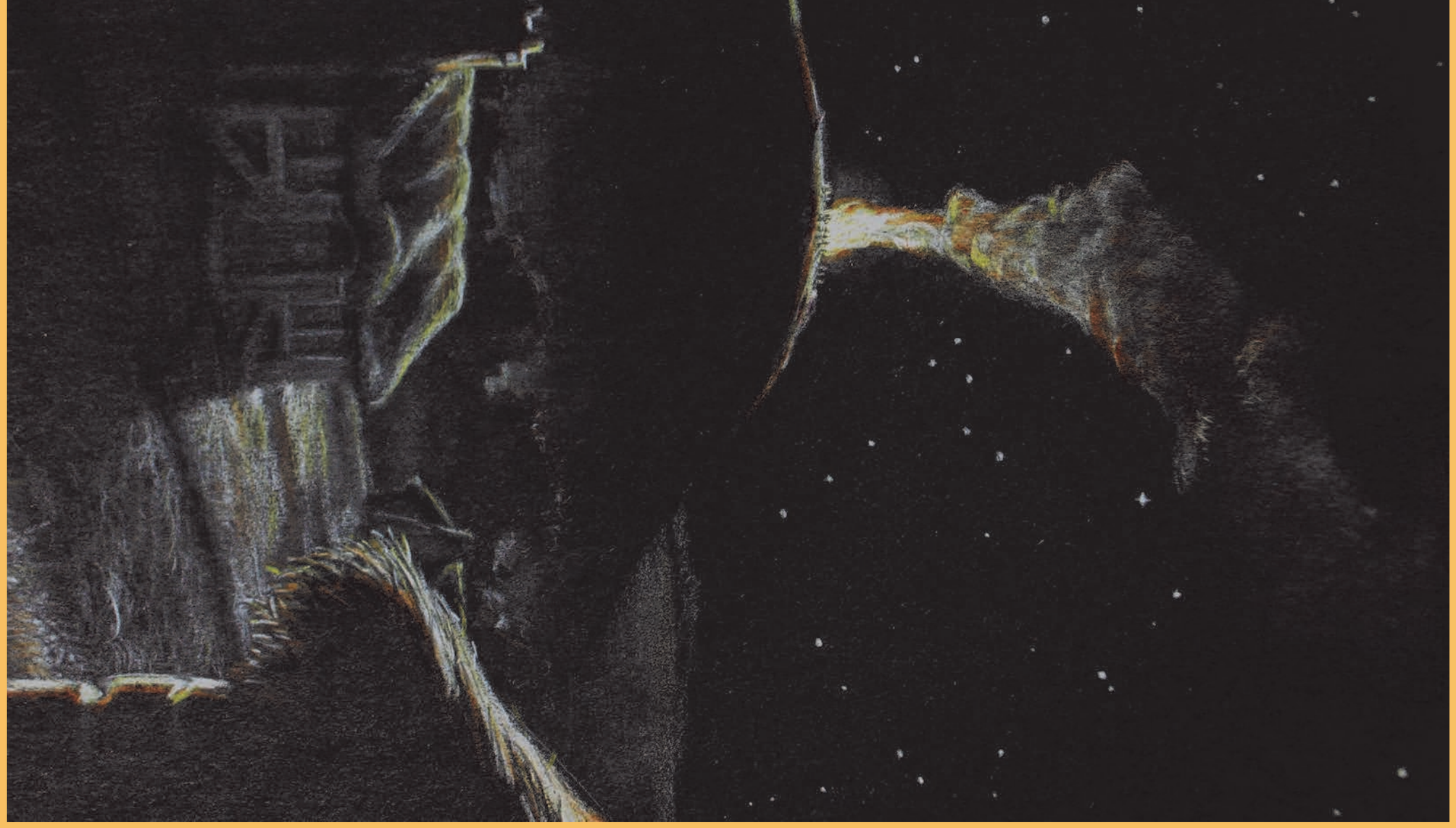
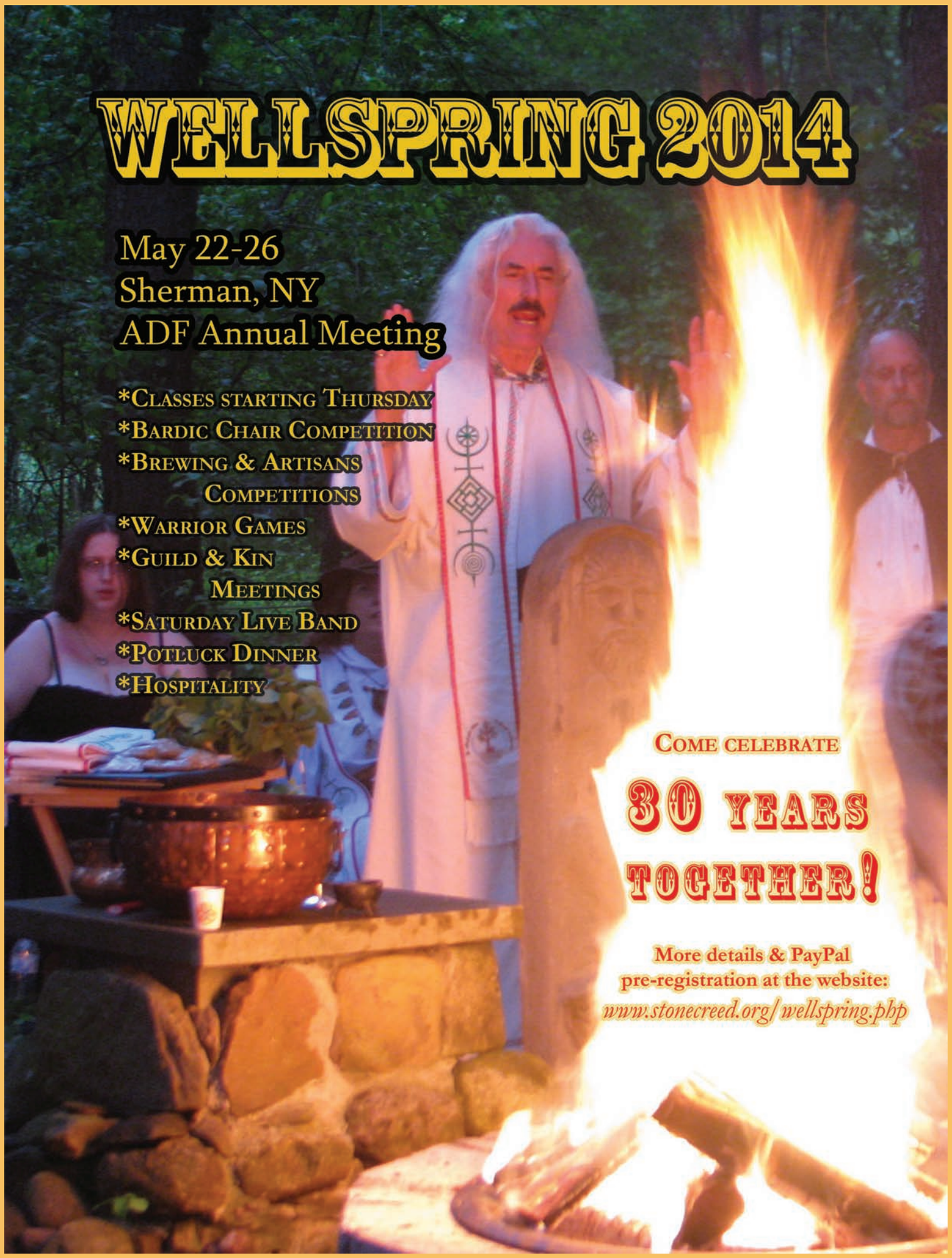
# OAK LEAVES

Journal of Ár nDraíocht FéinThe Quarterly Spring 2014 ~ Issue No. 64

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# OAK LEAVES

**The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin** **Spring 2014 • Issue No. 64**


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# Archdruid

## The Flames of Unity

We have perpetual flames burning in ADF. They are kindled at the Spring Equinox (Autumn Equinox in the southern hemisphere) through friction, and after purification, rekindled at the same time the following year.

This is the Hearth of ADF. In ancient Rome, the perpetual fire of the goddess Vesta burned under the care of the Vestal Virgins, and was considered the Hearth and center of the city. All sacrificial fires were lit from Her flame. Priestesses of the Goddess Brigit (and later the nuns of the saint) maintained a perpetual fire in Ireland that was only extinguished by order of the Church in the Middle Ages.

Many cultures had rites where the Fire would be ritually extinguished once per year and then relit to give it new life. Depending on the culture, this could take place in November, Spring Equinox, or even the Summer Solstice.

ADF now has such a Flame. Several, in fact, kindled in Washington and Michigan and maintained there. Other flames have been taken from these initial flames, and the custom spreads. In March they will be extinguished, the hearths purified, and the flames rekindled through friction, as in ancient days. We call these flames the Hearth of ADF, and they are flames of the unity of our folk.

And as a form of Unity, we invite everyone to magically connect their ritual fires, be they candle flame or bonfire, to the Hearth of ADF, that we might all join together for all our rites. You can do this by chanting the following charm while lighting your fire:

Kindled from the Great Flame
Kept by prudent skill,
Join with our common Hearth
That these flames be one!

May the Kindreds bless us all as we grow together in unity as One Folk, striving to preserve our Mother the Earth and our relationships with all beings, mortal and divine.

Bright blessings,
Reverend Kirk Thomas


**OAK LEAVES**

**Fall 2013 • Issue 62**

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Oak Leaves is published quarterly by Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship. Subscription rate is $25 for 4 issues for non-ADF members, $20 for 4 issues for ADF members payable in U.S. funds. Please allow six to eight weeks for new subscriptions to begin.

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**Cover:**
*Midsummer's Eve* by
Earrach of Pittsburgh


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# Fénídecht

*By John Machate*

If you attend Neopagan festivals or belong to a public Neopagan group, you have likely encountered individuals who, while willing to participate in social activities, for specific and often spiritually-based reasons they are unwilling or unable to take part in the religious aspects. As Neopagans, we generally accept that from outside the community many of us appear different from the norm or don't seem to fit easily into mainstream culture. It's often this "otherness" that brings us together, despite the variety of our beliefs and practices. So it's understandable that when our members seem committed to remaining apart from our most central religious activities, we may react with disdain, discomfort, or simply not know what to do with them. After all, what's the point of belonging to a community if you don't actually want to belong?

At issue is a basic misunderstanding: Neopaganism as a whole has not yet recognized the true motivations and needs of these individuals, nor recognized that a historically-grounded role known as the 'outsider' can be a powerful spiritual path for its practitioners while also contributing to the broader Neopagan culture.

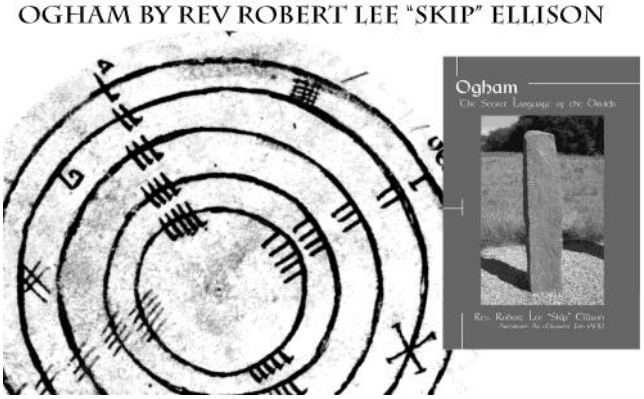
Though every person has his or her own reasons for remaining on the fringe of their chosen community, this article will focus on the Gaelic based 'warrior outsider' path known as *fénidecht*. Presented here from a historical perspective as well as a modern spiritual practice for those who identify as Irish or Scottish polytheists, we look to the tales of the Irish warbands known as *fiana* for inspiration.

**Ancient Fiana**

Up until the medieval period, communities of Indo-European descent were routinely harassed and, paradoxically, protected by bands of men living in the wilds. Often wearing the pelts of and referred to as wolves, these men have had many names among many peoples, such as the French *iuventus*, Irish *fiana*, Germanic *úlfhéðnar*, Welsh *gwyn* and in Indo-European **koryos* (McCone, The Celtic and Indo-European Origins of the Fian 22, 30; McCone, Werewolves, Cyclopes, Diberga, and Fianna: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland 15). As in other cultures, the Irish *fiana*, were typically comprised of temporarily disenfranchised youth (such as second sons without inheritance or uncontrollably rowdy adolescents), social outcasts, and self-imposed outcasts seeking recompense for offenses given outside the law (as in the case of Nessa, who sought to avenge her foster father's death at the hands of a *fían*). (McCone, Werewolves, Cyclopes, Diberga, and Fianna: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland 13; Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 48-51). Living outside of established communities, these men formed an ancient counterculture; existing beyond the bounds and protections of their villages laws, they had their own rules and values.

Leading these outlaw bands were older warriors who for various reasons never transitioned back into the communities. Instead, they trained and fostered the young men (and if we believe the tales, sometimes women) who were sent to them to become *féinnidi* (singular *féinnid*). Despite being part of the counterculture, these aging warriors were held in high regard by local leaders and ironically were often asked to enforce the established laws and defend towns and villages from outside forces. Despite such status, they remained outsiders in both their eyes and those of the people they protected.

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



They lived and worshipped their gods on their own. (Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 50; McCone, The Celtic and Indo-European Origins of the Fian 20).

According to the lore, in Ireland these bands were led by gods and heroes such as Finn mac Cumaill; Nessa, daughter of the King of Ulster; the druid Cathbad; and many others named in the Ulster and Ossianic Cycles of Irish mythology. These roving warrior bands often raided the countryside, attacking farms and hostels, while at the same time defending Ireland against invaders from the Otherworld or across the sea as necessary (Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 54-55). To join a warrior-band or *fían* required one to give up all claims to hearth and home and complete legendary feats requiring mental and hysical discipline (Keating 349-350). Separate from their society, they had to fulfill the most crucial and highly valued roles for themselves, including those of hunter, warrior, poet, and seer. As he excelled in all these things, Finn mac Cumaill was often considered the epitome of the accomplished warrior outsider.

**Modern Fiana**

The reality is that we no longer send our disruptive youth into the wilds to learn usefulness as hunters and warriors, or to keep them from making trouble for the community. However, outsiders do still play a role in 21st century culture. From the hermit living in his rural home to the soldier and his family living next door, the outlaw motorcycle club you saw on the highway and the loner kid who seems slightly off to classmates and parents alike, modern life affords the intentional and unintentional outsiders many different lifestyles and expressions, and unlike in the past, they may or may not come together in counterculture groups. The hermit isolates himself voluntarily much like some ancient seers and poets while the soldier, also a volunteer (at least in the U.S.), is involved in a military lifestyle not so different from the warriors of old, and that is separated from regular society by the tasks they are asked to perform. Some_outlaw motorcycle clubs may be involved in criminal activity, while the loner kid is intellectually or socially in conflict with his peers. These are all examples of modern situations and lifestyles that can set people apart from their societies of origin.

