also short-circuited the racing mind. However, the different types of meditation had various degrees of effectiveness for me. Thus I tried various forms of meditation before I found the one that worked best for me. After much trial and error, I discovered that the “no-mind” meditation did not suit me but that “active” meditation did. I also tried other meditations such as “yantra,” “mantra,” “sleep,” and “cord.” These other forms, I could do, with various degrees of success. In the next section of this essay, I will briefly describe each of these methods and my thoughts about them.

No-Mind Meditation: Sitting Still

To quiet my racing mind, I decided to try first the “no-mind” meditation. For one week, I did this meditation for ten minutes a session. Like a child, I cannot sit still for a long time. Unfortunately for me, this meditation was sheer torture. I began to hate it with a purple passion. At first, it hurt to sit still for just ten minutes, and not think of anything. However, as I continued to practice the meditation, I was able to sit still longer. Because it was so difficult to sit and think of nothing, I would often fall asleep.

Then I tried counting to four and watching my breathing, however that activity put me to sleep. Next, I decided to count 1001, 1002, 1003, and 1004, which did keep me awake. But then the “no-mind” meditation became one of counting instead.

When I did have an incident of “brain fire,” I did use the “no-mind” meditation. It helped to calm my brain, and I did not pass out. However as meditations go, I will not be doing this one on a regular basis. It is simply too hard for me to stay awake and be quiet at the same time.

Yantra Meditation: The Tree of Life

To do the yantra meditation, I chose to focus on the Tree of Life Mandala. This Tree symbolizes the uniting of Heaven with Earth. The Tree in the mandala is in full fruit and leaf, with clouds encircling the roots. The fruits on the Tree symbolize fertility from the union of the two worlds.

While practicing this meditation, I became less jittery. As I settled into doing the meditation, I focused on the Tree, letting it fill my mind. However, to avoid falling into a seizure trance,



I had to keep my eyes moving over the Tree. First I followed the twisty roots, and then the swirling clouds. Then I took in the shades of greens, browns, yellows, and blues. Afterwards, I moved up the tree trunk to the branches which curved around and around ending round fruit.

One day while I was meditating, I felt sad. In the midst of this meditation, the Tree reached out to me and I felt better. I think that the Tree was working her magic with me. Perhaps this is one of the benefits of the yantra meditation: to unite with the symbol. Once that happens, the symbol can be used to calm your mind.

I was more successful with this meditation than with the non-mind one. Since I had an object to focus on, I could sit still longer. However, I doubt I would use it for my main meditation since I had problems in zoning out, while staring at the mandala. But it was an interesting exercise and I got to know the Tree of Life better.

Mantra Meditation: The Sacred Circle

My first task in doing this meditation was to choose a mantra to chant. I wanted something that was meaningful to me but not boring. Also, I did not want to chant the usual “ohmmm.” The chant, I finally decided upon, was “We are all related in the Sacred Circle of Life.”

My next task was to differentiate between the “mantra” meditation and the “no-mind” one. Instead of breathing and counting to four, I had to focus on chanting the mantra -- Sometimes in the beginning, I would doze off, but then I would remember to chant, and remain awake.

As I practiced this mediation, it did get easier to meditate while chanting. Each session, I usually started out feeling jittery, but once I was into the chanting, I would calm down. The longer I chanted, the more the tension left my body, and the more relaxed I became.

I now understand why people chant mantras for relaxation. The more you do it, the more refreshed you are. As I did the meditation, I could feel the junk leave my brain. Afterwards, I became more lucid, which surprised me.

Although I was reasonably successful in this meditation, I would not use it in regular practice. I

prefer visual meditations to aural ones. I relate to the world through sight and not sound. However it was a good learning experience for me.

Active Meditation: Better Living through Handwriting

My favorite form of meditation is handwriting. I do it daily. As I move my pen across the page, my mind is freed to ponder the attributes of each letter. I am practicing graphotherapy, which changes the neuro-pathways of my brain by adopting new letter shapes.

According to Vimala Rogers, the author of “*Your Handwriting Can Change Your Life*,” by changing the shapes of your letters, you can train your mind to think differently. She states that by altering specific letter strokes, you can change certain aspects of your personality. To that end, she developed an affirmative alphabet to practice.

For example, the letter “A” that is often taught in schools emphasizes the ego instead of the soul. The attribute of Ms. Rogers “A” is “spiritual stardom, transforming ego into spirit.” The affirmation for “A” is “Today I will notice how my personality affects others and grow from that knowledge.” Writing her “A” repeatedly has helped me to internalize those things.

Ms. Rogers has set up a letter writing program to accomplish these ends. She instructs people to fill two sketch book pages, positioned in the landscape position. First, you write the letter across in one line, and then in the next line you write the attribute. After that, the following next three lines are filled with the letter, then the affirmation, and then finally the letter again. You do this over and over until both pages are filled.

Doing repetitive writing frees my mind to absorb the qualities of the letter I am writing. The meditation focuses my mind on one thing. As I write I can feel the junk leave my brain. When I am done, I feel refreshed. I do this daily meditation because it fills my mind through activity and thought. I am actively doing something instead of sitting passively chanting. The active meditation engages more of me, and is one that I enjoy.

Sleep Meditation: “Pillow Pets™”

To do the sleep meditation, I formulated a mental slide show of various “Pillow Pets”™. As their

commercial states “Pillow Pets TM is a sweet soft lovable pet that is also a pillow!” As I centered myself, images of cute animals like Buzzy Bumble Bee, Squeaky Dolphin, Ms Lady Bug, and so forth would move slowly across my mind. As they paraded through my conscious, I would chant “Sleep is calling. Sleep is calling.” As the slide show continued, I would drift off to sleep.

As I softened off to sleep, my mind would become quiet. While I chanted, I would become safe and warm. Now relaxed, I moved out of space and time, and floated away in my bed. The more I practiced, the more I was able to fall asleep almost at once.

What happened next was surprising to me. I could remember what went on in my brain whilst asleep. Usually when I went to bed I would blackout as if in a coma, and wake up the next day, with no memory of the day before. After doing the meditation, I instead would have the same dream every night. It was of lights blinking and moving along in several lines. These coloured lights would glow in the dark as they moved in their rows. I believe that the neuro-pathways of my brain were clearing themselves. When I woke up, I would feel as if that part of the brain was being healed. This sleep meditation seemed to help my brain to recover.

Cord Meditation: Embrace Beauty

To do this meditation, I first had to make a small “rosary” of twenty-seven large quartz beads. Stringing these beads was a meditation in itself. Because of my brain injury, I could only use one hand at a time. The knotting took me a long time, which made the “rosary” more precious to me. (When I did do the meditation, I had to pass the beads from one hand to the other to keep it flowing.)

Choosing the affirmation to chant took time and care as well. I wanted to say something positive that would encompass all of my life. After much thought, I came up with “I embrace grace and beauty in areas of my life.”

I did the meditation when I went to bed, during the night, and when I got up in the morning. Because it helped to calm me down, this meditation was helpful when I went to bed. Usually when I got up

at night, I would remain awake since the light would set my brain to racing. This meditation helped me to calm it and settle quickly back to sleep. Getting up and chanting set the tone for the day, and relaxed me as well.

What happened next was odd even by my standards. At first, I kept dreaming of spinning wheels. They were circles of colours spinning forming mandalas which flowed into flowers. Strangely enough, I did not get motion sickness during my dreaming.

Then I had a series of dreams that consisted of roads and railroad tracks. These lines were filled with coloured lights winking on and off. These twinkling lights moved up, down, and about on the roads and tracks. When I viewed these dancing colours, I felt more relaxed whilst I basked in their glow.

Again I believed that this helped to heal my brain. I assumed that the lights were healing the neural pathways. Also during the day, I became less reactive and more thoughtful. I had a sense of mindfulness throughout the day.

Meditation for Life: Experience the Letter “Z”

After practicing various forms of meditation, I decided that the active meditation was my favorite, and one that I would continue doing. This particular meditation suits my needs and temperament. For me, it is easy to do, and is something that I can do daily.

In contrast, the non-mind, yantra, and mantra forms of meditation were either too difficult for me or too boring. They were hard because I could not sit still long enough to gain the benefits from any of them. Furthermore, these meditations were boring to do, since I kept falling asleep whenever I did them.

I did enjoy the sleep meditation, but it seemed to me to be a way to have a good night’s sleep. I prefer something more active that I can feel a part of. The cord meditation did engage me, but it was too difficult to do one handedly. Perhaps when my brain heals, I will be able to do it more smoothly.

The form of active meditation I like the most is hand-writing since it engages and relaxes me. After

reading “Soul Development through Handwriting” by Jennifer Grebbin, I became amazed that there were so many benefits in practicing individual letters. Writing for Waldorf students, the author explains that, “Because when we write we not only express through the forms of the letters how we see ourselves and the world, but we also reinforce it. The Palmer method most often used by teachers, which was first developed in 1895, reflects all the values of that materialistic time. However, when we teach children the Vimala Alphabet, we help them preserve their connection to their inner spiritual wisdom.” I have found this to be true in my life, when I practice the Vimala Alphabet.

For regular meditation, practicing the Vimala “Z” enhances the benefits gained from the mantra style of meditation.

While a page of writing “Z’s,” I am put into a receptive peaceful state. Ms. Grebbin writes, “This is the letter of being at peace with the world and ourselves. The letter ‘Z’ can help us stop worrying and realize the perfection in everything all unfolding perfectly in its own time.” Rudolph Steiner writes in “Eurythmy as Visible Speech,” “There is a certain lightness in the experience of the Z.” The physical act of writing “Z” releases my worry and puts me into a more receptive and quiet mood.

I am reminded of the old method that teachers used in disciplining students, which is having them write five hundred times, “I will not disrupt the class.” I now see this as a method to physically imprint the mental message. Of course, writing a page of “I embrace grace and beauty in my life” is more uplifting and useful. For me, the physical



aspects of writing transfer my mental energy into a form of wonderful meditation.

Writing “Z” or another letter over and over frees my mind and calms it. It gives my mind a gentle focus, and allows for quiet pondering. This to me is the goal of meditation: to expel worry and replace it with wholesome serenity. To that end, I will continue writing the Vimala letters and their affirmations.



Virginia Carper is a Roman Reconstructionist and a member of ADF. As a form of “brain rehab,” she turned to writing full time and has self-published a series of books on receiving wisdom from the animals both mythic and mundane.

Author Notes:

Vimala Rogers’ Alphabet can be seen at “The International Institute of Handwriting Studies” <<http://www.iibs.com/vimala-alphabet.html>>.

The Official Site of Pillow Pets™ is <<http://www.pillowpets.com/>>.

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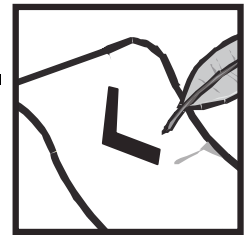
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Article

Lighting a Fire Within

by Bonnie Cyr



This year at Wellspring, members of the Brighid's Hearth SIG – a special-interest group here in ADF devoted to tending the flame of Brighid and sharing in her mysteries—joined together in fellowship to each other and to the Brighid's Shrine that is in our beloved Brushwood Nemeton. As one of the practices of our SIG is to tend the flame of Brighid, and many of us are Flame tenders for various organizations (Ord Brighideach, Daughters of Brighid and others), we felt it appropriate and moving to join together - some of us with shifts during Wellspring and others picking up extra shifts - to give honor and praise to the Shrine, our Nemeton, and to our own devotion.

