

O A R L E A D E S

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## The Balance of the Seasons

We are now at the half-way point between the equinox and solstice, those places that the ancient Celts thought of as the hinges of the year. In the north, the dark increases as we celebrate the November Cross Quarter High Day (called Samhain by the Celts), while in the south, the light increases as we celebrate that same Cross-Quarter High day, but which is called Beltane by those self-same Celts.

Two strikingly different holidays, celebrated at the same time but in different hemispheres. How can we possibly feel like one folk, we ask, when our holidays don't even match! How can some of us celebrate the return of summer and green and light while the rest of us celebrate our sacred dead while we look forward to the return of the sun in our darkening skies?

Not hard, as the Celts would say.

Time is cyclical, following the wheel of the year through the seasons. There is no beginning or end of time but rather continuing cycles – birth-death-rebirth, and spring-summer-autumn-winter-spring being the most obvious ones. And what things may these cycles hold in common?

Balance is one of these. And the entire cosmos seeks balance.

Life is balanced by death. Dark is balanced by light. Male is balanced by female. We all hold these opposites within ourselves, to varying degrees. And in our seasons, summer is balanced by winter, and autumn by spring. These things are all parts of a harmonious whole.

So when we have the beginning of winter in the north, we have the beginning of summer in the south. Without one we cannot have the other. Our members in the south help balance out our members in the north, so that we may all be part of a harmonious whole. And we, the folk of ADF, personify part of that harmonious whole.

As we stand between equinox and solstice, let us ask our Kindreds for Their blessings upon us all, that we, as one folk, may live well in balance and harmony with the Earth and each other. So be it!

Rev. Kírk S. Thomas  
Archdruid, ADF

## OAK LEAVES

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*The Spirit of the Stars:*  
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# The Mysteries of Mithras

By Jeremy Baer

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The cult of Mithras was the last great mystery religion of the Roman Empire. To the ADF Druid, the cult might provide an interesting example of the evolution of religion within an Indo-European society. Mithraism was a cult that (as far as the extant evidence allows for interpretation) was created by a certain section of Imperial society to furnish their social and cosmological needs. Mithraism rode certain theological and social currents of its day, and when those currents dried up so too did the cult.

## History

The earliest evidence of Roman Mithraism occurs at the end of the first century of the Common Era, with religious dedications erected by Italians serving in the Roman legions. It originated in Rome and Ostia, and spread to the provinces (especially to the Germanic frontier) via the Roman military (Claus 121-122).

Judging by the archaeological remains, the cult was especially active from 150 - 250 CE. During the Crisis of the Third Century, when Rome was torn apart by civil wars and foreign invasions, the cult declined (Claus 28).

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, Mithraism experienced a brief revival as aristocrats and Neoplatonic theurgists articulated a defense of paganism against the prevailing winds of Christianity (Claus 29). By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, with the triumph of Christianity and the increasing disintegration of the Western Roman Empire, Mithraism died out (Claus 31).

## Mitra

“Mithras” of course bears a certain linguistic resemblance to “Mitra.” Mitra is an Indo-Iranian deity of very ancient origins (Claus 3). In Vedic religion, Dumézil assigns Mitra the legalistic half of the sovereign function, while Varuna embodies the magico-religious half of sovereignty (Mallory 131). Indeed, Mitra's very name in Old Iranian means “contract” (Claus 3). He is the god of oaths and agreements (Claus 4). In the Zoroastrian reform

of Persian religion he also becomes a solar deity, the champion of light and goodness who battles against darkness and evil (Claus 4). He was honored with incense and bull sacrifices (Claus 4). By the time we get to the Hellenistic era, he has become the deity of rulers. He is a solar deity *par excellence* who is easily conflated with Hellenic solar gods (Claus 4-5). Cilician pirates in the latter days of the Roman Republic practiced secret rites to him (Claus 4).

All of this is beside the point, though. For all the long and illustrious history of Mitra, there is not one shred of surviving evidence that the Roman Mithras was connected to him (Claus 7). There are very few Mithraea in the eastern half of the Roman Empire that comprise the lands where Mitra was worshipped; most Mithraea are concentrated in Rome itself, its port town of Ostia, and along the Germanic frontier (Claus 7). Furthermore, one of the grades of the Mithraic cultic hierarchy was “Persian.” This title would have significance only to someone who was not himself Persian (Claus 136). The Indo-Iranian deity of Mitra and his historic cults cannot be demonstrated to have a direct connection to Mithras.

## Astrology

It has long been noted that celestial imagery plays a part in the Mithraic cult. However, when one jettisons the untenable hypothesis of an Indo-Iranian origin for Mithras, the astrological aspects of the Mithraic cult leap from the background to center stage.

The tauroctony is the central icon of the Mithraic cult. It depicts the god Mithras slaying a bull, and in this sacred act he is surrounded by other creatures and objects: scorpion, dog, snake, raven, lion, and a cup. All of these creatures or objects have a parallel in the heavens in Hellenic astrology, which are visible at certain times of the year. It was thus theorized that the tauroctony was a star map (Ulansey 15).

To what degree astral piety played a part in the creation of Mithraism is up to debate. David Ulansey goes so far to say that Mithraism was the creation of Stoic philosophers and scientists who saw in Mithras a great astral being who held sway over the stars and planets. The Mithraic cult, in his view, was dedicated to celebrating the procession of equinoxes through the Zodiac (Ulansey 82-83).

Even if one does not accept this view, it is clear that astrology and Stoicism were influential in the forging of the cult (Turcan 202).

### Theology

Discussing “theology” in the Roman world is problematic, as the Romans never had a coherent set of conceptual views about the divine. Nor, outside of certain philosophical schools, did Romans ever seek a unified understanding (Rives 252).

Further, there are two truths about Mithraism which complicate attempts to detail the inner understandings of the cult. One is that Mithraism was a mystery religion, which by definition operated in secrecy. The finer details of the cult were never revealed to the non-initiated (Clauss 14). Second, in a cult that spanned Western Europe and operated for almost three centuries, there were surely local variations in its inner workings (Clauss 16).

Nonetheless, from the archaeological remains left to us, and the few literary references of outside observers, we can compare this data to what we know of related cults and the general religious environment of the time.

Most Mithraists probably believed that the soul was immortal. It was a spark of life that originated from the changeless, eternal godhead beyond the stars. In life this spark resided in one's body, but in death it could be released and sent back to the great cosmic fires which spawned it (Clauss 11-12). Mithras is somehow the mediating figure in all of this, the savior who sacrifices the cosmic bull in an act that frees the soul and invigorates the universe (Turcan 240). Mithraism is

probably a mythico-religious adaption of Stoicism and its reverence for a pantheistic universe. Mithraic congregations most likely met on the solstices and equinoxes, honoring the celestial savior who was their benefactor in life and their *psychopompos* in death (Turcan 234).

### Practice

Mithraists met in mithraeum, small shrines which reproduced the cave setting in which Mithras was thought to have slain the cosmic bull (Clauss 42). The feel of the place was like a crypt (Turcan 216, 218). These shrines were relatively small in size, and the average congregation must have numbered 20-40 (Turcan 219). These shrines universally had a central aisle, flanked on both sides by raised podia where the cult members reclined to eat a sacral meal (Clauss 46, 108). The shrines housed the rich iconography of the cult, including the central image of the tauroctony (Clauss 52). Also present were altars dedicated to Mithras and



Photo Credit: Leona Oigheag

various other deities from the Greco-Roman world (Claus 57).

There were seven ranks of the Mithraic cult arranged in a clear hierarchy, and it is assumed they represented grades of priests serving a much larger body of initiates (Claus 131). Besides the actual initiation into the cult, the central rite was a communal meal, which Christians found too eerily like their own Eucharist (Claus 108, Turcan 233). It is known the Mithraist followed an ethical code or set of commandments (Claus 144-145).

### Membership

The cult was serviced by what I call a “middle class” of Roman citizens. The adherents of the cult were largely members of the military and government (and civilians who serviced them) and were neither at the very top or very bottom of society. They included soldiers and military officers, bureaucrats and minor officials, slaves and freed slaves in government service, and civilians (merchants, craftsmen, etc) attached to military camps (Claus 33, Turcan 241). We rarely find Mithraism among rural peasants (Turcan 243). Only in the dying days of Roman paganism, when the Roman aristocracy mounted an intellectual defense against encroaching Christianity, do we see any evidence of direct involvement from the elite Senatorial class (Claus 31).

It is often said that Mithraism was the principle competitor to Christianity in the Roman world, but this is nonsense. Mithraism was a religion that initiated only males (Claus 33). A cult that excluded half of humanity (i.e. women) could never become a truly universal cult. Furthermore, as has been mentioned above, Mithraism appealed only to a certain section of the Roman class structure. Finally, because Mithraic congregations were small, and extrapolating from the number of known Mithraeums where said congregations met, it is estimated Mithraism involved no more than 2% of the Roman population (Turcan 221).

### Relation to Society

Attached as it was to the Roman military-industrial complex and government service, Mithraists were noted for their loyalty and enthusiasm for the prevailing social order. Mithraic remnants often contain inscriptions dedicated to the health and safety of the emperor (Claus 23). A Mithraist could identify his god with Sol Invictus, the solar

deity who became the patron of the Roman emperors (Claus 28). Mithraism was a private religion that was never officially sanctioned by the state or army. However, the ruling circles certainly tolerated, and perhaps clandestinely encouraged, the cult (Claus 25).

This perceived relation between the Mithraic community and imperial society has led some people to condemn Mithraism as Roman “Freemasonry.” In this view, Mithraism was a clique of opportunistic social climbing and mutual back scratching hiding behind lofty ideals and a religious facade (Turcan 241). Mithraic cult adherents certainly ascribed their social advancement to their god (Claus 23, 142). Mithraic followers were bound to each other and to the emperor in a secretive cult defined by service and loyalty. It appealed precisely to those who were looking for religious values that mirrored the Roman social order (Claus 40-41, Turcan 240).

This might also explain why women were excluded from the cult. Roman women were respected as mothers and wives, and as members of certain religious cults such as the Vestal Virgins. Women were not however allowed an equal share of Roman political and economic power. Is it any wonder why females were excluded from the cult, if indeed a main function of the cult was social advancement?

Leaving cynicism aside, it must be allowed that individuals had meaningful religious experiences within a cult whose theology promised cosmic salvation. It must also be pointed out that, apart from purely crass notions of social advancement, Mithraism provided a close-knit support group and sense of belonging to individuals who served a vast (and often dangerous) empire. This sense of belonging, on both a cosmic and social level, was no doubt its main draw:

*The reverse of the Gnostic, who suffered exile in this world below, the Mithraist, like the Stoic, was at home everywhere in the universe and in society, notably in imperial and cosmopolitan Roman society, where loyalty to the emperor and the consciousness of serving, each in his own position, were in fundamental accord with a religion of 'Soldiers'... (Turcan 240).*

The downside of this is that the fortunes of the cult were irrevocably tied to the fortunes of the society and government it served. Even if Christianity had not triumphed and outlawed paganism, the decline and disintegration of the Western Roman Empire spelled certain doom for Mithraism (Turcan 247).

**Conclusion**

From the available evidence it seems likely that Roman Mithraism was a creation of Romans in the 1<sup>st</sup> century of the Common Era when the Roman Empire was at its height. Whether or not the old Indo-Iranian deity of Mitra was used for inspiration cannot be proven. In any case, Mithras was the figurehead for a mythico-religious astrology cult which paralleled Stoic philosophy. On a theological scale it promised salvation, on a social scale it offered belonging and advancement. It was comprised of middle class functionaries of the empire and the civilians whose fortunes depended on them. This private mystery sect could not be officially acknowledged by the state, but ruling circles certainly tolerated and perhaps secretly supported the cult. As the empire declined, so did the cult. Its last adherents were aristocrats seeking a reflexive defense against Christianity. When Christianity triumphed and Rome crumbled, the cult faded into oblivion.

What can we learn from this? Mithraism was a creation of the religious, social and political tides of the times, and the interplay between those various tides. The cult operated on both a “theological” and socio-political level. Likewise, we modern Druids are conscious creations of theological and social-political currents of the times. We service those currents and are in turn serviced by them. And our fate is not written in stone; as those currents change so can our fortunes. But unlike Mithraism, which tied itself firmly to the established currents of the day, many Druids usually define themselves in opposition to the standard currents of the day. Therefore, if general society and government as we know it were to falter, one could hope that it might be taken as an opportunity to flourish rather than recede.

*Jeremy Baer first joined ADF in 2009. He has completed the DP and is working on the GSP and IP. This essay was drafted for the ‘Research and Composition’ course for the GSP.*

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Photo Credit: Amanda Greishop



# How to Celebrate the Beginnings of Yule in Norse Fashion

By A.G. Vanidottir

## What exactly is Yule?

We tend to celebrate Yule at or near the Winter Solstice depending on scheduling for grove rites. The day usually falls sometime between December 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>. Depending on the hearth culture that the individual chooses to honor, there are a variety of celebrations that occur during the month of December; we as ADF druids label the entire time period, “Yule”. The purpose of this article is to explain what the background for celebrating Yule entails for those practicing a primarily Scandinavian hearth as well as give an example of how to set up ritual space for the beginning of the season.

In the *Saga of Hákon the Good*, by Snorri Sturluson, we are told that the Yule celebration lasted for three nights. King Hákon, a Christian, sought to impose the new religious practices of Christmas onto his subjects. He tried to pass several „Yuletide reforms“ that included celebrating Yule on December 25<sup>th</sup> rather than at the winter solstice. His pagan subjects objected to this and Hákon found himself in the difficult position of dealing with unruly people while trying to battle outside forces. In *Religion of the Northmen* by Rudolph Keyser, Yule is placed at the time of the miðr vetr (Mid-winter) festival around the middle of January. Though the date of the festival is different in the two sources, Keyser matches Snorri when he says:

“It began on Midwinter-night (miðsvetrarnátt), which, by reason of the great sacrificial slaughter then performed, was named höggunátt, the Hewing or Butchering Night, and it lasted three days, or, according to the ancient mode of expression, three nights.” (p.220)

I wondered what the „ancient mode of expression“ in Keyser’s statement might mean and found a quick reference in *The Island of Fire* by Rev. P.C. Headley page 95 that read:

“The Icelander’s sabbath, like that of colonial New England, which has not yet wholly

disappeared from its valleys, commences at six o’clock Saturday evening, and closes the same hour the following day.”

Whether the pre-Christianized Scandinavian people began their festivals in the evening versus the morning we may never know but Headley’s statement gives us food for thought where a society deeply entrenched in tradition is concerned. In the marking of time for Scandinavian regions it was often counted in daylight hours. In the winter daylight was far more scarce and this may account for discrepancies in calendars. Regardless of the time of day a high-day was observed there are two conflicted points as to where Yule actually falls within the Nordic calendar. Do we believe Snorri’s versions that capture the traditions of Yule as they are seen by a Christian over two hundred after the events? Do we believe Keyser who wrote his analysis of the traditions in 1854?

