

*Camp Bonnie Brae in Otis, MA  
October 24-October 26, 2014  
[www.charteroakadf.org/harvestnights](http://www.charteroakadf.org/harvestnights)*

# *Harvest Nights Gathering*

*Lake views, wooded trails, huge gathering room with big fireplace, meal plan included (vegan & gluten free options available (potluck for Friday night dinner), Saturday night ritual.*

**OAKLEAFS**

Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin The Quarterly

Fall 2014 ~ Issue No. 66





## Table of Contents

### Features

<i>Going Beyond Tradition in the Core Order of Ritual: Recreating the Cosmos and Opening the Gate(s)</i> by B.J. Rogers .....	2
<i>Grove-ing Pains: Planting the Seeds of Fellowship</i> by Lily Blum .....	10
<i>Slavic Blessing Rite</i> by Diane “Emerald” Bronowicz and Michelle Handa .....	16
<i>A New Online Music Course for ADF Members</i> by Janet McCandlas .....	22
Book Review: <i>The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees</i> by Ceisiwr Serith .....	25
<i>Artisan’s Guild Competition Wellspring 2014</i> by Amy Castner .....	26
2014 Bardic Chair Competition Results .....	28
<i>Celebrating the Ancestors with Children</i> by Jan Avende .....	31
<i>Website Review</i> by Rev. Robb Lewis .....	33

### Columns

Archdruid: <i>The Flames of Unity</i> by Rev. Kirk Thomas .....	2
<i>Ian’s Little Room—A Personal Column on Magic Arts</i> by Ian Corrigan .....	38

### Departments

Crossword Puzzle: .....	36
ADF News .....	41
Directory .....	42

### Arts

Story: <i>365 Days of Discovery</i> by Rev. Jean Pagano .....	12
Poetry: <i>Lughnassadh Toast</i> by Phoenix Rose .....	21
Poetry: <i>A Prayer of Offering to Lugh</i> by G.R. Grove .....	24
Poetry: <i>Compert Mongáin</i> by G.R. Grove .....	24
Poetry: <i>The Wine Flows</i> by Diane “Emerald” Bronowicz .....	27
Poetry: <i>Moments before the Second Battle of Mag Tured</i> by Wayne Keysor .....	32
Poetry: <i>WÆELCYRGE</i> by Finn MacMillan .....	32

**Publisher:** Selene Tawny

**Editor-in-Chief:** Rev. Melissa S Burchfield

**Managing Editor:** Bill Thomas

**Editors:** Jay Foulds, Deb Field, Bill Thomas, Grey Catsidhe, Brenda Lively, Donald “Domhn” Drake

**Layout Director:** A.G. Vanidottir

**Art and Advertisement Director:**  
Rev. Melissa Hill

**News Director:** Chris :)

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.

**Subscription Service Dept.**

ADF  
P.O. Box 17874  
Tucson, AZ 85731-7874  
adf-office@adf.org

**Advertisers**

Oak Leaves accepts advertisements for the sale of products, services, self promotion and events. Please email our Sales Director through the International Ad Department. Advertisement rates can be found on our webpage: <<http://www.adf.org/publications/periodicals/oak-leaves/advertising.html>>

**Cover:**

Rob Steiner

Copyright ©2014  
ADF, Inc.

**All rights reserved. Reproduction of any material from this issue in whole or in part is strictly prohibited.**



The idea of reciprocity is a big deal in ADF – in fact, it underlines our entire practice. It is summed up well in the Latin phrase, *do ut des*, or ‘I give so that you may give’. We give of our love, our attention; gifts of poetry, song, dance, and art; as well as physical offerings such as food and silver to the Kindreds, and in return we hope to receive blessings and wisdom.

What all this comes down to is relationships. We attempt to form relationships with the Spirits that mirror the ones we form in our own lives. We give to our friends and family all the time, be it love, emotional and financial support, and our participation with them in the good times and the bad. We sometimes make demands on others in our relationships, and sometimes they come through for us and sometimes they don’t.

And this is just how our relationships work with the Kindreds.

There are no guarantees that we will get what we want, either in our own lives or in our dealings with the Spirits. We do know, however, that the stronger our relationships in life are, the more likely that we will get what we need. As the saying goes, you get out of life what you’re willing to put into it. Life, and relationships are not passive. We can’t just sit back and expect the best. We must actively work towards making our relationships work so that they may serve us, and our communities.

And how can we do that? We create and maintain our relationships with the Kindreds through our prayers, our daily devotionals, our occasional full rites, and our attendance at (or workings of) our High Day rites. Staying engaged with the Kindreds means that they may stay engaged with us.

So let us join together as one folk and make our offerings in joy and reverence! So be it!

*Rev. Kirk Thomas*

ArchDruid,  
Ár nDraíocht Féin





# Going Beyond Tradition in the Core Order of Ritual -

Recreating the Cosmos and Opening the Gates

By B.J. Rogers

There once was a woman who cooked her holiday ham every year according to the family tradition. She scrubbed, peeled, and chopped vegetables strictly as she had been taught as a child. The ham, too, was prepared precisely with cloves and fruit placed just so, and exactly the right amount of glaze drizzled on top. Her rendition of the family's traditional meal was always well received, even by the older generations who'd experienced the previous cooks' offerings.

One year, this woman decided her children were old enough to begin learning the family ways of making this traditional meal. She diligently explained how and when each dish should be prepared. The kids eagerly soaked up this experience, enjoying both the attention by their mother and the opportunity to learn the family "secrets."

As this mother slid the roasting pan into the oven, the lesson over for the time being, her son looked thoughtful. "What's on your mind?" she asked him.

"I was just wondering why you cut the ends off the ham," he replied.

The woman frowned. "That's the way it's always been done. It's how your grandma taught me to do it."

"That's why it tastes so good!" the daughter interjected.

But her son's question piqued the woman's curiosity, because the size of the ham didn't seem to matter to the rest of the recipe and preparation. Over that year's family dinner, she posed the same question to *her* aging mother. As might be expected, the response was nearly identical. So, the woman turned to her great-grandmother, whose hearing was nearly gone, and loudly posed the question again.

"Eh?" the elderly matron inquired immediately. Before the woman could repeat herself though, the great-grandmother got a far away look in her eyes, smiled, and then explained, "My very first

kitchen was small and the oven tiny. A whole ham was too big for the roasting pan that would fit in that oven, so I cut the ends off to make it fit. When your great-grandpappy moved us to a bigger home, I kept using that little roaster because the smaller ham was the perfect size to feed the two of us and your grandmum."

=====

As a whole, ADF members tend to like their traditions and feel comfortable doing what others have done before them, often continuing to use the practices that have already been established, unchanged, for years on end. Most of the rituals I have found on the ADF website reflect this love of handed-down traditions, being relatively old (the last Liturgist's Yearbook is dated 2009 and many posted rites are from the later half of the 1990s) and fairly similar from one rite to the next. As such, they may not reflect the exploratory work done by groves in recent years, but they certainly point to our tendency towards traditions – even ones less than 30 years old. The following article expresses my and my grove's work in going beyond the "traditional" methods of (Re)Creating the Cosmos and Opening the Gate(s).

Based on personal experience of the groves I've visited and ritual scripts posted to ADF, the traditional method for establishing the Cosmos and opening gates in its most simplified form usually goes something like this:

- Perform the "Two Powers" guided meditation
- Establish the realms by defining them
- Transform the Hallows through "silvering"/censing
- Evoke a Gatekeeper
- Combine the magical will of the Presiding Druid with the Gatekeeper to open the Gates

The order here is, to some limited extent, variable among groves. Occasionally, the Hallows are transformed first. Sometimes the Realms are established during the “Two Powers” meditation, combining the two tasks into one. As all of these actions fall under two related steps of the Core order of Ritual (COoR), the final order is one of local preference and tradition handed down from an older grove.

In all, though, there seems to be little variation in the delivery of these steps with one significant regional exception. In the eastern half of the US, a single phrase with a magical sigil traced over the Hallows accomplishes the effect of opening the gate, establishing this as a task reserved for the Presiding Druid to accomplish on behalf of the Folk. Rev. Kirk Thomas innovated a grove chant and whirling dance with a staff as a method of opening the Gates which engages the Folk in the process of opening the Gates. Most groves in the western half of the US seem to have adopted his variation in some form or fashion, becoming a second “traditional” method. With festival travel most often limited to a member's own half of the US, these traditions tend to remain isolated to their region of origination.

The Las Vegas-based *Larrea Tridentata* Grove, ADF has been experimenting since its inception on alternate ways to establish the Cosmos and open the Gates that are independent from both eastern and western traditions. Given my origins, our early methods were understandably more similar to the eastern US method only more dynamically presented.

Our initial establishment of the Cosmos is a “guided meditation” that was meant to be an open-eyed experience more akin to a poetry slam in delivery. Our goal was to involve as much of the mind as possible by presenting a 'journey' using vision, motion, sound and imagination. It established the Hallows and their connections to their related Realms. Opening and closing the Gates was intended to be a group effort, combining the abilities of all of the Folk, the Presiding Druid and the Gatekeeper. As with the previous step, we accomplished this through motion as well as sound. Our grove is still fond of this method.