So how does *fénidecht* manifest as a life practice in the 21st century with our cities, supermarkets, standing armies and police forces? The answer is complex due to the fact that those I know who identify themselves as *féinnidi* vary greatly. Though *fénidecht* manifests as a spectrum encompassing wildly different lifestyles, all are practitioners of *fénidecht* due to what they have in common.

To begin with there are the physical and mental aspects of the warrior/hunter, namely combat and survival training. Warriors are trained to fight and are expected to do so if the need arises. In the 21st century hand-to-hand training is the most available and does not come into conflict with any legal authority the way weapons may. The mental training a warrior goes through to cultivate survival skills typically includes simple plant identification and ideally the experience of a hunt. At minimum warrior/hunters would know if they can and would kill for food, and it's best if they test that capability occasionally. An authentic practice of *Fénidecht* also requires that the warrior/hunter aspect of the path be sustained through non-combative physical training.

Following the old model, modern *féinnidi* should also be reading and writing poetry—in other words, practicing *filidecht*. As noted previously, in Irish lore Finn is held as the quintessential warrior outsider, and his command of poetry rivaled that of the more widely known bardic traditions. *Filidecht* is a basic and as essential a component of *fénidecht* as hunting or fighting skills (Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 17-40). Further, the requirement for the memorization and recitation of poetry comes to us from the stories of Finn and the initiation requirements to join his *fían* (Keating 349-350; Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 248). Today, this requirement could be expanded to include the writing of rituals and liturgy that they share with their communities.

Additionally, as the *fiana* had the ability to interact with and even enter the Otherworld (Dooley and Roe 13-15; Nagy, Shamanic Aspects of the "Bruidhean" Tale 302), it follows that modern

**CedarLight Grove, ADF would like to congratulate the newly elected Witan of 2014**

**Senior Druid: Ashley Bryner**

**Vice Senior Druid: Taryn Lyon**

**Pursewarden: Crystal Groves**

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*féinnidi* must cultivate the skills of the seer. Unlike Finn and his *fían* we don't physically cross the boundaries between the worlds, but through journeying and divination we can interact with the Otherworld to get answers and seek aid for ourselves or our community.

Last but not least, as much as the ancient *fíana* conducted raids, they also defended their homelands and thus the communities to which they would eventually return to finish out their days as householders or old men (Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 51; McCone, The Celtic and Indo-European Origins of the Fian 20). Because modern *fénidecht* mostly live in communities rather than remaining camped in the wild, this defensive role must evolve slightly. Serving in the national or local defense industries, working with or on the police and firefighting forces, working in the personal or self-defense industry, doing festival and event security, and even participating in activism to protect your community's interests are all ways in which the "defense of the people" can manifest.

Beyond the traditional roles and their associated skills that define *féinnidi,* another defining feature of *Fénidecht* is the worship of the gods of the Gaels, since this path is specific to the Irish and Scottish cultures from which Finn's legends come. (As a side note, the same tradition of warrior outsider exists in the Welsh culture and is called *gwynwyr* in Middle Welsh (Lewis xi)). Many naturally worship the war deities but there are also "outsider" deities, such as Manannan, Finn, and Brig Ambue.

**Today's Outsiders and Their Communities**

What I've described so far are practices familiar to many pagans, especially those who follow a warrior path. However, there is a distinct difference between warriors and warrior outsiders, namely "separateness" from the larger community. Again, the reasons vary, but for those who identify with the *fiana* or for whom *Fénidecht* would be an appropriate path, those reasons typically have to do with different religious practices, views, or values that restrict what they are able or willing to share with others. For example, it's common for Neopagan groups to work with a variety of deities from a variety of cultures in ritual space—but for a warrior outsider devoted to a particular god or Gaelic pantheon, this kind of ceremony may be best uncomfortable, and at worst in direct conflict with his oaths.

So then what can an outsider or even a group of outsiders do for the communities to which they only peripherally belong? I have already covered a few things that *féinnidi* can do to contribute to the communities' wellbeing, such as being part of defense efforts and contributing poetic and ritual material to the liturgies. But I believe Neopagan communities can provide more proscribed roles and open themselves to including *féinnidi* in yet more ways.

If affiliated with a group, *féinnidi* could participate in community rituals by acting as guardians—protectors outside the ritual itself—both in a physical sense as well as spiritual. When attending public festivals they could do the same—in fact, it was at a pagan festival where I first witnessed a large-scale recognition of the outsider as the organizers gave them space and latitude to function as they saw fit. Some who follow *fénidecht* have composed prayers and ritual acts they perform during these community rituals either independently or together as a small, intimate group. The *féinnidi* could also come together, much like their predecessors, as groups that aid each other in development in all areas of *fénidecht* and to celebrate the outsider lifestyle and spirituality. Part of this effort could include an exploration of the transitory nature of being an outsider.

After all, being a *féinnid* was never meant to be a permanent state, but a temporary one after which the individual would return to society (Nagy, The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in the Gaelic Narrative Tradition 50-52). For most, this is still true. There are warrior outsiders who fluidly move in and out of society

during different periods of their lives, and others whose status relates more to their profession or experiences, such as the soldier who is leaving military service or returning from war. This aspect of *fénidecht* has historically been addressed through rites of passage transitioning outsiders back to the community-at-large when desire or circumstance calls for it. The Gunderstup Cauldron has a depiction of one of these rituals and is described by McCone in detail (McCone, The Celtic and Indo-European Origins of the Fian 28-29). But groups of *féinnidi* can do more than facilitate these rituals and transitions for their own as members go through phases of being within the community and without—they can provide such work as a service to the broader community as well, facilitating rituals of 'cleansing' and 'purification' for others, such as the aforementioned soldier. (Lupus).

As you can see, *Fénidecht* is a modern, complex and valuable spiritual practice. It is my hope that in exploring how those who practice *fénidecht* approach their spirituality and showing how these *féinnidi* can support the Neopagan community, this article may inspire more groups to provide for the inclusion and spiritual development of these individuals in their organizations. As knowledge of this path spreads, I look forward to seeing the community learn how to acknowledge and accept the outsiders, and give them a place and a voice, which is, ultimately, what all human beings—even self-described outsiders—desire.

"Bloodroot" by Earrach of Pittsburgh

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*John Machate has been a Neopagan since 1988, part of what would become Celtic Reconstructionism since 1991/92. He has been publishing magazine and web articles on Neopagan topics since 1993 focusing on Neopagans in the military and Celtic Reconstructionism. John was an activist for Neopagan rights as founder and long-time leader of the Military Pagan Network, Inc, board member of the Coalition for Pagan Religious Rights, Inc., and a member of the Lady Liberty League. He has recently taken up writing again to share his work on the life of the Outlaw/Outsider Warrior via his blog at* www.fenidecht.com.

"Stonehenge Dawn" by Earrach of Pittsburgh

# The Song

*By Matthew Rutledge*

As I walked through a field on a cool morning, over the rolling hills I paused to pick up a blade of grass. I wonder the tales this grass could tell if only someone would listen. Would it talk about the battle men fought above, the worms that crawl below, his friends who were eaten, how he's been stepped on, or would it simply talk about the sun that comes and goes, how he reaches for it evermore with every passing? Would I be crazy to ask or would I be truly ill-advised keep walking without a word said? I look at the blade and ask but all it can tell me is how losing one's family is worse than death and it told me to just keep walking because I would get no further answers here. Confused I walked onward, I felt I needed to learn something. There must be a reason for this journey; a reason I started walking today.

Sometime later I came upon a babbling brook. The brook did not talk but within its waters was a fish who certainly, with freedom to swim the miles from Mountain source to ocean tributary, was able to see many truths and if I could only get his attention, he surely would want to share. With determination I leaned over and put every ounce of concentration on my goal. I lunged forward and caught the fish with my bare hands. Lifting this mighty fish in the air I ask what truths it could share. The fish, gasping in the dry air said one truth and nothing more. It said that pain always comes when it is least expected; sometimes freedom is an illusion. Frustrated, I cast the fish back. My journey could not be over. This was not the truth I was seeking. Along the way I past a grove of trees, a swan, three deer and a fly. None of them could share anything that could explain why I was drawn to go on.

Just as I decided I must have been mistaken in leaving home I see a rock. There was nothing special about the rock. It had no carvings or other decorations. It set upon dirt; not a mound of dirt, or in a hole but plain dirt. I was nevertheless drawn to the rock. As I came closer it became clear that a small man was perched atop. Looking

"The Guardian" by M.A. Bassett

at me he saw the face of a weary traveler and asked what troubled me so.

I proceeded to tell him about who I'd met how they all, rather than sharing the truth as I wanted to hear, only spoke in anger about troubling times as though I was the cause. Why I felt I should tell this man I have no explanation but when I did he told me that if I wanted this truth I just had to follow the two steps. Stop and listen.

I protested, because obviously at this point I saw he was mad but he retorted. He said I had it my way for a day, and for the next I should try what he said. I was beaten by my own efforts so I tried. I sat and listened but nothing. I waited until I could wait no longer. So weary was I of thinking about how to find the truth that I ceased to think anymore. At that moment I heard everything I had passed singing the song of the cosmos.

"They are ready to talk now?" Said I.

"No, you just started to listen" Said he.

## Three of Three

(Based on the Triads of Ireland)
By Rowen Grove

Three slender threads uphold the worlds,
As clearly we may see:
The thread of milk, as white as silk
The thread of grain, in sun and rain
The thread of skill, by wit and will;
And that's the first of three.

Three living Realms make up the worlds,
As clearly we may see:
The realm of stone, that's root and bone
The realm of sea, flows deep and free
The realm of sky, that rises high;
And that's the second three.

Three sovereign Gates connect the worlds,
As clearly we may see:
The seeking Fire, that dances higher;
The flowing Well, where wisdom dwells
The stalwart Tree holds fast the Three.
And that's the third of three.

So three by three are all things formed,
And bound, as we may see:
And so 'twill always be.

## To Janus

- Ceiswir Serith

Open the way for blessings to come,
close the gate to all that would harm,
all that would threaten me,
and all threats as well to my family,
my friends, to all I own:
Janus who looks in both directions,
look on me with benevolent eyes.

# Camping with an Infant

## Survival Tips

*By Sara Blackwelder*

As I've tucked my first Wellspring under my belt, and the 5th festival with my daughter, I thought I'd pass along some tips for bringing baby along with the family for a gathering. Of course the first Wellspring I'd attend would be the freakishly cold year, and being a Florida girl, I went from summer to winter in a span of a day! Which leads me to my first tip:

#1 always be prepared for any type of weather! Hot weather is a bit easier. Keep your baby cool with fans and little clothing, but make sure you are in the shade or have lots of sunscreen on the little one! Keep her well hydrated, I stuck with breast milk and water. Cold weather is probably more manageable to those of you who are used to temps in the freezing range. My best advice for that is layers and blankets, as well as staying hydrated and protected from the sun! I think we all forget that even when it's cold out, there is still a high likelihood of getting a sunburn and dehydration!

Tip #2 - Bring your stroller. Since I was driving up from Florida I was seriously considering not bringing my good stroller and just buying a cheap one on arrival. Am I glad that I didn't do that! The tray helped with me eating and feeding her without trying to balance camp food and baby on my lap (which incidentally is NOT a fun thing to do). It's also a great tool for when it's time for you to take a shower! Put the kiddo into the stroller and sit her in front of you as you shower. You don't have to worry about her getting into anything and you have the added bonus of a place to carry your gear in the basket under the seat. Bathing the baby at festival is hard but doable. Either do sponge baths, bring a little tubby to put her in, or if you are practiced rinse them in the shower itself.

Tip #3 - Have a baby carrier with you. This thing has saved me more than once! My carrier is like a backpack, so I can just throw her on my back and get stuff done or hike around the camp. This will saved your arms and give you free hands to accomplish things. The first festival we went to I had to strike my camp all by myself, and I couldn't have done it without having that carrier to wear her while I worked!

Tip#4 - Bring a baby or portable toilet. You know the things, the kind you start potty training with. You think to yourself though, my kid is still an infant in diapers, I don't need one of those! Yes, yes you really do. It is way easier to have that middle of the night bathroom break that you mothers will have close by rather than having to dash across camp to the nearest blue box while worrying that your baby is going to wake up while you are out! Just do it, you'll feel better, trust me. This is probably not as big an issue when you have a helper staying in your tent with you, but my girl's Dad was not with me at a few of our gatherings, and it was a huge ease off my mind to not worry about running to the bathroom and leaving her alone.

Tip #5 - Bring toys. You don't need many, and it's really for in the tent time. But also have some outside durable toys. You will use them, the outside and other people will only entertain them for so long. Put them in a bin, keeps them safe from the weather and it's easier to transport. And know that your kid will get filthy! Don't stress about it mom. Just go with it and chalk it up to a fun adventure for you both!

Tip#6 - Containment! I've learned this as my girl has turned from baby to toddler, but some way to keep her from running out into the traffic patterns of a camp or into dangerous situations is a really big help if you don't want to be jumping up and down all day long and running around constantly. Pack n play might be easiest if you are using it for a bed, but depends on the kiddo. I wish I had had my screened in 10x20 to keep her contained without her feeling like she was in a jail at my last festival. I think that it would have worked wonders for my sanity!

Most of all just enjoy your time and relax! If you can bring a helper, do it! If you can't, most people

are awesome and will give you a hand if you need it. Just don't think that everyone else is going to take care of your kid the whole time. Plan your drive for sleeping times; it just works out better that way. These tips are mainly for when they are pre-mobile. After walking it is a whole new game. Once I've had that experience I will try to share some additional tips on how to handle a toddler at a festival!

*Author Bio:*

*Sara K Blackwelder has been a member of ADF since 2008 and completed her DP in 2012. She is the organizer of Manatee Oak Proto-Grove, and an active volunteer in ADF. She is currently working on many projects in her spiritual work.*

"Mother's Garden" by M.A. Bassett

## Changing of the Guard

*A.G. Vanidottir*

Hail to thee Skadhi! Lady of Winter's whites,
Your call have we heard across our homes,
On these many cold days and dark nights.

Hail to thee Skadhi! Wolf-maid and Goddess of Bow,
Your touch have we felt all these long weeks,
our lives filled with your snow.

Hail to thee Skadhi! Mistress of Winter's fun
Thrymheim beckons your loving hand
Your duty here now is done.

Well have we rested
Well have we paused
Well have we met those we hold dear

Well have we thought
Well have we learned
Well do we know what Season is here

Hail to thee Eostre! Lady of first blooms,
Your touch do we crave across the land,
the stirring of Nerthus' womb

Hail to thee Eostre! Maiden and Goddess of Youth
Your smile is needed to lure the sun,
to give a promise it's truth

Hail to thee Eostre! Warder of Spring
Your love shines now to warm the earth,
we give hail for all that you bring.