Icelandic calendars were broken down into two seasons, winter and summer. There were twelve months to a year and four weeks to every month. This left four extra days a year and after a few years led to eleven extra days creating a leap week (sumarauki) that would be placed back into the calendars on the seventh year. The extra week was placed between the third and fourth summer months making the normal 364 day, 52 week year into a 371 day, 53 week year and since the 12<sup>th</sup> century have been inserted when necessary until the standard calendar was implemented. The Icelandic months were divided at the half point of our current Gregorian calendar. Winter began the middle of October (Gormánuður) on a Saturday and ended with the beginning of April (Einmánuður). Summer began on a Thursday. The months of winter fall like so: Gormánuður, Ýlir (Frermánuður), Jólmanuður (Hrútmánuður, Mörsugur), Þorri, Góí, and Einmánuður. (See Table 1)

When you account for the change in days every few years it is easy to see why the date of Yule

would have shifted. What it does not explain is why there is nearly a five week difference between Keyser's and Snorri's accounts. This may be where we see personal interpretation play a key role.

Keyser cites Snorri's accounting of the three main sacrificial festivals recognized in Iceland. Of the three two are winter based with one held

*Symbols in Pagan Europe)*

The changing of calendars, the adjustments for extra days, and even the laws regarding marking time for Scandinavia have created issues when researching traditions. It is also where we begin to see a great many problems arising for modern day practitioners. In Diana Paxon's book *Essential Ásatrú*, she says:

“Sigvat, an eleventh-century Christian

**Table 1**

	old Icelandic	modern Icelandic	begins	Julian	Gregorian
S1	?	Harpa	Thursday	9-15 April	19-25 April
S2	?	Skerpla	Saturday	9-15 May	19-25 May
S3	?	Sólmánuður	Monday	8-14 June	18-24 June
S4	(Miðsumar)?	Heyannir	Sunday	13-20 July	23-30 July
S5	Tvímánuður	Tvímánuður	Tuesday	12-19 August	22-29 August
S6	?	Haustmánuður	Thursday	11-18 September	21-28 September
W1	Gormánuður	Gormánuður	Saturday	11-18 October	21-28 October
W2	Ýlir	Ýlir	Monday	10-17 November	20-27 November
W3	Jólmánuður	Mörsugur	Wednesday	10-17 December	20-27 December
W4	Þorri	Þorri	Friday	9-16 January	19-26 January
W5	Gói	Góa	Sunday	8-15 February	18-25 February
W6	Einmánuður	Einmánuður	Tuesday	10-16 March	20-26 March

on *Winter-night (Vetrarnatur)* and one held on *Midwinter-night (miðsvetrar-nátt)*. This may be where the issue lies. It appears by the similarity in names to be two different times where a “winter night” occurs. On top of that throw in the Winter Solstice and you end up with quite a tangled mess. That is until you read a little more and insert some UPG. Keyser explains that *Winter-nights* is at the beginning of the winter season, mid-October, and was a time that the folk set aside to welcome in the winter cold. Technically the end of summer would occur on a Wednesday and then either Friday or Saturday, depending on calendar shifts and century of observance, the first day of winter (marked with the title of *Vetrarkoma* (winter comes or winter beginning)) would start. The two to three days between the end of summer and the beginning of winter were called *Vetrarnatur*. This was liminal time between seasons and would be marked with feasting. H. R. Ellis Davidson also makes a brief statement in regards to the time:

“The Germanic winter started in autumn with the ‘winter nights’, three or more days in late October; in Iceland this was the period between 11 and 18 October.” (p.39, *Myths and*

skald, complained in a poem about having been

refused hospitality at a farm because the people were sacrificing to the alfar. The alfar (elves) are ancestral spirits.” (p. 109)

In this passage Paxon is discussing the observances in fall and harvest time for a modern heathen using early sources. Combined, we now see a time of year where the harvest period has ended, winter is welcomed in, and the ancestors are honored. This fits in quite nicely with the Samhain season but the name tends to throw people off as does the change in calendar observances once the Gregorian calendar takes over. For those of us in more southern climes (as opposed to Norway and Iceland) we are enjoying a fall with beautiful colors on the trees, pumpkins, and Samhain parties. Though it is not yet upon us a nip is in air and we know that winter is coming, or *vetrarkoma*. A better term, one that Paxon uses as well, would be *Winter Finding*. The term also fits with the idea of winter coming or beginning. By slightly adjusting the name for modern usage we can then look at the other two winter type feasts and work on defining them better for our own practices.

*Midwinter-night* occurs around the middle of

January. A seventeenth-century manuscript (AM 466 12mo) begins a calendar with the incipit: “January, mid-winter month...”. The pieces of the puzzle begin to fall into place when we account for midwinter in a more literal sense rather than as another word for the Winter Solstice. Some groups celebrate Twelfth Night during this time counting twelve days from the new calendar year. There was no actual “New Year’s Day” for Scandinavia such as we observe. The years were marked by the beginning of winter and ended with the last day of summer. Yule, as stated above, was originally celebrated in what we know as January. H.R. Ellis Davidson continues her discussion of the main festival days in Iceland by stating the observation of Yule (Jól) fell at mid-winter and due to the conversion the date changed to December in order to coincide with Christ’s birth. This would lead one to believe that perhaps Yule, as we know it, was not originally a feast for the Winter Solstice but instead a midwinter event that was later moved. The feast for *Midwinter-night*, as is now recorded, is sometimes called a *Borra-blót* as it occurs right at the beginning of the Þorri month of the Icelandic Calendar and is separate from Yule. This feast is for the growth of crops according to Tacitus. It is the month of snow and ice, when the worst winter has to offer often occurs. Winter stores were brought out, mead was poured, and the people celebrated the final turn towards summer and the planting season. If we begin the “winter” season in October by renaming the first feast time as *Winter Finding*, then I believe we can safely label the feast in January either *Winter Nights* or *Borra-blót*. My personal preference is *Winter Nights* as I generally recognize the Nordic Goddess Skaðhi at this time period and the more generic name allows me to do so with ease.

Yule (Jól), as mentioned before, is a three day feast honoring peace, family, and welcoming back the sun during the shortest day of the year, Winter Solstice. The three day feasting may be another instance where confusion regarding names occurs. Remember that above I described the early days of *Vetrarkoma* into *Vetrarnattur* as a three day feasting. I suppose if you are going to feast it should be a big event. Winter Solstice is the same for all those in the northern hemisphere occurring around December 19th-22nd. In the southern hemisphere they would observe Winter Solstice in June. Here is where we can pull in Headley’s statement regarding times for honoring the sab-

bath. While he may have been referring specifically to Sunday worship of Christians, I can personally see where the idea may have had much earlier roots. Beginning a feast day towards the end of a day, or sundown, allows for the practitioner to finish off necessary chores from that day in order to devote the next period of time (whether a single day or many) completely to their observances. Almost like cleaning your house before going on vacation. For Yule all work is set aside, projects are finished, and none are started until the new year. Paxson states:

“December 19th – Mother Night. A feast in honor of Frigg and mothers. A time to celebrate the family, especially the women and children, and female ancestors...From this time through the end of Yule, all spinning must be finished and put away.

December 20 (or the eve of the solstice) - Yule Eve. The longest night of the year. Light the Yule log. Bake Yule cakes for each child. The house must be thoroughly cleaned and a light left burning all night.” (p. 111)

It is the light left burning that intrigues me. Take a moment to place yourself outside of the modern day world. Think about a home in Iceland, Greenland, Norway, or Sweden where in the winter the only light is the fire in your hearth and maybe a lantern or two. The days have been getting shorter, the nights have drawn on longer and longer. The evening of the solstice has arrived and there were only three hours of light, which is a relative term, for the entire day. Clouds, mist, and even terrain may have blocked out any sunlight that struggled to get through. The world has become eerily silent and cold. Time almost seems to stand still and you feel in the pit of your stomach that touch of fear and uncertainty. You wonder, for a few moments, if the sun will ever come back. Now expand that to more than just a few moments and instead try and imagine that feeling holding you in a state of unrest and worry for days or weeks. Your only consolation is the fire burning in your hearth and those you have gathered close about you. This is what Yule is about. We know today through science that the earth has tilted away from the sun and is at its furthest point in orbit. We also know that the idea of the sun not returning is less likely to occur. In the time of the early Scandinavians, however, the

sun may not have been seen to rise for several days. Fear of death from dark beings and the cold led to vigils and prayers for the safe return of the sun and warmth. We label these older civilizations as 'superstitious' compared to our modern concepts. That is a presumptuous stance. These superstitions are what gave a people faith and provided the roots for ritual observances.

### In what way can we observe Yule?

It is at this juncture of the article that I can share what I do from a personal standpoint, or my own UPG. I begin the Twelve Nights of Yule on December 19th. This allows me to celebrate Twelfth Night itself on New Year's Eve. My setting of dates may not be entirely accurate (I am NOT a Reconstructionist) but if you read the previous paragraphs you will understand that really no one knows for certain where the dates actually occurred. What I attempt to do is connect



Photo Credit: Anna Sowell

with traditions that my ancestors may have observed in a way that fits within my modern world. Do not concern yourself with matching specific times unless you absolutely feel the need.

It is the beginning of the new spiritual year for many of us and thus a time to be rid of the old and make way for those things that start us fresh. With this in mind, the 19th becomes the day of preparation. Beginning in the morning with the necessary cup of "do not let me kill anyone," place yourself in the mindset of preparing your hall. After morning devotional (if this is part of your daily routine), start with cleaning the kitchen. The kitchen is often considered the heart of the home, as such if the heart is not clean, then the rest of the house seems slovenly and 'clogged.' I dedicate all of the energy I use in the cleaning of the house to Frigg (as a goddess of hearth and home) or Nerðus (as the Earth Mother). I find that making

the work an offering places my mind in a slightly altered space, a light trance, that allows for all of the nasty jobs (such as cleaning the toilets after boys) to not matter so much. Once the space is cleared, take a break. This allows you to switch from the cleaning mode into the 'creating sacred space' frame of mind. After the break, and perhaps a light snack to rejuvenate the body, it is time to set up the altar.

How you decide to set up is entirely up to the individual, as well it should be. Altars are personal expressions of our relationships with the kindreds. If you are unable to have a full yule log, improvise. It isn't about being 'correct' or 'exact', as long as the **intent** is there. If you have small children or just live in a small space try drawing a yule log and then add a candle drawing each night. Use construction paper and be creative. As the yule log is sacrificed in the fire on Twelfth Night it

would make a perfect art project with the little ones that is easily cleaned up (with no need for storage). Those creative energies are fantastic offerings to the kindreds and can serve as a wonderful teaching time with little ones. I happen to

have a log this year so I will share what I, personally, am doing.

The Yule log is prepared with thirteen holes drilled to fit either taper or tea lights. Yes, I said thirteen. The center candle is the one used to light all the others and should be considered the sacred flame (think Flame of Kildare). The colors you use for your log are entirely up to you, I prefer all white candles. That may change depending on what resonates from year to year. The Yule log is the center piece. Place the log with the candles in front. If you are ready to actually bless the space, then by all means set the candles within the log, I prefer to wait for evening. Gather all the materials you need to set up for Yule and arrange them on the altar as you see fit, including any non-perishable offerings. Place the candle that is specifically dedicated to the Sun Deity of your choice in a prominent place that is easily accessible. You do not want to have difficulties in lighting your candles nor set yourself on fire trying to reach everything.

When you are ready to decorate the altar and bless it, start by a simple grounding and centering. Once you have 'shut out' the mundane and set your mind to the task at hand, begin by decorating the Yule log. Place the candles one by one, dedicating them to their appropriate night (it is fine to carve the night/deity into the wax for ease in remembering). Once the candles are set, place those items that you wish to dress the log with around and on it. You can pray, sing, chant, talk to the kindreds, whatever you feel called to do, the idea is to connect the physical act of what you are doing to both the kindreds and your own spiritual mindset. You are linking everything together. Once you have the log and altar ready then begin to bless the space. If you wish to perform a full ADF Core Order, then do so. I prefer to bless the space with incense then with water while I invite the kindred to be present. Once this task is done light the center candle with the intent of making it the sacred flame. I do this by dedicating that candle to the Earth Mother from whom all things come. My mentality is that without the earth there is no me. It is only fitting that the main flame of the log belongs to her. [If you prefer to dedicate the center candle to Sunna/Sol (insert hearth sun deity here) then do it.] Once you have dedicated the candle, try to burn it for about an hour envisioning the flame as your connection to the Earth's flow. The time is not a requirement just a suggestion. Then extinguish the flame, close down the rite in whatever manner resonates within you and go about your business. You are now ready to honor the Twelve Nights of Yule.

### **Okay, I set up my sacred space for Yule.**

#### **Now what?**

Well, this depends on the person. If you are not interested in doing anything more than the winter solstice don't. Once I have my space created and ready I practice my own version of the twelve nights. On the actual Winter Solstice I perform an all-night vigil. Think back to my comments on lights left burning. We do know that early Scandinavians stayed up on the winter solstice to keep the fires burning. Part of this was for warmth, part to light the lodge while the folk gathered were drinking and partying. Either way a light was left burning. Now think about the scenario of concern I painted. Even though we have science to teach us that there is no need to fear the sun's return, there is still that small child

inside of us that wonders. I discovered this in my own practice over the past few years.

On the winter solstice I try to take a nap in the early afternoon, this is very important if you are going to make it through the night. About an hour before sunset I bring out Sunna's candle, an offering, and some matches to the back porch. Once sunset approaches I go outside and face the west. I call out to Sunna bidding her a peaceful rest on this longest night and entreat her to return when the night is over. I make an offering of thanks to her for the warmth and light she has given us and then hold up the candle to her fading light. Striking the match, or lighter, I set the flame to the wick as Sunna sets calling to her to place her own spark within the flame that it may guide her back come morning. There is some argument as to whether the Goddess Sól is the same as Sunna. They are both listed as a sun deity and with similar genealogy. One might consider them one and the same or perhaps two twin sisters. I see them like this- Sól (which translates specifically as Sun) as the physical Sun. Sunna, again to me, is the energy that radiates from the Sun. You cannot have one without the other or there is no power. The reason I separate them is that there is not any indication within the lore that they are the same person. Sól is not listed as a kenning for Sunna nor vice versa. One is listed in the *Prose Edda* and one in the *Poetic Edda*. This would lead me to believe that they are two different entities that share similar duties perhaps due to regions of worship. If you wish to honor them separately then do so, if it feels like you should combine them into one being absolutely do that. Once Sól, the physical aspect of Sunna, sets I turn to walk into the house carefully handling the flame. As I cross the threshold I announce to those present in the house, including the wights, "Behold, Sunna has entered the house. The flame has been kindled and we now tend her light that she may find her way back tomorrow at the end of this darkest night. Hail Sunna." This begins the vigil.