Our first night, Thursday, saw us assembled after the opening ritual to process back into the Nemeton to a harmonized chorus of *Holy Water, Sacred Flame*.

*Holy Water, Sacred Flame;
Brighid we invoke your name,
Bless my hands, my head, my heart
Source of healing, song and art.
—Anne Hill*

We were ten strong—and we jokingly pointed out that though there were really ten of us, there were nine congregants and one member of ADF Clergy. We then proceeded through a call-and-response with Rev. Sue Parker-Wyndham (Lia Fal) who delivered a self-written, beautiful, and moving devotional:

*By deep well
And bright fire -
By the world tree's root and branch
I stand firm before the Gods*

*May I be the kin of the Mighty Dead
May I be the ally of the Noble Spirits
May I be the blessed Child of the Shining Gods
Brighid be above me
Brighid be below me
Brighid on every hand around me
And wisdom, love and power in my truest heart.
—Rev. Sue Parker-Wyndham*

Each of us in turn shared our prayers, thoughts, hopes and dreams for a myriad of reasons: each other, the Folk of ADF, our families, the Kindred, and much more. I pointed out that there were three candles present: Lia Fal had brought one which was lit when we arrived, which I felt very strongly signified that present space and time; one - the remnant of one that has traveled with me from festival to festival and through many rituals in the Heartland



Brighid's Hearth SIG token

Photo credit: Bonnie Cyr

area—reminded me of the past, and it was lit and placed between the shrine's well and the statuary to Brighid. The third—a new candle, which we would and did light through the weekend when the old was spent—was reminiscent of the future and of all that we hoped to encompass and achieve throughout the weekend.

Each member who was present received her own token of the SIG's appreciation for their devotion to the festival, to themselves, to Brighid, and to each other. These tokens were purchased on behalf of the SIG through the Magical Druid, run by Rev. Michael J. Dangler and Rev. Seamus Dillard.

I really felt like that moment, handing them out—and through the weekend somewhat validated that belief – was about lighting the fire in each of us to shine out brightly even when some of

us standing together were facing hardship and darkness. It reminded me of the service that we are allowed to share with each other and to the Gods, and how when we get to feeling like we are alone or that what we do is small or insignificant, we only have to look at that spark of flame—that token of our devotion - to realize we are connected together by sacred fire. During that opening time I was able to share a portion of a song that has become my constant reminder, as a Flame tender, of the peace and inner spark that can motivate and move us, *Light the Fire Within*:

*I have no fear, when darkness falls
Because there's a light that shines within us all;
And although this world can grow so cold –
When we reach inside, we find warmth.
Because there's a flame that burns in every heart,
And it's the will we have that lights a spark.*

*Once in every lifetime there's a chance to stand apart,
We can show the world our very best, reveal what's in
our hearts;
So the story goes and Glory never will end –
Because Inspiration lights the Fire Within.*

—LeAnn Rimes

The schedule we placed up for individuals to come and tend the Shrine seemed to work out well, despite the hectic pace of such a major festival. Even when members of the SIG seemed to miss each other at times, the Shrine was always well-kept, and offerings showed up in many forms; the times I spotted individuals outside of the SIG (and even outside of ADF) were often and with reverence. There was even a group that I was a part of during the weekend that held a small journey working in the Shrine's space, bringing worship and working together to blend with harmony and balance.

Since then, our experiences have led us to a lively discussion on our lists about possi-

ble work to be done in and around the Shrine and how to better our time and abilities to the benefit of ADF in the coming year. Our SIG, I feel, serves as a bright reminder of the fellowship and passion found in those who turn to each other and to that small spark which lights the fires within the head and heart.

I encourage all those who are interested in the workings of the SIG to take a closer look. For all those seeking more information regarding the Brigid's Hearth SIG of ADF, it can be found here: <http://www.adf.org/members/sigs/brighids-hearth/>. Many of our members are also part of Ord Brighideach International, an order of Flamekeepers: <http://www.ordbrighideach.org>.



Bonnie Cyr has been a member of ADF since 2005. She was a founder of Ocean's Tide Grove and has been a member of Three Cranes Grove since 2007. Bonnie is chief of the healers and naturalists guilds as well as the coordinator for the People of the Purple Feather SIG.



Photo credit: Carey Canastote

Brigid Shrine at Wellspring Nemeton



Article

Creating Our Own Icons: A New Mother Goddess and Gatekeeper for the Wellspring Gathering

by Eric Klinert



A few years ago when I began looking for images of the Irish gods and goddesses for my own home shrine I was unable to find any that looked the way I envisioned them. Although it had been some years since I had sculpted anything, I decided I would buy some polymer clay and give it a try. I found the process remarkably therapeutic. Over time I posted some of my pieces online and had some requests for copies. So I taught myself to make molds and cast copies from my originals. I have since sold a number of sculptures to friends and online.

In September of 2010, Flip and Deb Rutledge, fellow members of the Grove of the Midnight Sun, suggested I bring some of my sculptures to sell at the grove's yearly Midnight Flame Festival. Our former Archdruid, Skip Ellison, and current Archdruid, Kirk Thomas, approached me during the festival and asked if I would be interested in carving icons of the Mother Goddess and Gatekeeper for the site of the Wellspring Gathering at Brushwood, as the old images had become quite weathered and were due for a replacement. I told them I would be interested, but would have to give it some thought, as I hadn't carved anything in a great many years, and sculpting and carving each have their own very different approaches and challenges.

I'm embarrassed to say that, by the following year's Midnight Flame Festival, I still hadn't done much



Boa Island statue

more than think about it. The night before the festival's opening I went through some of my books of Celtic art and sketched out some ideas that had been in my mind for a Mother Goddess and a Gatekeeper. Although all of my pieces up until that time had been more classical in style, I envisioned something drawing upon existing



Gundestrup Cauldron

traditional Celtic artwork, particularly of the La Tène period, with its emphasis on stylistic, rather than natural, representations. For my primary inspiration I looked to the figures from the Gundestrup Cauldron, a large silver-plated vessel discovered in a bog in Denmark, and the Boa Island statue from County Fermanagh in Ireland, a large two-sided figure carved from a single block of stone.

On the last day of the festival I showed the sketches to Rev. Kirk Thomas, Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano, Rev. Michael Dangler, and Flip, and was met with general enthusiasm for the idea, with just a few minor suggestions.

I worked on both pieces in tandem through the winter of 2011-2012, crafting the originals from polymer clay, a medium which stays pliable until baked, allowing me to walk away from the pieces and return with a fresh eye without fear of losing workability. Because of the size of the pieces, I had to create each figure in three sections, in order to be able to fit them into my oven to fire them. When I had a final result I thought I could work

with, I created rubber molds of each piece by painting on liquid latex with a brush, then created a hard outer mother-mold from plaster of Paris. To save on material costs, I decided early on that I would only sculpt and mold the front face. For the sides of the pieces I bought some metal roof-flashing, and with the help of Flip and Leon Rutledge, we laid the mother-mold and the interior latex mold in a hole in the ground and surrounded it with the metal flashing, then back-filled sand around the outside of the flashing for bracing. Then we made a 2-to-1 mix of Portland cement combined with sand from Flip's yard. In order to give it more of an appearance of granite and have it look less like concrete, we mixed in a dark grey



Latex Mother Goddess mold



Latex Mold with Metal Flashing

powdered color additive, acquired from a local concrete supply store. We poured the concrete into the mold, careful to avoid air bubbles, covered it with plastic, and waited two days for the concrete to cure.

The Mother Goddess figure was created first, and came out of the mold with only minor finish work to be



Above: Gatekeeper original face
Left: Gatekeeper original sculpture

done. The Gatekeeper was a bit more problematic. One of the requests that had been made during discussions of the pieces was a phallus that protruded out from the piece, allowing offerings and the like to be hung from it. In order to prevent the possibility of breakage, it needed to be reinforced with a coat hanger, folded over multiple times, as the rebar we had used to reinforce the rest of the pieces would have been too thick, and would have run the risk of showing on the surface of the final piece. An additional glitch presented itself when lumps appeared in the Portland cement mix upon pouring. We did what we could to sift the lumps of undissolved cement out of the mix while we poured it, though some inevitably slipped past us.

Once the two pieces had each been given 48 hours to cure in the molds and then were de-molded, holes were dug and the icons were stood upright so that several days of additional finish work could be performed with a hand-held power grinder and a grinding-stone, as well as a Dremel tool for some of the finer detail.

There is a great deal of satisfaction to be found in creating one's own icons. I would recommend it to anyone. Whether one is a novice or an accomplished artist doesn't really matter. Images can be as detailed or as primitive



Plaster of Paris mother-mold

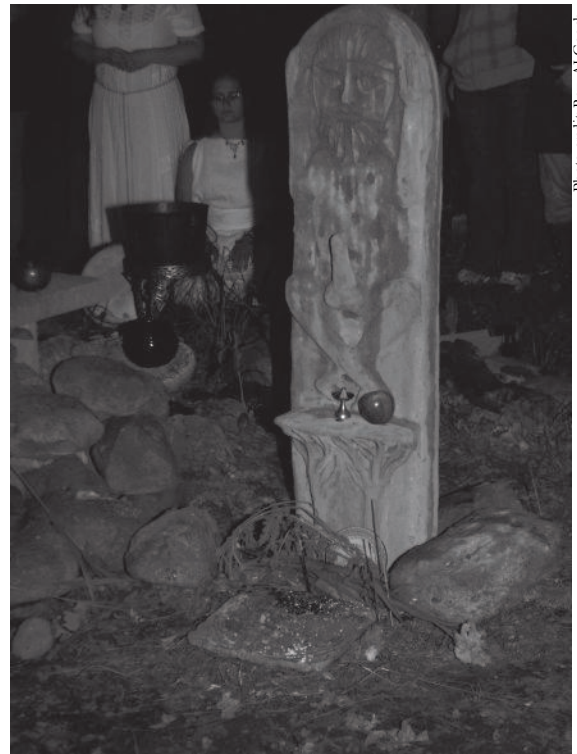


Earth Mother Installed

as the artist chooses. Sometimes the most primitive pieces are the most powerful.

The materials needed are easily available and not overly expensive, depending upon the size of the piece. The polymer clay I use, under the brand name Sculpey, can be found in any Wal-Mart or craft store. The liquid latex I use for creating my inner molds, called Castin' Craft Mold Builder, is available from most craft stores, as well as online. The plaster of Paris and the Portland cement can be found at any hardware store.

Care must be taken when creating the mother-mold (the hard, outer shell that holds the more pliable latex inner mold) to avoid undercuts, any nooks or crannies on the sculpture where the plaster of Paris or similar hard material can create a pinch and become impossible to remove without breaking either the mother mold or the sculpture itself. This can be prevented during the process of creating latex inner mold by filling in any spaces with latex that might create such a pocket. I also find it is helpful to drape the latex-covered piece with strips of cheesecloth before pouring in the plaster of Paris, both to strengthen the mold and to prevent the plaster of Paris from adhering too closely to the latex and creating undercuts.