# The Transformative Abilities of ADF Ritual and an Indo-European Precedent

## Part I

*By Reverend Amber Cannon*

Since the inception of ADF in 1983, there have always been core liturgical steps which identify an ADF- style rite. These are the steps that separate ADF liturgy from every other liturgical style out there. They give form to the vision of Isaac Bonewits. Interpretation of these steps has always been encouraged and discussed widely for their organic content. When a liturgy is locked up and not allowed to grow, it loses touch with the outside world and fails to properly serve all the folk. This state of invariance will control chaos but it will also block creativity (Bell, 152, Ritual Perspectives). The history of ADF liturgy indicates many changes including the formalizing of the Earth Mother eight years after ADF began, as well as the inclusion of the step "Re- Creating the Sacred Center" in 1991. Other liturgical steps have seen changes, such as a reduction in the number of times the Blessing Cup is passed. (Brandon, Ancient Symbols). There is no reason to believe that liturgy won't face other subtle changes. The root formula we work with will not change: gather, pray and make offerings, confirm they're received, and anticipate blessings in return.

The root formula we work with will not change: gather, pray and make offerings, confirm they're received, and anticipate blessings in return.

Orthopraxy is the word which ADF uses to describe its practices. This term generally refers to the general adherence to ritual practices, traditions and customs, all of which support ritual integrity. The opposite of this is orthodoxy and is marked by adherence to a creed and that is quite often applied to Christian Doctrine. One example of Neo-Orthodox Christian Doctrine is the belief that sin is an inborn trait. This infers that all humans have a wicked side and they must constantly strive against this part of themselves. Only by conversion and living a pious life can they possibly be saved. (Neo-Orthodoxy website). Orthodoxy is often founded in fear, and uses dogma to increase a mechanical solidarity among people.

Maintenance of orthopraxy allows one to be able to observe links between rites, which are performed at different times in different locations, with a sense of objectivity. Consistency in the ritual presentation from one group or grove to another supports a ritual's overall paradigmatic function and its ability to encourage value formation, such as **ghosti*, beyond the text of the rite. The paradigm supports and encourages values like honoring the Kindreds, caring for the Earth Mother and the importance of the Prayer of Sacrifice. (Grimes, Criticism, 43).

The transformative effects of public and private work of ADF can be viewed from three perspectives; these three perspectives are interpersonal, psychological and spiritual. This idea is based on the observation that rituals convey more than values and spiritual beliefs. They may also confer attitudes toward religion. (Grimes, Crit, 43-44). The concept of three different areas of transformation originates from the work of Walter Ong's sensorium organization. The Rev. Walter J. Ong was a Jesuit Priest and English professor with a keen interest in how culture is affected when it progresses from orality (use of an oral tradition) to literacy. Utilizing the concept of world-framing, sensorium organization focuses on how humans organize input from their senses. The perspective from which work is interpreted determines an individual's values and reactions. The way in which this input is interpreted will determine the efficacy of any didactic statements. (Grimes, Crit. 96-97). The way in which a participant responds to liturgical sensory input is important for providing immediate feedback to ritualists working to provide the best experience. The tools for recognizing these responses early are described thoroughly in the article "*Circles of Concentration*" by Kirk Thomas. This article breaks down sensory perceptions into four areas of sensory reception

that start with the ritualists themselves and expand awareness outward to include sensory stimulation by spiritual entities. With proper skills training in the ritual setting, a ritualist may influence the transformative and didactic potential. (Thomas, Well-Trained).

In public work, transformation occurs on an interpersonal level as inter group familiarity improves. Bonewits described this in terms of knowledge, affection and group identity. Knowledge refers to inter group awareness of a member's skill levels and abilities. Affection is used to describe friendship and emotional bonding in the group. Group identity focuses on impersonal traits such as shared ideologies and worldview. (Bonewits, 56-57).

At the interpersonal level of transformation, a spontaneous communitas is present. There are group functions to be performed, decisions to be made for the needs of the group and pleasurable rewards to be shared. A spontaneous communitas may be likened to a hippie-style happening with magical qualities of love and harmony surrounding it. (Turner, Process, 139). It may have some planning involved but will leave room for improvisation, and full audience participation. It may spring up anywhere there is a collection of people with similar attitudes or interests. Humans have a deep longing for inclusion, and the temporary structure of communitas fills such a need. (Turner, Process, 131-132).

Humans have a deep longing for inclusion, and the temporary structure of communitas fills such a need.

The degree of psychological or internal transformation in a public or private rite is dependent on the degree of reflexivity. This bidirectional relationship can also be seen in terms of a circular relationship that is formed within the context of a ritual. Another way of looking at reflexivity is by comparison to the laws of cause and effect. Here is an example of this circular relationship in our ADF rites: we make offerings and sacrifices, and the Kindreds bless us. Reflexivity can take on much deeper spiritual meaning based on the reading of the omen and personal experiences during any workings in the rite. (Turner, Theatre, 75-76). Ethnological themes and ritual drama also increase the potential of the circular relationships, hence improving chances for psychological and/or spiritual transformation. When ethnographies are turned into playscripts, then acted out in performance, they evolve into meta-ethnographies requiring performers to get "under the skin" of the cultural people they are presenting as. This requires much deeper consideration than the cognitive reductionism which characterizes someone who is merely taking on a role. (Turner, Theatre, 90-91). When a ritual drama is taken to this level of complexity, the bonds of Cartesian dualism begin to dissolve bringing the subject (the performer or observer) closer to the object (ritual in a cultural context). Cognitive awareness is heightened as one suddenly becomes not only one's subject but one's object as well. (Turner, Theatre, 100).

Many scholars have considered religion to be a complex set of symbols. In ADF, we use many forms of symbolism in our rites from the Triple Hallows to the Blessing Cup. Liturgical symbolism triggers motivations and potent emotional reactions in ritual. The very mention of the "Two Powers Meditation" will start a group centering and grounding. This is more than just knowing what is coming next; it is the use of symbolic liturgical language. We hear a Priest exclaim "Let the gates be open" and we visualize an opening in space. These symbolic triggers aid participants in recalling previously powerful experiences. When the symbol is used, the experience is recalled and the response to it is recalled as well. Ritual becomes a device for ordering and preserving religious ideology. (Pals, 272-273).

The spiritual form of transformation is by its definition more abstract, and likely to occur when public ritual grounds the communal feelings in such an intimate manner that a participant is able to let joy or sorrow to flow uninhibited. An example of this is when people let go and they allow themselves to show sadness or tears for an Ancestor at a Samhain rite. (Driver, 156-158). This time is also when a person is most susceptible to a personal religious experience or the occurrence of

illumination. The experience of illumination is often marked by the joyous apprehension of a deity or a Kindred spirit. There may be a sudden clarity of vision and you may even experience an uncommon form of dialogue with an entity or within a vision. (Underhill, 179). Jung refers to this type of transformation as an enlargement of personality. To illustrate his point, he uses the example of how the harsh critic Nietzsche encountered Zarathustra in a vision and was transformed into a prophet and tragic poet. (Jung, 120-121).

An opportunity for spiritual transformation is present in every ADF group rite following the COOR. In the steps which call, hallow and affirm the Waters, participants have the opportunity to interact directly with the blessing of the Kindreds and be transformed by the Powers which they believe in. When a Priest calls out, "Do you accept these blessings", a participant has the opportunity to reaffirm their connection with Divinity. When the Waters are drank or felt through asperging, the participant has an additional opportunity to deepen the spiritual connection transformation). This is the result of the way the Waters and the Blessing Cup are framed or presented in the ritual context. (Bell, Ritual, 251). Both the Waters and Blessing Cup become holy by the power of contagion or as Eliade describes it, "the dialectic of the Sacred". The Priest spreads this "sacred-ness" through contact with the Waters. (Pals, 204-205).

The experience of illumination is often marked by the joyous apprehension of a deity or a Kindred spirit.

Private work is highly encouraged in ADF and contains the potential to transform the participant in the three areas which group work also affects. Private or domestic work tends to reflect more on an individual's ideology and idiosyncrasies regarding practices. This style of work begins to take form in the Dedicant Program through the encouraging of Druids to perform daily home devotionals. These devotional activities help build relationships with the Kindreds, Earth Mother and a Gate Keeper. Solitary or domestic work heightens awareness of what is "personally" sacred and what is profane. Only in the secular world, where private practice occurs, is the proximity of the profane so obvious. Certain objects, places and events will reveal an identity as personally sacred to you and require separate recognition while other things are perceived as profane. (Durkheim, 37-40).

Despite this recognition, we are still free to misunderstand the sacred and confuse it with what is not sacred. The definition of what is sacred depends on personally adopted beliefs. Religion is more than acts. It is a system of ideas, (Durkheim, 46), regardless of whether we are examining group or domestic practices. There is a need to reaffirm these ideas by some form of regulated thought which may be perceived as prayer and by a regulated act which may resemble a communion with a supernatural entity. (Durkheim, 287).

In ADF's domestic practice, there are many ways to express forms of prayer and sacrifice from the simplest form of directed thoughts to a full devotional rite to a commensal meal. These ways might include chanting, playing music, dancing, special gestures or postures. (Serith, 17-28). All these expressive forms honor the Kindreds and may be considered tied in to transformative work. The complexity of the solitary rite does not always equal the reflexivity or benefits returned by Divinity in a group rite; however a bidirectional relationship is still present. There are times when the reward is in the performance of the rite, not in the blessings following, such as in prayers of thanksgiving. The transformative ability of ADF rites reflects the nature of worshipers with common needs. These needs have changed as society has changed both culturally and spiritually as well as economically. No hearth culture has been left untouched by some type of changes. Some of these peoples' needs were met by the development of mythology which reconciled their Ancestors' consciousness with preconditions of existence, attaching to it feelings of gratitude, love and sweetness. (Campbell, Bliss, 4). Eliade has identified that people have a need to escape the ordinary and mundane, displaying a nostalgia for the mythical paradises depicted in literature. (Pals, 213) . Joseph Campbell argues that the only way to truly affirm life is at its roots, no matter how brutal or war-like they appear. He

observes that this rational affirming only occurs in the most primitive cultures. (Campbell, Bliss, 4).

**The Hittite "Zarpiya"**

In the Hittite culture, a festival commonly consists of a sacrifice, a feasting and entertainment. (Gurney, 28) . Sacrifices are made to consecrate or sanctify oaths and covenants. In the ritual of Zarpiya, the Master of the house consecrates a goat to Sandas the lion god, by pouring wine over it. He holds out his bronze axe and invokes Sandas and the Violent Gods to join the feasting. Then he puts down his axe and the goat is slaughtered. The goat's blood is smeared on the drinking tube of a tankard filled with beer. The Master takes a bite of the goat liver and heart which he is handed, and he sips from the smeared drinking tube. The he declares loudly, "We have taken the oath! O Santas (Sandas) and Innarawant-deities (Violent deities), do not step to my gate again." (Gurney, 29-30). This central act is referred to as "drinking the God." The Hittite verb for drinking may also be interpreted as "give to drink" or "offer a drink to the gods." This is believed to have led to the custom of a host taking a sip from a glass before offering it to a guest. (Gurney, 34). The Zarpiya continues after the drinking phase with the cooking of the goat. When the fat arrives, two sets of nine loaves of bread are brought out. On a separate table, the cooked heart and liver are placed, and the Master breaks nine loaves over them. He calls for the Sun God (Sandas) to eat this meal, and to share it with the "the Gods of the House and the other thousand Gods." At another table he libates the wine nine times to the Violent Gods. He places the goat's shoulder and breast here and breaks the other nine loaves over it. Nine virgin boys are led in in a special manner to consume this meal for the Violent Gods. (Collins).

The theme of a sacred fluid being connected to covenant or oath-taking appears in several cultures. The liquor ritual is compared with a rite of passage which transforms a person from one state to another. Despite limited factual evidence, we can ascertain the importance of consuming liquor in Germanic rites.

This ritual is multifunctional in its quest to transform participants. It serves to renew a covenant with the Sun God so he will not trouble them and it serves to keep the Hittite version of ADF's Outdwellers satisfied so that order is maintained in the house. When the Master invites all the Gods to eat with the Sun God, he is making an offering to renew his commitment to all his patron deities. At the end of the Zarpiya, the Master shuts the doors to the house, apparently open from the beginning, announcing that "let shut evil out, and keep in good." (Collins). This makes the work of the ritual a form of protective magic further ordering the cosmos within the house and property. The shutting of the door bonds the people within in a social structure which further enhances the transformation.

**The Anglo-Saxon Liquor Ritual**

The theme of a sacred fluid being connected to covenant or oath-taking appears in several cultures. The liquor ritual is compared with a rite of passage which transforms a person from one state to another. Despite limited factual evidence, we can ascertain the importance of consuming liquor in Germanic rites.

The rites where this activity is so prevalent center on the comitatus, a deeply-held bond between the warriors and their chieftain. A follower could become bound to the comitatus by gifts of weapons and liquor, in the same manner as a wife could become part of a household. When a warrior was added to the comitatus, it was likened to adoption and the war band was to be treated like a family. Like a family, the war band represented a tightly formed social structure. When a bride was chosen, she would receive gifts including a steed, shield, lance and sword, and to her suitor she would gift some piece of protective armor. (Enright, 77). The rite to add a new warrior or a bride is an integration rite. Once the participant goes through with it, they can never be what they were before the rite took place. It also suggested that gifts of liquor were common in integration rites. (Enright, 80).

During the wedding procession, there is a cup offering which Celtic scholars compare to the idea of a supernatural woman, symbolic of a fertility goddess, marrying a ruler and bestowing kingship. In the Anglo-Saxon sources, this is not distinguished beyond husbandly authority other than service as his bride and queen. (Enright, 83).

Tacitus observed the religious significance of liquor and feasting. Women acted as servers during an assembly of the war lords. They kept the glasses full of liquor so that the warriors could deliberate their decisions for the war band. The women were witness to many oaths spoken over these cups at these assemblies, and their role as outside observers placed them in a role as prophets to the war band. They had a responsibility for morale building and maintained order of the comitatus as the servers of liquor. (Enright, 93-94).

From the information provided here, we see the ADF concept of ghosti at work. Gifts are given by the new warrior or bride and the blessing of membership in the comitatus is returned. The blessing is sealed by a sacred drink, such as the Waters of Life which confer the blessings of the Kindreds to ritual participants.