Sunna's flame is carefully placed on the altar in a position of honor. At the top of every hour I offer up a small prayer to the deity, ancestor, spirit of choice. You can start with Oðin, then move through the Æsir and the Asyniur, or recognize an entity as it fits within the COoR, or just make small prayers to Sunna each hour if you like. One

hour I like to devote to Frigg and all her handmaidens. That particular hour prayer generally lasts about 10 minutes while the rest usually only take a minute or two. As I also honor the twelve nights of Yule I try to incorporate one devotional prayer to coincide with whichever candle I am lighting that evening. Now this sounds pretty simple, right? It starts off pretty easy and you can usually keep momentum going until about 2:30 in the morning. This is when things start to get difficult. No matter how great of a nap you take your body still wants to sleep. Couple that with the neighborhood becoming quiet, kids going to bed, life beginning to settle for the evening and you are looking at one tired Druid. Starting about 3 am is when you have the opportunity to receive even the smallest inkling of what your ancestors may have experienced at this time of year. I turn off all the lights and as many appliances as I can get away with shortly after midnight. No computers, no phones, as little technology as possible. I have Sunna's flame and maybe a few tealights for extra lighting. The quieter everything becomes the more unsettled you find yourself. The only break in the silence is your hourly prayer. The time starts to drag slower and slower. You are tired, anxious, and lonely. By 5 am you have begun to know what desperation is and it is at this point that you are the closest you may ever be to true understanding of what the returning sun means. You long for it, you cry inside for Sunna to appear, you even wonder whether she actually will. When the first lightening of the sky occurs it is truly a wonderful moment. You have tended the flame all night and now it is time to return it to the sky.

Take Sunna's candle and carry it slowly out. Look to the east and watch for the sky to brighten. Once you begin to see the lifting of Sól hold up the candle and send that spark you held of Sunna back where she belongs. I make offerings of gratitude for her return and then extinguish the candle preserving it for the next year. Other's in the house sing happy birthday to Sunna for her return and then make a nice big pancake breakfast to celebrate. Once we are loaded up on the carbohydrates it is finally time to pass out ourselves with the amazing feeling of accomplishment we received for having taken part in a concept that is centuries old even if the

physical practice may not be.



*Anna is a true Norse woman. She can tell you about longbows while she braids the nicest braid you have ever seen. She can regale you with obscure lore and Old Norse while she bakes a mighty fine gluten free cake, and if you're really lucky, she might even let you have a piece. She been a member of ADF for ten years, completed her DP study, worked for Oak Leaves as the Advertising Director and served the Norse Kin as Chieftain 2010-12. It has been said that if you speak false lore she will ride on her axe (of course it's not a broom, silly!) and smite you.*

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# Dragons in the Grove

By Amanda Thomas

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Every group of people, no matter how well intentioned and organized, will eventually come across a dragon. Dragons are people who, while they don't necessarily mean to do ill, often cause drama and stress. In a church of 200-300 people, they can cause a great deal of damage, but rarely do they kill the church. In a grove or circle of 3-30 people, they can wipe out all of what was once a spiritual home. My sapling Grove is very important to me, and I want it to grow healthy enough to last well after I am gone. This means that as a leader I need to be prepared for the dragons that are always a guarantee at some point in the future. Thankfully, I have not met with too many dragons so far. My grove has been very fortunate on this score, but again I feel it is only a matter of time before a scaled beastie shows up.

There are no book sources that I have found written from a Pagan perspective. Pagan groves and circles have a very different dynamic than larger Christian churches, but some of the same techniques for dragon taming can apply. For this reason, I have been investing in several books that describe how best to deal with, and maybe even tame a dragon in a manner that will not burn the group (even if a few singses may occur). The first step is in identifying what type of beastie we are dealing with.

I am going to list some of the types of scaly creatures there are, but I am still in the process of researching how best to deal with them in a healthy manner. I am afraid that for this reason I am not really able to give much advice on how to handle them. Not all people who exhibit the traits of a dragon are a real beastie. Nor are all the dragons exclusively in the grove member rosters; they can be leaders as well. The real dragons burn hot and cause fires that are hard to ignore. It is often by the amount of damage that is occurring that we can truly identify a beastie.

The first book that I have read on this subject, and where I get the term dragon from, is a book called, "Well-Intentioned Dragons," by Marshall Shelley. This book provides an excellent description of the

various types of dragons that tend to show up in groups, no matter what the size. The second book that has helped me is more of a book on how to be a good leader called, "The lazy way to success," by Franz Gratzon.

The Prussian General von Moltke once divided his officer core into categories: 1) Mentally dull and physically lazy. 2) Mentally bright and physically energetic. 3) Mentally dull and physically energetic, and 4) bright and lazy (Gratzon, 46). The first group he viewed as harmless. The third group he dismissed out right, because they tend to be very dangerous people. The second group he sequestered to smaller leadership positions, because these are the types that tend to micro manage. The last group, the bright and lazy, he promoted as quickly as he could because he felt they were the best leaders. The reason I am listing these here is because many of our dragons fall into the second and third groups.

So how are the dragons and by what name do these beasties go by? First, we have "the bird dog." These are the people who scout out issues that are probably not really issues that need attention. They like to dig up the gossip and then point the leader to the individuals that they find offensive. My mom used to call 'em busy bodies, but bird dog sounds much nicer. Bird Dogs really do feel that they are doing the right thing and helping the group or leader out. They tend to couch what they are doing in spiritual terms, and might even see what they are doing as spiritual insights. Bird dogs are most likely to be in this second group. Bird dogs tend to do little real harm to the group, especially if given tasks to distract them from what others are doing. "These people like to give the impression they have more spiritual perception than anyone else." (Shelley, 38)

Next, we have "the wet blanket." These are the people who find so much fault in any idea or project that the group gets bogged down to the point of motionlessness. They sap strength and energy to the point that a small group is often



Genii Cuculatti by Sidney Bolam

the Captain has no power or authority in the group. How to deal with one who already has such a position is another issue I am trying to figure out how best to deal with.

Also lurking in the dark woods are the sniper and the bookkeeper. The sniper talks smack about everyone else, while the bookkeeper will record every little transgression perceived to use for later

disbanded. ❄️🧣 wet blankets are easier to lose in larger groups and can be kept in check by numbers, but very few Pagan groups are lucky enough to have those types of numbers. This is a dragon I am still trying to figure out how to deal with in an affective manner in a small group setting. Thankfully, I have yet to meet one in our grove. Mostly I think this type of individual falls into part of von Moltke's second group, and might be counteracted by being given smallish projects to keep them busy. The trick is to make them feel or think the idea for the project was theirs, or else they will find so much fault with even the suggestion, that it will just cause more headaches.

ammunition. These two are often shadowy figures that are often hard to spot in the process of starting a fire, it isn't until the flames are burning bright that their shadows can be spotted and identified. I am getting the impression from my readings that these two are best dealt with in open, check in type meetings. These type of meeting require everyone to be very open and trusting. Ground rules for how people are allowed to speak can also help. For example, the use of "I" language exclusively would have to be a requirement ("I feel hurt that such and such was said about me", instead of "when you said blah").

On the opposite side of the wet blanket we have the entrepreneur. This is the person who uses the group as the focus for business adventures. They will use the phone lists to try to sell their latest product. These are much less destructive in a small group than the wet blanket. They can be irritating, but rules put in place that state explicitly what phone lists and ritual get together are really for, help to keep this type of person in check.

Dragons are unfortunately a part of group life. They can be very hard to tame, but can often be turned into powerful allies and members. The trick is to be ready and to put the fires out before they take your group (grove or otherwise) down into ciders.



*Amanda Thomas is the Senior Druid of Ad Astra Grove, as well as a huge trouble maker in her spare time.*

In General von Moltke's third category we often find Captain Bluster. This is the type who knows it all and how it should be done. They won't hear the other options and often steam roll the opposition. If you don't agree whole heartedly with them, then you are an enemy that needs dealing with. They also seem to enjoy watching the fires that they start. This is one dragon I have felt the heat from first hand, and it was not fun. The best advice I can give from my experience is do all in your power to be sure that

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# Guild Column:

## Trillium Brewing Competition: 2013 Results

By *Arthur Shipkowski*

This year there were three entries to Trillium's Brewing Competition: a Maple Honey Mead, an Apple Pie Mead (prompting discussion about whether it was a metheglin, cyser, or both), and a Tomato Wine. Our judges were comprised of Brewers' Guild Scribe Rev. Nancy McAndrew, Archdruid Rev. Kirk Thomas, and the responsible organizer, myself.

All of the three would have been drunk by our judges willingly, but the one that won the competition was Scott Boehm's Tomato Wine. Earning an impressive score even from our toughest judge, Scott's wine had no technical issues, and while the judges agreed it was rather unusual, we all also agreed that it was quite drinkable if you like tomatoes. I would say it tastes like the water from home-canned tomatoes. Kirk found it more tomato juice-like, though very clear.

Scott found the recipe here:

<http://pioneerhandbooks.blogspot.com/2011/11/how-to-make-tomato-wine.html>

Scott's description of the wine and the competition:

I simply juiced and strained 3 gallons worth of tomatoes from the local farmers market. I then added 3 cups of sugar (1/gallon). After it was done I diluted the wine by half with filtered water. It was too acidic and even a little thick. The recipe called for wild yeast and that is what was used. I did nothing further but let it sit from early winter until it was shared at Trillium.

I hope others will try it and have success. The greatest compliment, besides requests for more, that I can think of would be for others to be inspired to try something a little different as I have done here.



Photo Credit: Amanda Grieshop

Congratulations to now two-time winner Scott, who took home a custom drinking horn, and thanks to all our entrants!



*Arthur Shipkowski is a past Members' Advocate and ADFer with his finger in a number of pies - including Trillium.*



# Poetry Corner

By *A.G. Vanidottir, Laurie (Lankelly) Brothers, and Chelly Couvrette*

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## Night's Dance

By *A.G. Vanidottir*

Ah, Treasured Night!  
In the beginnings and the endings you cradle us,  
your children  
Nourishing, Reaffirming  
In your darkness true life takes root and springs forth  
With infinite possibility stemming from the  
living cosmos

Beloved Night!  
Not bright and heated, rather cool, silvery  
essence descending  
Upon our consciousness, stirring our most basic and  
primal selves  
Deep with infinite space and possibility you settle  
about us  
Enshrouding the core of our being with your  
dusk beauty

Oh Night!  
We dance within your embrace  
Closely to our breasts we hold your gifts of power  
and wonder  
Bedecked in soft mists we linger in your company  
Seeking and yearning for the mysteries you promise

Dearest Night!  
Your radiance is not dampened by a shaded complexion  
Instead it pulses with the beat of a drum  
Inspiring our feet and hearts to dance  
To move and sway with the rhythm of your song

Sweet Night!  
How you breathe life within our minds and bodies  
Not to lie in complacency upon a lonely bed  
But to rise, buoyed by your luminous fervor  
Drenched in limitless infinity

Ah Night!  
In the beginning and in the endings you cradle us,  
your children  
Protecting, Loving  
And as we slow to the pulse of the earth and dawn  
approaches, you leave us your gifts:  
A kiss, an embrace, and the promise of a dance when  
once again the darkness falls.

## Midwinter

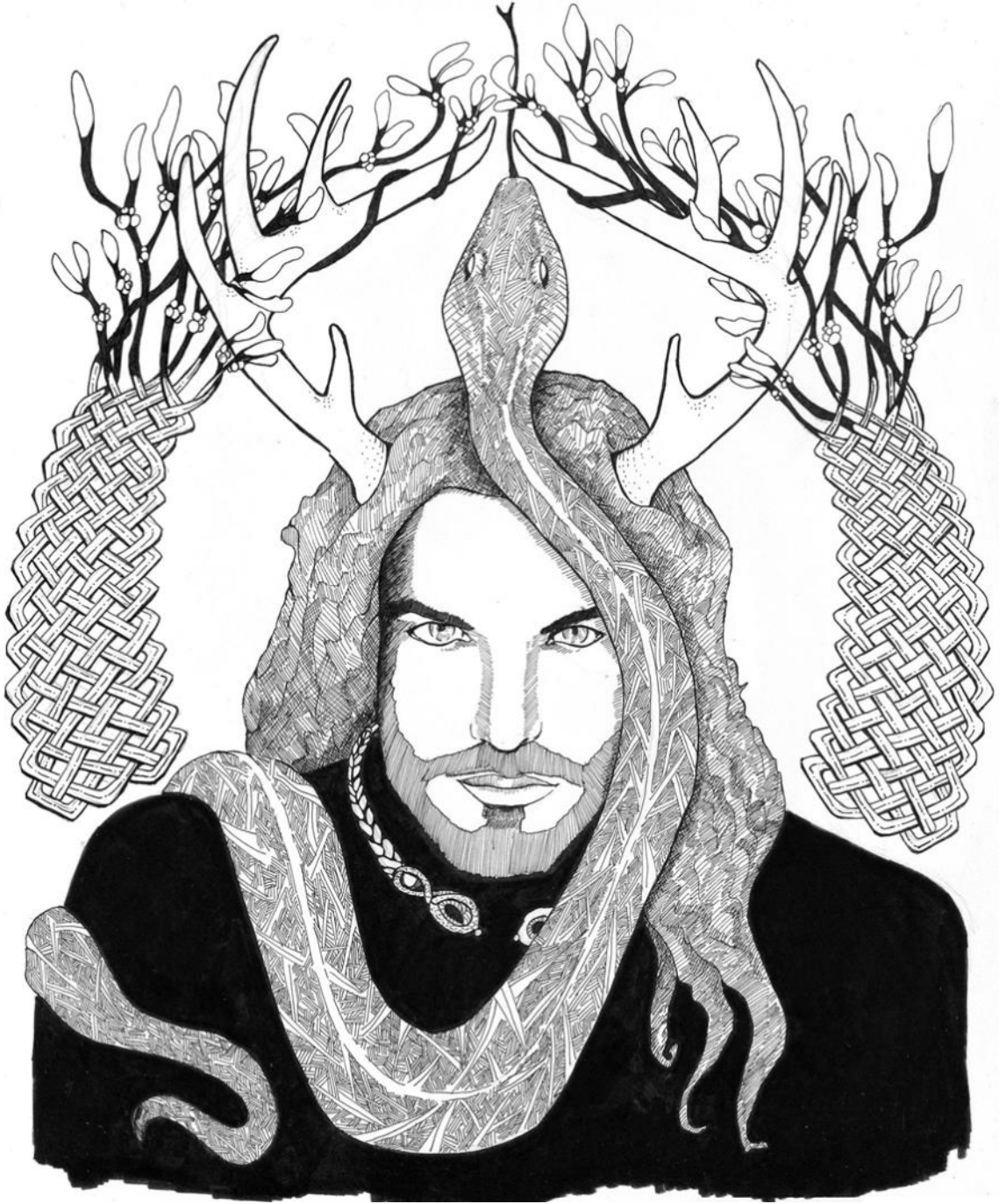
By *Laurie (Lankelly) Brothers*

In my subtropical place  
Could Yule ever be Yule?  
No snow, no crunchy frost,  
No bare stark trees  
Reaching their branches to the Gods  
Like dying men clutching at life,  
No weasel tracks  
Revealing the path of their nighttime forays  
Into death and destruction,  
No snow geese lighting up a partially frozen lake,  
Beacons of hope and purity  
On the darkness of the ice.