In the scripts that follow, I use these textual conventions: Unaltered text is spoken aloud by the Presiding Druid/reader (PD). Chants by the folk which are taken up and continue independent of or simultaneously with the PD are in bold. *Responses by the folk* which are spoken without the reader are in italics.

Version 1, used prior to 2013 for HD rites:

- Breath deep... Now look around you with your mind wide open.
- The Nemeton is claimed... And Breathe.
- The folk are gathered together... Breathe.
- The symbols of our service are consecrated... Breathe.
- Now, look!
- The sacred fire is before you. Breathe deeply of its warm smoky scent.

Shining Lakes Grove—Sambain by Melissa Hill



Focus. Watch the flames leap and dance. Feel the fire's heat and energy. It is never still: always reaching, dancing, leaping for the sun. It is beckoning to you, calling you in. Go ahead, join the fire. Dance with it. Slowly. Sensuously. Side to side, to and fro, twisting ever upwards towards the sky.

- Faster now. Spinning. Leaping. Climbing on the backs of flames nearest you, reaching higher and higher. And faster still. Crackling. Popping. Swirling. Rising towards the sky.

- You are a flame and the fire is within you, filling you with heat and light, and the energy of the sun, of the Cosmos, the Aether. Your whole body is filled with heat and energy, pulsing in shades of red, gold, and blue. Always reaching higher, you exhale a stream of smoke. It swirls into the sky, a silent messenger to the Gods. Reach with it. Dance, twirl and leap with it.
- Hover a moment in this cloud. You are shining brightly, filled with the burning heat, the voracious yearning powers of Fire.
- Now dive!
- The well is open to you. Dive deep. The water ripples, seeking the way out, searching for its own kind. Liquid tension, it climbs the sides of the well. It hunts the depths, seeking the way, the way out of containment. It must find the Way. The water beckons to you, draws you in. Join the water. Follow it. Stream out with it, twinkling and singing on its way. Meander through the plains with it. It is sighing, questing. Rolling and tumbling, over rocks and streambeds. This is the River of Life.
- This is the River of Enlightenment, shimmering and sparkling here and there with wisdom. Rush with it over the falls, diving and tumbling, singing with it as you go, reflecting brightly in the sun.
- You are a river and the water is within you, whispering, sighing and singing as you go, yours is the voice of wisdom. Shimmering with light and shadow, reflection and clarity, swirling and eddying in crystal shades of blue and green you go. Defying all containment, press onwards. Through canyons and valleys you run, vibrant and alive. Streaming, flowing, farther and faster, ever downward, ever westward until finally you burst upon the ocean!
- Spreading outward, roaring and chanting, swaying with the waves, you flow ever westward. And now you lap upon those distant shores, the isles of the Dead, the Realm of the ancestors.
- Emerge from this watery highway. You are

**“You are a river and the water is within you, whispering, sighing and singing as you go, yours is the voice of wisdom. Shimmering with light and shadow, reflection and clarity, swirling and eddying in crystal shades of blue and green you go. Defying all containment, press onwards.”**

rippling, sparkling, filled with the cool, inexorable, unstoppable powers of Water.

[pause for several breaths, then continue in a normal meditative voice]

- Within your body, the waters move, sizzling and roiling as they encounter the fire blazing through you. You are shimmering, vibrant, alive with the two powers merged. Your entire body is filled with bright energy, flowing through you from head to toe and back again, then spilling out to connect with your neighbors beside you. And now, the Nemeton is awash with light, crackling with the energy we each contain.
- Now, hold onto that energy as we make ready for its use.
- “Now, Gatekeeper, We feel the flames, the Powers of Fire leaping from our hands to the fire pit”

“So, let all of us join our powers of Fire with yours to throw OPEN this fiery Gate”

[all make a yanking motion, throwing open the Gate]

“And, we feel the liquid, the Powers of Water flowing from our fingertips to the well”

“So, let all of us join our powers of Water with yours to throw OPEN this watery Gate”

- Then, let this Toadstool, the most ephemeral of trees, stand as a signpost marking the Crossroads of all Realms opened to our voices and to the spirits.

“And now.... THESE GATES... ARE OPEN!  
*The Gates are open!*”

- As our rite comes to an end, This Signpost is no longer needed to guide travelers

“Now, Gatekeeper, we have one last task for which we need your assistance. Together, let us withdraw our powers of Water.”

“Pulling CLOSED this watery Gate,”

“And let us withdraw our powers of Fire,”

“Pulling CLOSED this fiery Gate.”

[All make a pulling gesture, pulling gate closed]

“Until now... THESE GATES..... ARE CLOSED!” *The gates are closed!*

- So this rite comes to an end. The Kindred have returned to their Realms, the Gates are closed. Yet, within the Nemeton there remains a glow. Though greatly diminished by our efforts tonight, we are each still imbued with the Powers of Water and Fire, and through them, connected to the Realms beyond. It is time, then, to return the remaining Powers to their place.

- Breathe deeply until your lungs are full. Now hold that breath and feel the Fire inside consume the air. As the breath in your lungs is used up, the Fire weakens, losing its hold on you. Exhale. Feel the smoke rush, then trickle from your lips. See it join the smoke from the fire before you, drifting upwards, ever upwards. The Fire has left, and you are separate now from it.

- And, as the Fire has left, you can feel now the Water within you condensing. The roiling, steaming energies are cooling, pooling. Shake out your arms. Feel the Water bead on your skin and roll downwards to the very tips of your fingers. As you shake, the Water drops from your fingertips, soaking into the earth, Seeking once again its Source. The Water has left, and you are separate now from it.

- But, look around you. The Nemeton still glows, though barely so. You are forever changed. Touched by the Powers of Fire and Water, you carry a kernel of each deep within your core. This too is a gift, a parting Blessing of the Kindreds.

We used this alternative “Two Powers” meditation for several years. In December of 2012, our grove decided to perform our first indoor ritual in conjunction with our annual gift exchange, which was not as widely advertised as our High Day rites are. Of course, it was still open to the public as all weekly meetings have been since our first. As such, we were looking for a really pared down COoR-based rite and eventually decided to use the method I had been developing for my personal

practice, which is inspired by Eliade's book Myth and Reality. This version does not specify the Realms the way a High Day ritual would, assuming that those present are familiar with the connections between the Realms and the Hallows.

Version 2, for an intimate grove rite or personal practice:

I call to the Causitor, whose spark first began it all!

Come, aid us in the renewal of the Cosmos!

First there was darkness...

And in the dark, the water flowed... and a tiny spark became the flame...

and the flame consumed the wood... yet in the middle of the wood, a tree stood, lit but untouched...

leading the water down and the fire up, spanning the Realms-so-different, linking them all into one.

As it was, so it is. The Cosmos is renewed!

The water flows down to the bottom of the tree. How shall it carry our sacrifices? *By opening the Ways!*

The fire's smoke lifts beyond the highest branches of the tree. How shall it carry our sacrifices? *By opening the Ways!*

Well, then? *Let the Ways be open!*

So, we no longer need to send messages up on the smoke. *Then, close the Ways!*

And we no longer need to send messages down through the water. *Then, close the Ways!*

Well, then? *The Ways are closed!*

As you can see, this version of Establishing the Cosmos and Opening the Gates is extremely pared down and makes many assumptions about the knowledge of those present. It worked well and we have re-used it for our gift exchange rite this past December as well. At a prompting by the grove members, however, we expanded the concepts in this second version with a full High Day rite in mind.

As with the first version, there is an attempt to involve more of the senses than just mental. Here, though, we see a bit of a shift towards the western US practice of using chants, though the use of

body motions remains. Even more than the first version, this one involves the actions of the folk as a whole to establish the Ways. It also includes a drummer keeping a “heartbeat” for the duration.

Current version for High Days:

Through you, Causitor, let the present and the beginning merge

Let this Sanctuary become as the Mundi, the World Axis, the center of All!

Settle yourself, my friends... Get comfortable.

Now take a deep breath... As you exhale, let your mind empty.

Let thoughts and worries flow outward with your breath.

Breathe again, pulling in the Night and let your cares drift away

Breathe... And cast your mind back...

Back...

Back...

Let your mind wander into the Deep Dark...

In the beginning, there was Darkness (for the Day begins in the Night) and the vast emptiness was formless. But in the sea of nothing, matter gathered into a lifeless ball,

Churning with heat, pulsing with the Heart of the Cosmos.

Then, above the roiling firmament, clouds gathered, first as thin wisps of moisture drifting. [drop dry ice or activate smoke machine] But the earth heaved as the elements separated and the clouds above thickened with the condensed liquid, drawing a blanket across the newly formed sky. And these clouds, too, took up the Pulse of the Cosmos.

Then from the Darkness the gathered Waters fell. [turn on the fountain] Beginning as a fine mist to cool and sooth, the gentle rains grew into a mighty deluge covering the raw, stratified earth in a thick blanket of frothing liquid. And these Waters took up the Heart Beat, ebbing and flowing, a steady balm on the World.

But, then, above the throbbing pulse, the sky

grumbled and a light flashed. [second drummer does thunder roll, throw 'snappers' toward Center] In the thick, dark clouds, tentative flickers sparked randomly, and grumbles echoed ominously until the Night was Dark and silent no longer. Then the Light reached out with forked fingers to stroke the Waters, to prod the Land not yet covered.