Gate Keeper Installed

For larger pieces, when pouring the concrete into the finished mold you may find you want to reinforce it with rebar, placed strategically halfway through the pouring process.

As pagans, we are fortunate to be surrounded by images of the divine wherever we turn. Our place of worship can be anywhere we feel connected to nature or to the Kindreds. Our icons can reside in temples or under the open sky. We have the images the ancients left behind, through their art and their stories, to guide us. The spiritual impulse to create religious iconography that has adorned innumerable churches and cathedrals over the centuries is no less powerful within our own hearts. It is up to us, as we seek to create our own sacred spaces, to make art that represents our own many-faceted visions of the divine. The hope is that such icons may become an integral part of a continuous, living tradition, a focus for future gatherings and a way for us to impart some small part of our own wisdom and our reverence for the land and for the Kindreds to all the generations to come.



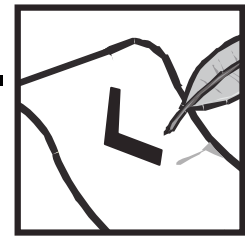
Having joined ADF five years ago, Eric Klinert is a member of the Grove of the Midnight Sun.



Article

Raven vs. The Big Bang: The Epic Battle of Myth and Logic

by JD 'Hobbes' Hickey



As Neo-Pagans living in a modern world, we can feel like we're being stretched in multiple directions. Finding balance between what we know to be true and what we're supposed to believe can leave us feeling conflicted, confused, and frustrated with the lack of clear answers.

Mark Twain once wrote "Havin' faith is believin' in somethin' you know ain't so." We're all fairly intelligent people, not prone to being dangerously gullible (aside from being guilty of forwarding emails promising doom and gloom or fame and fortune, depending on the hoax of the day). Thanks to science and our many technological wonders, we know that the sun rises and sets at predictable hours, we know the price of tea in China, and have access to an ocean of facts and figures that we are bombarded with every day.

And yet, our Neo-Pagan culture speaks of deities, magic, energy, mythology, and invisible forces that shape our lives in ways that we experience without truly understanding them. Some of us are resigned to believing we will never truly understand, while others continually seek definitive answers, and still others simply fill the gaps with as much faith as they need to move to the next level.

How are we to reconcile these two mindsets? Science and Logic vs. Faith and Myth: each discipline demands our attention while trying to refute the existence of the other. How do we balance what we know with what we believe or don't believe?



First, let's examine belief and knowledge. Don't take this the wrong way, but you don't actually know all that much; most of what you profess to know is really just very strong belief. For you to truly know something, it requires experience and



understanding. This experience converts what you believe to what you know, and the belief you had before the experience will probably aid in your understanding.

For example, if you've never been to Egypt, then you do not know that there are pyramids in Egypt. You can believe the books, believe the TV, believe your friends, believe your family, but all that is only very strong belief. Until you go to Egypt yourself and experience the wonder of the ancient Egyptian pyramids, all you can do is believe others when they tell you there are tall pointy things in the desert.

Fortunately, there's nothing wrong with believing in concepts until they are converted to knowledge by experience. You must believe someone at some point in your life or you won't be able to move forward. Belief tempered by critical thought and fueled by faith can bridge the gap until a concept becomes true knowledge.

Applying critical thought to your beliefs is crucial to maintain a realistic view on the world, which is why it is perfectly reasonable to believe that there are pyramids in Egypt, but a little out there to really believe that you will die in five days if you don't forward a chain email to ALL of your friends in the next 48 hours.

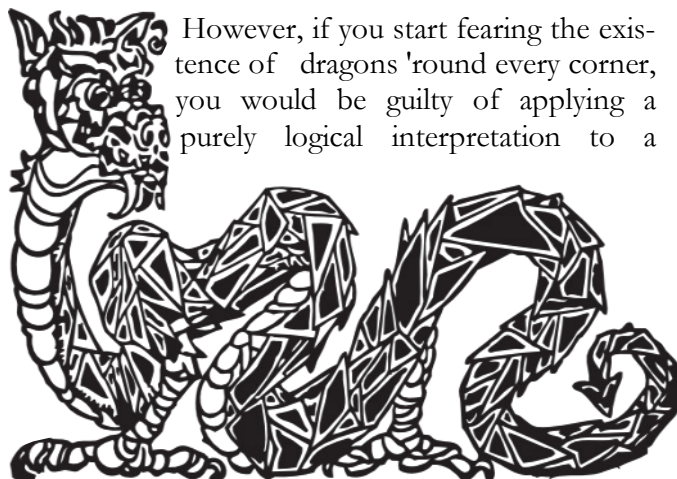
Now imagine how strong your spiritual expression could become if you had the same confidence in

your beliefs as in your "knowledge" that there were pointy buildings in Egypt. If the same muscle in your brain is flexing when you think of either concept, realizing that they are both beliefs might help you with some of your self-doubt.

Secondly, there's the struggle with balancing myth vs. logic (or science). Early philosophers understood that myth and logic were necessary to paint a complete portrait of existence. Myth is NOT primitive science (as many of us were taught as children). While logic examines and measures the surfaces of life and our environment, myth attempts to explore the deeper meaning beyond that surface. Myth allows us to understand concept that cannot be fully grasped by logical definition.

Let's say that you have never heard the word "courage" and are completely in the dark with the concept of it. From a logical standpoint, I could read you the dictionary definition of Courage and you could still not truly understand its meaning.

Instead, I would tell you a story about a boy who sets his fear aside to battle a dragon that is determined to destroy his village. In the moment when the boy lifts his trembling arms to point the sword at the dragon's heart, you would have the opportunity to understand the true meaning of courage without even using the word. This is the heart of mythic knowledge.

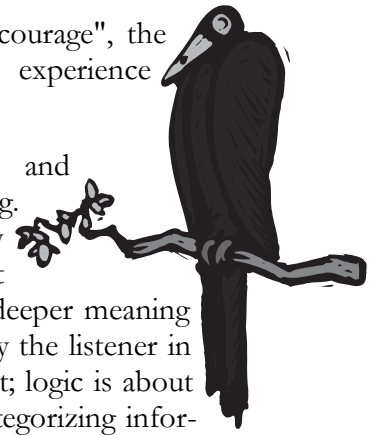


However, if you start fearing the existence of dragons round every corner, you would be guilty of applying a purely logical interpretation to a

mythic story and be missing the point of the story entirely. Logically, we know the story is false. But mythically, the story speaks to a universal theme that people can understand because it allows them to view the boy's courage in the mirror of their own experience. So even if the listeners do

not know the word "courage", the myth allows them to experience courage.

This is the beauty and power of storytelling. Even though a story can be entertaining, it can contain levels of deeper meaning that are experienced by the listener in a way that logic cannot; logic is about breaking down and categorizing information while myth invites the listener/reader to search for its deeper meaning. The early philosophers believed that the effort in this mythic exploration was as valuable as arriving at its destination.



Myth and Logic can co-exist comfortably because they both have very different goals to achieve. So while we can logically understand the scientists speak when they tell us that it is the earth's rotation that causes the sun to seemingly rise and set along the horizon, we can still appreciate the mythic telling of how the lovers Sun and Moon chase each other across the sky, pausing ever so briefly for a tender embrace during an eclipse.

As Neo-Pagans, we seek to celebrate the deeper meanings in events and our lives. While we can keep an eye on our logically-organized calendar, choose our sacred times, and celebrate our connection to the Divine through ritual and symbol deeply rooted in myth and personal expression, What we experience during these mythic moments allows us to live our beliefs, expand our knowledge of ourselves, and adds fuel to our faith. There's no need to sacrifice our mythic reasoning for society's logic: balancing mythos and logos enriches our lives more than either discipline can achieve on its own.



Active in the Montreal Pagan community for the past ten years, Hobbes has been a member of ADF Thornhaven Grove since 2009 and was recently appointed as their Grove's Bard. This award-winning storyteller has performed at events across Canada for over fifteen years

Citation

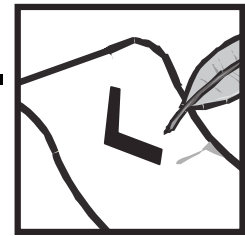
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Article

The Advanced Bonewits Cult Danger Evaluation Frame (ABDCEF)

by (P.E.) Isaac Bonewits



[Editor's Note: This framework can be used in ADF to allay the fears of non-Pagan family members or by leadership to self-evaluate a grove or other subgroup of ADF, and for guiding bylaws/SOPs, etc. (©1979, 2008: reprinted with permission by the Executrix of his estate, from the webpage <<http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF.html>>)]

Introduction

Events in the last several decades have clearly indicated just how dangerous some religious and secular groups (usually called “cults” by those opposed to them) can be to their own members as well as to anyone else whom they can influence. “Brainwashing,” beatings, child abuse, rapes, murders, mass suicides, military drilling and gunrunning, meddling in civil governments, international terrorism, and other crimes have been charged against leaders and members of many groups, and in far too many cases those accusations have been correct. None of this has been very surprising to historians of religion or to other scholars of what are usually labeled “new” religions (no matter how old they may be in their cultures of origin). Minority groups, especially religious ones, are often accused of crimes by members of the current majority. In many ways, for example, the “Mormons” were the “Moonies” of the 19th century—at least in terms of being an unusual minority belief system that many found “shocking” at the time—and the members of the Unification Church could be just as “respectable” a hundred years from now as the Latter Day Saints are today.

Nonetheless, despite all the historical and philosophical warnings that could be issued, ordinary people faced with friends or loved ones joining an “unusual” group, or perhaps contemplating joining one themselves, need a relatively simple way to evaluate just how dangerous or harmless a given group is liable to be, without either subjecting themselves to its power or judging it solely on theological or ideological grounds (the usual method used by anti-cult groups).

In 1979 I constructed an evaluation tool which I now call the “Advanced Bonewits’ Cult Danger Evaluation Frame” or the “ABCDEF” (because evaluating these groups should be elementary). A copy was included in that year’s revised edition of my book, *Real Magic*. I realize its shortcomings, but feel that it can be effectively used to separate harmless groups from the potentially dangerous ones and to distinguish harmful ones from those that are merely unusual to the observer. Feedback from those attempting to use the system has always been appreciated. Indirect feedback, in terms of the number of places on and off the Net this ABCDEF has shown up, has been mostly favorable. It has been used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its *Meddigo Report* on Bible-based cults (which really bothered some members of the Religious Reich <<http://www.neopagan.net/ReligiousReich.html>>). It was also used by the government of the Union of South Africa in its report on minority religions. This latter led to the legalization of same-sex marriage there. It has appeared in a few books by other Pagan authors as part of discussions about choosing ethical teachers and groups.

The purpose of this evaluation tool is to help both amateur and professional observers, including current or would-be members, of various organizations (including religious, occult, psychological or political groups) to determine just how dangerous a given group is liable to be, in comparison with other groups, to the physical and mental health of its members and of other people subject to its influence. It cannot speak to the “spiritual dangers,” if any, that might be involved, for the simple reason that one person’s path to enlightenment or “salvation” is often viewed by another as a path to ignorance or “damnation.”