And yet, there are mild breezes here,  
And bougainvillea blooming  
In this shortest daylight of the year,  
Lizards still bobbing their heads  
And fanning their magnificent orange throats,  
There are holly trees and pine trees,  
And stately palms to adorn royally  
With twinkling crystal lights,  
And starry nights  
To sit around a burning Yule log  
Outside, with no frozen toes or runny noses.

And I come to the realization  
That Yule is Yule, because it's in my heart,  
And the Gods are the Gods,  
The Sidhe are the Sidhe,  
The Ancestors are the Ancestors,  
No matter where.  
They, too, are there, all within my heart.





**Nature of Choice**

*by: Chelly Couvrette*

Spirits of the land, and sea and sky,  
Spirits of fin and fur and feather,  
Spirits of stone and moss and tree.  
Spirits of the unseen ether.

We all live within this orb,  
side by side and world by world.  
Connected by the tree of life.

Our choices made, send ripples forth.  
Through the orb and through the worlds.  
They resound within the realms.

Be careful now, with your choice,  
For ripples sent can replace,  
A proper choice within the world.  
And cause more harm than good.



# Pan Pagan Festival Review

## An Elemental Connection: Pan Pagan 37

By Rev. Jean Pagano

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Pan Pagan Festival is the grandparent of all Pagan Festivals. First held in 1976, Pan Pagan Festival was a place when people could come, meet, and share during the birth of the festival movement in the 1970s. The festival movement that grew up during that time gave rise to our current festivals today: Trillium, Wellspring, etc.

The beauty of festivals – both then and now – is that people of a like mind could get together to appreciate the fact that a) they were not alone and b) they could learn and share with others. That tradition continues this day with Pan Pagan – among others.

I have been attending Pan Pagan since the 90's. When I worked in Chicago, I would go to work during the day and then drive the two hours to Pan Pagan so that I could enjoy both the electronic beauty of work in the city along with the community and spiritual work to be done in the late afternoon and evenings at Pan. It was a strange combination of all worlds.

These days, I go to Pan Pagan and stay. Lovingly surrounded by the Tippecanoe River near Knox, Indiana, Pan Pagan continues the tradition of peaceful festival enjoyment and learning. While people have come and gone from the sponsorship group of Pan Pagan, the Modrzyk family is still providing the leadership in presenting Pan Pagan along with the affiliated groups.

This year's theme was "An Elemental Connection", and the elements were all close at hand: for me, the sea was the Tippecanoe Rive, the land was the stretch of primitive campground that provided both massive trees overhead and soft earth beneath, and the blue sky that stretched out overhead. From Thursday to Sunday, the weather was truly a gift from the Gods.

Several years ago, Stanley Modrzyk asked me to do a workshop on Isaac since Isaac had attended Pan early on in its history. I agreed to do so and this

year I presented two workshops to better approximate not only Isaac, but the experience of Druidry in general. My first workshop was entitled "Reformed Druids of North America", and I went through the history, philosophy, and liturgy of RDNA to set a backdrop for what Isaac created with ADF. The class was well attended and an RDNA ritual was performed at the end.

My following workshop was entitled "Isaac Bonewits and ADF Druidry" and in this I spoke about Isaac, how NRDNA evolved from RDNA and how they both set the stage for the coming of ADF. Commonalities between concepts and ritual components were discussed and people were introduced to ADF ritual at the end.

It was interesting to note that one of the attendees is an ADF member and we picked up at least one more member from the group. Even more interesting was that one of the folks had done several ADF Core Order of Ritual rites independent of ADF altogether! It encouraged me to see that what we do is slowly filtering into the neo-pagan community on its own. This, in my mind, is an exceptionally good sign.

Other presentations at Pan Pagan were Labyrinths, Building the Astral Body, Elemental Discussion, Tai Chi Chuan, Amulet Making, The Dye Extravaganza, Crystals and Beyond, and Building Faery Houses. For those who are looking for a different and intimate gathering, I would recommend Pan Pagan 38 – coming your way next August



*Jean "Drum" Pagano is the current Vice-Archdruid, Listmaster, Master Bard, study program enthusiast, and general hard worker.*



# Paying it Forward in a Prison Worship Group

By Ted P. Gilliland

Across the United States, there are approximately twenty prison members of ADF. Half are housed in the State of Washington at Coyote Ridge correctional Center (CRCC). We comprise the first, and currently the only, Prison Worship Group (PWG) sanctioned by ADF and are considered a ministry under the oversight of the Clergy Council. According to the Subgroup Charter Manual, a PWG does not qualify for grove or proto-grove status, or represent ADF as a whole.

That said, ADF-PWG members live and worship in a restricted environment. We are without internet access, our ability to view the ADF website is virtually nonexistent, and, we have controlled movements to the State library which can fluctuate with the operation of the facility. Along with that, the inconsistency of the Inter-Library Loan (ILL) system makes the completion of the Dedicant's Program and other study programs extremely challenging. Despite these obstacles, five members of our PWG have successfully completed the DP! It is my opinion that we have to work harder than the average ADF member to accomplish the same exit standards.

Still, many of our accomplishments would be far from complete had it not been for the ground-breaking work of Thomas Brown. He reached out to ADF and Rev. Kirk Thomas through CRCC Chaplain Eric Askren to bring ADF Druidry to Coyote Ridge. His efforts paved the way for the success achieved by myself and others who have since become members of ADF, the PWG I and have reached our initial goals of becoming Dedicant Druids.

When I first arrived at CRCC I knew little to nothing of Druidry. Shortly after my arrival, Thomas Brown engaged me in conversation on paganism and broached the topic of Druidry. From the beginning, he explained that ADF Druidry involved a great deal of personal study, self-motivation, hard work and personal practice. This piqued my interest.

The following week I attended the Samhain (2011) ritual led by Rev. Kirk Thomas. I don't think I could have had a better initial exposure to Druidry. It was this experience that hooked me and started me on this spiritual path. In the following weeks, Thomas plied me with more and more study materials, encouraging devotionals, personal practice, and work on the DP. All the resources he had on hand were items he had to wait to receive. I asked him if he had difficulties obtaining the reference material when working through his DP. He reflected that "Kirk made sure these were available..."

The most valuable resource Thomas gave me, which I recommend to anybody working on their DP, was *The ADF Dedicant Path through the Wheel of the Year* by Rev. Michael Dangler. He did not have the benefit of this asset during his work. He said, "I only got a .pdf version after doing the work and passed it on to others." His DP work was trial and error.

I undertook working on the DP in November 2011 with all seriousness and diligence. Because I previously worked with a Wiccan group, I was able to write on three Sabbats as three of the High-Days attended thus allowing me to submit the whole of my work on 3 May 2012. Throughout this process, Thomas mentored me by answering all my questions, reviewing my work, explaining concepts of Druidry that I did not grasp, and making suggestions for improvement. Did I struggle on some of these things? Sure, sometimes I needed external motivation, and reading *Comparative Mythology* by Jaan Puhvel took a great deal of effort and a good dictionary just to read ten pages per day! My biggest obstacle? During the DP, it was word count. I was unkind to my reviewer, pushing (and exceeding in some cases) the maximum word count. Because of this, several submissions were returned for editing. As I work on the GSP, the biggest obstacle is waiting on books purchased via mail and the temporary suspension of ILL's.

Longtime PWG member Andrew Kennedy stated that the largest hurdle in his DP work "was being able to articulate his thoughts onto paper. There always seemed to be something missing when I read the paper back to myself." He also mentioned that "the members of the Frog stone Circle helped me a lot along the process of completing the DP." Dedicant Druid Rich Tullis voiced similar difficulties of knowing what he wanted to say but not always having it come out on paper as he would have liked. Still, we all persevered.

During my time practicing Our Druidry, I have been witness to Dedicant oaths which have employed a variety of sacrifices including a divination deck, cross-stitch work, detailed drawings, and a Warrior's Dance<sup>2</sup>. I have seen a submission to the Artisans Competition at Wellspring 2012, which took "Best in Show." Also, having garment experience, I have designed, embroidered and embellished ritual attire for myself and others.

Our experiences as PWG members may seem commonplace; not much different than those of any other ADF member. We have had the benefit of a mentor in Thomas; over time we have come to understand the Core Order of Ritual, and now, as we grow together, our skills as Liturgists and Ritualists grow, as well.

Here, the comparison ends. Within the restricted environment in which we live, we of the PWG are governed by certain regulations and policies. We face situations within our environment that clearly illustrate these restrictions. Not being able to meet as a group without a volunteer sponsor or staff to supervise. Having the Archdruid, who drove four hours to lead a High Day, turned away because the fog was a safety and security concern with no consideration given to an indoor alternative. We have been in the middle of a High Day and had to close down ritual and "cell-in" due to a facility drill. And, the State determines which religious items we are allowed to possess.

Despite these and other restrictions, the Frog Stone Circle has continued to slowly grow. When Kirk first came to this prison as the Volunteer Druid Mentor, he was very green and unsure of what to expect. Yet, he moved past his uncertainty and helped establish a new avenue through which

to pursue Issac's vision - the PWG. Over the years, his role has gone from one at the forefront and leading the rites to one of valued support. Because of his commitment, the Frog stone circle has developed a cycle of growth demonstrated by a pattern of paying it forward. Thomas benefited from the mentoring of Kirk. In turn, we Dedicants had the advantage of them both. As we move forward it is our turn to help those who are new. To lead by example, to mentor them in understanding our ways, to help them develop a personal practice and to help fill their mind with study. We have firmly established ourselves as a growing element of ADF within this prison. We understand who we are, what our place is, and what our responsibilities are within the greater ADF community.

The leadership and guidance of Kirk Thomas is fully reflected in the high standards and many accomplishments of this PWG. Also, the continuing achievements of its members reflects highly on Thomas Brown who early on expressed "an eagerness to establish a precedence for others to follow." Together, they laid a solid foundation upon which others can build. I am grateful to have Kirk as our Volunteer Druid Mentor and I repay his dedication through meaningful study and personal growth. This is not done for public accolades, or a pat on the back from him. I do this for personal fulfillment and to deepen my understanding of what it means to live my life as a Druid.

As someone who may be seen as an outsider, my devotion is expiatory for the wrongs I have committed, so that eventually, upon my release, I may rejoin the ADF tribe.

I had no part in the founding of this group, but I have been involved in its growth. My journey began with zero understanding of what it means to be a Druid. Through practice, devotion, study, and understanding I have embraced what it means to live as a Druid. I now help in carrying our vision forward by mentoring others as I was mentored, and in helping to responsibly guide and educate those just coming to know Druidry.

The PWG is an asset. But, can this successful model be repeated in other facilities? I believe it can. All it takes is the application of the virtues which we follow. Those who lead ADF should not only ask how they can best serve the membership,

but how they can best serve *all* the membership. Within ADF, we frequently hear the phrase "we give so that you may give." Personally, I think this should not just apply to the Kindreds. The PWG was given the opportunity by the Clergy Council to establish ourselves as a subgroup. We have grown to the point that we now give back a greater gift, that in turn, they may take it and give it to others. Growth cannot happen by words alone, and prison volunteers are needed. Ultimately, success in the establishment and growth of new PWGs will take a committed Volunteer Druid Mentor and prison members who are both serious and dedicated.

Kirk Thomas is a stellar representation of a Druid Volunteer, and those willing to follow his example in prison ministry would be wise to learn of his experiences.

*Ted P. Gilliland is a Dedicant of ADF, Scribe of the Frog Stone Circle, and Seeker of the Demeter and Eleusinian Order. He has been an ADF member since January 2012 and is currently working on the GSP. He enjoys needlecrafts, working with nature, and is a self-proclaimed wealth of useless information.*

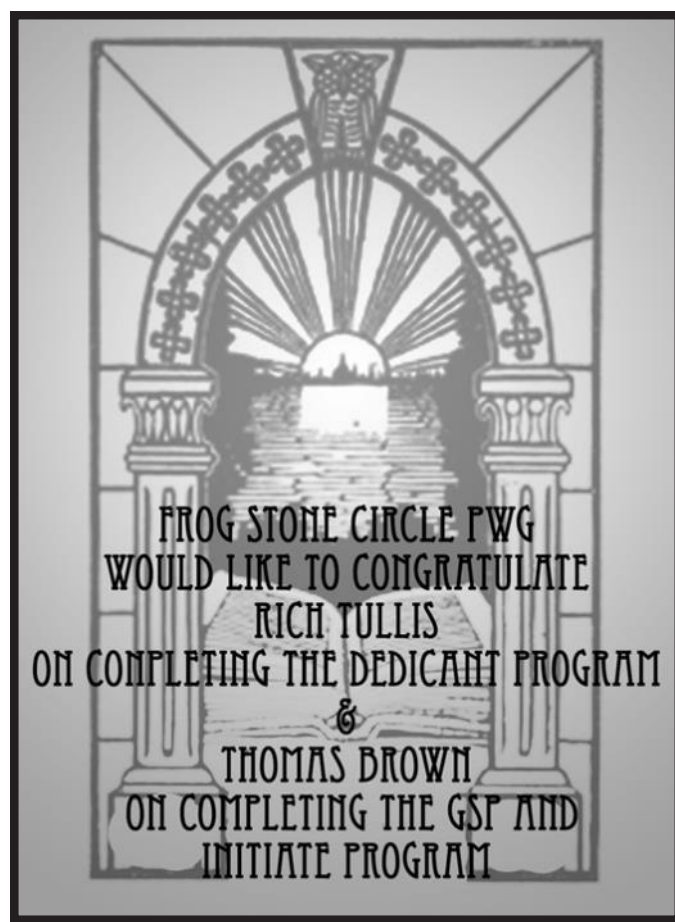


Photo Credit: Farrach



# Book Review:

By A. G. Vanidottir

## *Sigyn: Our Lady of the Staying Power* by Galina Krasskova

ISBN: 0578031051

I generally resolve to take all modern day books on the Nordic beliefs with a very large grain of salt. They usually entail one of three types of material: extreme academia that loses its points multiple times within the text and offers very little in the way of actual understanding, fluffy idealism that clearly shows the author does not know their lore nor how to spell, or it smacks of the hard-line thought of only those directly descended from ancient Scandinavia can possibly understand how to worship *their* gods. For these reasons I dislike reading 98% of the material out in stores. About three years ago I received a book entitled *Sigyn: Our Lady of the Staying Power* by Galina Krasskova. It was a few days before Wellspring 2010 and I had decided a short read would be just what I needed on the drive up to Brushwood. The book is a 61 page handbook/devotional on the wife of Loki. I read it in about half an hour but the material within stayed with me much longer. When I had ordered it I expected a tome similar to the other book of Galina's that I own, one filled with poetry and invocations. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised by well thought out content on a little known deity.