And in that moment, the Land and the Waters were joined with the Fires from the Skies above and the Heart Beat of the Cosmos pulsed throughout the new world until Life filled all of those Realms and the Day began.

And, so, here we are at the Present, which is the Beginning. The Cosmos is Renewed and we are re-woven into it. Above, Below, Between. As it was Then. As it is Now

Newly born, and forever in existence, these Hallows, which are the Fire and the Water, [gesture to each in turn] sleep the sleep of Creation. So, Let us awaken our Hallows with chant number ...

The Hallows have awakened! So, let us stir the energies. Let us re-open the Ways and part the veils that separate the Realms.

Oh, churn, Mighty Waters, soothing Balm of the World. To the West and to the North, to the East and to the South. Churn and turn.

Flow inexorably across the lands. Churn and turn

Reach downward in your churning, Mighty Waters! Form a whirlpool spinning ever downwards. Press out the water in rushing walls and let a tunnel appear.

Let the Way to the oldest land, the Land of the Dead, be open!

*Let the Way be Open!*

And as below, so above

Stir Mighty Fire, gift from the Skies above. Lift the air, stir the winds. To the South and to the East, To the North and to the West. Twist and burn

Rise up from the very core of the Earth. Twist and burn

Reach upward in your burning, Mighty Fire! Form



*CedarLight Samhain Altar: by Melissa Hill*

the fire-whirl spinning ever upward. Press out the scorching flames in rushing walls and let a tunnel appear.

Let the Way to the youngest land, the Land of the Gods, be open!

*Let the Way be Open!*

And, as Above, so below

Let this toadstool stand with us at the center of the Ways. Let all the Kindred see and know that this is a crossroads between the Ways! My friends, the ways are open!

*The Ways are Open!*

The Ways stand open. Yet we remain firm on the Land on the Earth, which is our Home. Let us sound out the call, then, send invitations to our Kindreds that they may join us here at the center, at the Beginning, the Present, the End

We seek, first, a Gatekeeper, a guardian to stand at the Center and ward these Ways between the Realms

The Ways, too, are no longer needed in this space. So, let us calm the energies, let us close the Ways and let the veils between the realms fall into place.

Mighty Fire, gift from the Skies above! Still the whirlwind and let the fiery tunnel collapse. Let the clouds of smoke and flame break apart and dissolve into gentle tendrils. Calm the twist, calm the burn ... Calm... calm...

Let the Way to the youngest land, the Land of the Gods, be closed!

*Let the way be closed!*

And as above, so below

Mighty Waters, soothing Balm of the World! Fill the whirlpool and let the watery tunnel collapse. Let the rushing walls of liquid spread outward, and dissolve into gentle currents. Calm the churn, calm the turn .... Calm... calm...

Let the Way to the oldest land, the land of the Dead, be closed!

*Let the way be closed!*

And as below, so above

And thus, THE WAYS..... ARE CLOSED!

*The ways are closed!*

So this rite comes to an end. The Kindred have returned to their Realms, the Ways are closed. And yet, the Hallows remain: a fire pit and fountain, tangible symbols of the Cosmos as it was in the beginning, as it now, as it shall forever remain. As we prepare to depart, may these Hallows echo in our minds, in our hearts, in our spirits that they may continue to connect us to each other and the Realms beyond our own.

Some of the major changes we have made are clearer in function with this third and most recent version of our Cosmos & Gate Opening. While Fox pursues the Hearth Keeper/Fire Tender as an expression of the Gatekeeper concept, we have split the notion in two. According to my interpretation of the ideas presented by Eliade, we have added a Causitor, a Primordial Being or First Being who was present at the beginning of the Cosmos and a part of the original creation. The Causitor is not involved with opening the Ways between the Realms but rather in re-creating the Realms themselves through the creation story.

The Folk add their desires and energies into the Ways, not so much to open them, but to re-establish their existence as a continuation of the re-creation of the Cosmos. In concept, then, the Ways between are always available and need but a stir by the Folk (or individual) to re-open and pass sacrifices to the intended recipient.

The Gatekeeper, then, becomes truly that: a Keeper of the Ways. The evocation of the Gatekeeper for us is the invitation to a Guardian, rather than a Magician or Psychopomp/liminal boundary-crosser. We do not otherwise address Outdwellers in our rites, except in our request - our charge of task - for the Gatekeeper. We consider the charge a transactional exchange and "pay" for the service prior to thanking the Gatekeeper for being present in our rite. Our subsequent Kindreds invitations are open to all Beings regardless of cultural affiliation provided the Gatekeeper, "the Cosmic Bouncer," determines no negative intentions. Cosmologically, we find this approach more appealing and in line with the rest of our approach.

I've taken this opportunity to share these with you as examples of ways you can experiment and grow your own practice, be it personal or public. Tradition is a good thing, but when left unchallenged and unchanged for too long, it can lose its power, its meaning and its connection to those currently following it. Like the woman who cuts the ends off the ham for the sake of "tradition," sometimes the reason for an act is no longer applicable and a new method may be adopted without disrespecting those who handed down the original tradition.

If there is anything you find useful in the Cosmos & Gate Openings I have presented here, anything you choose to adapt to your own practice or that inspires your thoughts to new directions, then our own experiments have served their purpose for more than just our small corner of ADF. May we all be enriched by the exchange of ideas; may we all be inspired to imagine new traditions and share them with our fellows.

#### References:

"The ADF Core Order of Ritual for High Days." *Ár NDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship*. N.p., 2006. Web. 06 Apr. 2014. <<https://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/core-order.html>>.

Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963. Print.

"Snopes.com: Grandma's Cooking Secret." *Snopes.com: Grandma's Cooking Secret*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.snopes.com/weddings/newlywed/secret.asp>>.



*To obtain a version complete with stage directions please contact the author directly. For the sake of space the directions were removed.*

#### Author Bio:

*Beej has been a member of ADF since 2000 and is the co-founder of Larrea Tridentata Grove, ADF. As the primary Liturgist and Storyteller for the grove, Beej often seeks to combine these two fields to make rituals more dynamically interesting while remaining within the broad limits of the Core Order of Ritual. Beej also currently serves as the ADF Members Advocate.*

From one of the ADF's finest poets...

## The Well of Mystery

by Wayne Keysor

This volume lyrically explores both the beauty and the struggle inherent in a life grounded in the spiritual tradition of Druidry.

From the ecstasy of devotion and the wonder of the natural world to the eternal cycles of suffering, loss, and death, this collection pursues the relentless human search for meaning through direct and powerful language that speaks to the pagan soul.

Available at:

<http://amzn.com/0615603238>



# Grove-ing Pains—

## Planting the Seeds of Fellowship

By Lily Blum

Watching an idea turn into a Grove (or protogrove) is amazing to me. It's rather like watching that seed you planted in the ground months ago finally start to flower into a fledgling plant. It is both gratifying and incredible to know that you had a hand in this growth, especially when it is as successful as Columbia Protogrove has been in just the few short months since it was officially named as such.

I moved to Salem, Oregon from Tucson, AZ and the Sonoran Sunrise Grove nearly five years ago. I never became terribly involved in Salem's small and closeted Pagan community aside from the occasional Pagan Coffee Night. I will admit: I was just a wee bit shell shocked to find that things were so different from the very active and open community I was accustomed to. I thought of starting a PG on my own but I was far too busy with school, work and family to attempt to take on such a task alone. Additionally, no one with whom I networked actually seemed willing to attempt it with me. One thing that you are never short on in small communities is rumors and gossip and here was no exception. Rumor had it that as few as five and as many as eight protogroves had been started and had failed for various reasons, ranging from understandable to downright ridiculous. One woman swore that a protogrove had failed because the couple leading it demanded that every female member be willing to sleep with them. Another gentleman argued that same protogrove had fallen apart because of misunderstandings in leadership responsibility and goals. I doubt that we will ever know the true story and in truth, it hardly matters because the damage was done. ADF had an overall negative reputation within much of the local pagan community.

When I found out, quite by coincidence, that another protogrove was being launched, I am proud to say I didn't give an atom what local gossip had to say. I immediately contacted the



Grove Organizer, *Planting Seeds (a)* by Lily Bloom Jonathan Levy, and offered to help in any way I could. The founding members met together, came up with a name and within a month, we officially became Columbia Protogrove, ADF.

It's been amazing to watch the Pagan community as a whole go from being very unsure about us to inviting us to perform rituals at different events. Our Beltane ritual alone drew in thirty-two attendees, our largest turnout yet! We have worked hard to incorporate ourselves into the community with prison ministry, outreach, in which we go to different cities to perform ADF rituals so that the people who may not be able to attend High Days can still partake, and study groups. At the time of this writing we have seven full fledged grove members and one "friend of the grove" (a title given for someone who does not wish to officially join the grove or ADF, but who wishes to be involved with our goings-on). We are even hosting a Pagan festival this Summer called "Columbia Community Campout: Bringing Together The Tribes" in hopes of fostering and furthering our sense of community among the different Pagan traditions.