As a general rule the higher the numerical total scored by a given group (the further to the right of the scale), the more dangerous it is likely to be. Though it is obvious that many of the scales in the

frame are subjective, it is still possible to make practical judgments using it, at least of the “is this group more dangerous than that one?” sort. This is **if** all numerical assignments are based on accurate and unbiased observation of **actual behavior** by the groups and their top levels of leadership (as distinct from official pronouncements). This means that you need to pay attention to what the secondary and tertiary leaders are saying and doing, as much (or more so) than the central leadership—after all, “plausible deniability” is not a recent historical invention.

This tool can be used by parents, reporters, law enforcement agents, social scientists and others interested in evaluating the actual dangers presented by a given group or movement. Obviously different observers will achieve differing degrees of precision, depending upon the sophistication of their numerical assignments on each scale. However, if the same observers use the same methods of scoring and weighting each scale, their comparisons of relative danger or harmlessness between groups will be reasonably valid, at least for their own purposes. People who cannot, on the other hand, view competing belief systems as ever having possible spiritual value to

anyone, will find the ABCDEF annoyingly useless for promoting their theological agendas. Worse, these members of the Religious Reich and their fellow theocrats will find that their own organizations (and quite a few large mainstream churches) are far more “cult-like” than many of the minority belief systems they so bitterly oppose.

It should be pointed out that the ABCDEF is founded upon both modern psychological theories about mental health and personal growth, and my many years of participant observation and historical research into minority belief systems. Those who believe that relativism and anarchy are as dangerous to mental health as absolutism and authoritarianism, could (I suppose) count groups with total scores nearing either extreme (high or low) as being equally hazardous. As far as dangers to physical well-being are concerned however, both historical records and current events clearly indicate the direction in which the greatest threats lie. This is especially so since the low-scoring groups usually seem to have survival and growth rates so small that they seldom develop the abilities to commit large scale atrocities even had they the philosophical or political inclinations to do so.

The Advanced Bonewits’ Cult Danger Evaluation Frame (*version 2.6*)

| Factors: | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Low High |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Internal Control: Amount of internal political and social power exercised by leader(s) over members; lack of clearly defined organizational rights for members. | _____ |
| 2. External Control: Amount of external political and social influence desired or obtained; emphasis on directing members’ external political and social behavior. | _____ |
| 3. Wisdom/Knowledge Claimed by leader(s); amount of infallibility declared or implied about decisions or doctrinal/scriptural interpretations; number and degree of unverified and/or unverifiable credentials claimed. | _____ |
| 4. Wisdom/Knowledge Credited to leader(s) by members; amount of trust in decisions or doctrinal/scriptural interpretations made by leader(s); amount of hostility by members towards internal or external critics and/or towards verification efforts. | _____ |

(continued on next page)

| Factors: (continued) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Low High |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 5. Dogma: Rigidity of reality concepts taught; amount of doctrinal inflexibility or “fundamentalism;” hostility towards relativism and situationalism. | _____ |
| 6. Recruiting: Emphasis put on attracting new members; amount of proselytizing; requirement for all members to bring in new ones. | _____ |
| 7. Front Groups: Number of subsidiary groups using different names from that of main group, especially when connections are hidden. | _____ |
| 8. Wealth: Amount of money and/or property desired or obtained by group; emphasis on members’ donations; economic lifestyle of leader (s) compared to ordinary members. | _____ |
| 9. Sexual Manipulation of members by leader(s) of non-tantric groups; amount of control exercised over sexuality of members in terms of sexual orientation, behavior, and/or choice of partners. | _____ |
| 10. Sexual Favoritism: Advancement or preferential treatment dependent upon sexual activity with the leader(s) of non-tantric groups. | _____ |
| 11. Censorship: Amount of control over members’ access to outside opinions on group, its doctrines or leader(s). | _____ |
| 12. Isolation: Amount of effort to keep members from communicating with non-members, including family, friends and lovers. | _____ |
| 13. Dropout Control: Intensity of efforts directed at preventing or returning dropouts. | _____ |
| 14. Violence: Amount of approval when used by or for the group, its doctrines or leader(s). | _____ |
| 15. Paranoia: Amount of fear concerning real or imagined enemies; exaggeration of perceived power of opponents; prevalence of conspiracy theories. | _____ |
| 16. Grimness: Amount of disapproval concerning jokes about the group, its doctrines or its leader(s). | _____ |
| 17. Surrender of Will: Amount of emphasis on members not having to be responsible for personal decisions; degree of individual disempowerment created by the group, its doctrines or its leader(s). | _____ |
| 18. Hypocrisy: amount of approval for actions which the group officially considers immoral or unethical, when done by or for the group, its doctrines or leader(s); willingness to violate the group’s declared principles for political, psychological, social, economic, military, or other gain. | _____ |
| | Total: _____ |

Translations of various versions of this are available in these languages:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Dutch: | <i>Bonewits' Geavanceerde Raamwerk ter Evaluatie van Sektegevaar</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_Dutch.html > |
| German (2.0): | <i>Isaac Bonewits' Sektengefahr Checkliste</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_German.html >. |
| French (2.6): | <i>Grille avancée de Bonewits pour l'évaluation du danger potentiel d'une secte</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_French.html >. |
| Italian (2.6): | <i>Documento Avanzato di Isaac Bonewits per la Valutazione del Pericolo del Culto</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_Italian.html >. |
| Polish (2.6): | <i>Zaawansowany Kwestionariusz Bonewitsa Oceniający Niebezpieczeństwo Sekty</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_Polish.html >. |
| Portuguese (2.6): | <i>A Ferramenta Avançada de Bonewits para Avaliação de Seitas</i> < http://www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF_Portuguese.html >. |

Other translations will be posted as they are done.



Isaac Bonewits founded ADF in 1983 and served as its Archdruid, developing it through the grove structure until he resigned in 1996 for health reasons. He continued to support the development of ADF as Archdruid Emeritus and wrote several books in the last decade of his life, including: *Rites of Worship*, *Witchcraft, a Concise Guide*, *The Pagan Man*, *Bonewits Essential Guide to Druidry*, *Bonewits Essential Guide to Witchcraft*, *Real Energy*, and *Neopagan Rites*. Isaac passed on into the Summerlands on August 12, 2010.

ADF Store

Ár nDraíocht Féin's member store



- Books
- Jewelry
- Oak Leaves
- Gifts
- Clothing
- Divination Sets
- Ritual Supplies
- Music

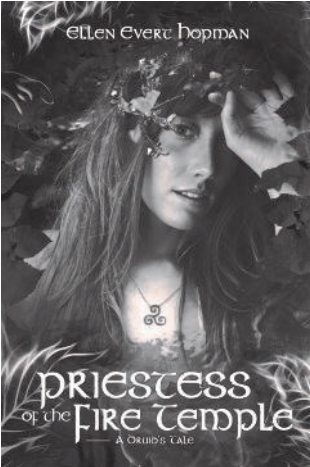
Visit us at: <http://estore.adf.org/>
Or email us at adf-store@adf.org



Book Review

Book Review: Priestess of the Fire Temple

by Melissa 'Missy' Burchfield



Priestess of the Fire Temple: a Druid's Tale (2012)
by Ellen Evert Hopman
ISBN: 978-0-7387-2925-1

In this conclusion to her fiction trilogy, Hopman once again delivers a lovely story full of love, loss, intrigue and mystical history. The story begins with the main character, Princess Aislinn, telling her story to a young

Priestess assigned to her care in her elder years. She begins with a synopsis of her life as she knew it before she hit that critical age at which so many young men and women of ages past had their futures decided for them by their parents and adult

relatives. Through various trials and triumphs, we follow Aislinn and watch her evolve into the woman she is meant to be.

Hopman includes a map, a list of characters, including Deities and place names that are quite helpful, particularly if it has been some time since you've brushed up on your Irish history. Her descriptions of Druid ritual are thorough and moving, and she does an excellent job of explaining the motivation for each of the actions taken by the characters in ritual space with grace and enthusiasm.

Overall, this is a strong ending to a well-written trilogy. Pagan fiction isn't everyone's cup of tea, but for those of you who like it, you'll find you need no sugar to sweeten the brew.



Photo credit: Rev. AJ Gooch

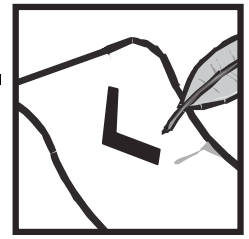
Wellspring Bardic Chair contestants (clockwise from the left): Lesley Domnu-Hooper, JD 'Hobbes' Hickey, Dave 'Thexalon' Kleinschmidt, **Rev. Ian Corrigan (2012 Wellspring Bardic Chair winner)**, Jan 'Skylark' Avende, Rhiannon from Muin Mound Grove, Sydney Gooch (5yo), Melissa 'Missy' Burchfield
[Editor's Note: more about the Bardic Chair competition is expected to be ready for the Winter issue]



Festival Review

Festival Review: Artisan's Competition at Wellspring 2012

by Amy Castner



The Artisan's Competition at Wellspring Gathering was another rousing success! We had 28 entries from 19 different artists, and a great variety of incredible talent from our well of creativity. Many thanks go to our judges, Rev. Carrion Mann and Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano, who had a very hard job to do, because the excellence and talent shown in each piece was really overwhelming. The "Best in Show" winning piece was chosen by popular vote during the annual Artisan's Wine and Cheese Reception, which was held directly after the ADF Annual Meeting.

The Sacred Objects category continues to be the most competitive with many different pieces all showing the spirituality of their creators. Julie DeRosiers from Thornhaven Grove entered a fantastic painting called *The Nine Worlds*, which hangs above her altar, and Chris Henderson from Grove of the Seven Hills showed his talent with his hand-carved *Warriors Shillelagh*.

There was also fierce competition in the textiles and fibers category! My favorites include the gorgeous purple shawl crocheted with a raven by Stephanie Phillips of Charter Oak Grove, and Grey Catsidhe's (Muin Mound Grove) lovely handmade Blodeuwedd doll, complete with a cloak that could transform her from flower maiden to owl.

Special mention for eco-friendliness goes to Steph Gooch of Stone Creed Grove for her *Three 'Green' Grocery Bags*, which were created entirely from scrap cotton yarn, and to Jessica Olson of Feather River Grove for her beautiful *Felted Tree of Life Sporrán*, made from recycled Czech army blankets.

All members of ADF are encouraged to showcase their creativity and enter next year's competition. You do not have to be a member of the Artisan's Guild, and entries can be mailed if you are not able to attend Wellspring Gathering!

Special thanks to Deb Field, Melissa Hill, Jennifer Schmoak, Caroline Farrow, Jack Cole, and Chris Sherbak, 2012 Artisan's competition volunteers.

Your hard work helped once again to make this an excellent event!