Instead of a book filled with poems I received one that actually explained a little about the goddess Herself. Sigyn is only mentioned within the lore as the wife of Loki, a trickster god. We know that she is a mother to two boys, Narvi and Vali. Her origins, parents, and traditions are never clearly stated. What is strange is for a goddess with no ties listed in any source material, Snorri names her as one of the Asyniur (lead goddesses of Asgard). This may be a simple pairing up as Loki is listed amongst the lead gods, the As. The two sons are

killed when Loki is bound after Baldr's death. The only other piece of information about her is that rather than returning home with the other gods/goddesses to Asgard after Loki's binding, Sigyn chooses to stay in the cave with her husband. She tries to catch as much of the venom from Skaði's snake hanging over her husband's head as possible but when she pours out the bowl he is burned and writhes causing earthquakes. She is a woman that chose the harder road.

As little as we know about Sigyn it is understandable that I was skeptical about a book devoted to her. Not only does Galina inform the reader of material directly known about Sigyn but also surprised me by presenting a well thought out piece on concepts and ideas regarding pagan practice that some individuals are uncomfortable with, like praying to gods. Even I have heard a



few people comment that this notion smacks of Christianity and they don't like the idea of it. The concept of prayer is a delicate one and I think that she sums it up nicely on page 2:

"Denying ourselves such powerful spiritual tools as prayer, meditation, ritual and devotional practice because Christians also use them is shortsighted in the extreme. It gives to monotheism a power that it does not and should not possess, power over our own

spirituality." (page 2)

I should point out here that she in no way bashes Christians. She addresses the multitude of people who balk at the idea of 'praying' to their gods because it sounds too much like Christianity. Let's look at the idea of prayer beads. This idea is not a new one. The most common form is found in the Catholic Church with rosaries. When we let go of the preconceived notion that anything used by a monotheistic religion is something to be avoided like the plague, we can see that the intent behind the use of the beads is one that can be applied to our own spiritual practices. Intent matched with action is a powerful tool regardless of belief system. These beads are now slowly taking hold in the pagan community and can be tailor-made to fit any personal form of devotion the individual desires.

Within the pages of this book are prayers, invocations, rituals and experiences with this amazing (albeit not well understood) lady. Though little lore survives about her, Galina highlights what can be deduced by what we do know:

She is the lady of Constancy  
She is the lady of Dignity  
She is the lady of Loyalty  
She is the lady of Gentleness  
She is the lady of Endurance  
She is the lady of Strength  
She is the North Star  
She is the lady of Simplicity and Patience  
She is the overcomer of Obstacles

Kennings for her, or *heiti*, are given on one page and later in the book are a few rituals and prayers to honor her. Her name means "Victory Woman". Such a powerful name and the kennings given to her cause one to stop and wonder what is missing from the existing lore and what did Snorri deliberately downplay? Galina herself is an Odins-woman, but in this book she discusses the impact that Sigyn has had in her life and the attributes found within this goddess by honoring her. Constancy, Dignity, Fidelity, Loyalty, Endurance, an Overcomer of Obstacles, Strength; those are the things that would cause one to reach out to her. These types of, dare I say it, "virtues" are found in a goddess that many people ignore. Having made prayers and offerings to her I can say that the worship of Sigyn is one of compassion, empathy, and deep connection. She opens your

eyes to a whole different spectrum of understanding in regards to the stories and characters found within the original source material. Galina manages to capture this in her writings.

This book may be small, but it is packed with interesting information that goes a long way to help the beginning person. There is a simple meditation, instructions on how to build an altar (though hinging around Sigyn, this could be implemented for others as well), and beautiful chants and rites. Some of the concepts and prayers are right on the mark and it would benefit anyone to read it. I highly recommend this book to any who would know more about such an impressive and obscure goddess. Here are a few examples of prayers contained within the covers to whet your appetite. Bless, bless!

"My Lady of everyday virtues, please help me remember to execute each task in it's time, not my own.

May I learn that bread must be taken out of the oven when it is baked, not when I feel like it.

May I learn that apples must be picked when they are ripe: not when "I'll get around to it."

May I perform everyday tasks mindfully, knowing that tasks dictate the doing, and the time and fashion of the doing.

May my work be blessed by performing it in the proper spirit.

For only then will I too be blessed by my work."  
(p. 20-21)

Hail Sigyn, Wife of Loki.

Hail Sigyn, Mother of Narvi and Vali.

Hail Sigyn of the unconquerable heart.

Hail Sigyn of the Staying Power.

Hail Sigyn, Victory Woman.

May You ever be praised!

(p. 6)



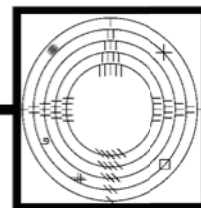
***Anna is a wise and insightful lady. For a more complete bio, please check out her earlier article on Yule in this very issue!***



## Tools of Our Druidry

### The Fege Find and the Odin's Eye

By Rev. Michael J Dangler



The *Fege Find*, or Fionn's Window, is a type of ogham found in *In Lebor Ogaim* or *The Book of Ogham*, an Irish text whose earliest preserved form was recorded around 1390.

The *Fege Find* consists of five concentric circles, and all five *fedas* are included in the design.

At the center of the design, we have cut a hole, as the meanings of both "Fionn's Window" and "Fionn's Ridgepole" speak to places you can "look out from" in a house. While the "window" is obvious, a ridgepole is less so: in iron age houses, a central hole sat at the top of the roof, allowing the smoke from the domestic fire to escape. A poet or diviner doing ecstatic work might journey forth from the home, climb the ogham, and exit the hole in the roof of the house. The pillar of smoke, then, is the axis mundi that supports the heavens and leads the diviner to the world of the spirits.

The Odin's Eye is an outgrowth of the experiences we had with the *Fege*. Here, the design represents the eye of the wise god, cast into the Mimir's Well, where it gazes out into the cosmos for our benefit.

These items are tokens of otherworldly vision and divination. They add depth to the work we do in ritual and at our own altars.

Ways to use the *Fege Find* and the Odin's Eye:

#### For Trancework:

There are many ways to use these two items. My personal favorite: in trance, you can hold it up to your eye and gaze upon a flame or other focal point.

As you gaze through the center hole, envision the turning wheel of the cosmos and your place within it, there at the center. The *Fege* or the Eye becomes a compass for your soul's journey when used in this way, and you may see many wonderful things through it.

#### For Pendulums:

Each ogham on the *Fege* and rune on the Eye represents a letter, allowing you to work the fege like a spirit board, or you can assign values to the runes or fedas and allow the spirits to direct your pendulum.

#### For Sigilization and Spirit Work:

Because each symbol is a letter, you can use this to create sigils for spirit work by drawing lines between each letter in a spirit's name in sequence, and using that sign to conjure the spirit in ritual.



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## Series: Pagan Tradition in Christian Ireland As seen with St. Brigit: Part II By Ashley Price

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[continued from OL issue 62]

### The Saint

As approximate contemporaries and equally important church figures, it is surprising the degree of difference there is between the records of Brigit and Patrick. Most importantly, Patrick left his own writings to posterity, giving his biographers his own words to work with, whereas very little, if anything at all, is left from St. Brigit's life. What records we do have are "unhistorical; they belong less to hagiography than to mythology" as Liam DePaor argues (44). There are, in fact, no contemporaneous written records of St. Brigit. Several chronicles compiled much later do mention her, typically claiming her death to be somewhere between 520 C.E. to 525 C.E., but their inconsistency reflects the dearth of knowledge about Brigit. The Annals of Inisfallen, a chronicle probably begun in 1092 C.E. cites her "repose" in 524 C.E., but nothing else (117). The Annals of the Four Masters, an oft-cited work, is even less reliable as it was a seventeenth century compilation. Even the simple facts of Brigit's life were in dispute in the medieval period.

There are several retellings of Brigit's life ranging from the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup>, many of which copy each other extensively, and therefore provide some degree of consistency. To avoid undue repetition, I will draw my evidence from three of the earlier sources: Cogitosus' *Life of Brigit* written in the 7<sup>th</sup> century; the *Bethu Brigte* of the 8<sup>th</sup> century; and the *Life of Brigit* in the Book of Lismore which dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

In the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, approximately one hundred years after Brigit's death, the nuns of Kildare asked Cogitosus, a monk of the same double monastery, to write a laudatory *vita* of the monastery's illustrious founder (Kenney 356). Cogitosus' fantastical tale, probably derived from oral tradition and one of the earliest examples of Celtic hagiography, makes use of pagan symbolism to enhance the spiritual prowess of its subject

(300). Breaking from the oral tradition, however, this *vita* was composed in Latin, showing its monastic and potentially international audience. Presumably, this wasn't written for the people who had already been familiar with Brigit's legends, but based off of popular tales and transcribed into a legitimate format for ecclesiastical posterity. This *vita* is remarkable in one last respect; Cogitosus is referred to as the "father" of Muirchu (359), the author of St. Patrick's earliest biography, a fact which suggests preeminence of this curious female saint.

The anonymous *Bethu Brigte* was written approximately a century after Cogitosus' tome and is included in the *Lebar Brecc*. Composed in a strengthening vernacular, this account differs markedly from earlier tales, yet continues with the themes displayed in Cogitosus. As the format and the tales contained within this work suggest that the author had in fact not read its predecessor, it is possible that the *Bethu Brigte* reflects a consistent and pervasive oral tradition.

The latest of our sources, the Book of Lismore, was compiled by at least three scribes from the no longer extant Book of Monasterboice in the late 1400's (Stokes, *Lismore* v). Composed in the vernacular, the Book of Lismore relies upon its forebears, in this case the *Bethu Brigte* and Colgan's *Tertia Vita*. Contained within this book are nine *vitae*, of which Brigit is the third. Its correspondence with other manuscripts shows the strength of the Irish monastic tradition in the late Middle Ages.

The account of Brigit's miracles ascribed within her various *vitae* fall primarily into three categories: an affinity to fire, metalwork, and healing or fertility. These themes of Brigit's life parallel the attributes ascribed to the goddess with one exception: Brigit's patronage of poetry and learning are not all that apparent. However, three of the men in her life correspond with the *áes dáno*

attributes: Dubthach maccu Lugair the poet, Conláed of Kildare is “Brigit’s chief craftsman,” and Áed mac Bricc the physician (McCone 165). Additionally, she is officially considered a patron of students, as evidenced by the Catholic Encyclopedia, and corroborated by Kenney’s *Sources for the Early History of Ireland* (358).

Like the Goddess, Brigit is primarily associated with fire, and her attributes fall strictly within the categories of the *áes dáno*. The most pervasive and shocking images within the *vitae* show this quite well, with Brigit being engulfed in flames as an infant or fire flowing miraculously from her head as she took the veil. These unbelievable and fantastical occurrences make obvious Brigit’s associations with divine fire, and therefore with the pagan practices of yesteryear. Those insisting on Brigit’s inherent Christianity argue that this shows her affinity with the Holy Spirit, as images of light and fire are common in Irish hagiography (Harrington 64). This might be the case if the remainder of Brigit’s patronages didn’t mirror so perfectly what we know of the Goddess.

As a holy figure associated with the traditional *áes dáno* arts, Brigit is a being who gives life, heals the sick and is a portent of fertility. The tales connected with her are littered with accounts of her conjuring food or miraculously recovering stolen livestock. One of the most memorable examples of this is Brigit’s churning of butter. In one version she was assigned to make butter with several other maidens. Unlike her peers, she divided the curds into twelve parts, with a thirteenth in the center that was greater than the rest, which was designated for the poor. The container was immediately filled with more than enough butter to please her hosts, which became a sign of Brigit’s connection to the divine. In this story Brigit is blessed with abundance (itself connected to fertility) and then shapes that abundance in a Christian manner. In this way the story draws on both Pagan and Christian imagery, and therefore is an obvious example of the way in which the monks Christianized a pagan figure.

Another example of her divine powers of fertility occurs just as she takes her veil. During the ceremony of her consecration, she knelt before the bishop, resting her hand on the wooden base

of the altar. At this simple gesture, the wood became green with life, survived three fires and cured the diseases of good Christians (De Paor 209).

Related to fertility, Brigit is also a renowned healer. Much like Christ, Brigit cures dozens of lepers. Similarly, Cogitosus tells us how, “following the example of the Saviour... she opened the eyes of a person who was born blind” (211). The saint is also able to cure children of dumbness. In Cogitosus’ *vitae* there is a tale of Brigit taking a child by the hand and refusing to let go until she could speak (212). In another tale contained within the *Bethu Brigte*, Brigit smashes her head against some rocks in a stream, causing blood to flow into the water. She then orders one of two mute girls to “pour the water mixed with blood about [her] neck,” (29) which immediately cured her. In addition to this, Brigit cured the girl’s mother of barrenness. Moreover, Cogitosus claims she is able to produce the opposite effect. In his *vitae*, he recounts a tale of a nun who had given up her vow of chastity and became pregnant. Upon learning of this, “Brigi[t], exercising the most potent strength of her ineffable faith, blessed her, causing the foetus to disappear, without coming to birth, and without pain” (De Paor 211). With all these acts, Brigit was able to cure her followers of their ailments, thus reminding them of her holiness and redirecting their lives to a more pious form of Christianity. While Brigit’s healing arts could be inspired by those of Christ, the monks were able to effectively use a pagan tradition to strengthen the power of the saint.

Brigit’s most important feat was the creation of the “Church of the Oak,” or Kildare, on what may be an ancient pagan site (Lawrence 48). In Ireland, as elsewhere, monasteries were the medieval centers of learning, the place where histories, heroic tales and poetry were written. As patroness of one of the largest monasteries of her time, Brigit became a patron of learning and poetry, which completes Brigit’s affinity with the traditional pagan tripartite association of fire. The location of this site further exemplifies Brigit as a bridge between pagan and Christian culture. The integral point of this unusually large and ornate double-monastery was a gigantic oak tree which reportedly survived into the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Kenney 356). As the Celts, and consequently the Irish, were well known to have venerated oaks and as

this was probably originally a pagan site of worship, the reasons behind Brigit's choice of this spot to found her great monastery are obvious. Kildare is, in fact, a continuation of a traditional Christian practice of assimilating pagan sites for the worship of Jesus. R.A.S. Macalister elaborates on this:

There was doubtless here, in pagan times, a college of priestesses who tended a perpetual fire, and who... honored the fire-goddess Brigid, this divinity being immanent in the sacred sun-oak which gave to the place the name that it still bears. Probably the head of the college was regarded as an incarnation of the goddess, and so bore her name.... But one of the succession came under Christian influence, and embracing the Faith of the Cross, she accomplished the tremendous feat of converting the pagan sanctuary into a Christian religious house—a work in its way far more wonderful than the miracles with which her biographers credit her. It is no detraction from the honour due to her for this achievement, that she could not quite rid the establishment over which she presided of all its pagan vestiges.... And though it is probable that she herself changed the official name 'Brigid' which hitherto she had borne (for no Christian lady would willingly continue to bear a name so heathenish while paganism was still in force), it was too deeply rooted in the folk-memory, and continued to be used locally to designate her (Kenney 358).