In the Hittite ritual, wine is poured over the goat. This marks the goat as sacred for the act of slaughter. In ADF rites, we commonly follow two procedures during the Purification step of the COoR, The first step purifies participants with water, and the second step marks them as holy with the smoke of incense. The participants in the ADF rite have been transformed in the same manner as the goat. This redefines the act of consecration as temporarily marking something or someone as sacred for the purpose of sacred acts. Consider the importance of consuming liquor at Anglo-Saxon religious ceremonies. Liquor consumption causes an altered state. It was in this altered state in which important decisions were made and oaths to Gods taken. This altered state temporarily consecrated or made holy the war band. The women initiating this state by serving the men could be considered as transformed into liminal guardians maintaining the flow of the rite, or in other words; the women maintain order within the chaos.

Upon further comparison of the transformative effects of the Hittite, Anglo-Saxon and ADF rituals, there are similarities in a sacred fluid granting some form of blessing. These blessings empower, protect and grant insight, all of which are transforming gifts. Enright tells us an offering of weapons bound a person to the comitatus. This compares to the way an offering connects a sacrificer to a deity or the three Kindreds during a COoR rite. (Enright, 91).

In all three ritual practices we have evidence of communitas which transforms participants. Each set of religious practices contains a symbol set to order their universe. Examples include the blood-smeared drinking tube and nine virgin boys in the Zarpiya, and the pouring of liquor and gifting of weapons for the Anglo-Saxons. (Turner, Theatre, 23). Spiritual transformations are triggered by the symbolic imagery which informs the cultures and their philosophies, giving substance to archetypes. (Eliade, Symbols, 173-174). Symbolic thinking gives form to what is most axiomatic about ritual.

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*Rev. Amber Skyspirit (Cannon) has been a member of ADF since 2009 and recently completed her CTP Third Circle Training. She also serves as Seers Guild Preceptor. She is a priestess of Three Cranes Grove in Columbus, Ohio. She enjoys travelling to many Pagan and ADF*

# A Re-examination of the Prophecy Poem

*By Judith O'Grady*

I love stories-- I love reading them,hearing them,and telling them myself. One of the great good things about being a Druid and learning about my personal roots is the plentitude of Irish stories and the acceptable emphasis that our religion places on knowing them and making them a part of our world-view.

As we read lore, however, I think that an important part of our understanding should stem from that very personal and individual process of integrating the stories into our own mental context. Not just what the tale 'means to me' or what lesson it can teach me that needs to be brought into my own life and beliefs but also what it meant and taught in the story-telling past; how it 'worked' then. On the one hand, this process should include our own knowledge of the culture of the day (the day of the lore-tellers and the participants, not our day). On the other hand, we should be aware of the historical context of the story told and its place in the entire body of lore. On the gripping hand, there is the unfortunate but unavoidable acknowledgement that much lore, both entire tales and series of tales as well as chunks and lines from what is preserved, has been lost, Christianized, or assigned to make-believe or hagiography. It must be re-imagined-- speculated about in a directed way-- in order to a recreate any sense of what the lore could have been when intact and part of the living dominant culture.

I enjoy this process very much; it is like holding up a beautiful piece of sculpture or craftwork and turning it over in your hands, like imagining what is around the bend in the landscape picture, wondering what I would contribute if I was present at the fire when the listeners and the story-teller talked it over after the story was told. I do not think that I can know the one and only answer to the question of how to interpret lore but I can (and do) create or imagine an answer that is logically consistent, rationally defensible, and artistically satisfying. Sometimes the process is small-- 'what if the story of the Three Little Pigs is about clan structure rather than forethought?' and sometimes it is enormous-- 'what might the Gods have told our ancestors that has since been lost?'.

At the end of the second battle of Mag Tuired one of the Morrígna (most likely either The Mórrigan or Badb) makes a prophecy, for which I use this translation:

> "Peace up to heaven.
> Heaven down to earth.
> Earth beneath heaven,
> Strength in each,
> A cup very full,
> Full of honey;
> Mead in abundance.
> Summer in winter. . . .
> Peace up to heaven . . ."

*http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/cmt/cmteng.htm*

Ancient Irish poetic rules dictate that the last word of one line should be either the same as or allusive to or metaphorically connected to the first word of the next line. As well, the last line and the first line should have circularity, that is should be exactly the same. So it is obvious that a number of lines are missing; I have filled in those lines with appropriate poetics:

Peace up to heaven.
Heaven down to earth.
Earth beneath heaven,
Strength in each,
Each in each piled,
Piled like a cup.
A cup very full,
Full of honey;
Mead in abundance.
Abundance flowers,
Flowers like Summer.
Summer's inside winter. . . .
Winter's a blanket,
Blanketing the green.
Green under the wet,
Wet is Summer's peace.
Peace up to heaven . . ."

# Cafe Press ADF Store
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*Author Bio for Judith O'Grady:*

*I am a Leaf on the Gods Wind.*

*I am an Irish Descendant and a Celt. One side of my family came from an island in the Far Wild West of Ireland and the other was mostly Welsh people who immigrated to hilly farm country in the New World and stayed there for hundreds of years. I describe this mixture as thinking with my dark Welsh head while feeling with my Black-Irish heart. When I was in my teens, I started researching my roots; reading folklore and history, anthropology and fiction.*

*The Goddess to Whom I am dedicated pushed me to join in public ritual after thirty-odd years of worshipping alone and gradually this led to my being a member of the Ár nDraíocht Féin (ADF), completing their Dedicant's program, and being the Grove Organizer of the local Lake of Oaks Protogrove, ADF. With much less hesitancy I started chatting on forums, blogging and spewing opinions in general, writing essays and finally a small book.*

*My first love is and always will be discussion about ideas.*

Peace up to heaven.
Heaven down to earth.
Earth beneath heaven,
Strength in each...

**To be Humane**
*By JIMI Braun*

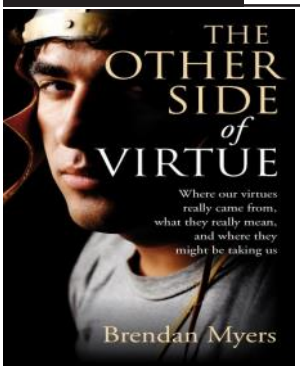
What is it to be "Humane"?
is it a kind friendly hello?
is it dragging a sickly dolphin back to sea?
is it saying prayers for our sick or dying?
is it giving change to the homeless?
is it hunting to thin the herd to prevent over population?
is it putting it out of it's misery after an animal has been shot?
is it to euthanize colonies of feral cats to cut their numbers?
is it relocating animals because we have encroached on their habitat?
is it product testing on mice to help human lives?
is it doing nothing when someone of something is in need of help?
is it extinguishing lives to better your cause?
is it bombing a nation before they bomb yours?

By definition humane is characterized by compassion, sympathy or consideration for humans or animals. But the root of Humane is human and so many of the human race act in contradicting way from the meaning of the word. Much of the human race can not be defined as compassionate or sympathetic and considerate of life, when there is mass extinction, deforestation, and war. I for one will no longer use the word "Humane" when describing acts; the human race is not ready to be defined as such.

# The Other Side of Virtue

**Book Review**

*By Melissa S Burchfield, ADF Master Bard*




The Other Side of Virtue: Where our Virtues really came from, what they really mean, and where they might be taking us

*By Brendan Myers, Ph.D.*

From the beginning Overture where he discusses storytelling and fire to the Fifth Movement were he discusses The Calling of the Immensity, Brendan Myers sweeps his readers through time as though dancing through the minds of the greatest thinkers on virtue and morality of the ages.

This book is laid out in five movements, each weaving a distinct part of the tapestry that ends with a full view of where we are now in terms of moral identity, integrity, love and beauty. The First Movement is a series of quotes: fragments, proverbs and aphorisms that hold snapshots of how a virtuous life and the qualities therein were a part of the societal beliefs of the contemporaries in their time. At fist a seeming hodge-podge of quotations, these pieces move the reader through a general view of the evolution of virtuous thinking.

The Second Movement, then, discusses the Heroic Age ideas of moral behavior. This movement explains truth, honor, trust, loyalty, and integrity and ties them into personal identity and tribal mentality, describing how honor is "the quality that disposes one to act in ways that earn the praise of others. The source of its significance is in communities and friendships, not individual desire…Social bonds are the foundation of personal identity" (Myers 48).

The Third Movement moves on to discuss the "civilized" societies, the cities that evolved after the tribal hierarchy had lost its sway. Here, Myers explains how the virtues of the day morphed into those of courage, prudence, temperance, and justice with an importance on The Great Soul: One who possesses the above virtues as well as Reason which would align oneself to The Divine.

The Fourth Movement begins with discussion of the virtues of the Renaissance Humanism where the human psyche began to really separate itself from the seemingly less sentient beings of nature, thus giving us dominion over the Earth. Myers then moves through Art history, Machiavellian influence, Shakespeare, Romanticism, Nietzsche with flawless ease, ending up with lively discussions of the Heroic Virtues of the Shire and Virtue at Hogwarts to tie everything together for the modern-day mind.

Finally, in the Fifth Movement, Myers tackles the most difficult topics, those of authority, power struggles, and the very thresholds of death. Just when the topics seem darkest, however, Myers ends the book with a discussion of positive reason, love, integrity, and above all else, beauty.

A worthwhile read for any student of psychology, anthropology, or philosophy with an interest in the exploring the social minds of the ages, this book will leave the readers not only with a more well-rounded and solid foundation of a living, breathing knowledge base on virtue and morality through the ages but also with the means to apply the knowledge to modern concepts as humanity continues to evolve. We may appear to live in an egocentric, narcissistic society, but looking deeper will reveal that the media view of the human psyche is hopelessly biased toward a pessimism that simply does not lie at our core.

*Brendan "Cathbad" Myers is a dangerous man. Not only can he think clearly and creatively about some of the most important issues of our time, but he argues passionately and poetically about the need to challenge the dominant paradigms that rule our world."* ~ Rev. Isaac Bonewits, author and founder of Ár nDraíocht Féin

Find him on the web at: http://www.brendanmyers.net/

# Will You Open the Door When Dievas Comes Knocking?

*By Reverend Jean Pagano*

<An Old Man knocks at the door>

Peasant: "Who knocks at my door on this day?"

Old Man: "It is just I, an Old Man", says Dievas in disguise.

Peasant: "Come in Old Man, and share my hearth. Sit down and have some tea with me. Wash up from your journeys, for I can see that you have travelled far. Tell me of your travels, Old Man."

Old Man: "There is not much to tell. I have lived a long time and I walk down a different road every day. My home is nowhere and seemingly everywhere. I am constantly touched by the generosity of people towards an Old Man like myself."

Peasant: "Have you travelled far, Old Man? Your clothing looks worn, yet you seem strong and full of life."

Old Man: "I have been blessed with long life and health and the good wishes of those I meet along the way".

Peasant: "I do not have much, Old Man, but please share my meal with me. It is just myself and my dog and we remain friends as our years accumulate, but you are welcome to share our table and our home as long as you may need."

Old Man: "I will gladly share a meal with you. I am in your debt."

Peasant: "You owe me nothing, if fact, you do me a service by allowing me to share what I have with you. One day, I will be an Old Man and perhaps Dievas will look upon me with kindness in those days. I may not have much, but I have a companion, a roof, and my garden to keep me alive, with the blessings of the Gods. I share those blessings with you, Old Man."

Old Man: "I appreciate your generosity and your kindness. I am sure that Dievas will look favourably upon you. Nothing escapes his view."

<The next morning, upon arising, the Peasant found that the Old Man had gone. A bright, shiny stone was left upon his table.>

Peasant: "What a kind, old man. It was good to have company even for a short time. It feels good to have visitors and quite frankly, I feel good. I feel younger and better than I have in quite some time. And you Dog, you look younger and better than I ever remember. Perhaps it is the beautiful day that awaits us. Let us step outside."

<The peasant steps outside and notices that his garden has erupted into a veritable wealth of vegetables and fruits>

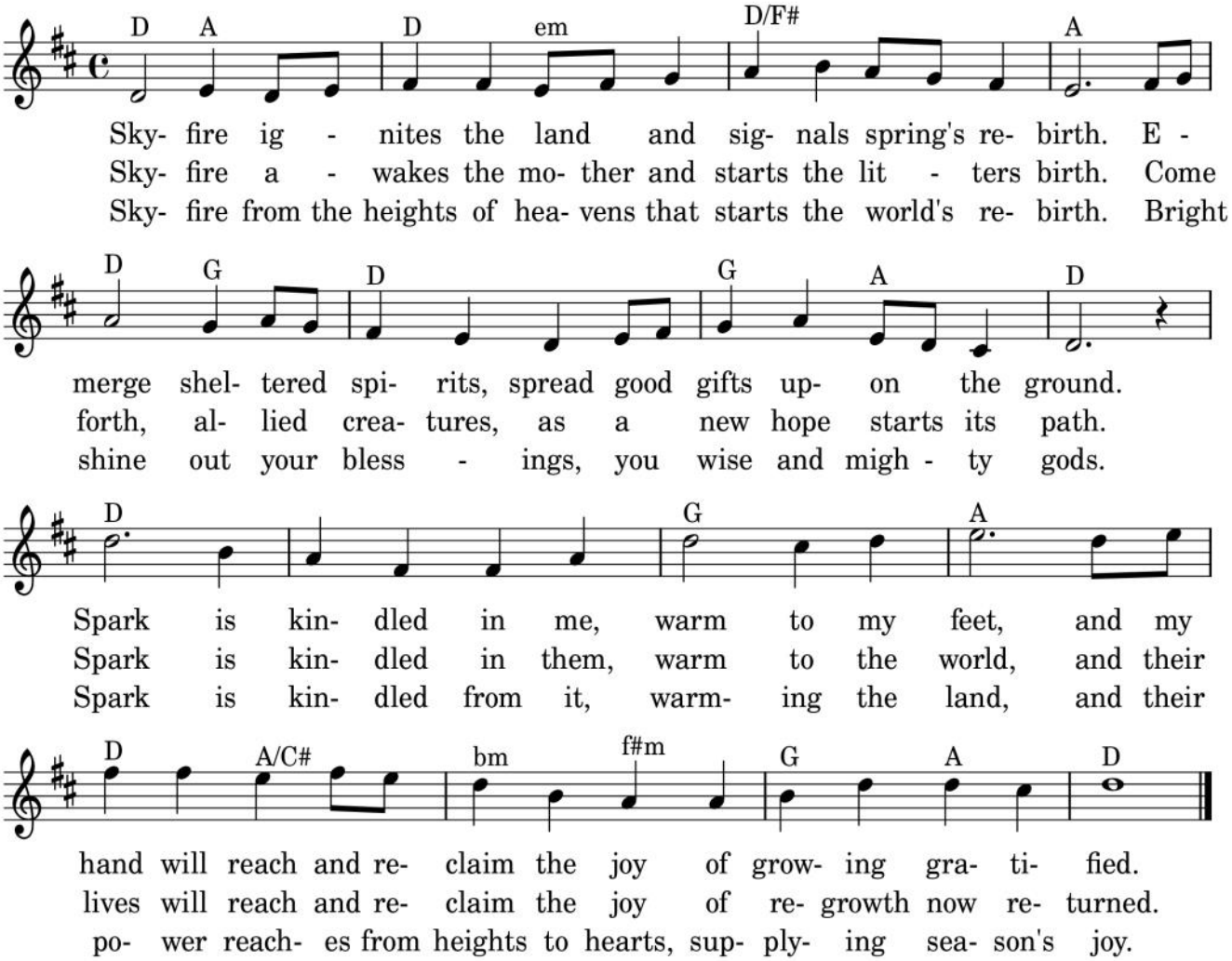
Peasant: "By the generosity of the Gods, Dog, I think there was more to our visitor than we were led to believe. Let us hope that we may greet him and share our table with him again and again for the joy of sharing a moment with Dievas is the greatest harvest of all."