Being a new and still growing protogrove, our rituals are primarily made up of a Leader and Co-Leader. However, we try to incorporate attendees by asking them to make offerings to the

Kindreds. This serves two primary purposes: It allows celebrants to be active in ritual and in our worship of the Kindreds and it allows them to become familiarized with our ways and traditions. Being Pan Indo-European also works in our favor: no one feels ostracized or unwelcome for their culture or for the gods they worship. I think my favorite part of this is the utter feeling of togetherness and fellowship that I haven't had since leaving SSG. It truly warms my heart and makes me want to sing praises to the Kindreds for the blessings bestowed upon us.

Out of all of the good things I have encountered in my experiences with Columbia PG, my favorite of all was the implementation of our matron Earth Mother and namesake, the goddess Columbia. At every ritual we give honor to her by name and have received abundant blessings in return. She is a local Earth Goddess to the Pacific NW whose name seems to pop up everywhere here, from the river named after her to colleges, businesses, even in food! Theories abound as to what her name was before she was Columbia: there is even a local

legend that states she was a triple goddess of sorts, with two sisters who bore the same name as she. Eventually, the three sisters transformed into the prime staples of the native folk of the Pacific Northwest: corn, squash and beans.

What ever the origin of Columbia is, we are blessed to have her as our matron and our Earth Mother. I feel her presence every where in my travels around the state: In the misty air that seems to hang over the cities on wet mornings, in the evergreen trees that cover the Pacific NW, in the river that bears her namesake, even in the lava beds and ancient caverns that one finds around here. It is our fondest hope that she will continue to bestow her blessings upon us here in Oregon, Washington and beyond, that we may thrive and see the day that we may call ourselves Columbia Grove, ADF.

Author Bio:

*Lily Blum has been a member of ADF since 2004 and is a nursing student in Salem, Oregon. She is the Co-GO (Commander Riker) of Columbia Protogrove, ADF.*



*Planting Seeds (b) by Lily Bloom*



# 365 Days of Discovery

By Rev. Jean Pagano

Diancecht: "Be gone!"

<Miach falls dead under his father's fatal blow to the head.>

Airmid: "I bury you, brother. You, who were the greatest healer; sadly, there is no one to heal you. Is there anyone to mourn? Who will ever know? Our father, great but cruel; proud, but jealous, could not tolerate the thought that not only were you his equal, but you were his better as well."

Airmid: "Into my arms, brother. No cure can heal you now. I will carry you to the edge of the world which is where you will be safe. There you will be free; free from a father's jealousy; free from a father's threat; free from a wound thrice inflicted and twice recovered. I know that while you will be gone from this mortal plane, you are a God after all and will continue to help heal from the land of the Ancestors and from the land of the Shining Ones, though those here among the living and vital nature spirits will need you most and will call to you today, yea, and call to you tomorrow, yea, and call to you every day until Lir reclaims the land and submerges all in his primordial and infinite waters. Waters that flow on the land and you will be there; water that flows underground, and you will be there, water that flows into the stars at night and you will go there."

Airmid: "For surgery was your strength, my brother, and none could surpass you, not even our father. At the end, you healed yourself, not once, but twice, until his wretched sword did cut short a life that should still be here and vital. But how can it be that a God can die? Do we attain, sustain, and ordain ourselves to a world fraught with material pitfalls and fatality than even we Gods cannot escape? We live forever; it is true, but perhaps not in this form and not in this place. How can this be? Will all our powers, great and true, how is it that this has come to pass? That father strike son, three times wrong, and thus change vitality to mortality and then to leave his torn and lifeless body like a husk upon the ground? Does thus the healer fail in their appointed task and cause more pain in stark reversal of one's calling and creed? The world changes too much on this day."

Airmid: "I walk, wearily, almost lifelessly, holding my brother, my mentor, my friend, he in my arms, light,

lifeless, broken into halves where a whole once lived and breathed and flourished. I hold him up to you, Belenos Bright, and I ask that you warm what remains of his mortal shell and he diffuses into the three realms and surrounds us all who care to feel, to call, and to recollect. Grant, O the Many Gods, that from this senseless death that some good may arrive, arise, and sustain for all the great works that he did. Let spring forth from this tragedy some semblance of gift or miracle that some balance may be restored. To one who healed all give the rest of us something with which to heal ourselves at his physical absence."

Airmid: "Here, here beside the ocean where all life began, I put you to rest my brother. Let this red cloth hold your body and let me wrap it tight so that it may hold your body together as one. Red, like the blood of the Mother; red, like the blood of your patients; and finally red, like your own blood. I bind you in the cloth of this world as we prepare you, in essence, for our appreciation of you in the next world."

<Airmid places stones around the place where Miach is laid to rest.>

Airmid: "Now, brother, I surround your body with these stones, selected by my hand, to encircle you, to protect you, to mark you off. Lir will watch over you for all time to come. I will cover you with my cloak so that you will be warm, though I doubt that warmth preoccupies you in any way now. Yet, to ease my soul, I will cover your body with this cloak. It is a magical cloak and may it bring blessings your way."

<Airmid places the cloak over the body.>

<A breeze arises from the Ocean and whirls around the grave of Miach. From this breeze, Miach's voice is heard.>

Miach: "Worry not, my sister, my Healing Goddess, for while I cannot stand next to you in the flesh, I can still be next to you – always – in the spirit. What does location matter if one can be anywhere? We are fooled as Gods sometimes, fooled into thinking that we have powers and abilities in the corporeal world when in fact we have powers in whatever world we find ourselves. Do not grieve for me because I have greater things to bring into being and I also will continue my work, whether I am on this plane of existence or not. I am not so easily dismissed or destroyed."

Airmid: "I have heard your words and I will look for those greater things that you have promised. I will hold vigil over your resting place this night and will keep you company, although as I see now, it is my company that you have kept. I will light a bright fire under the fires of the skies, bright lights that punctuate the sky and give us pause to think and dream and wonder. Countless are the Shining Ones that watch us from above and guide us in our days."

Airmid: "The fire now lit, the flames cast long shadows against the stones of Miach's grave. As I watch the movement, I recall so many scenes, acted out by shadow and light against the backdrop of this place, this grave, this time. It is one of the ironies, one of the mysteries of life that we Gods may come to some end, some finality, and some cessation on this plane. I do believe Miach when he says that he will continue his work, wherever he may be. One does not need to see a God to pray to him, for it is rarely so that people see the very divinities to which they address their needs."

Airmid: "Flicker, flicker, flame; what is the nature of the Gods in this world, in any world? One day we are and then we will be, never thinking of an end, never thinking that an end is even in the remotest of possibilities. How odd is it for a God to die? How impossible is it for a deity to come to some death. I cannot understand it in the depths of my being. Yet these battles we have seen of late, in an around Mag Tuired, have bent the fabric of the very reality that we have come to understand and enjoy. How can one explain that Gods are falling in battle by the hand of their enemies? How can one explain that Gods are falling to the sword by the hand of their own family? How has it come to be that we are so inured in this world that we can be injured at all even fatally? This I cannot comprehend."

<A raven lands on one of the stones of the cairn.>

Raven: "I thought it might be time for my appearance, as with a passage so recently noted. While it is my usual practice, or so it is said, to come to

claim the dead and to clean their bones, this one is different. This one did not live or die in the usual manner of mortals and his job is far from over. My appearance is not really premature as it is unexpected. I come not for your brother, my dear, as much as I come to you. I can see that these events weigh heavily upon you and that you have many questions which remain unanswered, unsettled, and unspoken. They are powerful questions precisely because they have no answers, no place in this world."

Airmid: "Morrighu, Mother, you come to me, dark as night, when I am feeling dark as the night that



End of Summer by Christina Marvel

surrounds me, dark as they night that engulfs Miach, dark as the night that I cannot see past. I know that we live in many dimensions and on many planes, but I always thought that we would continue here on this plane. Yet now I see it is not so and that this continuity is somehow twisted or flawed and I cannot comprehend that my brother – a God – could be here, vital one moment and bereft of life, cold, still, unmoving, the next. I know he exists in other planes – he has visited me here, speaking from the wind blowing from the west across Lir, the great ocean. So I know that it is not merely voices that I hear, it is HIS voice. He is there, yet I cannot extricate myself from here."

<The Morrighu's long, black cape encircles the cairn and Airmid, like black wings unfolding.>

Morrighu: "Some Gods have existed here since the beginning, such as Lir and me, to name a few. Others have come into being at a later time and while we, as Gods, can speak their lineage, we know that there was a time when they were not here but existed only as potential as "that which will come to be". In this preliminary stage, we cannot speak of them and at that time before they walked with us here we could not speak of them because they were not here yet."

Morrighu: "So, there then comes a time when they are no longer here yet we have the added advantage of

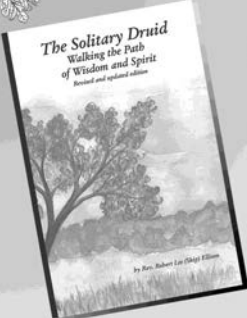
being able to speak about them, of remembering them, and of celebrating not only what they were, but looking forward in anticipation to what they will be. When a God leaves this mortal plane, they do not vanish into nothingness and vapour, but instead reform, renew, and redirect all that which was into something new, something unexpected, and something rarified. I suggest that this is the case with Miach as well. This one is not dark and cold; this one is not scattered and disembodied; this one is in fact on his way to something more. This much I can tell you and it applies to more than just your brother: when a God leaves this material plane, they may yet manifest again on this plane as themselves, as something new, or as a combination of the two. The energy that permeates the Gods is multiversal in its nature and is capable of many things. See yourself, my child, not as one entity in one place, but one entity in many places, extending in many directions, with the ability to not only see through your own eyes, but to see and experience yourself in a detached yet vibrant manner. This cairn is not the end, no, never. It is a place of rebirth and everlasting. Who knows what wonders await us next from Miach? Wait and see, child.”