Macalister's supposition, albeit helpful, is problematic. Every source of Brigit shows her to have been a Christian from birth, with the infant even going so far as to refuse the food of her unclean Druidic caretaker. It is therefore unlikely that St. Brigit was ever the head of a college of priestesses. Macalister's syncretistic model does recognize Brigit as a figure whose connection to the pagan goddess helped facilitate the transition to Christianity. Gerald of Wales further underlies this in his description of Brigit's perpetual fire:

In Leinster's Kildare, which glorious Brigit made famous, there are many miracles worthy of record. Of these the first to come to mind is Brigit's fire, which they say is inextinguishable, not because it could not be extinguished but because the nuns and holy

women tend and maintain it so carefully and attentively with sufficient fuel so that it has ever remained unextinguished from the time of the virgin (Brigit) throughout the passage of so many years.... That fire is surrounded by a circular hedge of brushwood, inside which no man enters (Lawrence 46-47).

This is clearly a ritual which recalls the Vestal Virgins of Rome, and is potentially the vestiges of a pagan fire ritual.

Finally, Brigit's feast day of February 1<sup>st</sup> is another hallmark of her pagan roots. The Irish pagans divided their year primarily in two, with the divisions being at the holidays of Samhain (November 1<sup>st</sup>) and Beltane (May 1<sup>st</sup>). Furthermore, the year was divided once again at August 1<sup>st</sup>, or Lughnasadh, and February 1<sup>st</sup>, a holiday known as Imbolc (Harrington 65). By attributing the date of Brigit's death, and therefore her holiday, to the very beginning of the agricultural year further cements her link with fertility and the pagan past in the popular imagination. This link is, however, more tenuous than the associations discussed above. Relatively little is known about Imbolc outside of the associations with the saint; despite the saint's connection with that holiday, there is no evidence that Imbolc was a feast in celebration of goddess Brigid.

### **Syncretism in Official Policy and Common Practice**

Syncretism, the process of assimilating certain aspects of an older religion to a newer, often invading faith, is common throughout Europe. The Romans were famous for this: many foreign deities were ascribed a place into their pantheon as they conquered that territory. For example, at the Roman baths at Bath the British goddess Sul became Sulis Minerva. The Christians continued this tradition of claiming indigenous temples and pre-Christian ideas as more and more peoples were converted. In 601 C.E., according to Bede, Pope Gregory famously wrote a letter to Bishop Mellitus, instructing him that:

[T]he temples of the idols among that people should on no account be destroyed. The idols are to be destroyed, but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water,

altars set up in them, and relics deposited there.... In this way, we hope that the people, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may abandon their error and, flocking more readily to their accustomed resorts, may come to know and adore the true God (92).

The Church was patently aware that if one integrates features, such as places of worship, symbols, holidays, or even the deities of an



Sunna Blalock's Flamekeeping Altar to Brighid

indigenous culture the people of that culture will transition more easily into a new religion. It is likely that this process occurred at Kildare, and therefore with the goddess Brigid as well.

This syncretism occurred naturally from the innate human desire to foster unity between the past and the present. Carl Starkoff reinforces this, stating that “the attempt to achieve a unity of opposites, even of contradictions, in religious experience is part of the quest for final unification” (21). Holding this to be true, it is infinitely more likely that the early Irish Church would attempt to foster this unity rather than create a divide. Arthur Brown suggests in his article “From Cauldron to Grail” that this is in fact the case, and that syncretism was especially prevalent in Ireland, where “the first missionaries showed a generous indulgence to such popular beliefs as were not positively inimical to Christianity” (65-66). He further cites such popular examples as the moving

of Christmas to December 25<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the pagan (probably Germanic) celebration of the Solstice, the translocation of All Saint's Day to match the Irish pagan feast of the dead on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and of course the transparent carryover of the goddess Brigid as the holy virgin St. Brigit. Moreover, this transparent syncretism occurred extensively in national histories throughout Christian Eurasia.

As the Church extended its influence across Europe, people felt compelled to include their native culture and religion within the framework of Christian history. The Slavic Nikonian Chronicle, written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, does this by placing the origins of the Slavs within the myth of the Flood, specifically as a descendent of Japheth. This phenomenon occurred in the Celtic northwest as well, as can be seen from Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*. The Irish, however, took a more unique approach to this integration that included, and at points emphasized, the native Celtic myths.

Kenney claims that the Irishmen sought to integrate their past into Christian history and “to pour their myths, traditions, sagas, genealogies, into an orderly historical mould” that coincided with the framework given in the Bible (13). The *Lebor Gabala Erenn* is an obvious example of this impulse. This book, which details the successive invasions of peoples into Ireland, integrates the biblical movements of the tribal successors of Noah with more native traditions, such as the invasion of the monstrous Fomorians. Effectively, the *Lebor Gabala Erenn* “completed this syncretic movement by gathering into one narrative the story of Ireland and the Irish from Noah to Ruardri Hua Conchubair” (14). This phenomenon was not isolated to Ireland, the Anglo-Saxon kings incorporated both pagan gods and the Virgin Mary into their genealogies.

Further examples of accepted syncretism can be seen in the actual practice of saints' cults, not the least of which being Brigit's. The most important

characteristic of this is the location and orientation of sacred sites. As shown in Mary Lee Nolan's survey of religious geography, Irish sites of pilgrimage were usually not associated with relics, as on the continent, but with sacred wells, stones, highly elevated places, or even natural vegetation (430). This parallels nicely with the pre-Christian devotion to such places, as can be seen with Brigit's Kildare. Holy wells, in particular, are found at more than 85% of the Irish sacred sites (431). As further evidence of this sanction syncretism, at least 34% of the sacred sites in Ireland were once pagan temples, a prevalence that is seven times that of the continent (432).

The connections between Christian and Pagan Ireland, and therefore the confusion between the two, can further be seen in the Lough Erne figures. A collection of five statues or fragments thereof, these figures have caused much speculation as to their origin. Traditionally thought to be images of St. Patrick and some of his earliest converts, Professor Lethbridge effectively shows that it is more probable these figures are pagan in inspiration. Lethbridge, examining the bases of the figures, believes that these were originally a part of a circle of standing stones, a common feature of pagan Ireland, or at the very least were meant for outdoors display (175). Both of these scenarios, though not conclusive, are certainly not indicative of Christian worship. Furthermore, some of these figures are depicted in an obviously sexual position, similar to the Sheela-na-Gig figures of the later Middle Ages (177). That these figures could be confused with representations of Patrick suggest either the ignorance of scholars, or more probably, the similarities in iconography between pagan and Christian statues.

The evidence for Brigit's pagan origins are particularly strong because of how singular a character she is. As has already been mentioned, Brigit left no writings, and therefore no evidence of her miracles or childhood, both of which are extensively described in her *vitae*. Both her cult and her hagiographical record are based on an oral tradition; this record made extensive use of pagan imagery, holy sites, holidays, and possibly even rituals to continue the devotion of this beloved figure.

Brigit is moreover a unique figure in the hagiographical tradition. The three Patrician

saints, Patrick, Brigit and Columba, diverge significantly from the contemporary continental writings by placing an extremely large emphasis on the saint's miraculous ability and not their moral virtue. This is done to such a degree that "the saint is regarded as a more powerful druid, the forces underlying his religion are conceived as magical rather than spiritual and moral, and the objects and ceremonies associated with his creed and worship are only a very superior kind of 'medicine'" (Bray 137). In this way the cults of the early saints recall the deities and heroes of pre-Christian Ireland. Brigit is exceptional even in this regard, departing from the traditions of her compatriots. Thanks to Laurence Maney's research we know that the proportion of what can be described as "folklore" miracles contained within Brigit's *vitae* are significantly greater than that of either Patrick or Columba, with less than half of the instances of calling directly upon God than in the works on her peers. Additionally, Brigit is more sympathetic to the pagan past than is Patrick; whereas Patrick and his successors are directly confrontational towards druids, Cartwright's discussion on Celtic hagiography shows that Brigit is considered to be far gentler. As one can see, Brigit's hagiographical tradition is different enough to warrant consideration.

Brigit was remarkable in one other way: as a woman, the fact that she founded and ran one of the most important monasteries in Ireland is significant, to say the least. Kildare was a rival for Armagh, St. Patrick's monastery, and at points even surpassed its splendor. As discussed in Christina Harrington's *Women in the Celtic Church*, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Kildare made a bid for the archiepiscopacy but eventually conceded to Armagh, compromising authority over Ireland for that of Leinster. However, neither church received the archbishopric (78-79). This argument between the great monasteries remained in the popular imagination for centuries; an 11<sup>th</sup> century commentary on the poem *Brigit Bé Bithmaith* claimed "Brigit and Patrick divided out the kingship of Ireland between them, so that it is she who is the head of the women of Ireland and he who is the head of the men" (79). While statements like this do not likely reflect the reality of 5<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, they are indicative of Brigit's place in the minds of the people, and therefore her

role in their lives and their worship.

Finally, the unique role that Brigit plays in the Irish church and its parallels to the traditions associated with the goddess are worth considering. Brigit is famous for her epithet, the “Mary of the Gael.” The vision which rewards Brigit with this appellation effectively links her to the mother of Christ. In the *Bethu Brigte* at a synod at Leinster, Bishop Ibor had a vision of the Virgin Mary and was told that “This is Mary who will dwell among you.” Upon Brigit’s entrance into the hall, Ibor declared that “this is the Mary who was seen by me in a dream.” In this way Brigit is linked to the holiest woman in the Christian tradition, who was effectively the mother of the faith. I believe this epithet strongly coincides with Brigid’s role in the pre-Christian faith, that of an important mother deity. Her veneration throughout the Celtic lands further reinforces this.

I have shown the symbolism and function of the two Brigit’s are far too similar to ignore. It can be argued that despite the saint’s obvious connection to the goddess, that she does not represent a continuation of the pagan religion, but that Christianity supersedes this. This theory ignores the need for unity between two or more groups that precedes the phenomenon of syncretism. I have argued that the cult of St. Brigit does represent a transparent continuation of the pagan past in the popular imagination. This was likely an unconscious instinct amongst the Irish of the conversion period, but it allowed them to integrate their previous mythology and pseudo-history into that of the invading faith. By continuing the cult of the daughter of An Dagda, the Irish were able to validate their traditions while integrating them into a new belief system, thus creating a unity of the two mythologies.



***Ashley Price has been a member of ADF since 2005 and completed the Dedicants Program in 2006. Marroned in the Midwest, she’s been involved with various training programs, kins, SIGs, guilds, and even ran a Grove for awhile. She has not yet earned an ADF merit badge.***

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# Little Acorns:

## Prayer Dice

By Ishtar vom Sternenkreis

Mealtime prayers are a great way to express our gratitude for the bounties of the land and Mother Earth. It helps us to become mindful of what we eat and what it is that actually nourishes us. And it can bring a short quietness to the table before the “noshing” begins. Unfortunately kids are not always keen on delaying the start of the meals through prayers. I’ve found this quite frustrating when my son was very young – until I’ve found the Prayer dice.

The Prayer dice is a dice with six short prayers. In our family it has become an integral part of the meals and my son loves to throw the dice and then I have to read the prayer (and hopefully one day he will read it or his sister). This was so much more fun than just wait for Mummy to say “something strange”. Additionally, I always had a nice prayer handy and it is a fun way to introduce more spirituality and mindfulness into your daily family life.

On the homepage you can find two versions of a prayer dice pattern:

- One with color pictures, which looks very pretty if printed out on a color printer.

- And a black and white version

To make your own, print the dice of your choice out. The dice will be more robust if you glue it on not too thick carton and then cut it out. If you glued it on carton, you should slightly slice in a bit the edges where you want to fold the dice (without cutting through), to be able to fold the carton better.

In the document you can even change the text fields on the prayer dice to customize the dice to your own taste. Have fun, and let us know what your experiences were!

The word documents are on the WIKI page of the Childrens Education and Parenting SIG Go to: <https://www.adf.org/members/wiki/old-wiki/index.html> — click on the ChildrensEducationAndParenting folder to access one of four documents.

Have fun!

Ishtar

*A black and white version of Ishtar’s prayer dice has been included on page 40 of this issue.)*





# A Story of Tishtrya

## An Avestan Story of a Star God

By Rev. Jean Pagano



We are told, from long ago, that all life requires water. We see water all around us, but it has a will of its own. There are times that the waters are healing; there are times when the waters are harmful; there are times when the waters rise up to nurture; there are times when the waters arise in anger. There are times when the waters are placid and serene.

This is the story of the coming of the waters and the blessings extended to all the Earth from Tishtrya. Tishtrya lives among the stars. In the heavens, he protects the Moon and held the many waters that come to men and beasts. Offerings are made to Tishtrya for the coming of the beneficial waters.

Tishtrya is a bright light in the sky. Many look to his arrival in the heavens with the hopes and promises of beneficial waters. Offerings are made to him for the blessings he bestowed. In the heavens he holds the waters like those of the wide ocean.

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. For these offerings, he moves the clouds from the ocean to the land bringing rain and fertility with them. These are the gifts that he does give.

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. For these offerings, he makes the springs run with waves as thick as a horse's size and still thicker. These are the gifts he does give.

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. For these offerings, he brings water to the plants and also to Mitra's wide pastures. These are the gifts that he does give.

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. He subdues the Pairiska that would make the waters boil over. His intercession makes the waters flow gently and spread ease and joy on

fertile countries. These are the gifts that he does give.

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. He takes the waters and washes away all fears. He brings health to all creations. He is lord and overseer above all stars. These are the gifts that he does give

Tishtrya is thankful for the offerings that are made to him. He comes at his appointed time and moves through the heavens like a young man of fifteen years. Bright in the sky, he brings the flowing waters and the seeds that are found therein: to the fields, to the animals, to the people of all nations. Our offerings sustain him – they keep the waters flowing; they bring fertility, like a young man of fifteen years. He is a bright light in the sky that brings the flowing of waters and the gift of fertility; these are the gifts that he does give.