"Strawberries" by Melissa Hill

# Music

## Spark is Kindled

*By Thexalon*




"Continuing with my year of focus on sacred fire, I see the stirrings of spring as the moment when fire has its greatest influence over the world. It is quite magical, really, that with just the sun showing up more often everything from animals to trees (and in many cases, people) begin to take an active part in the world again. When I venture out without a coat for the first time, I often think of how similar I am to the groundhog stepping out after a long winter.

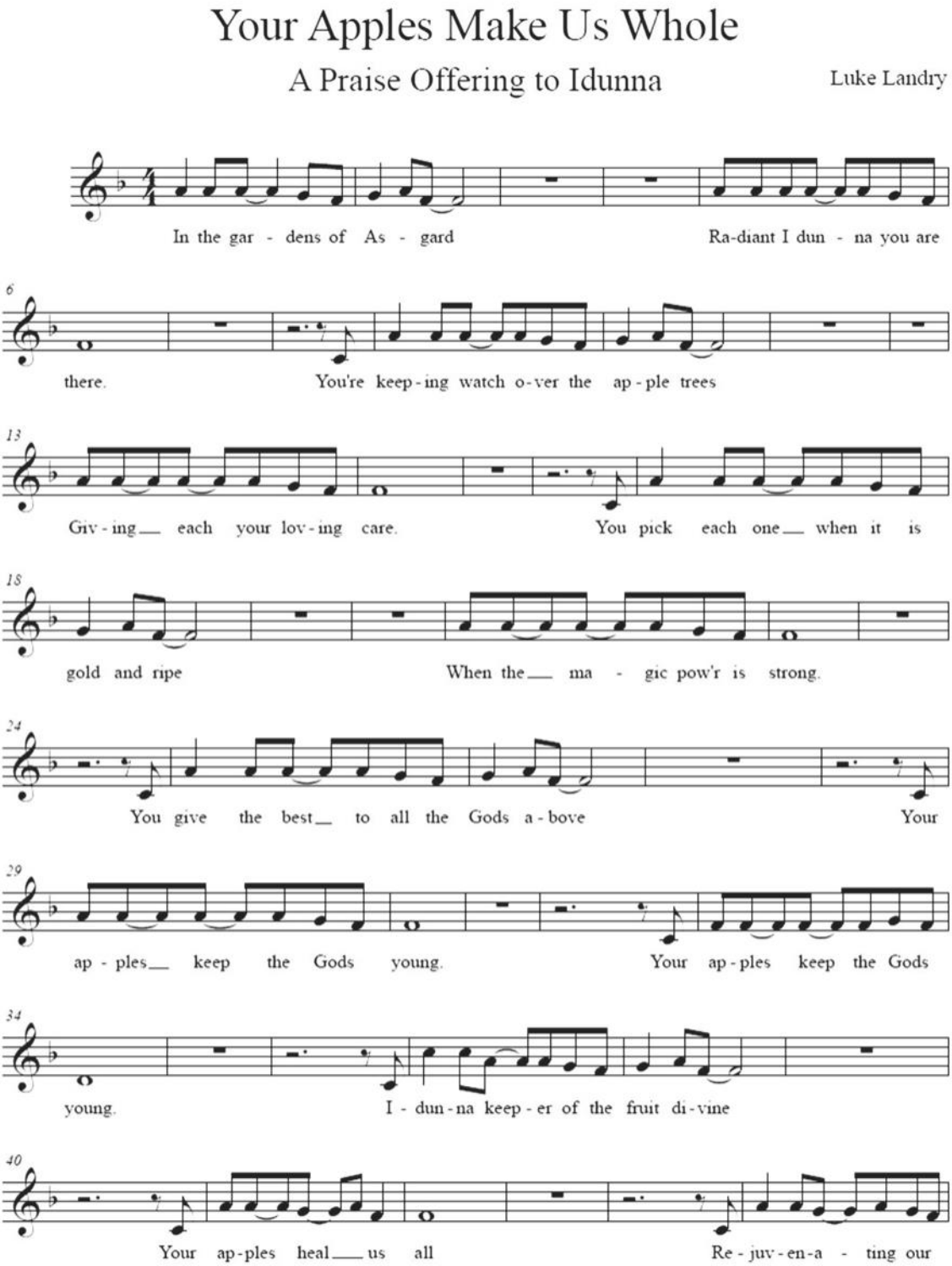
Musically, this should be relatively straightforward, although guitarists will have to contend with some rapid chord changes that keep the energy of the song moving right up to the last note. The pace should be somewhere between a lilting dance and a leisurely walk."

*Author Bio:*

*Dave "Thexalon" Kleinschmidt has been an ADF member since 2008 and a Dedicant since 2011. He regularly writes and performs songs for ADF rites and festivals. In addition, he serves as the Polemarkhos of White Owls Kin (the Hellenic interest group), and as Scribe of Stone Creed Grove.*

# Music: Your Apples Make us Whole

*By Luke Landry*

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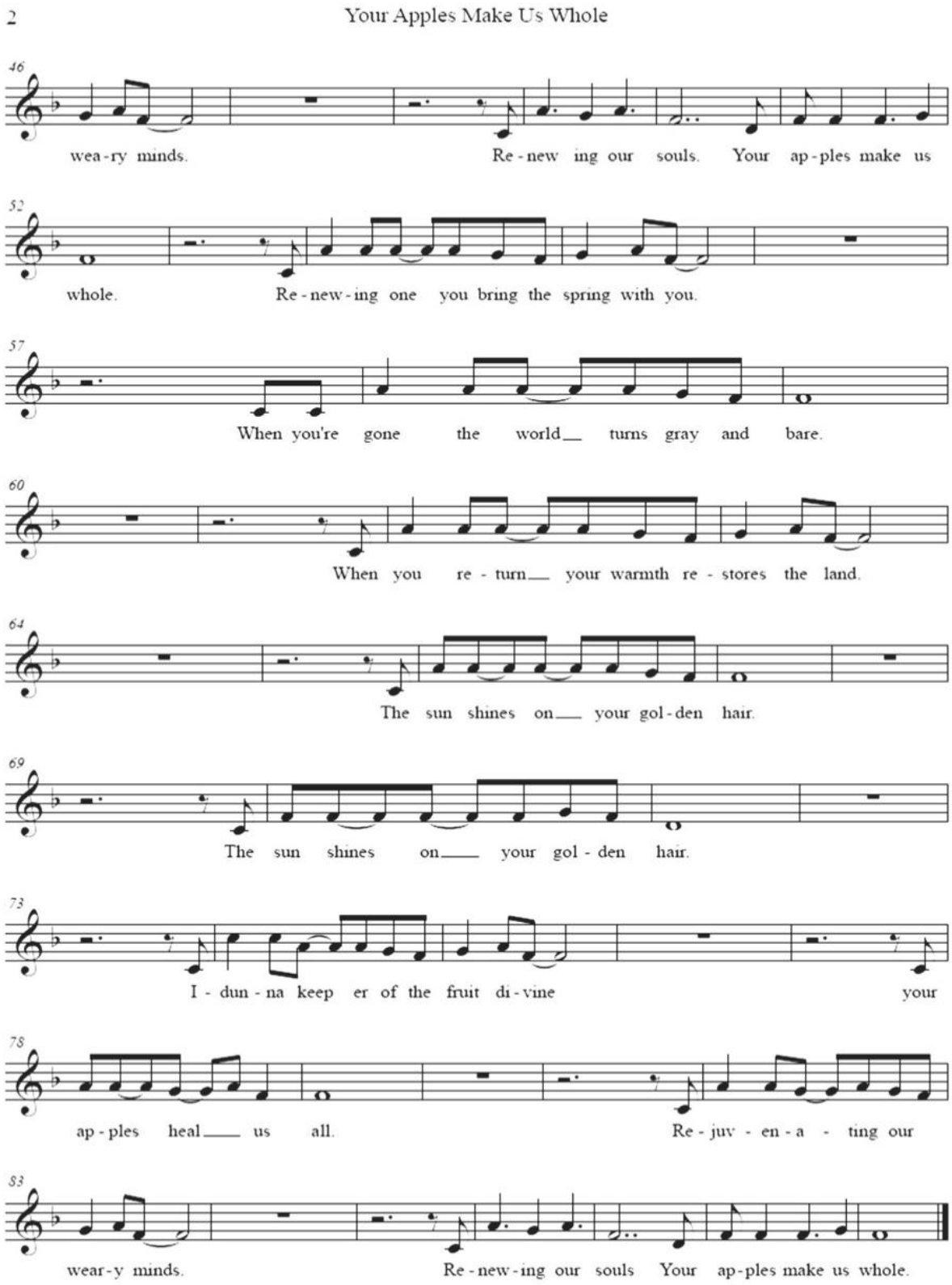



*Luke Landry has been an ADF member since 2010. He is currently serving as Senior Druid of Charter Oak Grove, ADF, and as Archivist of the Bardic Guild. He plays a mean guitar and can be found wandering festivals, spreading musical joy throughout the campgrounds. Find him on YouTube.*

# Poetry

*By Wayne Keysor & Ygraine Willmot*

## Morning's Song

How I love the morning,
when the solid, gray blanket of twilight gives way,

grudgingly at first,
but then with increasing resignation,

until suddenly,
with a magnificent shrug, the whole world is transformed.

Golden fire leaps
from the heavens, and pours down over the muffled shapes below,

until the cup of world
is filled once again to overflowing, ablaze with inner fire,

so common, so startling;
heart of flame that is finally, exquisitely, manifest to the eyes.

And in that moment,
the world starts anew, rising from the ashes of the old,

carried aloft
on shimmering wings of red and gold and pink,

singing to us as it soars:

this is the day to hold someone you love;
this is the day to dance upon the green earth;
this is the day to do better, to be something different;
this is the day, O my children!

- *Wayne Keysor*

**happy 30th birthday, ADF!**
**from Drum**

## May Song

Even after the coming of Christianity to the Europe and the British Isles, May songs (Maienlieder) continue to mark the observance of the returning welcome spring. References to "Master May" defeating winter or to an awakening feminine Earth are common even in 12th Century song lyrics, which indicate the enduring power of the May song to capture folk sentiment that celebrates the spirits turning of the tide to warmth and fecundity. After learning a number of old May songs in German and Latin, I decided to try my hand at writing one of my own.

The last verse alludes to the plough charms of the Saxons like the famous AEcerbot invocation to Erce. The idea that we should wish wholeness on the Earth even as we cleave her with our tools really resonates with me.

The tune I chose is a variant of the Swedish folk tune, "Ramunder." I hope to convert it to music notation at some point, but for now, please enjoy the lyrical poem.

Hurrah for the burgeoning forth of the Spring!
The spell of long Winter is lifted.
Our garlanded Lady awakes from her sleep,
And with her apron of bounty we are gifted.

***

Chorus:
Take my hand and prance to the grove.
Grasp your ribbon fast and dance 'round the pole
On this bright day!

Weaving in and out, to and fro,
Feel yourself entranced as we go,
'Round about way,

And if I give a glance toward the Wood,
As if to say perchance we should,
You know my answer's "Yay!
Hail the new May!"

***

Buds swell and burst, satin petals shower down,
The Greenwood's awash in fragrant flower.
In dark furrows corn seed springs up its
tawny head,
The sun climbs higher every hour.

Chorus

Be whole, Earthmother, though we part you
with the plow,
Be fruitful in the embrace of Sun and Rain.
We leap for joy on your green earth for Summer's
drawing nigh,
The waxing year has come back 'round again.

Chorus

- *Ygraine Willmot*

*"Slumbering Ostara" by Melissa Hill*

# A Norse Oracle Ritual and Meditation

*By Mike Kaan*

This small ritual is geared towards the Norse hearth culture, but it can be modified to include any other Indo-European hearth culture. Also note that this ritual does not include offerings, as I have a separate ritual I conduct weekly in which I sacrifice to the Kindreds. This ritual can easily be adapted to include offerings in addition to the oracle working if one so chooses. Special thanks go to Jeremy Baer for the Three Realms invocation.

Start with 3 Complete Breaths to calm and focus the mind.

> "I come seeking counsel with the Three Kindreds. I come seeking wisdom from the runes."
>
> "Hail to the Fire, from which the worlds were born and to which they shall return. Sacred Fire, burn within me!"

[Place a hand (safely!) near the Fire and feel its warmth.]

> "Hail to the Well, for within the deep pools lie wisdom and fate. Sacred Well, flow within me!"

[Place a finger in the Well and feel the cool water.]

> "Hail to Yggdrasil, the World Tree, to which all the worlds are connected. Sacred Tree, grow within me!"

[Touch the tree with both hands, feeling your connection to the cosmos.]

> "Fire and Ice met in the Yawning Gap and the giant Ymir was born. Odin, Vili, and Ve slew the giant. From Ymir's blood came the Sea, from his skin the Land, and from his skull the Sky. Hail to Odin and his brothers for the creation of the world!"

[Optional: At this point, one might form the inner grove in their mind's eye, with the Hallows forming before you and the Three Realms manifesting around you and beyond.]

> "Hail Mighty Ancestors! Your blood is my blood and you guide me from beyond the shadow of this world. Be with me in my rite!"
>
> "Hail Noble Land Wights! Spirits of forest and field, you guide me along the forest road. Be with me in my rite!"
>
> "Hail Gods and Goddesses of the Aesir and Vanir! You guide me by the light of wisdom from your homes in Asgard. Be with me in my rite!"

[Optional: As each of the Kindreds are invited, you may wish to visualize them approaching your inner grove, ready to give you their advice.]

> "Three Kindreds, I come to you for your wise counsel. My question is this: _____?"

[Let the question linger for a moment and then take up the runes.]

> "Hail Odin, All-Father, Ruler of Asgard! Nine nights you hung from Yggdrasil for the secrets of the runes. Let the Kindreds speak to me. What wisdom do they share?"

[Pull one rune, 3, or 9, depending on the spread you wish to use. Then, breathe deep and meditate on the runes, divining their meaning in relation to the question asked. You could visualize the literal meaning of the runes and their application within your inner grove or you could repeat them as a mantra. You may try any kind of method that works for you in absorbing the message the Kindreds provide.]