2012 Artisan's Competition Winners

Best in Show:



Photo Credit: Jack Cole

Druid Shield by Ted P. Gilliland, Frog Stone Circle PWG

Sacred Objects:

1st Place: "*Bratach Brid*" *Estonian Lace Shawl* by Barbara Wagner, Shining Lakes Grove



Photo Credit: Shawneen

2nd Place: "*My Bear*" *Ursine Totemic Altar Idol* by Shawneen, Three Cranes Grove

2-D Fine Art:



Photo Credit: Melissa Hill

- 1st Place:** *Bee's Eye View* by Melissa Hill, Cedar-song Grove
- 2nd Place:** *Meditative Amoeba* by Jennifer Schmoak, Cedarsong Grove

3-D Fine Art:

(This category had a tie for first place)



Photo Credit: Shawneen

- 1st Place:** *Love Knows No Gender* by Shawneen, Three Cranes Grove



Photo Credit: Jack Cole

- 1st Place:** *Green Man's Gift* by Athena Moonstone, Three Cranes Grove

Photography:

- 1st Place:** *Rivers of Ohio* by Lesley Domnu-Hooper, Protogrove of Live Oaks
- 2nd Place:** *Greenman at Leeds* by Amy Castner, Cedarsong Grove

Textiles & Fibers:

- 1st Place:** *Shining Lakes Grove Banner* by Dorothy Quirk, Shining Lakes Grove
- 2nd Place:** *Sun in Glory* by Amy Castner, Cedar-song Grove

Other Crafts:

- 1st Place:** *Epona the Czarina Traditional Pysanky* by Amy Castner, Cedarsong Grove
- 2nd Place:** *Prosperity Bracelet* by Athena Moonstone, Three Cranes Grove



Amy Castner is former Senior Druid of Cedarsong Grove, current Upper Midwest Regional Druid, member of the Artisan's Guild, and Chair of the 2012 Wellspring Artisan's Competition.



Opinion

Vision and Leadership: Living the Dream

by Thomas Brown



I believe in the vision and dream of Our Druidry to affect change in the world. I also have a great reverence for the wide range of leadership skills of our modern Druids. I even have a deep fondness for the open and inclusive nature that ADF provides. But, what I like the most about ADF is the accountability to which that leadership is held. It is that leadership that advances the vision of ADF being a mainstream Pagan religion. Leadership and vision are clear focuses of my life, yet I am not on any of the e-lists to discuss the topic. So when I read Rev. Jessie Olson's article "Isaac's Dream for ADF" it made me think of my own involvement in ADF, the community presence and actions of my prison-based grove known as the Frog Stone Circle, and what I can do to increase the dream of Isaac and ADF (Olson). Jessie's words resonated with me and inspired me to respond with how prisoner members of ADF advance that vision and our relationship to leadership.

Within ADF's organizational structure, prison-based groves are now known as Prison Worship Groups and fall under the direction of the Clergy Council. We aren't allowed to use the term "grove" in our group names and we do not represent ADF. We are allowed to participate in the Dedicant Program and various other study programs on a limited basis and only with the assistance of the volunteer mentor (our mentor is Rev. Kirk Thomas, ADF Archdruid). Although we have a set of bylaws, elected officers, maintain a small budget and perform some form of community service every quarter we are still only a small subgroup of ADF. Indeed, a very small ADF subgroup that holds Isaac's vision as one of our personal goals. It was the Druids at CRCC

that advocated for the stone circle, the 700-pound concrete well, the cedar post that serves as our world tree, a fire pit enclosure, grass and planter boxes for the beautification efforts of the sacred grounds within the prison; our efforts even established four paid positions to maintain the area where the nemeton (and other sacred space) is located. Additionally, the Frog Stone Circle, along with ADF, Kirk and members of the Clergy Council are responsible for affecting changes in policy and negative perceptions of modern Pagans within the facility and state-wide. Those efforts alone have advanced Isaac's vision, if only within our own little world.

Therefore, I ask myself, "What can I do when I don't personally think of myself as a leader within the spirit of ADF?" My role as Internal Organizer of the Frog Stone Circle is that of a steward and facilitator for study groups, High Days and as liaison for Rev. Kirk Thomas' own leadership. The membership of the Frog Stone Circle consists of convicted felons of every variety. We are convicted felons with job qualifications ranging from bathroom janitors to assistant to the assistant lunchroom lady; our incarcerations prohibit being



**Charter Oak Grove, ADF
Would like to
congratulate:**

**Kathleen Pezza for her ordination as
ADF Clergy
and**

Luke Landry for completing his Dedicant work

leaders or pillars of our community while a debt is being paid. But, we have smart guys amongst our ranks and they are sincere in their approach to the world of spirit; we will have three men complete their Dedicant Path documentation in 2012. The 'work' within the Frog Stone Circle advances Isaac's vision and dream for ADF. While we are not leaders, we are living the dream due to leaders applying vision.

Since Samhain 2009, we have maintained a total of seven paid ADF members and numerous guests at our High Day rites. While some people's personal interest in Paganism may wax and wane, there has constantly been fulfilling ritual, enlivened study and true worship of the Kindreds due to Kirk's mentorship, his assistance with liturgies and his patronage. In short, the Frog Stone Circle operates like any other grove and in doing so advances Isaac's vision by creating a healthy environment for modern Pagan worship in a prison setting. Our operations are due to Kirk's leadership and a commitment to his vision as well.

Kirk once told me that he makes the drive to Connell due in part to my piety. I like to think that I share in the vision and my life is supported by it. Now that I have shared some insightful information about the only subgroup that's not an e-list within ADF, I can confidently answer Jessie's question: "what can I do personally to help advance his [Isaac's] vision?" First, I believe that completing the Dedicant Path and completion of the Initiate Path of ADF demonstrates my commitment to our leaders and ADF community. This is preferable to my empty words as a prisoner. Through the Initiate conduit I shall further the Work of the Wise in the dark lands where many social outwellers roam, bringing Druidry and Isaac's vision where it's needed. Since imitation is



Thomas Brown in ritual robes

the sincerest form of flattery, I represent the Druid community amongst other prisoners from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and other Pagan faiths on an advisory council to the facility chaplain in the spirit of interfaith negotiations; within the true, uncompromising spirit of 'Uncle' Isaac, I am happy to report that my 'unappreciated source of agitation' often gets things done much to the chagrin of my monotheist counterparts. Above all this, I take responsibility for my thoughts, feelings and actions. That is my contribution to Isaac's dream for ADF: knowing my place in the cosmos, doing my part through proper sacrifice (as we mean it) and supporting my

church through service and the maintenance of virtues (even when no one seems to be looking at the smaller members of the Pagan community).



Thomas has been a member of ADF since 2009, with his DP work approved in 2010. He has been accepted into the Initiate Program, has worked his way through Rev. Ian Corrigan's Nine Moon practicum, with mentorship from Archdruid Kirk to complete the course work necessary for the IP. He serves the Frog Stone Circle as Internal Organizer by acting as liaison with the facility chaplain; this role in (the only approved ADF Prison Worship Group) allows him to lead study groups on the DP, ADF style rituals, and serve for magico-religious functions of ADF. Thomas is also a full Druid grade member of OBOD with interest in bridging the gap of ADF & OBOD styles of Druidry.

Work Cited

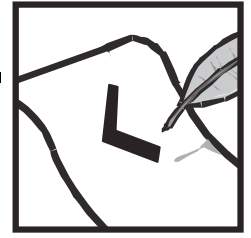
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Personal Story

Finding My Grove: An Essay on Community and Birch Trees

by Samantha Noll



This year I attended ConVocation, an annual Michigan convention of esoteric traditions, with some of my grove members. I originally came to support Melissa, our liturgist, as she was leading a ritual to Menulis. The ritual was lovely and well attended, however, the experience of ConVocation brought with it surprising insights not immediately connected to my original purpose or so I thought. After all, my purpose was for me, an individual, to support another grove member, who is herself an individual. I made the decision to follow the Druid path, to seek out and join my grove, and to go to ConVocation. And yet, what I realized during that night ritual to Menulis was that I had found something more fundamental and deep than the simple freedom of individual choice would allow me to have.

Now I know that most of us live in a society that focuses on the virtues of individuality and that's ok. I'm not critiquing personal liberty per say but I want to suggest that there are formative consequences of living in a society that myopically focuses on the ideals of individual freedom and the equality of choice. Within this framework, a person may come to understand his or herself as an individual that feels, desires, weighs, chooses, and denies; an individual that is fundamentally prior to society or community. This was my position and one that I had not consciously weighed or considered. However, as Wittgenstein famously responded to Descartes' "I think therefore I am" argument, the very language that Descartes' uses to proclaim his freedom from all things social is itself a product of society; as we are all a product of society and the communities that make up our society. That's what I found at the Menulis ritual during ConVocation. I found a community. Not a cluster of individuals fundamentally separate from each other, but rather, a group of people who, like birch trees, are distinct individuals and yet share the same roots. They grow from the same soil and shared experience nourishes them. They stand apart and yet are supported by their fellows during harsh rains and heavy winds. They thrive through

fellowship as well as individual growth and both make the group stronger. In short, *they are a grove.*

Now I am relatively new to the grove, having joined them only a few months ago, so this may seem obvious to those of you who have been a part of such a group for a long period. Or maybe I am just lucky enough to have found myself in the midst of some very special people. Or maybe it's both. What I can tell you is this: during the ConVocation conference, I witnessed my grove coming together as a family. They laughed together, supported each other, walked through the halls of a hotel to ritual with their heads held high, singing to the beat of a drum. They were strong as individuals and as a community. In an age of computer games and consumer targeted advertisements where people are envisioned as individual choosers separate from all value and community ties, I can't help but think that some people must be missing something fundamental about life. It's not the car you drive or the size of your house that matters; these are all ornaments. What matters is where you choose to put down your roots and who you grow and share the soil with. These are the people that support you during heavy rains and enrich your life.

This year I attended ConVocation, an annual Michigan convention of esoteric traditions, with some of my grove members. I originally came to support Melissa, our liturgist, as she was leading a ritual to Menulis. The ritual was lovely and well attended, however, the experience of ConVocation brought with it surprising insights. *In short, what I found was my grove.*

❧

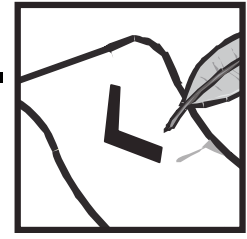
Hailing from Cedar Song Grove, Samantha Noll joined ADF in 2011. She is active in the Scholars Guild and an editor on OakLeaves' staff. She is currently a student of and teaches Philosophy at Michigan State University, with areas of interest including environmental philosophy, development ethics, animal metaphysics, and agriculture ethics.



Personal Story

Sunne Smackdown (or: How I learned not to neglect a Goddess)

by Rob Steiner



I attended Wellspring this year for the first time, and it was while there that I feel like I had an experience of the divine that brought it's reality a little more home for me. It was the presence of the Sun Goddess, Sunne, or more appropriately, the lack thereof, that made me appreciate the role of deity in my life much more than I had.

But first, a little history.

One day last fall, I was taking a walk at work on my lunch break. I was walking outside, and it was an overcast day. I was in a somewhat depressed mood, with a lot of things going through my head. With headphones on, I was mulling things over as I walked. The song "Hold On", by Yes, began playing on my iPod. I honestly didn't pay it much attention, so caught up was I in my own thoughts. There is a lyric in the song that goes "Sunshine,

shine on, shine on you. Sunshine, shine on through". So I'm walking, the music's playing, and the the sky's cloudy. As the above mentioned line played during the song, though, the clouds broke open, and the rays of the sun bathed me in their light. I was snapped out of my internal dialogue and took notice of the warm sunlight on that cool November day. The combination of the lyrics from the song and the perfectly time break in the clouds immediately lightened my mood, and I quietly thanked Sunne for her gift.