*Jean Pagano is a Master Bard interested in many cultures, including the the Hittite, Avestan, Baltic, and, of course, the Celtic. He's taught Hittite poetry and Celtic pronunciation and he has written many stories, songs, and poetry for all the deities he has been collecting.*



Into the Sun by Nate the Sage



# Roundtable

## Reflective Art, Poetry, and Ritual

By Nathan Eckenrode

I am a member of Inis Ull- Apple Isle ADF Grove. We meet in Central Park for High Day Rituals during the light half of the year, ie the warm months and in an Acting Studio for the dark. We are a grove that is culturally Celtic. At the planning meeting for our Lughnasadh, we agreed that the central work of the ritual was to actively stand with the Faeries and the cyclical world view which they represent. Also in honor of Lugh, we chose to do this in the form of a game. As the clever creative fellow that I am, I had a board game for us to play as the means to gather the divination.

### The Board

I have been working on a table all year long. The basic construction of the table is two half-circles five feet in diameter, so naturally together they form a round table. I colored one white and

stained the other one black to represent halves of the year. On the surface of the table, my kids and I drew concentric circles of various diameters. This was rather similar to the recreation of the cosmos as each ring encloses a different part of our reality. Over these circles I laid out two perpendicular lines bisecting in the middle of the table, this cross defined the solar solstices and equinoxes. Another cross laid over this produces the cross-quarter high days, the Faerie Fire Days of Imbolc, Beltaine, Lughnasadh and Samhain.

The original circles are divided into three different areas. On the outer circumference is a symbol that can be found in many IE cultures, a snake eating its tail. This symbol has the most direct meaning of the cycles of life that I believe defines the touchstone for understanding the natural philosophy which many of us use as a foundation for beliefs. The next bit is more complicated. I



Photo Credit: Nathan Eckenrode

combined images of Ogmios's shield with some exercises from Sacred Geometry to produce a mandala which shows the pathways to the Otherworld.

Ogmios's Shield has five concentric circles which coincide with the Ogham symbols, it took some study of this system to derive the proper method to fit it into the middle ring of the table. The outer circle in the shield is the initial ring, the single slashes of the ogham writing starts here. Each ring inwards adds another slash until the center ring of the shield is where we find five slashes.

The third ring of the table is in the very center and uses the boundary of the fifth circle of the shield. Here's where the sacred geometry comes into play. The first and outer ring of the Ogham Shield is analogous with the diameter of the Earth. The fifth and inner ring of the shield is analogous with the diameter of the Moon. This helps with the construction of the mandala on the table. Centered on each solar high day, I placed three moons which touched the Earth ring (outside of the shield). These twelve moons combined with the thirteen in the center, allowed me to draw a twenty-eight pointed star around the outer ring of the shield. There is a very long and detailed book called "How the World is Made" written by John Mitchell with Allen Brown which outlines this ancient technique.

So quickly, back out to the outer ring where the snake is living, I colored the background of the quarter according to the season. Then inside the star, I used these color coding techniques to indicate where the seasons overlap. Finally, I'd like to point out that where ever possible, I put Celtic knots into the design. For instance, the snake is constructed out of a circular pattern that I found to be very pleasing. On the axes of the the shield, I put silver chains as a nod to the silver chains connecting Ogmios's tongue to our ears. I also constructed four fire pits out of very simple knots for each of the Faerie Fire days.

### The Game

The mechanics of the game we played were very simple to construct. But first the game needed to be set up as part of the ritual. For several days, I practiced with my children setting up the board for playing. I had a set of Ogham sticks which we had

used as part of the previous year's ritual spaced around the outer ring. My children were given the task of keeping these in order throughout the ritual. This did wonders for keeping them attentive. When we all arrived at the central working, I read a long poem written specifically for the occasion which described the game. Each person in the grove placed a token on the board, symbolizing their willingness to stand with the Faeries, and the half of the board they selected was the team they were on, Light or Dark.

Before the game got fully underway, the Ogham sticks needed to be moved from the outer ring to their proper position on the Shield of Ogmios. As I have yet to find documentation which indicates which direction the axes of the shield corresponds to the cosmological axes, I opted to have the first Ogham stick, Birch, be laid upon the fire symbol for Lughnansadh. I wrote a poem as a mnemonic for the meanings of the Ogham marks and while I was reading this, my children placed the sticks around the shield. We had practiced this for several days before the ritual so that they were confident in their knowledge of this task. Incidentally, I have found in "The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom" written by Caitlin and John Matthews a finger mnemonic which makes fantastic substitution for prayer beads during meditation. The essence of this is to count Ogham symbols or trees based upon joints in the fingers on one hand.

Here is the poem which I read:

*We begin with the Birch  
Fionn's taste of knowledge  
the tip of the thumb its perch  
prickly consequence from Hawthorn  
inspiring introspection, Vines adorn  
the White Fir is full of energy  
from Rowan protective synergy  
great strength the Oak exudes  
while change the Ivy includes  
flowering Gorse in transmutation  
enduring Alder, for the duration  
spiny leaf Holly, fruitful action bears  
harmony and health, the Broom shrub cares  
colorful feelings from Heather in dreams  
receiving Willow's intuition, it seems  
creativity by Hazel unbounded  
control in the Blackthorn is founded  
here with Poplar, victory equates*

*from wisdom the Ash elates  
 most lovely & beautiful Apple  
 in transition, Elder's touch supple  
 stout Yew's forte is illusion  
 remember these to avoid confusion  
 and upon the other hand  
 five more plants upon the land.  
 like the Alder, Aspen signifies endurance  
 Spinille is creativity, perhaps in a dance  
 there is nothing like Honeysuckle for attraction  
 Gooseberry's clear thinking needs no retraction  
 and finally we at the end reach  
 for purification of the Beech.*

At this point, the Ogham sticks are all lined up on the shield in the center of the board. These are the crops in the field and the two teams are harvesting them. One person from each team rolls a die and the higher one gets to select a single ogham stick and place it in one of the moons or houses on their side, naturally tied dies roll again. The game is played until three stalks remain in the field. The team with the highest number of stalks gathered wins. They then roll dice to determine the order that the three remaining stalks are to be read, from highest to lowest. This was the method by which we arrived at our divination. The first ogham symbol represented the grove's past, the second the present and the third is the future of the grove. We pulled the symbols for TRANSITION, CONTROL & CHANGE. In that moment, it seemed quite clear to all of us that this was a highly fortuitous reading and was reflective in our grove's status. We had submitted our application to be a full grove during the summer and were waiting to hear the Mother Grove's decision\*. We came to the agreement that this was reflected in the past while in the present we had direct control over our actions and were making the proper decisions together. The change which we read from the future seemed to strike a chord of growth, not merely in size but also in the maturity of the grove. This we believed would be realized through much dedication and hard work. As the Seer for the ritual and because I built the method to divination, it struck me as quite wonderful that the three symbols we pulled all came from the same axis, originating from the section

of the board which representing spring or new growth. This leads me to believe that our grove has plenty of wonderful works of magic that can give us and ADF an interesting and prominent standing with the Pagan community of New York City and perhaps even within the community at large.

\*Important note, the very next day, we received the congratulations of being accepted as a full ADF grove.



*Nathan, AKA Sage, is the Scribe for Inis Ull-Apple Grove in New York City. He lives in a tiny studio apartment with his two kids who are regulars at grove rituals. Currently, he is actively procrastinating turning in his DP requirements for reasons of which he is completely unaware. Days, Months, and Years of his life has passed by with a paint brush in his hand. This may or may not be the cause of said procrastination.*



Photo Credit: Melissa Hill



# Seasons Changing Joy

By Dave "TheXalon" Kleinschmidt



Though the snow sur-rounds me and my hearth, ma-ny be-ings keep the  
In the ag-es past by long a-go, brave-ly hud-dled fam'-lies  
Un-der-neath the so-il sleeps the seed, Bur-row-ing the bears be  
Now I ce-le-brate this ho-ly day Giv-ing thanks to pa-trons



fi-re warm. And if he-roes show up at my door, Glad-ly grant them  
stoked the coals. Ge-ne-ra-tions stand-ing at my back, Look-ing long-ing-  
still great beasts, Wights will whis-per waft-ing in the wind, Si-lence snapped by  
of my way! Migh-ty Aes-ir come from As-gard's hall, Ai-sy-nur with



gift of mead and boar. Thus the thought of sea-sons' chan-ging on-ly brings me joy.  
ly at lit-tle lack.  
stir-ring of my kin.  
wis-dom for us all.

Even though the Norse are not my primary pantheon, I always take up an interest in them in the winter months. Something about tromping around in evergreen forests through snow up to my knees makes me focus on the cultures of northern peoples, which conveniently matches my grove's annual Yule ritual. The hearth fire has been a theme for me this year thanks to the research of John 'Fox' Adelman, and so it seemed like the perfect centerpiece of the song.

For performance, this should be taken at a steady but slow pace. The attitude should be of someone relaxing in their home enjoying the safety that it provides. Notice the odd-length phrases - those of

you with strumming instruments will need to take that into account.



*Dave "TheXalon" Kleinschmidt has been a member of ADF since 2008, a Dedicant since 2011. He has composed and performed religious and secular music for voices and instruments since childhood, is a regular performer at ADF rites and a competitor in the Wellspring Bardic Chair. He is also the Polemarkhos of the White Owls Kin, the Hellenic interest group of ADF, and active in the Bardic Guild.*



# Poetry

By Laurie (Lankelly) Brothers, Luke T Landry

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## The Hag

By Laurie (Lankelly) Brothers

The Cailleach, Queen of Winter,  
The Hag, Maker of Nightmares,  
Rules over the dark and cold.

Above, the ground lies fallow,  
And frozen stars hang immobile in the heavens.  
Below, the seeds await rebirth,  
Animals slumber, birds fly to warmer skies,  
Trees stand naked, exposed  
To the cruel ravages of ice and snow.

Yet all dream of the time  
When the Cailleach releases Her grip  
To prepare for Her rebirth as the May Queen.  
When the Cailleach, whose beauty  
Lies hidden beneath Her folds of grey,  
Will transform Herself once again  
Into the warm caress of Spring.

And the Wheel slowly turns,  
Eternally following the Sun.

## Tocharian B, Poetry

By: Luke T Landry

*Tocharian B:*

Iprer kauc spā kem ñor  
Kām etsunai  
Kām epiñkte

Aise kārþ spā aise tāl  
Yāp teṃ ost  
Yāp teṃ ike

Kāl spālmeṃ aiśamñe  
Kāl spālmeṃ mañkālāṣṣe  
Kāl spālmeṃ ārttalñe

*English Translation:*

Sky above and earth below  
Come towards  
Come within

Power descend and power rise  
Enter this house  
Enter this place

Bring superior wisdom  
Bring superior luck  
Bring superior love

Solstice Night by Melissa Hill

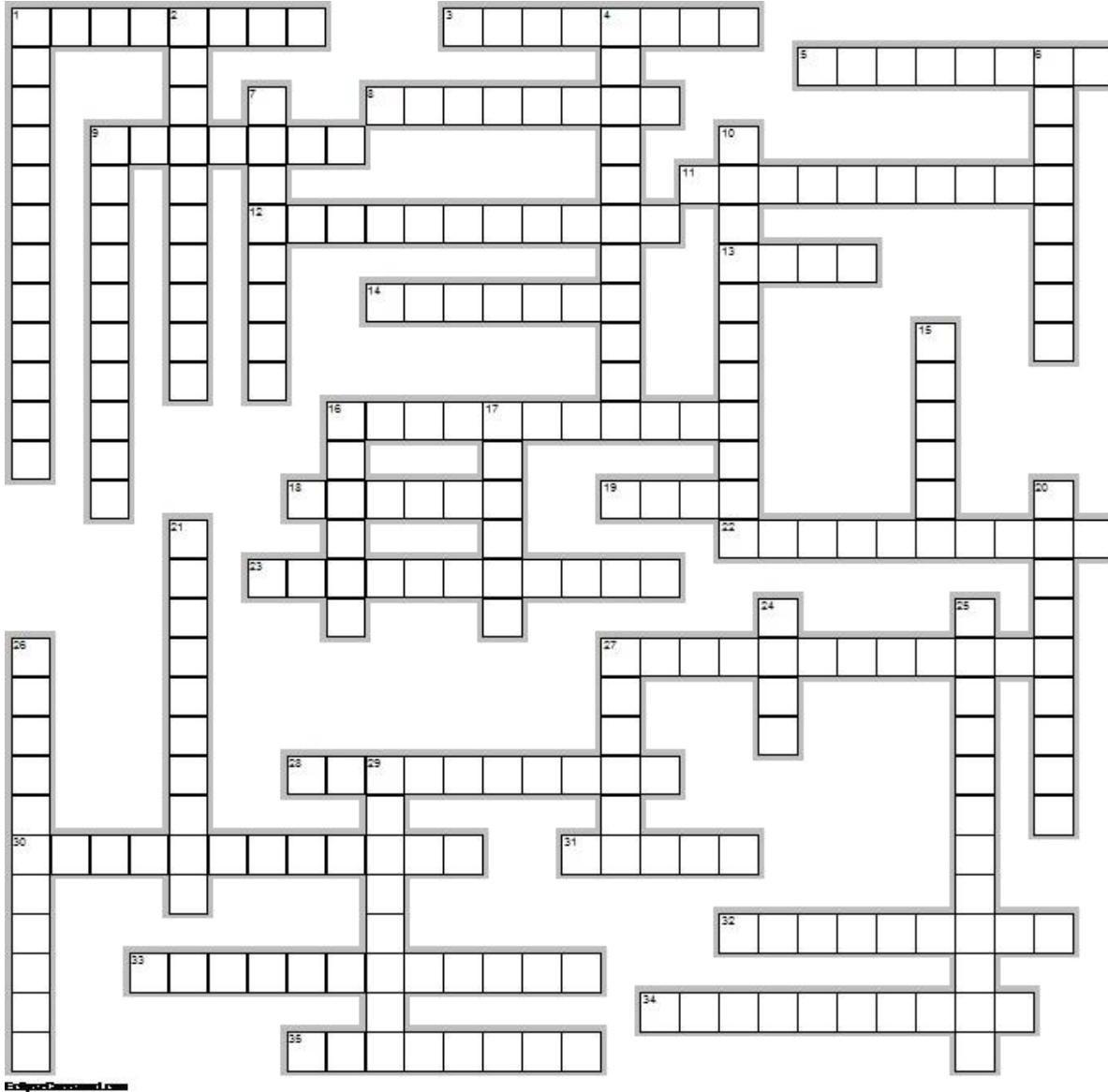




# Crossword Puzzle

Movie Quotes

By Chris:)