> "The Kindreds have spoken and have shared their wisdom."
>
> "Hail to the Gods, the Land Wights, and the Ancestors. Thank you for your presence and counsel. May you depart in peace."

[Optional: To complete the visualization, you may envision the Kindreds departing, with the inner grove being filled with the mists which return you to the present moment.]

> "I go forth with the wisdom of the Kindreds. So be it!"

# Eating with the Seasons

## Reconnection with Nature Through Food

*By Chelly Couvrette*

We live in a world where we eat what we are in the mood for or what we can afford. Things are "in season" according the public all year round as we can get tomatoes in the middle of January as well as fresh domestic meat such as chickens. Some children and adults don't even know that their food comes from a farm, they just know it comes from a grocery store. This type of disconnect allows people to not have to know when the seasons change except by a date on the calendar.

In our communities we do rituals eight times a year in line with the change of the seasons and the mid-points therein. However even some of us who recognize the change of the seasons don't really notice it because of how readily available food is all year round. Sure we know Lughnasadh is the beginning of the grain harvest but we don't know the lack of grains because supplies have run out. We can just go to the grocery store and buy more flour or more pre-baked bread in times when supplies would have started running out depending on the harvest of the year before and how well you budgeted the grains. Berries only keep for so long and wouldn't be able to be eaten fresh in January but we can now because of grocery stores and mass transit of our food.

If you think back, back to the cultures whose gods we revere, back to the times even before electricity. Many people grew their own food and raised their own animals for slaughter. They would have dried and preserved their vegetables and the fruits they could for the winter months. They wouldn't have had things like bananas when they were living in Ireland or Iceland or Britain. Even Canadians would not have had that luxury as they do not grow in the Canadian climate. They would not have had fresh tomatoes in the middle of winter, and much of the fresh domesticated meat would have been eaten up or dried so that it did not spoil. Eating in this manner you would be always checking for the first shoots up from the ground which would signal spring. You would know when certain plants were in fruit. You would eat to what is in season versus what you were in the mood for.

Eating with the seasons allows you to reconnect with the world around you and allows for knowledge of what our fore-bearers had to go through at different times of the year. The chart I use for this type of eating is adapted from the information on http://www.churchofasphodel.org/articles/feast_and_fast.html. I do know that the author of this website has been discredited on certain things however this page makes sense as to when to eat things based on the seasons. The one thing that I modify is that if I find one of the foods at the farmers market as it has come into season early then it is allowed. This works in things that are in season in my area with the chart.

Samhain to Winter Solstice Sacred Foods: Domestic Meat (Beef, Pork, Lamb), Root Vegetables Abstinence Foods: Eggs

*Artist: Diane Watson*

Yule to Imbolc Sacred Foods: Hunted Meat (Turkey, duck, geese, rabbit, venison, buffalo etc.) Root vegetables, Kale, leeks Abstinence Foods: fresh domestic meat, most fresh vegetables, Fish

Imbolc to Vernal Equinox Sacred Foods: Eggs Abstinence Foods: Fresh Domestic Meat, Fresh Vegetables, Chicken, Dairy (hard cheeses are ok)

Vernal Equinox to Beltaine Sacred Foods: Eggs, chicken, milk and dairy products

Abstinence Foods: Domestic Meat, hunted meat, root vegetables

Beltaine to Summer Solstice Sacred Foods: Greens Abstinence Foods: Fruits, beans, soy

Summer Solstice to Lughnasadh Sacred Foods: Fruits (berries and tree fruit) Abstinence Foods: grains (incl. rice), Seeds, Nuts, Seed and Nut oils

Lughnasadh to Autumn Equinox Sacred Foods: Grains (incl. rice), seeds, beans Abstinence Foods: Domestic Red Meat

Autumn Equinox to Samhain Sacred Foods: Above ground vegetables, chicken, nuts, apples Abstinence Foods: hunted meat (turkey, quail, venison etc.)

Each of these seasons matches up with the hunting and farming of the northern climates and would have to be adapted for more southern regions or even the southern hemisphere.

On occasion you will have to deal with food allergies while eating this way. Whether it is due to a child in your home, yourself, or a guest you plan on feeding. Deciding how you are going to handle these things is paramount in keeping to how you feel spiritually while doing this type of eating. Something like Wowbutter could be considered a soy product and used as the abstinence food from Beltaine through Summer Solstice or it could be looked at as a nut product and done from Summer Solstice through Lughnasadh. Personally when I deal with this I regard it as the latter as to me it is a nut product since I cannot actually eat them.

How long you will eat this way is also another story. Some people will choose to eat this way from season to season never eating out of season. For most of us this will be too much and very difficult psychologically when it comes to eating out with friends. One to two weeks on either side of the high days takes up a significant amount of time but also doesn't make you feel like you are on a diet all year long.

Any person choosing to try to eat this way will have their own struggles. What will yours be?

# Poetry: Hidden

*By: Melissa S Burchfield, ADF Master Bard*

Letters, Words,
Written on my heart,
Skin ink stabbed into a fragile countenance.
Each prick awakening the soul
As sensations travel down my spine;
Words echoing through my dreams.

Dust-covered desires are washed new
By waves of emotion
Once wading of a calm pool,
Now roused into a roaring sea.
Desires caught up in a storm of potential,
Of raging, unspoken words
Fighting to find their voice
Amongst the throes of their tumultuous,
Thunderous existence
While the gathering froth whirls round the rocks,
Compelled toward the shore by his breath,
Seeking order to their chaotic dance.

He whispers; he speaks; he shouts,
His voice ebbing and flowing as the tide
Through my consciousness.
The cadence slows, and I hold my breath
In silent anticipation as I am drawn out to sea,
Drowning in longing,
Building, mounting.
The cadence soars and so, too, do I,
Riding the cusp of waves of words as though
I have wings
Ablaze with burning questions ignited by the embers
Of once dormant hopes for what may come to pass,
Even if time-touched moments alone,
Stolen and released once more into the steamy void
between us.

When the words cease, I remain buoyed,
Softly floating on my sea of unrequited love,
Yearning to be washed upon the shore,
Though fearing that I shall remain buried there
As a misplaced or cast away treasure
Shimmering in the sun and
Waiting to be discovered
By he who will marvel to find
Such hidden beauty in the sands.

# After the Dinner Party

## Disposing of Household Offerings

*By Rowen Grove*

Many folk in ADF make offerings to their Deities, Land Spirits, and Ancestors, and this is good and appropriate, part of our **ghosti* relationship with the Kindreds. Offerings of poetry or song, a measure of whiskey or bit of bread given to the Fire, leave no trace, but what should be done with the more physical remains?

I often make offerings of small portions of food or drink at the various shrines around my house, but I do not leave them to decay, any more than I would leave the remains from a dinner party to dry up or rot on the table after the guests have left. It is, of course, sometimes a little easier to determine if human guests have finished with their dessert than it is to tell if one's ancestors or Deities have taken what they wanted from the offering; some Individuals would be offended by anything not perfectly fresh, while others may prefer that strawberry to be left until it grows fur or desiccates away. My own general practice is that edible offerings are left overnight, after which the solid bits are set outside in a particular spot, where the small land creatures (birds, squirrels, etc.) take care of them. Thus far I have not been in the habit of making offerings of substances which would be harmful to these; should the matter arise, I will have to re-evaluate the practice.

Liquids are easier; they are either poured onto the ground in a particular spot, or occasionally released into the "running waters" of my kitchen sink. (It seems to be more acceptable to some Deities to deal with beer or whiskey in this way than with home-brewed mead, but that is my own UPG.) In the case of liquids which are highly alcoholic, I often keep the "used" offerings in a designated small stainless steel bowl for another night before pouring them onto the land, in order for more of the alcohol to evaporate.

Outdoor offerings are a little more direct: if bread or fruit or cornmeal is left at one of my household outdoor shrines, I can be fairly certain that my little land-kindreds will be along to take care of the physical parts. Liquid offerings left out in cups are not poured on the ground until the following day, and in the warm seasons are lightly covered with a loose cloth, largely to avoid drowning the local bees.

All well and good; I am one person, and do not generate large amounts of offering-leftovers. The critters are happy to deal with grain or bits of baked goods, and I feel there is no harm in allowing the birds to peck at a piece of fruit which was an offering. If my land was frequently used by large numbers of folk, and massive amounts of offered foodstuffs accumulated, this might have to be reconsidered, but thus far even the offerings left from a household High Day celebration have not overwhelmed my little visitors.

The accumulation of non-biodegradable offerings also needs to be considered. Candles and incense burn and are gone; wax stubs are kept and added to the next seasonal household fire. Some offerings remain on the altar, often for quite a while, but if one's practice involves, say, offering a small brown pebble to one's Deity nightly, that altar would soon be awash with small brown pebbles, with no room for anything else. While this *may* be what the Deity in question desires, it is not really practical to have an entire room – or house – eventually containing nothing but small brown pebbles, and a renegotiation with one's Deity concerning offerings may be in order. At some point, some offered items will have to be relocated or otherwise dealt with. Polished stones may be placed in outdoor shrines; some things may be burned or deposited in a small offering shaft. The appropriate placing of such objects is between the practitioner and the Deity to Whom the things were offered, but, if they are to be buried or otherwise put into the Land overall, it should be done in a place and manner that will not cause damage.

Offerings made at one's own home in general usually have little impact on the environment as a whole, but what one does with larger offerings, or those made in public places or old sacred sites is another question, and one which will be considered in the future.

# Little Acorns

*By Phoenix Rose, Melissa Hill, and Kathleen Pezza*

**What a Wonderful Spring!**

By: Phoenix Rose (Amy Fleming),
Scribe at Cedar Light Grove
(To the tune of "What a Wonderful World")

I see buds in the trees,
Shoots in the ground.
Birds are singing—
What a beautiful sound!
And I say to myself,
What a wonderful Spring!

I see people planting seeds,
Feel the warm sun on my face,
Watch as gentle rains fall,
All over the place,
And I say to myself,
What a wonderful Spring!

Now there's leaves on the trees,
Eggs hatching, too,
Grass turning green,
And flowers blooming, too.
And I say to myself,
What a wonderful Spring!

Baby animals are born;
They're a wonder to see.
It's a time of hope for you and me.
And I say to myself,
What a wonderful Spring!

**Challenge**

Hey there, acorns! Have you ever written your own song? Sometimes I make up my own words and my own music, but sometimes I just make up new words to a tune I already know. That's what I did in the song above. It's kind of like how "The Alphabet Song," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," and "Baa, Baa Black Sheep" are. They have the same tune, but different words.

So, here is your challenge: Write some songs for *Oak Leaves*. You can write your own music and words or just change the words to a song you already know. You can write a song about a season, a High Rite, a festival, Sacred Earth, one of the Kindred, etc. We can't wait to read it!

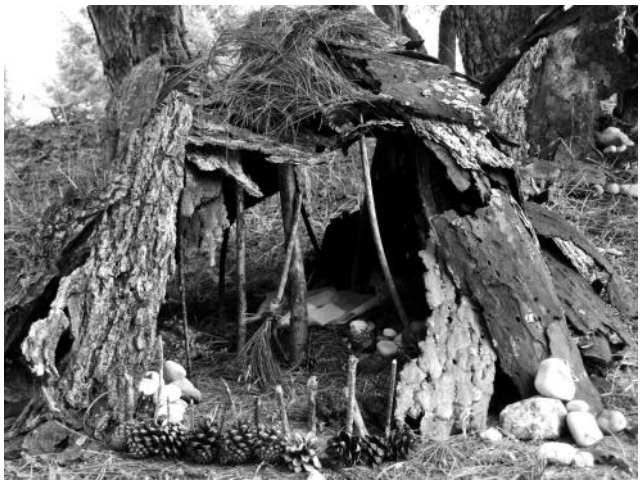
**Fairy Houses with Cedarsong Grove**

My daughters and I have been building fairy houses for years now. We make our houses out of grass, bark, rocks, flowers and whatever we can find. What we don't use are plastic things, glue, tape, or anything that doesn't biodegrade. Usually we don't use any human things. These are not the adorably cute little houses that you will find in books or calendars. As cute as those are, when we make our fairy houses part of the point is to use the materials we find, and combine our time and creativity in making something special.

We do make exceptions for string. Everybody likes string. Even nature spirits.

We have spent many pleasant hours carefully balancing bark for a roof, using grass and pine needles to make a broom, or carefully arranging white stones up a tiny path. We've even occasionally had visitors, such as when a friendly toad stopped by for a visit.

It's easy to start. Just gather some materials. Twigs pushed into the ground make a good start, grass or bark creates walls, and then just let your creativity guide you. It's a nice touch to leave a small food offering in your new fairy house. It's just good hospitality.



**Dancing with the Dawn**

I am a hard polytheist. This means that I believe there are many deities. Not that there are many aspects of one deity or that there are two deities who have many facets. I think that there are powers out there. I see them. I walk on the Earth Mother and breathe with the Sky Father. One in particular comes once a day in the early morning and she's changed my life.

The Dawn. I call her by her Lithuanian name: Aušrinė. It wasn't my plan. I didn't pick her out of a book and think, "Yep, that's the goddess that's going to rock my world."

She is a Goddess of liminality. She is a dancer on the edge between darkness and light. The thin red dividing line between day and night. In the lore she has many forms: the morning star, a human girl, the sea mare, and the dawn itself, which is her hair.

*Liminal defined:*

1. *of or relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.*
2. *occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.*

Liminality is challenging sometimes. One thing I've learned about being devoted to the Dawn is that my life is often going to be in liminality. I might go so far as to say that at least in some aspect it seems I must at all times be in some sort of liminal state, but that would by it's very definition say something was permanent. That would be unacceptable.

We all find ourselves in liminal circumstances. Everyone has moments of transition when they're not quite one thing or another. Often those moments are times of stress. Marriage, birth, and death are all liminal spaces, as are the smaller transitions of life such as a new job or a new friend. I honor those changes with my words and deeds.

I'm not naturally good at transitions. It's something I'm learning from her. I often think of myself as rather hobbit like. I like to stay at home, tend my garden, paint, craft, and cook. If you've ever watched the Disney variant of Rapunzel,

*Tangled*, I could live in that tower as long as it had a rooftop garden.

So it's sort of hilarious that a goddess of liminality would choose me. At the same time, Aušrinė is faithful in her work. Though she brings transition and change she does so each and every day without fail. The stories tell that she tends the Sun's fire every morning, readying Saulė's chariot and opening the gates of dawn. She does the work that must be done, without fail, because if she didn't the order of the world would delve into chaos.

> O little Sun, God's daughter,
> Who kindled the fires in the morning?
> Who kindled the fires in the evening?
> Who made your bed for you?
>
> O Morning and Evening Star!
> The Morning Star my fire.
> The Evening Star my bed.
> Many kinsmen have blessed me,
> And many are my treasures!