It was shortly after that that I began offering a prayer to Sunne each morning. I usually wait a few minutes after sunrise – at least during the week while I'm at work – then go find a quiet spot to say my brief prayer. At home on the weekends I usually just say the prayer upon rising. I have done this every day for the past six months or so. I've

only missed one or two days due to some meeting schedule or some such at work.

Until Saturday during Wellspring.

Up till then, things had been going great at Wellspring. I was having a great time, meeting some new people, deepening older friendships. Then it was like a sink-hole opened up, and I fell in. At some point prior to that, my grovemates and I had been discussing my divorce. That and related things (confidence, self-esteem, yada yada yada) began weighing ever more heavily on my mind. The thing is, these thoughts were not new. I had dealt with them before—often—and had gotten able to move past them pretty



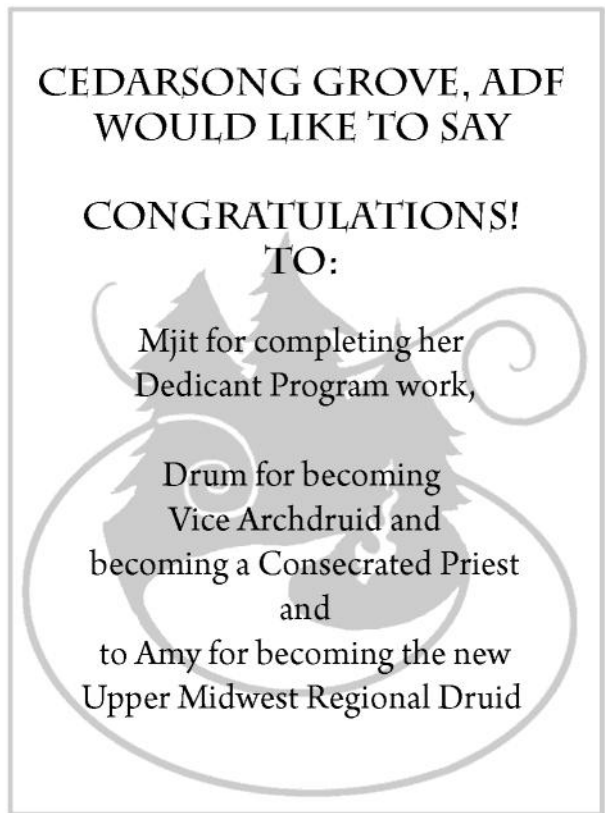
quickly. But not this time. I spent most of Saturday night at Wellspring in a deep funk. Despite the Herculean efforts of some of my friends to pull me out of it, all I wanted to do was go back to my tent, crawl into my sleeping bag, and stay there. I was truly surprised at the severity of the sudden depression.

As dawn broke on Sunday, I lay in my tent looking back on the past evening, wondering what had happened, and if the rest of the festival was going to be like this. Then, the light of the rising sun caught the top of my tent, and I realized it. I never said my devotional to Sunne the day before! So, the first thing I had to do was my devotional.

I got dressed, got out of my tent, and faced the sun. I felt her warm rays on my face as I prepared to say the prayer. Then, with hands held out in front of me, I prayed. As I prayed I felt a pressure on my hands, as if the light was pushing back on me. I had never experienced that before. I wasn't sure if it was good or bad, but I decided at that point that I wasn't going to spend the rest of Wellspring depressed. And I didn't.

Still puzzled over the previous evening's melancholy, I mulled over when exactly that "sink hole" seemed to open up. I retraced the day, and realized that it wasn't until the sun began to set that I started feeling depressed. The later it got into the evening, the worse I felt. By the time that evening's entertainment (the band Rogue's Cross) was on, I was in a full-blown situational depression. I let every negative thought in and have free reign in my psyche. And every negative thought seemed to have an exponentially increased influence on me. I spiraled deeper and deeper into the sink hole. And as I said, nothing anyone said or did could pull me out of it. I asked myself the question: did my sudden depression that night have any connection to not praying to Sunne that morning?

I shared these thoughts with one of my grovemates, and after listening, he made a suggestion that perhaps Sunne was reaching out to me. It was as if she was letting me know that she enjoyed my morning devotional to her, and she would give me a gentle lesson for forgetting it on Saturday. Maybe she excused my occasional lapses at work due to the circumstances, but there, at Wellspring, she was letting me know I had no excuse (and, of



course, being surrounded by dozens of like-minded druids, I didn't). Maybe, just maybe, he offered, I found my patron.

I won't say at this point that I look upon Sunne as my patron. I don't think I'm ready to take that step yet. But, if nothing else, she taught me a lesson in piety. I continue my morning devotional to her, and I'm endeavoring to learn more about her and how the ancient northern Europeans may have viewed her. I'm excited by the possibility that a goddess may have reached out to me, even if it was a really strong love-tap with a "clue by four".

I honor you, Sunne, and thank you for the gift of life you bestow upon this planet and all who dwell here.

Hail, Sunne!



Since 2010, Rob Steiner has been a member of ADF and Shining Lakes Grove in Ann Arbor, MI. He is a member of Eldr ok Iss: Kin of Fire and Ice, and is also in the Artisans Guild. Under oath to submit his Dedicant Path material by Samhain 2012, Rob is looking forward to further training opportunities within ADF.



DAD Speaks

Annual Awards

by Rev. James 'Seamus' Dillard



Over the last couple of years I had the pleasure of being on the committee that reviews, selects and presents the ADF Volunteer awards. This year's group of volunteers is like previous ones, some of the finest people I know. Of all the things I did as Vice Archdruid this was by far my favorite. Here is a quick rundown of the awards and this year's winners.

Since I don't remember the order that we presented the awards, in no particular order we awarded Awards of Appreciation to:



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison for his efforts in continuing to organize and upgrade the ADF store.



Photo credit: Rev. Crystal Groves

Rev. Crystal Groves for behind the scenes Tech Support and continue work as ADF Preceptor.

To the 'King of the Office Elves,' the one and only **Hugh Hampton**, who continues to rock and support ADF in so many ways!



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano for his efforts as study program reviewer and mentor.

Steph Gooch for all her hard work on *OakLeaves* and ADF Publishing! [Editor's Note: this award really belongs to the entire staff of *OakLeaves*, from the Layout Director and Advertising staff to the Editors and Contributors, without whom *OakLeaves* would not be what it is.]