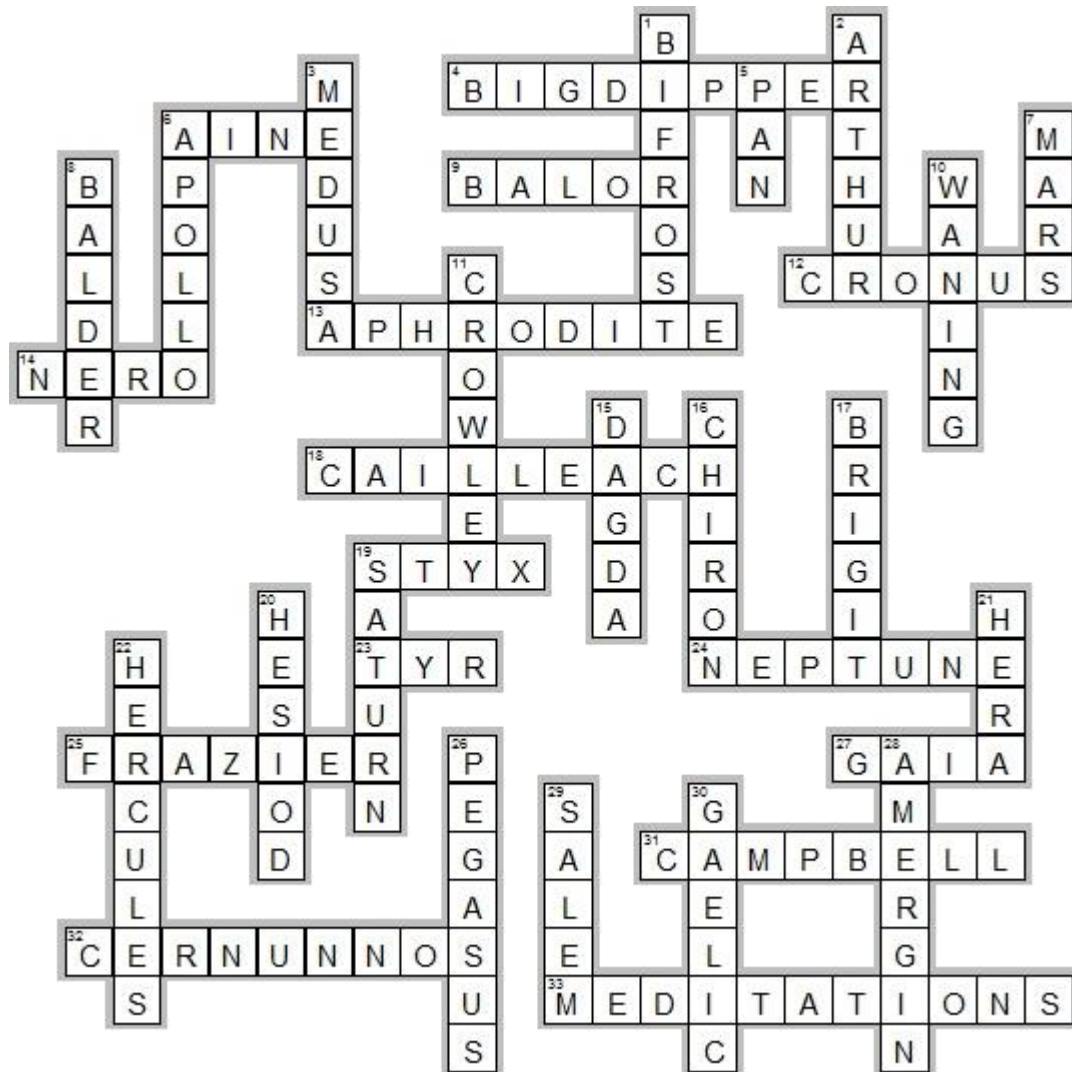
## Across

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. "To infinity and beyond!"                    | 14. "Yippee ki-yay mother f*cker"                    |
| 3. "I ain't got time to bleed"                  | 16. "This one time at band camp"                     |
| 5. "The power of Christ compels you"            | 18. "Hooyah master chief"                            |
| 8. "Khaaaaan!"                                  | 19. "You're gonna need a bigger boat"                |
| 9. "Here's Johnny!"                             | 22. "I'll be back"                                   |
| 11. "No, Mr. Bond. I expect you to die!"        | 23. "Mine mine mine"                                 |
| 12. "I'm gonna get Medieval on your ass"        | 27. "Now, explain it to me like I'm a four-year-old" |
| 13. "That's why no-one will remember your name" | 28. "Here's looking at you kid"                      |

# Down

1. "This is Sparta!"
2. "You talkin' to me?"
4. "You can't handle the truth!"
6. "Say hello to my little friend!"
7. "Surely you can't be serious?"... "I am serious...and don't call me Shirley"
9. "I see dead people"
10. "They're here!"
15. "I feel the need – the need for speed!"
16. "Get away from her you Bitch!"
17. "No thanks, I choose life"
20. "I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse."
21. "There can be only one"
24. "Ssssssmokin!"
25. "Human sacrifice, dogs and cats living together – mass hysteria"
26. "Life is like a box of chocolates"
27. "A boy's best friend is his mother"
29. "Do... or do not. There is no try"

# Last Issue Puzzle Key



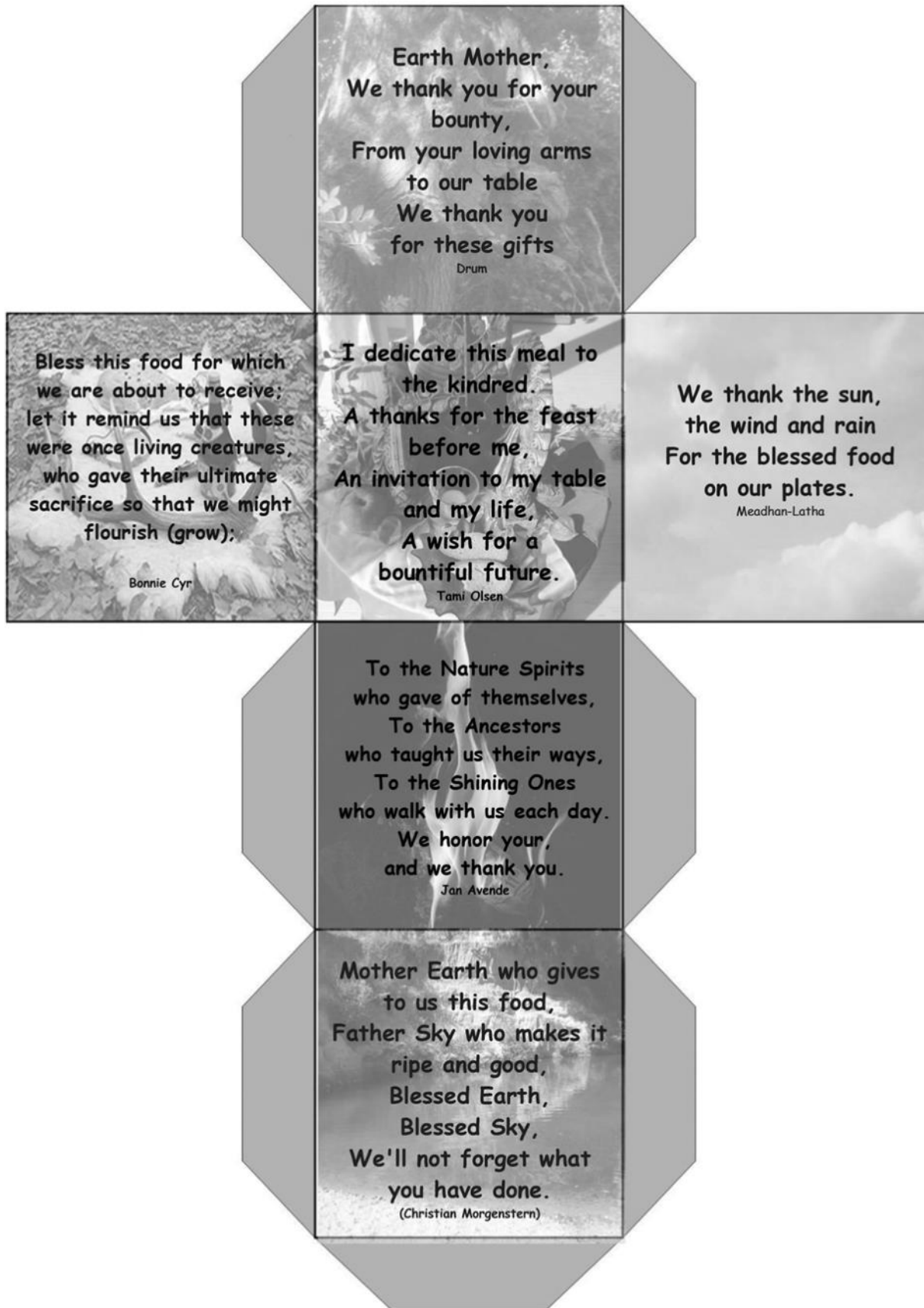


Image courtesy of Ishtar vom Sternkreis



# News and Announcements

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## Dedicant Path Completions

### Martha Wright

Blackland Prairie Protogrove, ADF

Date completed: June 2013

### Vedarion

Solitary

Date completed: July 2013

### James Hathorn

Solitary

Date completed: August 2013

### Sam Carranza

Manatee Oak Protogrove, ADF

Date completed: August 2013

### Dylan Johndrow

Shining Lakes Grove, ADF

Date completed: August 2013

### Brian Long

Sandia Mountain Protogrove, ADF

Date completed: September 2013

### Tavish

Cedarlight Grove, ADF

Date Completed: September 2013

## Generalist Path Completions

### Melissa Burchfield

Generalists Program

Date completed: July 2013

## Guild Program Completions

### G R Grove (Gwernin)

Bardic Guild Study Program

Date completed: July 2013

## New Protogrove & Grove Approvals

### Tenebris Protogrove, ADF

Choctaw OK

Date Founded: July 11, 2013

### Whispering Oaks Protogrove, ADF

Florahome, FL

Date Founded: July 17, 2013

### Inis Ull – Apple Isle Grove, ADF

New York, NY

Date Founded: August 3, 2013

~ Congratulations to all ! ~

## Upcoming Events

### PantheaCon 2014

February 14-17 2014

San Jose, Ca

### Convocation 2014

February 20-24 2014

Detroit, MI

<http://www.adf.org/events> for information





# ADF Directory



## The Mother Grove

Archdruid	Rev. Kirk S. Thomas	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Vice-Archdruid	Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-vice-archdruid@adf.org
Treasurer	Sara Blackwelder	adf-treasurer@adf.org
Secretary	Rev. Robb Lewis	adf-secretary@adf.org
Members Advocate	Desiree Cook	adf-members-advocate@adf.org
Chief of the Council of Regional Druids	Sharon Gorbacz	adf-cord-chief@adf.org
Chief of the Council of Senior Druids	Flip Rutledge	adf-cosd-chief@adf.org
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Sean Harbaugh	seanthedruid@gmail.com
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Susan Parker-Wyndham	suewyndham@ncweb.com
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Barbara Wright	ceorua@gmail.com
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Ian Corrigan	tredara@ncweb.com

## Additional Leadership Positions

Administrator	Selene Tawny	adf-administrator@adf.org
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Isaac Bonewits	[deceased]
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Ian Corrigan	tredara@ncweb.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman	john.adelman@trw.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
Chronicler	Steph Gooch	adf-chronicler@adf.org
Public Relations Director	RavenSea	ADF-PR-Manager@adf.org
Information Manager	Rev. Rob Lewis	adf-info-manager@adf.org
Listmaster and Moderator	Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-listmaster@adf.org
Preceptor	Crystal Groves	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Store Manager	Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-store@adf.org
Webmaster	Rev. Robb Lewis	adf-webmaster@adf.org

## Committees

Clergy Council	Chair: Rev. Kirk S. Thomas	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Council of Lore	Chair Rev. Crystal Groves	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Grove Coordinating Committee	Chair: Rev Caryn MacLuan	adf-gcc-chair@adf.org
Grove Organizing Committee	Chair: Aigeann	adf-goc-chair@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee	Chair: Rev Barbara Wright	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. Also: please include a brief ADF-related bio for all articles and essays.

Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: MS Word (doc/docx), Rich Text Format (rtf), or Text Format (txt).

While electronic submissions are preferred (and may be given priority for printing), readable hard-copy submissions may be sent to:

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

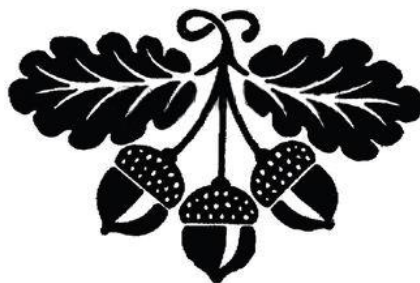
Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender.

## 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 grayscale 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, tiff, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at [adf-ol-art@adf.org](mailto:adf-ol-art@adf.org). Contact the Art Director to inquire whether hard copies of your art may be submitted, depending on scanner availability.

## Deadlines for submissions are:

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



# Ár nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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

## Membership and Subscription Form

One form per person please.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ADF Membership Rates:

Regular Membership \_\_\_\_\_ years @ \$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 \_\_\_\_\_

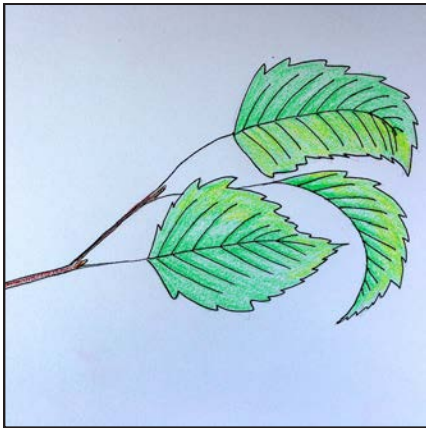
Notary Seal: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ogham

Beith  
New Beginnings



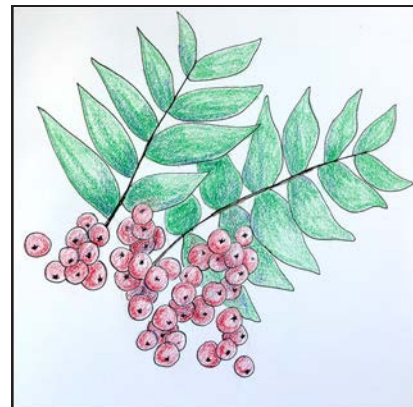
White as Light  
Tall and slender  
Gateway to the trees  
"Beauty of the eyebrow"  
Briatharogam of Cu Chulainn



Luis  
Protection from  
Enchantment



Grey and red  
Branches surround  
Protect me always  
"Friend of cattle"  
Briatharogam of Maic ind Oc



# Trillium is Coming!



April 17th-20th, 2014

TLC Campground, Cross Junction, VA  
[www.trilliumgatheringadf.org](http://www.trilliumgatheringadf.org)