<The wings retract and the raven takes to the air and heads west, over the great ocean.>

Airmid: “Let me look deep into this place, deep into myself, deep into the words that the Mother has given to me. I cannot see past this moment, but if she promises me transformation, then I will look to that moment, that day, that time when such an event will come to pass.”

<The sun breaks over the horizons until the rays of the sun reach Miach’s cairn.>

Airmid: “What magic is this? What can this possibly be? What is happening to Miach’s body? As the sun’s rays reach across the land to caress this sacred cairn, filaments of herbs and grasses are growing up through my cloak. Small heads peek through the material and as the sun rises, they push forward more and more and raise themselves up to the very sun that has given them life. Dare I look under my cloak that covers my brother’s body? Dare I look to see what can be possibly happening? Do I? Something altogether unusual must be occurring for herbs and grasses grow quickly but surely they cannot grow so quickly through earth, through a body, and through a cloak, all in the matter of a few short hours. For I just lay his body to rest here yesterday and today this is happening.”



*Back in print!*  
 Rev. Robert Lee (Skip) Ellison's  
**The Solitary Druid:**  
*Walking the Path of Wisdom and Spirit!*  
 (Revised and expanded)

*Drawing on archaeology and ancient sources, Rev. Ellison presents a full system of Druidic ritual, including divinatory practices, rites of passage, magical work, and receiving blessing in solitary rites.*

*Highly recommended for ADF Dedicant Work!*

*Available now from ADF Publishing  
 And fine retailers everywhere!  
 - \$18.95 -*

Airmid: “What was it that Miach said? ‘Because I have greater things to bring into being and I also will continue my work, whether I am on this plane of existence or not’, well this assuredly must be so! I cannot bear to look under the cloak, but I know, in the core of my existence, that these plants are growing from Miach’s body himself! Are these the greater things of which he spoke? Is this continuing his work, from wherever that might be? What could this work be?”

Airmid: “As I look upon his body, I see that these plants are herbs, every one of them and that they are growing from various parts of his body and I wonder if this has some significance. These particular herbs are only growing from where his head would be and – mysteriously enough – I recognize some of them as being herbs that affect the head like feverfew, valerian, and lavender. How very odd! I must take a closer inventory once the herbs have stopped growing. I pray they grow to full maturity and perhaps maybe to seed.”

Airmid: “I marvel at this miracle of growth and of magic – for the plants keep sprouting, one after another, after another. Not just everywhere, but in very selected places. I will note all of these plants and each one of their locations because in this magical and sacred act, nothing is random and nothing is left to happenstance. As the rays of the sun increase, the growth and density of these herbs continues to proliferate. With the passage of time and the ticking of seconds, I begin to see that more and more of the herbs begin to take the shape of this man, this brother, this God. I am enchanted by the diversity and great number of these herbs. A veritable herbarium has grown from where he once lay. No, this is no longer a funeral cairn; it is the living embodiment of this God, the next step in his evolution wherein he has gone from the direct instrument of healing to the very means to heal others and to heal oneself. He has surpassed us all,

once again, and gone one step further in his healing journey.”

Airmid: “The sun no overhead, the growth seems to have attained it fullest magical height and it truly is a man-form made of herbs. But how many herbs are there? It is difficult to say. Let me take the time to examine them all and count them as well. There are one, two, and three...thirty...ninety...one-hundred eighty and more...two-hundred seventy...three-hundred sixty-five. By the mighty Gods! There is one herb for each day of the year, this is magic indeed! Oh my brother, the miracles that came from your hands, O Great Surgeon and Leech, have now manifested themselves in ways we could never have guessed! Perhaps, just perhaps, your untimely end at the hands of a jealous father was not as inopportune as perhaps it was destiny. Oh my goodness, such as bounty as the likes that healers have never seen. This great harvest – and the knowledge imparted thereof by the precise positioning of these herbs on the very spot where they will do the most good – will take time to catalogue and time to disseminate, like seeds. Three-hundred sixty-five days of discovery will be the cycle of learning for all healers. These new healers, armed with a body of knowledge like never before assembled will be like Gods in the miracles that they may present to their people, all made possible by the greatest healers and leech that the world has ever known, my dear brother, Miach.”

Airmid: “So, dear brother, let me be the one to gather your great harvest, as this has always been my calling as the Goddess of Herb craft. Let me gather them all and put the neatly in mounds where they grew to best recall what the benefit most. Then, for those that are new and have no name, I will give them a name, based upon their qualities and their locations. This will be one harvest that will go down in the annals of this green earth as one greater than them all. Let me spread my own cloak on the ground, next to you, dear brother, so that I may arrange them all.”

<The cloak is now neatly arranged with three-hundred and sixty-five different herbs.>

Airmid: “Now that they are all separated and placed near where they benefit most, let me thank you once again, Miach, for this bounty of earth, magic, and healing. You always gave throughout your life on this plane and you continue to give as you always did. Let me not put down to memory all that is here and then I will tell all healers everywhere so that the knowledge will carry forward forever. Your name will be known on this plain forever!”

Diancecht: “What madness is this? What are these things here gathered and what is this density of herbs growing out of that cairn? How do these herbs grown in this form, in the form of a man, in the form of your brother who dare challenged ME, the greatest of all healers, first healer of the Gods and first healer of this people?”

Airmid: “Father, you were the cause of this great healer’s demise, yet he has surpassed you once again by bringing forth from his broken form a magic far greater than you could ever hope to present. Three-hundred sixty-five herbs, one for each day of the year, all the herbs needed to heal the creatures of this world from this day hence are now assembled and properly arranged on this, my cape. With this knowledge, healers of our rank and of this world alike will be able to cure any malady that arises. It is truly the greatest magic!”

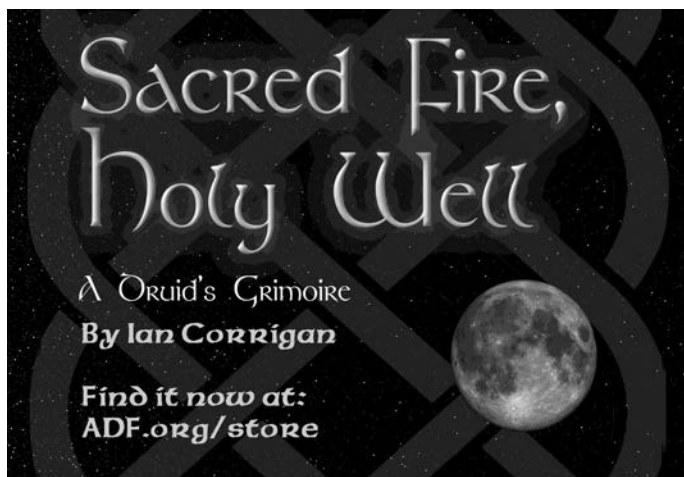
Diancecht: “Never! I will never allow these seeds to be the seeds of my undoing. People and creatures need me, need Diancecht, the Greatest of Healers, not some common grasses that have been sprouted and sprung, gathered and organized by trickery or some lesser ways. They shall never surpass me!”

<With this, Diancecht grabs Airmid’s cloak and scatters all of the herbs to the arising winds.>

Diancecht: “Be gone!”

### **Author Bio:**

*The Reverend John “Drum” Pagano has been a member of ADF since 1984 and is a firm believer in the ADF Priest’s Oath, especially “to continue in the programs of study of Ar nDraiochtFein.” He is active in the Guild Study Programs and Clergy Training Programs as both a student and a reviewer. He is currently the ADF Vice Archdruid.*





# Slavic Blessing Rite

Sassafras Grove, ADF, Pittsburgh PA

By Diane "Emerald" Bronowicz & Michelle Handa

## Musical Signal

Ring "sacred dingers" nine times.

## Processional

Song: "Center of the World" (chorus only)

The Waters flow around us  
The Fires burn within us  
Standing tall we gather at  
The Center of the World  
Upon the Earth our mother  
We worship here together  
All as one we gather at  
The Center of the World

## Purifications

*Blessers will purify each participant as they enter the ritual space with land (earth), sea (water), and sky (incense). As they enter the ritual space, each person is greeted by the **Officials** holding bread and salt.*

## Opening Prayer

*My zdyes' DAby POchyst' otDAT tryom roDAM. ("Mih zee-yes DUB-ya PO-kin-est oat-DAT tree-ohm ra-DAM")*  
We are here to honor the Three Kindred.

## Warding the Site/Acknowledging the Outsiders

Oh Mighty Perun ("PEAR-rune"), god of thunder, god of lightening, god of weapons and war,  
Stand guard we pray, watch over our work  
And keep the chaos at bay.  
Perun, accept our offering!

*Make Offering*

## Invocation to Bardic Patron: Stribog

Stribog ("STREE-bog"), Grandfather of the winds, we call to you!  
May your winds clear the fog of forgetfulness from our minds and awaken us to greater awareness.