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

~~~Thanks to all five for their hard work.~~~

This year we decided to start a few new categories for awards. The first is the **ADF Vision Award**, much like the Founder's Award this award is given to the person or group that helps keep ADF's vision alive through education and public outreach/awareness. This year we presented two Vision Awards:



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

**Rev. Jessie Olson** received one for her ongoing commitment to On-line DP Education Classes.

**Three Cranes Grove** received the other for their continued commitment to publishing, workshops, seminars and public relations/education including their work at the Dublin Irish Festival and other large pagan and non-pagan events.



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan



Photo credit: Steph Gooch

Another new award this year is the **Good Fire Award**. This award is presented to the person(s) that continue to kindle the fire of our piety through writing books, rituals, chants, songs, liturgy and magical workings. The first ever Good Fire Award was presented to **Rev. Ian Corrigan** for his endless work in creating a living liturgy that is ADF. I can't think of anyone in ADF that does not repeat at least something he has written or been influenced by his work and piety.

This year's Flounder's Award...ahem, I mean **Founder's Award** goes to **Cedarsong Grove** for their growing international commitment to service, in-



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

cluding work with the Lansing's Adopt A River Program, Lansing's Fenner Nature Center, and The Solar Circle Organization.

This year's **Volunteer of the Year Award** goes to the outgoing DP Preceptor, the one and only **Maria Stoy**. As Kirk said at the meeting, Maria has been a rock in terms of the Dedicant Program, and her recent notice to step away from that position leaves a big hole to fill.



Photo credit: Rev. Ian Corrigan

To all the volunteers that one the awards please know that these are but small tokens of our enormous thanks and appreciation for the work that you do to make ADF what it is today. To all the volunteers and members of ADF we thank you for your contributions of time, love, money and energy.



*Former Vice-Archdruid, Rev. James 'Seamus' Dillard is a member of Three Cranes Grove and has served locally as Senior Druid and Purse Warden, as well as Scribe and Guild Chief of the Warrior's Guild, and Tribeways Podcast host and producer. Seamus has co-written three ADF-related books and is currently working his way through the Clergy Training Program.*

**Also presented at the Annual Meeting Awards:** The post of ADF Bard Laureate, created under Archdruid Robert 'Skip' Ellison, is in the gift of the Archdruid. During Rev. Ellison's tenure, the Bards Laureate were Ian Corrigan and Lialfal. When Kirk Thomas became Archdruid, he appointed Diane 'Emerald' Bronowicz as the new Bard Laureate. At the time, he gave her a small brooch to wear as a badge of office, but promised to get her something 'better' as soon as he could. Finally, this year he was able to present her with a large bronze medallion as the sign of her office (which will pass to the next Bard Laureate), and he also gave smaller versions of the medallion to the Bards Laureate Emeriti, in recognition of their service.



Photo credit: Steph Gooch



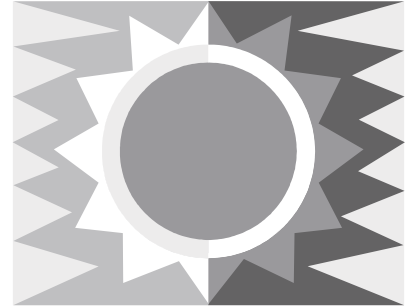
# Poetry

## After the Equinox

by Colleen Sorbera



Daylight wanes  
 Yet life remains in every fire colored tree.  
 Wind rustles through the forest,  
 We ready ourselves for what's to come.  
 Sun yields his long dominion  
 To mysterious dark of night,  
 What is unknown grows,  
 Within us as without.  
 The dark months exult in change,  
 Until snows come  
 To render all silent  
 All still.



# Poetry

## Mabon

by Laurie 'Lankelly' Brothers



Mabon, Autumnal Equinox, sacred day,  
 Day named in honor of the great god Mabon,  
 Day of equal light and darkness,  
 Day of the second harvest,  
 Day in which we honor Mabon and Modron and all the gods and goddesses  
 And give thanks for the bounty and fruits of the Mother.

We anticipate the changing of the seasons,  
 Leaving the warmth of summer  
 And entering the chill of winter.  
 We look with awe upon the migration of Gaia's creatures,  
 We mourn the descent of the Sun King,  
 Yet we celebrate the coming of the Crone  
 And reflect upon her wisdom in the approaching cool times.

Shining Ones, Ancestors, Spirits of this Place,  
 We honor you and give you thanks for joining us today.  
 For the bountiful harvests, for the endless seasons,  
 We offer our gratitude.  
 Mighty Ones, today we reap the fullness of your love!





# Poetry

## Doorway to the Dark

by Laurie 'Lankelly' Brothers



In dark silence, we walk between the worlds  
Blurring the lines separating the living and the dead,  
Between whispers of light and whispers of darkness.

Samhain, Summer's End  
Death of the old year,  
Beginning of the dark half.  
Samhain, day when the gods draw near to the Earth  
And the dead return to their living places.  
Samhain, portal to the underworld, gateway to winter,  
Time of short days and long nights.

Festival of our ancestors,  
Night for kindling ritual fires  
And burning away the old year,  
Night of divination, night of prophecy,  
Night the crone beckons.

Come close, ancestors  
Come close, crone  
Come close, darkness.  
Do not fear them.  
In fearing death, you do not live  
In fearing life, you will not welcome death.

Sacred Samhain, end to beginning, beginning to end,  
Doorway to the Dark.





# Poetry

## Wild at Heart



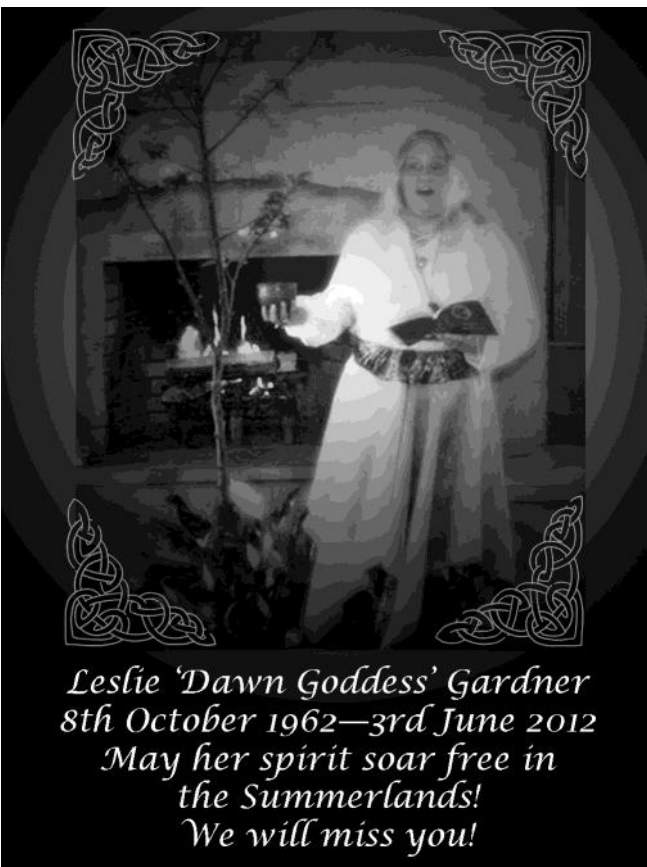
by D. Rowen Grove

She shines out from the lantern,  
And she drives the away the chill,  
And she guides the traveler homeward  
That's been lost out on the hills,  
And she sets the stew a-bubblin'  
And she aids the blacksmith's art -  
But do not entirely trust her  
For—Fire is wild at heart.

She'll purr upon your hearthstone  
And she'll keep the children warm,  
And revive a frozen herdsman  
Who was caught out by the storm,  
And she shines with equal cheer on  
The fair lad and the swart,  
But do not forget to watch her  
For—Fire is wild at heart.

She'll dance for celebrations  
Like a blythe, high-hearted lass,  
But she'll just as gladly leap and roar  
Amongst the trees and grass,  
And your roof-tree's just as good a log  
As deadwood from a cart;  
So be mindful how you treat her  
For—Fire is wild at heart.

She never was our servant,  
Though betimes, she is a friend  
And we'd be fair lost without her,  
And the Winter'd be our end.  
So respect this lovely lady,  
Aye, she'll gladly do her part -  
Tend her well and don't abuse her  
For—Fire is wild at heart!



## Dedicant Path Completions for Three Cranes Grove:

Joe Auerbach - 4/10/12  
Traci Auerbach - 3/22/12  
Shawn Scott- 3/22/12  
Erin Fortner - 2/4/12  
Jan Avende - 7/25/11  
Irisa McKenzie - 6/22/11



Honorable Mention  
to Bridgette Adkins (9/6/11)  
, who did her DP Oath  
with us at a Druid Moon



# Poetry

## Samhain Trio



by *Samantha Noll*

### ***Eudaimonia***

At the boundary stones,  
marking the crossroads  
between right and wrong,  
the bones of old *selves*  
lay like the carrion-picked  
remains of suicide victims—

And don't we, in supposed  
modernity, also fear the  
stygian nights when they  
rise, like ghosts, to haunt  
our dreams?

Perhaps our ancestors  
knew a truth better left  
buried at the crossroads:  
that the act of judging  
brings with it the cost of  
soiled hands...and

the cloying certainty of  
*eudaimonia* is actually  
built upon a foundation  
of bones— old *selves*  
left to rot at the boundary  
between right and wrong.

### **The Scent of Smoke**

There is something special  
about the scent of smoke  
that lingers on your clothes  
after *Sambain*.

Even days later, when you  
press your nose against  
the fabric and breathe in,  
it's as if the veils of time  
part for a moment and  
memories of the past are  
rekindled in your mind.

It makes you realize exactly  
what was lost when we,  
as a people, stopped sharing  
space by the fire on frosted

winter nights and, instead,  
insulated ourselves in solitary  
rooms with central heating.

Yes, there is something special  
about the scent of smoke  
that lingers on your clothes  
after *Sambain*.



### **Dumb Supper**

For this meal,  
the simple acts  
of preparing  
and eating  
food became  
a communion  
with ancestors,

as if the fingers  
of my grandmother  
and great aunts  
helped to form  
the dumplings  
and pie crusts.

For this meal,  
we sat in *rememberance*  
on Samhain;  
when the veil  
between our  
world and the  
next is shear,

like the bone  
china and old  
ivory tablecloth  
my great grand-  
mother used to  
set for supper.

For this meal,  
their memory  
is as sharp  
and vivid as  
the taste of  
rhubarb pie.





## DRUID KIRK'S DREAM

Archdruid Kirk tells us that he has a vision for ADF. He said, "Someday, though probably not in my lifetime, ADF will own a moderate sized piece of land that will have a temple to the Kindreds, grounds for camping and festivals, a building for scholarly study, an ADF Office, and an indoor rite space for inclement weather.

**But even with such a grand dream  
it cannot come to pass unless we start helping now.**

There are many ways to financially help ADF grow and to fulfill this vision.  