I don't think the order of the world would fail if I didn't cook breakfast for my kids. But I do know that my family depends on me, as Aušrinė's family depends on Her. Some days it's hard to get up and get it done. I find that if I view my daily work as a practice to honor Her it helps me and gives me strength. I sing when I work and I feel the connection that I have to Her.

When we look at the lore, we see some of the ambivalence that people felt toward this beautiful and liminal goddess. In the Lithuanian tradition, much of what we know comes from the *dainas* or sacred folk songs. These songs preserved the knowledge of their pagan forebears. Here's a second *daina* that is one of the best preserved myths in the Lithuanian lore:

> The Moon wedded the Sun
> In the first springtime.
> The Sun rose in the Dawn,
> The Moon abandoned her,
> Wandered alone, afar,
> And loved the Morning Star.
> Angered, Perkunas thundered
> And cleft him with a sword:
> -How could you dare to love
> the Daystar, drift away
> In the night alone, and stray?

Menulis is the god of the moon and there are many songs and stories about him as the young fickle god who wanders away from the sun goddess Saulė with her daughter Aušrinė. Perkunas is the thunder god and he is very serious about upholding the rules of the gods. In this song we have an explanation about why the moon appears damaged, but we also have a message about the complicated relationship the gods and goddesses have with each other.

In working with her I've developed a number of devotional practices for her:

I dance for her. I let the drums take my body and move me. I let the self that organizes and thinks and reads fade away and all that is left is the me that moves when She is there. In the infinite present moment I find her. Dancing is associated with both the sun and the dawn, particularly on midsummer evening and morning.

I create for her. Like the fire she tends, I tend my creative fire. Like love, I find that allowing myself to experience creativity opens me to even more creative experiences. Creativity is one of those things where there is an endless abundance of it when I let it into my life. I paint and draw, but I also experiment with materials and ways of creating. In particular, I often find myself working with the Earth Mother in this aspect of my practice, searching for more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways to express my vision and my creative impulses.

I heal for her. For those of you who are familiar with Brighid, this is all beginning to sound pretty familiar, isn't it? I personally think that Brighid and Aušrinė have a lot in common. I could see them getting along pretty well. Cosmic BFFs if you know what I mean. Another story of Aušrinė tells how she was there at the creation of the world. It was said that she has three forms, the sea mare, the maiden, and the morning star. As such, she is connected to the sea, land, and sky. When I do my healing work, whether it is with herbs, words, or a laying on of hands, I let myself sink into that triple connection, allowing my self to reflect that ordering of the cosmos. When I am in that space the words flow freely and my hands feel how the energy should flow.

Most days I sing a song in the morning. When I'm doing really well I sing it at dawn. Sometimes I sing it while cooking breakfast. Sometimes I sing it while I'm driving the kids to school. One of the wonderful things I've found in this adventure with a goddess is that by learning about the lore and bringing it into my own life I have been given such gifts. I never sang before, but I do now. I dance now. I draw strength and happiness from my devotional practices and the best part is that I can share all that with others. May you each find the gods or goddesses that call best to you so that you too may share your adventures.

**Bibliography:**


Greimas, Algirdas J. Of Gods and Men. Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1992.

Landsbergis, Algirdas and Mills, Clark ed. The Green Linden. New York: Voyages Press, 1964.


*Author Bio:*

*Rev. Melissa Hill is an ADF Priest and Senior Druid of Cedarsong Grove, ADF. Her interests are wide-ranging, but she is best known for her art, her loyalty, and a slightly shy smile. She can most often be found with her nose in a book, or dancing around a fire to honor the moon at midnight. She deeply enjoys darkened nemetons and mead halls with the right company. If you listen, you can here the swan song sung by her spirit in the light of the moon.*

**Songs for Kids**

*She's Got the Whole World in Her Hands*

She's got the whole world in her hands,
She's got the rivers and the mountains in her hands,
She's got the oceans and the seas in her hands,
She's got the whole world in her hands.
She's got everybody here in her hands,
She's got everybody there in her hands,
She's got you and she's got me in her hands,
She's got the whole world in her hands.

*There's Water in the Well*
*(Farmer in the Dell)*
There's water in the Well
There's water in the Well
Hi-ho, the derry-o
There's water in the Well
The water's cold and dark
The water's cold and dark
Hi-ho, the derry-o
The water's cold and dark

*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Fire*
*(Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)*

Twinkle, twinkle little Fire
As we sing you rise up higher
Little flame, warm and bright
A tiny piece of holy light
Twinkle, twinkle little Fire
As we sing you rise up higher

*Big, Green Tree (Three Blind Mice)*

Big, green tree
Big, green tree
You are so tall
You are so tall
You reach the sky with your branches high
Your roots dig into the ground nearby
You are the link between earth and sky
Big, green tree

*Rev. Kathleen Pezza is responsible for these "filked" versions of beloved children's songs. Kathleen has a deep and gentle personal practice that inspires the hearts of all who know her.*

"Sundial" by M.A. Bassett

# CedarLight Grove, ADF

***Current Witan:***

**Senior Druid:** Ashley Bryner - ashley@cedarlightgrove.org
**Vice Senior Druid:** Taryn Lyon - taryn@cedarlightgrove.org
**Pursewarden:** Crystal Groves - crystal@cedarlightgrove.org
**Scribe:** Amy Fleming - amy@cedarlightgrove.org
**Members Advocate:** Lynda Hardy - lynda@cedarlightgrove.org
**Senior Druids Emeritus:** None


## 10 YEARS WORTH OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

**2013 marks the 10 year mark of when we started keeping track of our Community Service Activities at CedarLight Grove, ADF, and that ADF started taking in the quarterly reports for us to archive this information.**

**In 2006, CedarLight Grove, ADF was presented, along with three other groups, the first of the annual "Founders Awards" presented by ADF for those Grove's who perform outstanding community service, especially towards Hurricane Katrina Relief.**

**We have kept up the steam of our quarterly community outreach requirements, alternating our High Days between Community Service and Fundraising Events.**

**View our list of Community Service Activities on our Website:**

***http://www.cedarlightgrove.org/events/community-service/***

## "AS FEATURED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES"

**In September 2013, we were visited by a writer for the "In the Garden" section of the New York Times paid us a visit to discuss our permanent nemeton owned by CedarLight Grove, ADF Inc. The piece recieved a lot of positive commentary throughout the pagan community. We've also received several local inquiries from people who had read the article but never heard of us. or ADF.**

***"Out in the yard, the Druids will circle around their World Tree, a green ash that connects the underworld, the heavens and the mortal realm. The officiants will make offerings at the "well" (here, an enamel bowl: the last thing the yard needs is a mosquito pond). And they will recite bardic tales around the fire. "***

**We were very fortunate that Michael Tortorello came to us with an open mind and inquisitive nature. And now we can say "As Featured in the New York Times".**

**Keep up with this and more of the shenanigans we are up to on our Facebook:**

**https://www.facebook.com/cedarlightgrove**

www.cedarlightgrove.org

# What are You Doing for Eastre?

*By Earrach of Pittsburgh*

**Have you been asked this year?**

It seems so often that we're innocently approached by our coworkers or relatives not aware of our religious affiliations as if, as usual, everybody in the world is a good Christian, or at least one among those of the God-fearing Xmas n' Easter variety...

Well, but hey, wait !

- W H Y - N O T ?

Just like YULE, the word "EASTER" hain't got diddly to do with anything Christian anyway...

Yep, if we'd just give up on that optional "Ostara" spelling** (it's always sounded too californi-cosmic for my tastes anyway) and go with the flow and get adjusted to the very old and non-christian word "EASTER," we'd start getting our point across, A.) to ourselves, and B.) to the rest of them. Yep, if we spell it in the archaic form Eastre and use the common pronunciation or something very close, we could, just as we've all been doing with Yule, begin reclaiming its power as "one of ours-in-the-first-place!" Yes, EASTER is not a Christian word...

Only Christians speaking English or German use that name for the celebration of Christ's resurrection. ALL the other languages use some variant of "Pascha". For all we know, the Dark-Ages missionaries from the British-Isles christianized the continent and brought the custom of using the old pagan name for spring/ dawn with them from England. Of course, in our local Neopagan tradition, our Eastre is celebrated at the Vernal Equinox itself, not, like their "Easter", the date of which they figure from the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox (Eeeww! It sounds just so "heathen", doesn't it?).

**On a fixing a Neopagan THEME for the VERNAL EQUINOX**

For over ten years now Sassafras Grove ADF has done a Vernal Equinox liturgical theme honoring the "Nerthus" Earth-Mother from the Celto-Germanic traditions of around 2000 years ago. The account we have of these traditions comes from the writings of Tacitus the Roman. Tacitus was writing about the people the Romans called "Germans". In that time such distinctions were simply geographic territories, often defined by the Romans themselves. Whereas we have a notion of things "German" nowadays, many historians and archaeologists have come to agree that the cultural and linguistic distinctions were much less well defined then than they are now. Therefore they treat these territories as being essentially what they'd call "Late le Tene-Celtic" or perhaps even "Celto-Germanic". As Isaac Bonewits always said though, this is apparently the case with "most" modern scholars, "...except the German ones! " ;-)

> *"They have in common the worship of NERTHUS, that is Mother Earth. They believe She is interested in humanity's affairs and drives about among them. On an island in the Ocean sea there is a sacred grove wherein waits a holy wagon covered by a drape. One priest only is allowed to touch it. He can feel the presence of the Goddess when She is there in Her sanctuary and accompanies Her with great reverence as She is pulled along by kine. It is a time of festive holiday-making in whatever place She deigns to honour with Her advent and stay. No one goes to war, no one takes up arms, in fact every weapon is put away: only at that time are peace and quiet known and prized until the Goddess, having had enough of the people's company, is at last restored by the same priest to her temple. After which, the wagon and the drape, and if you are like to believe me, the deity Herself are bathed in a mysterious pool..."*

Particularly noteworthy for us is the fact that of the seven tribes named by Tacitus as sharing the Nerthus traditions, only three are recognizable to modern scholars(1.), and one of them is very familiar, the "Angli": that is, the "Angles",

progenitors of the Anglo-Saxons to emerge hundreds of years later.

## OUR LOCAL NERTHUS TRADITION

There are no actual historical connections that I am aware of for fixing the honoring the Earth, Magna Mater, Nerthus, Gaia, etc. at or around the time of the Vernal Equinox (She is with us all year-round of course...). In our work it has just seemed very sensible to do so and it has become our custom. A rich expression of this current, unique to our group, is the tradition of burying our oaken Nerthus-idol every year in the ground of someone's garden at the very moment of the Autumnal Equinox and then leaving her there until we unearth Her again six months later, at the very moment of the Vernal Equinox. Once dug up we carefully bathe her and anoint her with fragrant oils and, in keeping with Tacitus' story, we then set her up in her little wagon and she goes "abroad among the people" throughout our community, visiting our various home shrines and traveling with us to visit other groves through the six months she spends "topside" every year.

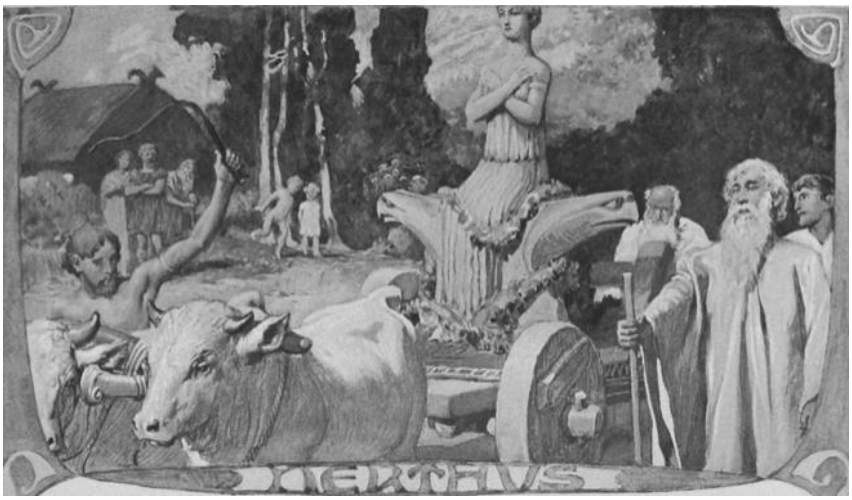
## HONORING EASTRE, an alternate Vernal Equinox theme…

Another yet still legitimately Northern / Central European based theme could be an equinox rite to EASTRE Herself (- Eostre, Ostre, etc.). It's the same word as "Easter" and it's at least as legitimate as the word "Yule" is for us to reclaim it as "one of ours". It's very likely the word may have been used by the pre-Christians to mean springtide and has no linguistic connections to the terminology of Christianity whatsoever. As a goddess of beginnings, spring, the dawn, and/or the east, She can be called upon as a highly appropriate alternative to Nerthus as the deity-of-the-occasion, especially when scheduling calls for our public event to fall just before the actual equinox. The theme of the dawn-goddess Eastre's promise of Nerthus' immanent rising fits perfectly. Why, with the inescapable eggs, bunnies, crocuses, the works - - there's no real stretch there, eh?

### But was this "EASTRE" really worshiped as a goddess?

As to who Eastre "was", and even as to who may have worshipped her and when? Honestly, that stuff is very unclear. As a matter of fact, you'd be safe to trust no source that even mentions her as a "goddess" with any surety - She's that archaic. Other than one brief citation in Bede's de Temporum Ratione (8th Century), there are I believe no accounts in the ancient record by contemporaries referring to Her as an actual goddess being worshipped by their own people or others within memory. The roots of why She is generally counted by scholars as probably having been a deity are more linguistic than anything else. Eastre may have meant "the Beginning" (of life; i.e., the "dawn" thereof) yet we don't know which came first: Eastre the goddess –or- Eastre, a word for "Springtide".

The Christians fixed the Feast of the Passion and Resurrection from connections in their story with Passover. The Jews set the date of Passover from the first full moon after Vernal Equinox. Somewhere in the first 1000 years of Christianity the "paschal" theme became synonymous with this time of year - hence the Christians' appropriation of the totally non-Christian word eastre from the Germanic tongues of which English is a member. You will find that all of the non-Germanic languages of Europe have "pascha" as the root of their name for the feast of Christ's resurrection with no sign of anything like "easter" at all. Some recent readings have suggested that the reason for this is that in the "Dark Ages", while the continental missions had actually failed and their territories had largely lapsed back into paganism, it was a second



"Nerthus" by Emil Doepler

wave of Anglo-Saxon Christian missionaries from Britain who finally established the ongoing foothold in Germany, using the far more successful strategies of the insular church. These Anglo-Saxon monks brought with them the custom of using the term "Eastre" from their vernacular and it stuck. To this day, only the English-speaking peoples and the Germans refer to the Christians' Feast of the Resurrection with a word that bears any resemblance to "Easter".
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* * "OSTARA" - a form found everywhere these days in Wiccan literature but actually not found in the ancient record. The word Ostara was first suggested in the 1840's by the Brothers Grimm as their speculation of how it -may- have been spelled in ancient Germany. Bede's citation (730 C.E.) of the name Ostre or Eastre seem to be the oldest historical mention to be found, yet he does not give the "ostara" spelling.