May your winds fan the fires of our hearts as they ignite with inspiration.  
May your winds give breath to the words we speak and sing in honor of the Kindred.  
Stribog—accept our offering!

*Make Offering*

## Honoring the Earth Mother: Matka Syra Zemyla

Matka Syra Zemyla ("matka sarah ZEM-uh-lah"), Moist Mother Earth  
You birth, nurture, and sustain our lives  
And in your arms we find our final rest.  
Like our ancestors before us, we honor you  
And we dedicate our worship to you first and foremost.  
Matka Syra Zemyla  
We honor you!

*All touch or kiss the ground.*

Song: "Oh Earth Mother" (Words by the RDNA, music by Richard MacKelley.)

## Remembering Brigid (As Patron of Sassafras Grove)

I light this candle in honor of Brigid

The Patron of Sassafras Grove  
Through the years you have been midwife  
To many changes and new beginnings within our grove.  
You foster our hope through good times and hard,  
Through challenge and victories  
You are the source of all our work  
The voice in our song  
The strength of our arm  
The hand that heals discord  
The inspiration of all we create  
Lady of the Hearth Fire  
Lady of the Sacred Wells  
Lady of our Grove  
Remember us as we remember you.

## Ground and Center

*Someone leads a “Two Powers” meditation.*

### **Statement of Intent**

Tonight we gather to celebrate Sassafras Grove’s first Slavic Rite. We seek to introduce ourselves to the Slavic Worldly Spirits and Deities in a hope to get to know them better. We also honor our Slavic Ancestors of blood and heritage whom we already know and introduce ourselves to the Slavic heroes and other Slavs among the Mighty Dead whom we may not know. We seek to strengthen these relationships as well. And finally, at the Height of the year, we gather to honor the Zorya, Goddesses of the Morning, Evening, and Midnight Stars, and Dazhbog (“DASH-kah-bog”), God of the Sun. Da BUdyet tak (“Da-BU-dayet-tak”)! So be it!

### **Recreation of the Cosmos**

**Song:** “Recreate the Cosmos Again”

A time beyond memory, of gods and heroes

### **Gatekeeper Invocation and Gateway Opening: Baba Yaga**

Close your eyes – take a few deep breaths – take a moment to feel your connections both below and above.

We are in a thick, ancient forest in Eastern Europe. It is daytime and the sun is filtered through the trees above – the air is cool and pleasant. You feel your connection to our Moist Mother Earth as we move forward through the trees – you feel connected to the trees and plants around us, feeling one with the animals.

We come to a clearing, where you can see, in the middle, the back of a strange little hut. It rests on a giant Chicken foot and is surrounded by a fence of bones and skulls. You are not afraid, but do feel a sense of anticipation – this is a place of transformation –  
This is the hut of Baba Yaga.  
We kneel or stand before the hut and give offerings.

We call out:  
Little Hut, Little Hut  
Turn your back to the forest  
And your front to us! (**All** repeat)  
We give bread, a work of our hands, made from gifts of our Moist Mother Earth

*Make offering of bread.*

Little Hut, Little Hut  
Turn your back to the forest  
And your front to us! (**All** repeat)  
We give Vodka, from the roots of our Moist Mother Earth

*Make offering of vodka.*

Little Hut, Little Hut  
Turn your back to the forest  
And your front to us! (**All** repeat)  
We give bone, as a sign of our mortality.

*Make offering of bones.*

The air shifts. We hear a rustle – and the hut turns on its chicken foot, front door now facing us.

The face of an old crone appears in the window. She is gnarled with age, but her eyes are bright and flashing. She asks what we want of her. Baba Yaga – Grandmother, Bone Mother, Crone – we come to ask you to assist us in our quest to know the Slavic Pantheon better.

*Pour vodka.*

Snake Goddess, Bird Goddess, Mistress of Animals – we ask you to open a gate between the worlds!

*Pour vodka.*

Goddess of Transformation, Shapeshifter, Guide to the Land of the Dead – we ask you to assist our journey, so that we may have success.

*Pour vodka.*

Baba Yaga, accept our offerings!  
(**All** repeat)  
She looks closer, eyes squinting.

Baba Yaga – we now also offer you this sweet treat you so love.

*Make offering of cookies.*

We honor your wisdom, knowledge and power. We come in reverence to ask your help now!

Baba Yaga – we ask you to open the gateway!!!

The sky darkens around the hut. The two skulls atop the fence on either side of the walkway light up with a fire within. The door of the hut opens – we hear a voice – old and wise – whispering “the gateway to the enlightenment you seek has opened.”

THE GATEWAY IS OPEN!!!

Take a deep breath and open your eyes.

## **Invocations and Offerings to the Three Kindred**

### **Nature Spirits**

Spirits of Land, Sea and Sky  
You who dwell with us and among us  
All Nature Spirits and especially those of the Slavic lands  
The Children of Moist Mother Earth  
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite!  
Worldly Spirits – accept our offering!

*Make offering.*

### **Ancestors**

Ancestors and Honored Dead  
You of Blood, Hearth, Heart, and Heritage  
The Slavic forbearers we know, and the Slavic heroes we hope to meet  
You who lived so we may live as we do today  
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite!  
Ancestors – accept our sacrifice!

*Make offering.*

### **Deities**

Bright Ones, Shining Ones  
You Gods and Goddesses of our hearths and our hearts

You, the Deities of the Slavic culture whom we are only beginning to know  
You who guide our steps and protect us  
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite  
Deities - accept our sacrifice!

*Make offering.*

## **Invocation to the Beings of the Occasion: Dazhbog and the Zorya**

*The Beings of the Occasion altar is set up in four sections with a candle for Dazhbog and each of the Zorya: Dazhbog at top, Zorya Vechernyaya at left center, Zorya Polunochnaya at bottom, Zorya Utrennyaya at right center.*

### **Dazhbog**

At the height of the year, we call to Dazhbog (“DASH-kah-bog”), fiery, radiant, shining god of the Sun; glowing in your golden robes, brilliant in your brazen chariot! Dazhbog, Giver of Fortune, we Children of Earth recognize how fortunate we are, for without your blessings we would not have the gift of life. Dazhbog, fiery, radiant, shining one: Be welcome among us!

### **Zorya**

Zorya Vechernaya (“veh-KREN-Nay-yah”), Evening Star, Guardian of the Gloaming Gate. You close the gate behind Dazhbog after his return to the Underworld each evening and cover the sky with the deep blue of twilight. Zorya Vechernaya (“veh-KREN-Nay-yah”): Be welcome among us!

Zorya Polunochnaya (“pul-nicks-NIGH-yah”), Midnight Star, Guardian of the Darkest Night. You welcome Dazhbog as he dies in your arms each night, and you restore him to life each day by your magic. Zorya Polunochyaya (“pul-nicks-NIGH-yah”): Be welcome among us!

Zorya Utrennyaya (“oo-TREN-nigh-yah”), Morning Star, Guardian of the Sunrise Gate. You call Dazhbog to the Heavens each morning with the light of your flaming sword, opening the way for his



*Scott Holbrook –Foust Modeling by Ashley Bryner*

chariot to travel the daily sky. Zorya  
Utrennyaya: Be welcome among us!

Dazhbog and the Zorya: Be welcome  
among us!

*Make initial offerings of incense, oil, herbs, and flowers.*

### **Individual Praise Offerings**

*People come forward to make offerings to Dazhbog, the  
Zorya, and the Kindred in a Slavic context.*

### **Conclusionary Sacrifice/Prayer of Sacrifice**

*Senior Druid holds platter with bread and salt.*

Dazhbog, Zorya,  
Kindred we know well and those we have  
only just met.  
We thank you for your many blessings,  
now and always.  
Accept our sacrifice!

*Senior Druid makes offering.*

### **Omen**

*Seer takes the omen with pysanki symbol cards.*

### **Meditation on Personal and Group Needs/ Induction of Receptivity**

Over the years Sassafra Grove has reached out to and has forged relationships with many different beings of many different cultures. Today we have opened our doors to the Slavs, and they have joined us in this work. They have given us their message of \_\_\_\_\_. Is it your will to now ask for their blessings? Then Da BUdyet tak.

### **Asking for and Hallowing the Blessings**

Today we began a journey to better understand the Slavic Pantheon. We paid honor to you Dazhbog and to you Zorya, and to the Kindred among the Slavs. Please bless this bread, made from earth, water, fire and air. Grant us wisdom, knowledge, strength and health, happiness, peace, and abundance. May our spirits rise and expand as did this bread. Let us continue to learn and grow in your light!

*Senior Druid presents the blessed bread to the  
congregation.*

Behold: The Blessings of the Kindred!!  
(All repeat)

### **Affirmation of the Blessings**

*Bread is passed around and people eat.* [We ended up having a nice chat about Slavic customs and traditions of our families, friends, and neighbors.]

### **Call for Any Work Yet Undone**

### **Farewell to Beings of the Occasion**

Dazhbog, we know that as the Summer wears on, your power wanes. But your life-giving blessings are always with us as you make your daily journey. And Zorya, we know that you will continue to defend the Gates of the Heavens and watch over us, as you do Dazhbog, when we have need to call to you.

We thank you for listening to our call this night and blessing us with your presence. This first call shall not be the last.

Dazhbog and the Zorya, Hail and Farewell!