Every donation large or small helps us build for the future.



## Memorial and Named Gifts

**Honor a family member, loved one or friend by  
donating in their name or in gratitude or  
celebration of a special event or life  
occurrence.**

Donate now at: [ADF-Office@ADF.ORG](mailto:ADF-Office@ADF.ORG) or  
ADF PO Box 17874 TucsonAZ 85731 EIN 51-0328645

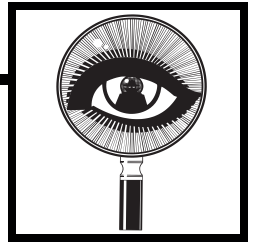
In order to qualify for an IRS deduction, you must meet these criteria: No goods or services were issued in exchange for donation. Under Internal Revenue Service guidelines, the estimated value of the benefits received is solely "intangible religious benefits": therefore the full amount of your payment is a deductible contribution.



# Seek & Find

## Outdweller

by Rev. AJ Gooch




Turn the picture sideways  and see if you can find the hidden outdweller:



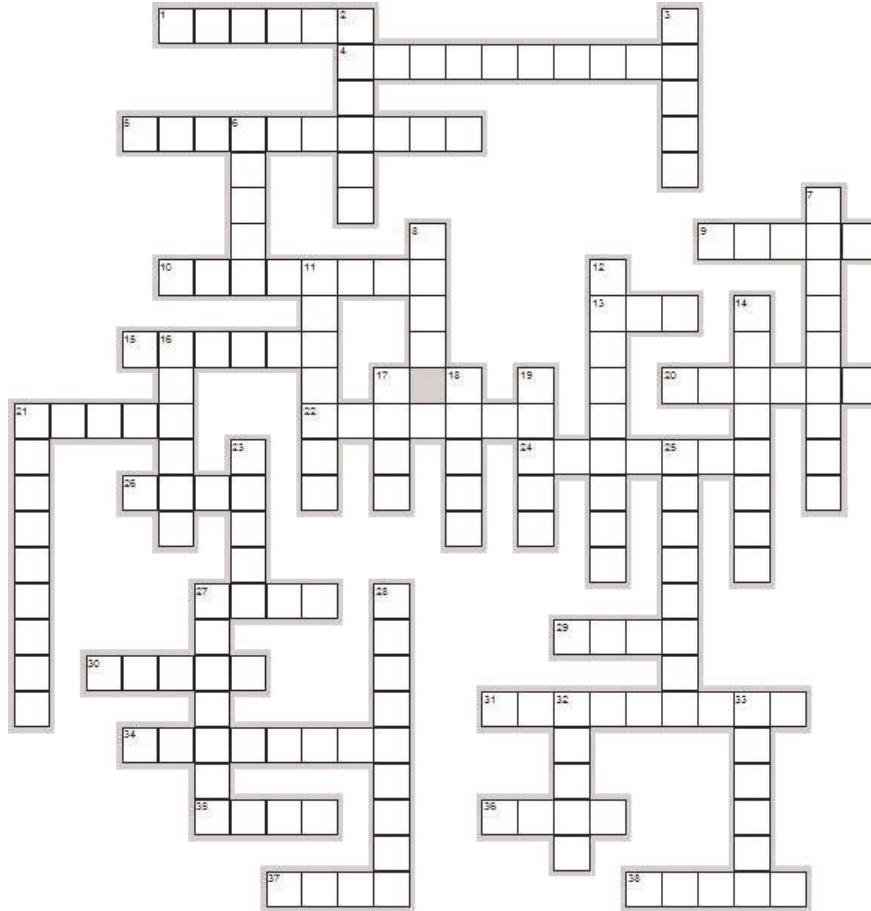
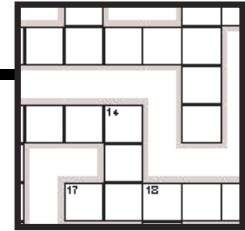
Photo credit: Rev. AJ Gooch



# Crossword Puzzle

## Celtic Conundrum

by Chris :)



ESCAPEGAMES.COM

## Down

- 2. Well of the Nine Hazels
- 3. First owner of *brug na boinne*
- 6. Coll's tree
- 7. One of the invaders of Ireland
- 8. Wife of Finn
- 11. A province of Ireland
- 12. Her staff freezes the ground
- 14. Mother of Pryderi
- 16. He cheated on Medb
- 17. One of Lir's wives
- 18. She was whisked away by Midir
- 19. AKA Airgetlam
- 21. Arawn's magic Cauldron
- 23. He killed Nuada
- 25. One of the Tri de Dana
- 27. Gaulish god of light
- 28. Welsh name for Aug 1
- 32. Son of Fionn
- 33. Ireland's capital city

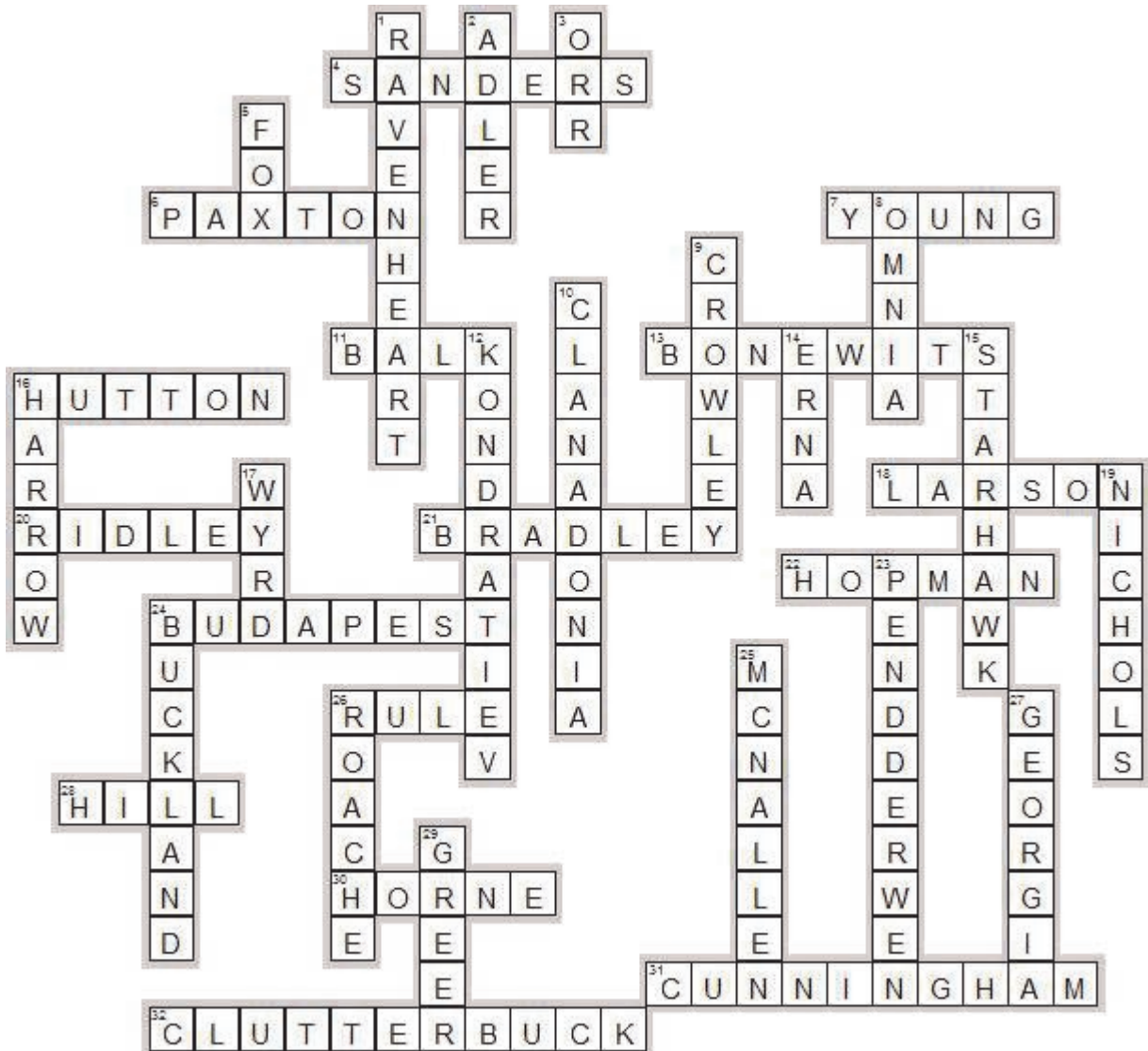


# Across

1. City of Lugh's Sword
4. Conchobars seat of power
5. Emer was his wife
9. Lover of Etain
10. June 9 is his holiday
13. Nuin's tree
15. Killed by Pwyll
20. AKA Mary of the Gael
21. Father of Pryderi
22. Wife of Eochaid mac eirc
24. Druid of the Milesians
26. Scotland aka
27. Brother to Branwen
29. The sons of Tuirenn killed him
30. Likely Irelands most famous book
31. Math and Gwydion created her
34. Irish Sea God
35. Largest Hebrides Island
36. Ireland aka
37. Cynfeirdd is aka
38. A Gaelic fertility goddess



# Last Issue's Puzzle Key





# News and Announcements



## **Dedicant Path Completions**

### **Shawn Scott (Shawneen)**

Three Cranes Grove  
Completed March 2012

### **Ravenna Blue**

Three Cranes Grove  
Completed March 2012

### **Mjit Raindancer Stahl**

Cedarsong Grove,  
Completed March 2012

### **Joseph Auerbach (Anivair)**

Three Cranes Grove  
Completed April 2012

### **Debra Grove (Rowen)**

Silver Branch Golden Horn Grove  
Completed April 2012

### **Member #6155**

Coast Oak Grove  
Completed May 2012

### **Luke Landry**

Charter Oak Grove  
Completed May 2012

## **Clergy Completions**

### **Kathleen Pezza (Kathleen)**

Clergy Training First Circle  
Completed May 2012

## **New Protogroves & Grove Approvals**

### **Manatee Oak Protogrove**

Bradenton, FL  
Founded: March 17, 2012

### **Home of the Ancestors Protogrove**

West Hills CA  
Founded: March 17, 2012

### **Sandia Mountain Protogrove**

Albuquerque NM  
Founded: May 22

### **Willow Star Protogrove**

Steubenville OH  
Founded: May 22

### **Thistle Protogrove**

Shreveport, LA  
Founded: May 22

### **Whispering Maple Protogrove**

Mansfield, OH  
Founded: June 8, 2012

~ Congratulations to all ~

## **Upcoming Festivals**

**Summerland Gathering** - Aug 16-19, 2012; Yellow Springs, OH

**Midnight Flame Festival** - Sept 6-9, 2012; Bellaire, MI

**Harvest Nights Gathering** - November 9-11, 2012  
Otis, MA

<[www.adf.org/events](http://www.adf.org/events)> for further information



# Contributors List



## Art

Autumn Aelwyd

Cover: *Harvest Spirit Vase*

## Articles

(P.E.) Isaac Bonewits

*The Advanced Bonewits Cult Danger Evaluation Frame*

Virginia Carper

*Adventures in Meditation with an Injured Brain*

Bonnie Cyr

*Lighting a Fire Within*

JD 'Hobbes' Hickey

*Raven vs. The Big Bang: The Epic Battle of Myth and Logic*

Eric Klinert

*Creating Our Own Icons: A New Mother Goddess and Gatekeeper for the Wellspring Gathering*

## Columns

Thomas Brown

*Vision and Leadership: Living the Dream*

Melissa 'Missy' Burchfield

*Book Review: Priestess of the Fire Temple*

Amy Castner

*Artisan's Competition at Wellspring 2012*

Rev. James 'Seamus' Dillard

*VAD Speaks: Annual Awards*

Samantha Noll

*Finding My Grove: An Essay on Community and Birch Trees*

Rob Steiner

*Sunne Smackdown*

Rev. Kirk Thomas

*A Welsh Wheel of the Year: Part 4*

## Crossword

Chris :)

*Celtic Conundrum*

## Poetry

Laurie 'Lankelly' Brothers

*Doorway to the Dark*

*Mabon*

D. Rowen Grove

*Wild at Heart*

Samantha Noll

*Sambain Trio*

Colleen Sorbera

*After the Equinox*



## Seek & Find

AJ Gooch

*Outdweller*

## Photographers

Grey Catsidhe (*Lighting a Fire Within*)

Jack Cole (*Artisans Competition*)

Rev. Ian Corrigan (*Annual Awards*)

Bonnie Cyr (*Lighting a Fire Within*)

Rev. AJ Gooch (*Wellspring Bardic Competition, Creating Our Own Icons, Seek & Find*)

Steph Gooch (*Annual Awards*)

Eric Klinert (*Creating Our Own Icons*)

Shawneen (*Artisans Competition*)





# ADF Directory



## The Mother Grove

Archdruid  
Vice-Archdruid  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Members Advocate  
Chief of the Council of Regional Druids  
Chief of the Council of Senior Druids  
Non-Officer Director  
Non-Officer Director  
Non-Officer Director

Rev. Kirk S. Thomas  
Rev. Jean 'Drum'Pagano  
Rev. Francesca Hedrick (interim)  
Rev. Robb Lewis  
Melissa 'Missy' Burchfield  
Sharon Gorbacz  
Flip Rutledge  
Rev. Francesca Hedrick  
Rev. Sean Harbaugh  
Rev. Susan Parker-Wyndham

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seanthedruid@gmail.com  
suewyndham@ncweb.com

## Additional Leadership Positions

Administrator  
Archdruid Emeritus  
Archdruid Emeritus  
Archdruid Emeritus  
Archdruid Emeritus  
Chronicler  
Public Relations Director  
Information Manager  
Listmaster and Moderator  
Preceptor  
Store Manager  
Webmaster

Selene Tawny  
Rev. Isaac Bonewits  
Rev. Ian Corrigan  
Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman  
Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison  
Peg Glosser/Steph Gooch (Deputy)  
Jennifer Lee  
Rev. Rob Lewis  
Jean 'Drum' Pagano  
Crystal Groves  
Rev. Jean 'Drum'Pagano  
Rev. Robb Lewis

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adf-info-manager@adf.org  
adf-listmaster@adf.org  
adf-preceptor@adf.org  
adf-store@adf.org  
adf-webmaster@adf.org

## Committees

Clergy Council  
Council of Lore  
Grove Coordinating Committee  
Grove Organizing Committee  
Prisoner Relations Committee

Chair: Rev. Kirk S. Thomas  
Chair Rev. Crystal Groves  
Chair: Rev Caryn MacLuan  
Chair: Aigeann  
Chair: Rev Barbara Wright

adf-archdruid@adf.org  
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adf-goc-chair@adf.org  
adf-prison-ministry@adf.org

For information on **Regional Druids** please see the full listing at:  
<<http://www.adf.org/members/org/cord/>>

For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at: <<http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html>>



# Submission Guidelines



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

## References and Notations:

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

## Medium of Submission:

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

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

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

We will also accept electronic submissions on CD, sent to:

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

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

## Art Submission Guidelines:

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

## Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: December 1st,  
Summer: March 1st,  
Autumn: June 1st,  
Winter: September 1st





# Ar nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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

## Membership and Subscription Form

One form per person please.



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

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

The information on this form represents a:  
 New Membership Renewal Revival of Expired Membership.  
 Information Update (If name/address changed indicate previous)

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

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

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

I am 18 years of Age or Older: { } Yes { } No (If no, see waiver below.)

### ADF Membership Rates:

Regular Membership \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$25/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prisoner Membership \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$10/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$20/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Non-Members \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$25/year = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### Under 18 Membership Waiver

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

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

Notary Seal:

- Weddings
- House blessings
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Rites of Passage
- Funerals
- Hand-fastings



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# SASSAFRAS GROVE

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*By Earrach Of Pittsburgh*

*Celebrating Twenty Years of Service To The Gods and The Folk*