# To One Gone Before

A Poem for my Ancestors
*By Melissa S Burchfield, ADF Master Bard*

Gentle child of radiant light,
Eostre's kiss upon thy brow,
Stretching limbs of green and white
As leaves appear on every bough.

Sweet and gentle breeze of spring
Caress awake the flowers blooms.
Returning birds in thine ears ring
As gentle rains do kiss the tombs

Of Ancients who have gone before,
Mothers, Fathers, kin and friend.
Names recalled in mind and lore
To guide us through to winter's end.

Where art thou, my love, my life?
Gone as with the snow and gloom.
Whence will thee return, my wife?
When death becomes thy patient groom.

## The Morrigan & the Crow

By: Phoenix Rose

Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree
Morrigan, Morrigan, listen to me
If wisdom you seek from the sisters three,
Morrigan, Morrigan, follow me

Take control of your life with sovereignty
Balance light and dark and then you will see
Respect Sacred Earth and live in harmony
Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree

Macha, Badb, and Anu make the sisters three
To the Cave of Cruachan follow me
Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree
Morrigan, Morrigan, follow me

Birth, death, and rebirth are all under me
Change is the one true constancy
Gaze into my cauldron and learn my mysteries
Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree

Guidance and protection you have from me
But know that growth is never easy
And work you must if you follow me
Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree

Morrigan, Morrigan, said the crow on the tree
Morrigan, Morrigan, listen to me
If wisdom you seek from the sisters three,
Morrigan, Morrigan, follow me

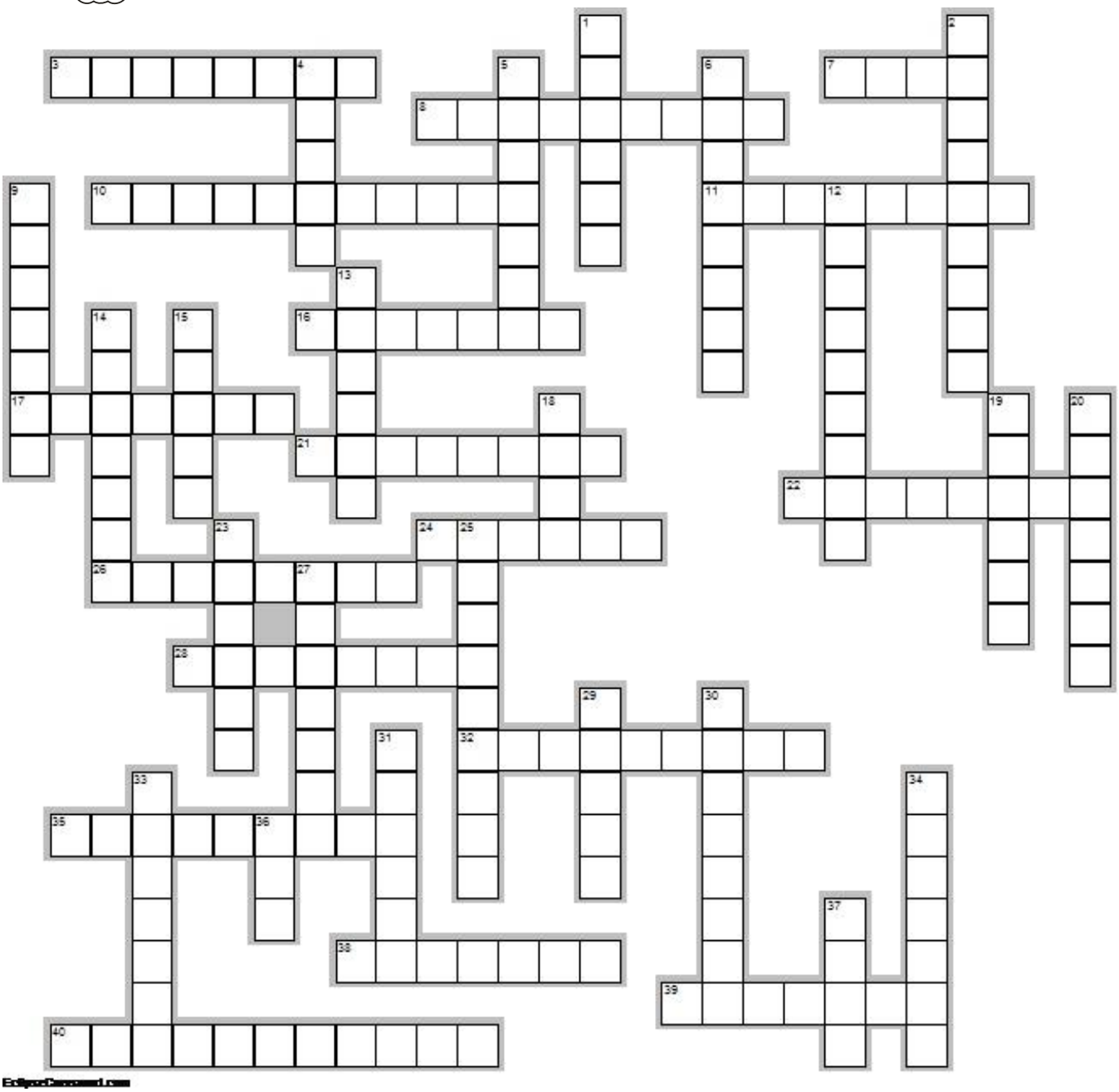
Hail the Morrigan!

*Amy Fleming (Phoenix Rose) has been a member of ADF and Cedar Light Grove since Samhain 2011. She completed her Dedicant's Program in early 2013 and is now working on the GSP, IP, and several Guild Study Programs. She currently serves as Scribe at CLG.*

# Crossword Puzzle

## Heroes and Heroines

*By Chris:)*



# Across

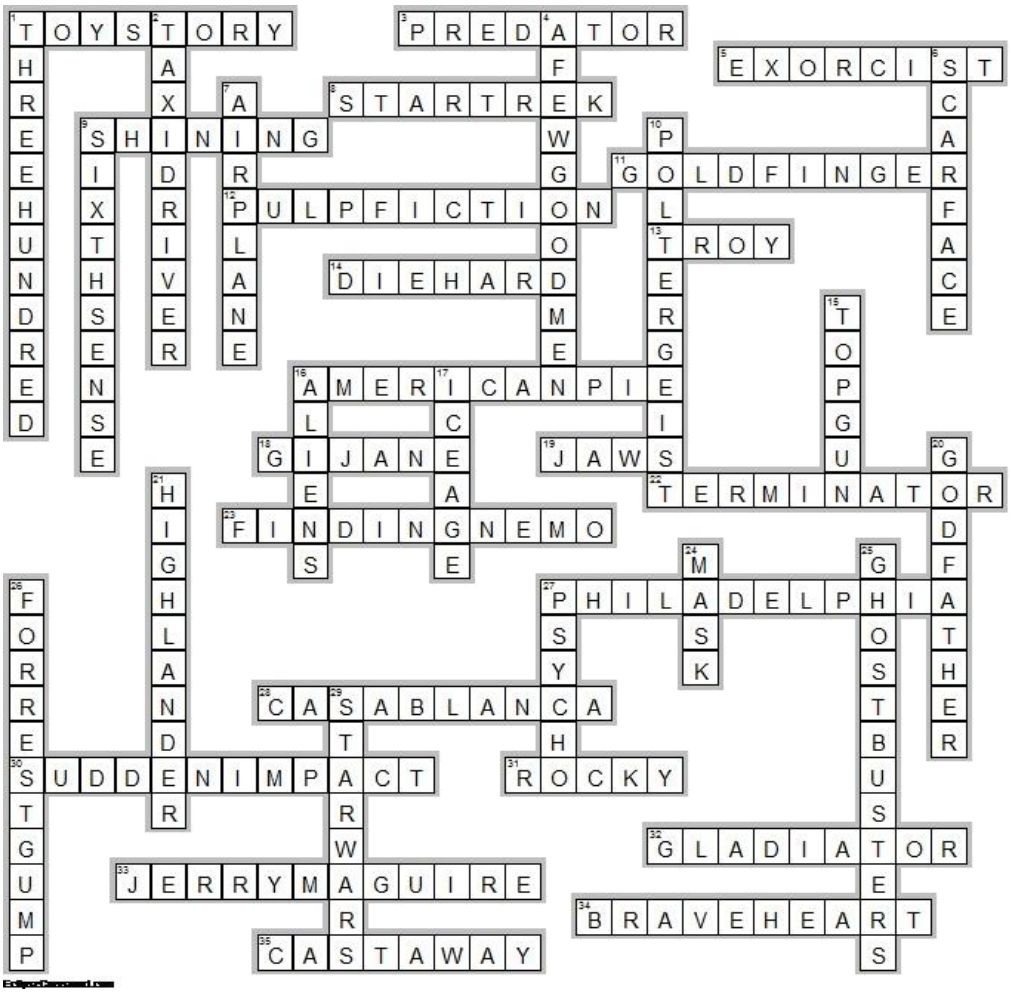
3. Ancient Greek warrior
7. Warrior princess
8. Famous Thracian Gladiator
10. Famous Lakota Indian Chief
11. E=MC2
16. 16C Italian Astronomer
17. Disappeared July 2 1937 (last)
21. Lives in Neverland
22. ___of the 12 labors
24. Historical female sharpshooter

26. "Truth, Justice and the American way"
28. King of Sparta
32. Steals from the rich & gives to the poor (2wds)
35. She led a French army
38. No. 99
39. Painted the Mona Lisa
40. The lady with the lamp (last)

# Down

1. British King who defeated the Saxons
2. Modern Buddhist leader (2wds)
4. Captain America actor
5. 14th century Scottish hero (last)
6. Author 'Meditations'
9. Philanthropist talk show hostess
12. Jedi from Tatooine
13. A wonderful life George_____
14. Killed Medusa
15. WW2 Diary writer
18. Co-founder National Woman's Party
19. Navy Leader Horatio___
20. Father of Microbiology
23. Famous Nun
25. That's one small step...
27. Anti-Apartheid Activist
29. Princess of Wales
30. Iceni Queen
31. Prince of Troy
33. Modern theoretical Physicist
34. 4C Female Alexandrian scholar
36. The 'angel of prisons'
37. I have a Dream... (last)

# Last Issue Puzzle Key



# Druid Moon Casts

*By Nick Eglehoff*

A year ago I was watching a show on the Geek & Sundry channel (on YouTube) called "StoryBoard": a sort of "virtual round table" discussion led by author Patrick Rothfuss, it was done using Google+'s Hangouts on Air feature and the thought occurred to me that that would be a great way to do ritual with practitioners from disparate areas of the country and world. Granted, it probably wasn't the most novel of ideas (I remember reading about chaotes performing rituals in IRC chat rooms back in the early Nineties), but it seemed like a good way to not only get new content on ADF's YouTube channel, but also educate new members and the general public about ADF ritual (what it's like, the prat-falls and pit-falls that happen even to seasoned ritualists, etc.).

So, I petitioned the Mother Grove to find out who controlled the ADF YouTube channel in order to query them about their willingness to partner up on such a project and found myself quickly tasked with working on ADF's presence on Google+ and working on ideas to re-vitalize the YouTube channel. Over the following months I cobbled together a basic ritual script to use for this new medium and gathered together a core group of liturgists (Rev. Rob Henderson, Diane Emerald Bronowicz, Rodney Cox, and Missy Burchfield, among others) to help me work out the kinks. On Saturday, November 9th the first of the "Druid Moon Casts" (as they become dubbed) went live with only...a few technical difficulties, but has generally been acclaimed as both successful and greatly appreciated by those of the membership who participated.

The Druid Moon Casts are intended to be a monthly event for various members and groups within ADF to not only perform ritual together, but to experiment, to learn, and to expand the circle of our community even wider by the new means of communication that the Internet has provided us. Along with the Druid Moon Casts, I hope to eventually get round table discussions with ADF members and leadership, various types of "music" (drumming, didgeridoos, etc.) for trance work, and festival reviews up on the YouTube channel, as well. But, as with many things, progress will be clocked at the rate of a speeding oak as everyone involved juggles family life, day jobs, and works to their utmost to make sure that any content is done with quality.

*Author Bio:*

*Nick Eglehoff is currently serving as the Chief of the Eldr Ok Isse Kin and has completed his DP, GSP, and IP programs. A dapper gent, Nick can be found admiring a good brew, delving into obscure topics, or tinkering with any number of techno-gadgets and programs just to see what they do. He has an unfortunate penchant for penguins and monocles.*

# News and Announcements

## Dedicant Path Completions

**Adrian Columbia**
Solitary
Date Completed: September 2013

**Lauren Neuman**
Solitary
Date Completed: October 2013

## Generalist Path Completions

**Thomas Brown**
Generalist path
Date completed: September 2013

## New Protogrove & Grove Approvals

**Prairie Shadow Protogrove, ADF**
Omaha, NE
Date Founded: September 14, 2013

**Protogrove of the Whispering Spirits, ADF**
Appleton, WI
Date founded: October 31, 2013

**Sandia Mountain Grove, ADF**
Albuquerque, NM
Date of Charter: October 31, 2013

**White Hawthorn Grove, ADF**
Columbia, MO
Date of Charter: October 31, 2013

**Cedarsong Grove, ADF**
Lansing, MI
Date of Full Charter: October 31, 2013

**Star of the North Protogrove, ADF**
Cottage Grove, MN
Date founded: December 2, 2013

**~ Congratulations to all ! ~**

## Upcoming Events

**PantheaCon**
February 14 -17, 2014
San Jose, CA.

**ConVocation**
February 20-23, 2014
Detroit MI

**Trillium Spring Gathering**
April 17-21, 2014
Cross Junction, VA

**WellSpring Gathering**
May 22-27, 2014
Sherman, NY

**Spirit of the West Druid Gathering**
June 13-15, 2014
Sylvan Lake Alberta Canada

**www.adf.org/events for information**

## ADF News

As of **January 4, 2014** regular memberships will now cost **$30** per year.

All memberships will now be paperless receiving only a membership card.

Membership Guide and Dedicant's Path will be available for reading or printing on the ADF website for free or hard copies may be purchased at the ADF Store.

# 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' Adelmann | john.adelmann@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** | Rev. 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**

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 . 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 @ $30/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:

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# Trillium is Coming!

## April 17th-20th, 2014

TLC Campground, Cross Junction, VA

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