## Farewell to the Kindred

### Deities

You who live in our hearts and guard our homes  
Thank you for attending us this day and always  
Stay if you will, go if you must  
Deities, Hail and Farewell!

### Ancestors

Ancestors and Honored Dead  
All who lived so that we may live as we do today  
Our Slavic forbearers we have remembered tonight  
And those Slavic heroes we have just met  
Thank you for your many blessings today and always.  
Stay if you will, go if you must  
Ancestors, Hail and Farewell!

### Worldly Spirits

Worldly Spirits--those who share our planet with us  
Children of Moist Mother Earth  
Thank you for being with us today.  
Stay if you will, go if you must  
Worldly Spirits - Hail and Farewell!

## Farewell to the Gatekeeper & Closing the Gates

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

We find ourselves back in front of Baba Yaga's hut, realizing we have passed a full cycle of a day, traveling with The Zorya and Dazhbog (DASH ka bog).

We leave a parting gift.

### *Make Offering*

THANK YOU, Baba Yaga, for your assistance--thank you for opening the gateway and keeping it open so that we may enter the world of the Slavic Pantheon

that is so new to us. We honor you, Baba Yaga!

The door of the hut closes, the skull torches fade and go out, and the hut slowly turns around again on its chicken foot. Baba Yaga! Hail and Farewell!  
The Gateway is Closed!!!

## Restoration of the Ordinary

Song: "Restoration of the Ordinary"

Let the Well be but water  
Let the Fire be but flame  
We've been touched by the magic of the Sacred Tree  
We will never be the same.

## Affirmation of Past/Future Continuity and Success

As it has been done in the past...  
As we have done it now...  
And as it likewise will be done in the future...  
We have again forged a link in the sacred chain of Tradition...  
LONG LIVE THE TRADITION!  
(All repeat)

## Regrounding/Recentering

*Someone leads the group in a reverse "Two Powers" meditation.*

## Thanking Brighid

Blessed Brighid, Patron of our Grove and of our hearts  
We thank you for your love and protection, now and always  
Brighid, we thank you.

*Blow out her candle.*

## Thanking the Earth Mother

Matka Syra Zemyla, Moist Mother Earth  
Like our ancestors before us, we thank you for your continued support and sustenance Earth Mother, we honor you!

## Thanking the Bardic Patron

Stribog, Grandfather of the winds  
Thank you for fanning the flames of

inspiration within us  
Stay if you will, go if you must  
Stribog, Hail and Farewell!

## Lughnasadh Toast

by Phoenix Rose

### Thanking the Warrior Patron

Mighty Perun, we thank you for watching  
over our work  
and standing guard against the forces of  
chaos.  
Stay if you will, go if you must  
Perun, hail and farewell!

### Closing Prayer

### Musical Signal

Ring "sacred dingers" nine times.

### Recessional

Song: "Walk with Wisdom"  
(Words and music by Sable)

### Author Bio(s):

*Diane "Emerald" Bronowicz: Emerald has been an ADF member since 2002. She has been active as a leader at the local, regional, and international levels, currently serving Sassafras Grove as Scribe, the Heartland Region as Deputy Regional Druid, and ADF as Bard Laureate. Although Emerald primarily works in a Hellenic context in her personal work and has previously served as the leader of O.A.K., the Hellenic Kin, she joined the Slavic Kin and co-lead her Grove's first Slavic rite to honor her Polish ancestors. Emerald completed the Dedicant Program in 2004 and is currently working on the IP, BGSP, GSP, and LGSP.*

*Michelle Lee Handa: Michelle has been an ADF member since 2007. She is a member of Sassafras Grove in Pittsburgh and has served as its Members Advocate and actively serves as a liturgist and event organizer. Michelle's primary pantheon is Norse, but to honor her heritage she is a member of the Slavic Kin and does personal workings honoring them. She co-lead the Grove's first Slavic blessing rite and plans to do another in September. Michelle works actively with Baba Yaga (partly because BY gave her no choice in that matter). Michelle has completed the Dedicant Program in 2009 and is currently working on the IP.*

The days are getting shorter  
But it is still hot  
The fireflies are leaving  
But the crickets are aht (out)

The first harvest is ready  
Let's pick some crops  
And prepare for the feasts  
Of Lughnasadh

Now come in from your gardens  
And gather your kin  
There's games to be played  
Before the feasts begin  
You'll need strategy and skill  
If you're going to win  
Taitius' games at Lughnasadh

Let's all raise a cup  
In Taitius' name  
Stepmother of Lugh  
And a Harvest Queen  
Protectress of our Grove  
To her we sing  
At this Rite of Lughnasadh

Now we come to Lugh  
The Samildanach  
Lugh of the Long Arm  
Protects the Tuatha from attack  
It is he who created  
The Lughnasadh games  
So let's drink to him  
And honor his name

Be ye from the North,  
East, South, or West  
Be ye a warrior, farmer,  
Craftsman or druidess  
Come join me in honoring  
Our Patrons tonight  
At this, our Lughnasadh Rite

Hail Taitiu! Hail Lugh!



# A New Online Music Course for ADJ Members

*By Janet McCandlas*

“Music, once admitted to the soul, becomes a sort of spirit, and never dies.” Edward George Bulwer-Lytton

Music is a gift to humanity from the Shining Ones. It uplifts us from the mundane and gives us a connection to greater realities. It is a powerful way of expressing our deepest feelings, ones that cannot be put into words. Music producer and composer Robert Fripp said, “Music is the wine that fills the cup of silence.” It is the universal language of mankind.

This being said, it is only natural that many of us wish to include music in our personal spiritual practice and at public rituals and festivals. Whether we perform the work of others or create our own compositions, we wish to use music to help deepen and strengthen our individual and collective magical experience. However, many who desire to make music lack the skills to do so. And self-taught musicians may at some point wish to deepen their skills through formal instruction in music literacy and theory.

It can be a real challenge to develop musical skills. Private music instruction tends to be costly, and generally speaking one must commit years of study to gain real aptitude on their instrument of choice. Adult music education outside of private lessons may be hard to find in the community, perhaps being limited to university courses that cater to those who already have foundational music skills. Juggling a busy schedule of work and family responsibilities also tends to limit the time we can spend in music studies.

As a music instructor who has had a fair number of adults pass through my studio over the years, I have considered what can be done to create a more efficient, effective, and affordable learning experience for adult learners. A possible solution to this puzzle is an online format of music instruction for adults that teaches basic music literacy, theory and compositional skills with the goal that upon completion, the student will be able

to pursue the art of music--either independently or through further instruction in a face-to-face learning environment.

I know that many online music tutorials already exist, what I propose is different from what I have found to date in my internet searches. One of the challenges an online course presents is that online tutorials are about as interactive as an instructional manual. The lack of personal interaction can be a real hindrance to learning. Who answers the student's questions? Who gives feedback and motivation? Who tailors the learning experience to the student's learning style?

I feel that these challenges can only be met by the course being a mixture of prepared lessons and individual mentoring provided by the instructor. It would include regular check-ins with students via email and phone conversations, and have students submit recordings of their lessons on an infrequent but regular basis. This type of mentoring could result in a greater measure of success for course participants.

With this goal in mind, I have created an online music course that seeks to provide foundational instruction in music literacy, theory, and composition. I am seeking two groups of people to participate in my online course free of charge; those who lack formal musical training of any kind and who want to learn, and those who may have had childhood music instruction or even be musicians themselves at present, but who wish to improve their literacy skills or understanding of music theory. I am hoping that six to eight people in each group participate.

This is an action research project on my part, and I plan to publish my findings in an academic research journal upon its completion. Because course participants would be human subjects in a research project, they will be provided with release forms that delineate exactly in what way the information I gather will be used. I will publish no information about any course participant without their written permission.

My research questions include: can an online format impart musical skills with any measure of success? Does this format work more effectively for those who are true beginners, or for self-taught musicians who desire to receive formal instruction to improve existing skills? How does mentoring affect the learning experience? What were the experiences of the individuals taking the course?

If you would like to participate in this research project, I have listed the minimal qualifications that course participants need to meet.

I am offering ADF members the chance to participate in this project at no charge beyond the cost of materials. Because this is a formal research project, release forms will be provided that outline exactly in what way the research will be used. Participants will provide information about prior musical experiences. A questionnaire to be filled out at the end of the course is also planned.

The course will take place over approximately one year.

In our year together, we will learn how to read music, gain a basic understanding of music theory and ear training, and discuss how to arrange and write our own music. As course instructor, I will provide the framework of weekly lessons, telephone and email conversations, and facilitate online group discussions. Participants will provide their own course materials, journal their experiences, be available for conversations with the instructor and with the group online, and commit to preparing their lessons through regular practice.

Those who wish to participate in the course will need to have the following resources: A 5 octave (60 keys) or larger keyboard with touch-sensitive keys, touch-sensitive being that the key sustains a tone when held and that when pressed harder, it gets louder (Yamaha YGP-535 or similar). A computer with Windows 7 or greater equivalent and broadband internet access. Money for course books (approximately 150.00 US). Time to practice at least 30 minutes 3 times a week, journal about experiences, engage in phone calls with the instructor and in online group discussions.

This course is keyboard-centric because the keyboard layout makes the presentation of music

theory concepts easier to understand. Participants will be required to intermittently record songs from the music book and send them to the instructor via a free online file-sharing service. If you have concerns about internet privacy this course may not be for you.

Although I will act as guide and mentor, to a great extent the success of the course depends on the efforts of those participating in it. Those who are best-suited for this course will be highly self-motivated, will be able to work unsupervised, and will enjoy distance learning.

Finally, this project explores the ability of online instruction to introduce foundational musical concepts with the understanding that musical artistry cannot be learned in an electronic environment. While I as the instructor can impart a certain amount of this from a distance, it is limited by the fact that we are not face-to-face. Those wishing to pursue music further will eventually need to find an instructor who can meet their musical needs.

Those who wish to have more information about this course can contact me personally at [j.mccandlas@gmail.com](mailto:j.mccandlas@gmail.com).

#### *Closing thoughts*

Many ADF members would like to serve their groves musically but feel limited by lack of training. It is my sincere hope that this course will help people feel more confident in their musicianship and their ability to share music with others, both in performance and in written form.

#### ***Bibliography:***

["http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/44512.Edward\\_George\\_Bulwer\\_Lytton"](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/44512.Edward_George_Bulwer_Lytton)

#### ***Author Bio:***

*Janet McCandlas has been a member of ADF since 2006, completed the Dedicant Program in 2011, and is a solitary member of the European ADF community. She holds a Master's degree in Education, diplomas as a Waldorf class teacher and music teacher, and did her undergraduate studies in piano and vocal performance, music therapy, and choral conducting. Currently, she teaches choir and advanced music studies at the Freie Waldorfschule Erlangen in Germany.*

## A Prayer of Offering to Lugh

by G R Grove

*Druid:* Bright-faced Lugh, Lord of Summer,  
*Sambildánach*, Long of Arm,  
Son of Eithne, Foe-defeater,  
Sétantas father, Balors bane –  
Now at your high feast we hail you,  
Lord who saves the waving grain,  
Foster-son of Taitlius rearing  
who cleared land for Bres' arts.  
God of Harvests, grain we give you,  
first-fruits, fresh-baked, for your fire!

*(Druid or Sacrificer offers bread to the fire)*

From our gardens fruits we've gathered –  
Here we offer them as well!

*(Druid or Sacrificer offers garden produce to the fire or on the Earth)*

Lastly, mead, both from our brewing,  
and of song-craft, poets' gold –  
Here we pour them for your pleasure,  
Lugh, to gladden your fine feast!

*(Druid or Sacrificer offers mead to the fire or on the Earth)*

Take our offerings, Bright One, bless us  
if it please you. Hail to Lugh!  
*People:* Hail to Lugh!

## Compert Mongáin

by G. R. Grove

By the sea she walked; from the sea he came,  
a man with eyes full of silver flame.  
When he spoke to her, and he called her name,  
she knew that to grant his wish was no shame.

"I will give you a son full of magic strong;  
I will give you a story fit for song:  
for your lord's away, and the nights are long—  
come and lie with me, and we'll do no wrong."

"Oh, in Alban far my husband fights,  
and true is your word of my lonely nights,  
but how shall I set this wrong aright  
if I lie with you for a son so bright?"

"Oh, I will journey to Alban far,  
and take your man's place in his deadly war,  
and when he returns, there shall be no bar  
to telling him true what our bargains are—

"For our son shall be great Finn reborn,  
a hairy lad, and as sharp as a thorn;  
and I'll teach him my arts, or I'll be forsworn,  
if you lie with me till the morrow's morn."

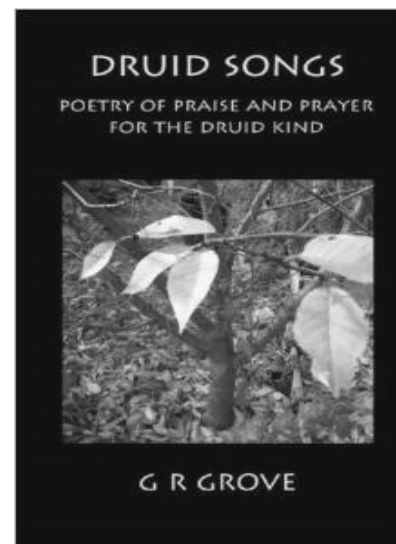
"I will lie with you, if you tell me true,  
that never shall I be the worse for you." —  
"Oh, your lord and your son shall safe be, too;  
I swear by my name you will nothing rue."

By the sea she walked;  
from the sea he came,  
a man with eyes full of silver flame.  
When he spoke to her, and he called her name,  
she knew that to grant his wish was no shame

By G. R. Grove / Gwernin (previously published  
in my collection *Druid Songs*, © 2013 G. R. Grove.  
Available at Amazon.com)

### Author Bio:

G. R. Grove is a storyteller and poet specializing in medieval Welsh material. Her "Storyteller" series of novels grew out of her visits to Wales and her own experiences as a teller of tales. Her newest book "The Druid's Son" is a (currently) stand-alone prequel to the "Storyteller" series. She has also published two volumes of poetry. She has completed the GSP and achieved rank as an ADF Master Bard.

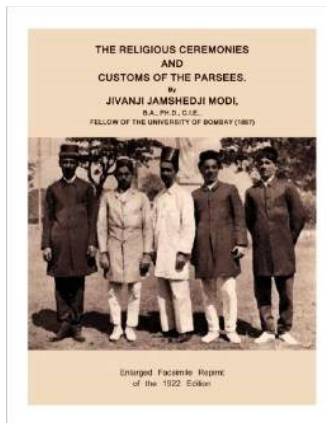




# The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees.

Book Review

By: *Ceisiwr Serith*



## *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees.*

Modi, Jivanji  
Jamshedji.  
New York: Garland  
Publishing, 1979  
(1922).

The mission of Zarathustra (Zoroaster) caused a revolution in the theology of Iranian religion. The prophet devised a theology in which all of creation is involved in a battle between a good God (Ahura Mazda or Ormazd) and an evil spirit (Anra Mainyu or Ahriman). The duty of mankind is to participate in this battle on the side of God by living an ethical and pure life, and practicing certain rituals.

Even with this change in theology, however, much of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian Paganism survived. Most important, the form of many of the rituals continued with little alteration, and it is with the rituals that Modi is concerned.

The most important of these, both for Zoroastrians and for ADF members who may want to incorporate aspects of Zoroastrian practice into their own rituals, is the homa ritual, or yasna, which involves the preparation and offering of a ritual drink, i.e., a form of the "Waters of Life." A study of this ritual can lead to insight into the theology of the Waters of Life, a greater understanding of Indo-European cosmology, and useful suggestions for incorporation into one's own rituals. This will be important for those who practice in the Iranian and Proto-Indo-European traditions, but anyone should find much to think about.

There are, of course, other rituals described by Modi – the drōn, a transformation of animal sacrifice with bread replacing the animal; rites of passage such as birth and weddings; purification

rituals, etc. Some of these, such as the purifications for women after menstruation, for instance, may be of only academic interest. The ritual drinking of bull urine may be both difficult and distasteful, and the disposal of corpses by their being eaten by vultures is clearly based on post-Pagan theology.

All of the rituals are described in great detail, so much so that they could be performed accurately (albeit in English) from the descriptions. There are useful notes that often give parallels with other traditions, both Indo-European and otherwise.

It is some of these notes that I cannot compliment, however. Modi's exegesis suffers from an eagerness to show that Zoroastrian rituals are as sophisticated and valid as those of Western religions. This is unnecessary and sometimes misleading to modern readers; the rituals' beauty can stand on their own.

In sum, the book provides a great service to students and practitioners of Indo-European Paganism. Not only does it help us to understand both Zoroastrianism and the Iranian Paganism which lies behind it, it gives hints at explanations of other Indo-European cultures.

The book will be especially useful for those practicing an Iranian hearth culture, of course, but all ADF members should find it interesting, especially those developing their own rituals. I highly recommend *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* for all ADF members.

### **Author Bio:**

*Ceisiwr Serith is the author of Deep Ancestors: Practicing the Religion of the Proto-Indo-Europeans (published by ADF Publishing). A member of ADF for 28 years, he is currently Senior Druid and Liturgist of Nemos Ognios Grove in the seacoast region of New Hampshire.*



# Artisan's Guild Competition Results

## Wellspring 2014

By: Amy Castner

The Artisan's Guild competition at Wellspring Gathering was again a huge success! We had 32 wonderful and unique entries in 7 categories. This year we split the "Textiles & Fiber Arts" category into separate categories to honor the fact that the crafts are so different, and had excellent entries in both categories. Competition was fierce and for the first time ever we had a tie for "Best in Show," which Wellspring attendees voted for at our annual wine and cheese reception.

I encourage all ADF members to participate in next year's Artisan's Guild competition at Wellspring Gathering. You do not have to be an Artisan's Guild member to enter, and mail-in entries are available for those who cannot attend the festival. Each artist can enter one piece per category!

Best in Show (Tie)

"Bedim (Skadi)" by Amanda Grieshop, Cedarsong Grove

"Spirit of the Trees" by Diane Watson, Sassafras Grove



*Cernunnos Sickle* by Chris Henderson

### Fiber Arts

1<sup>st</sup> – "Robin's Accessories" by Robert Lewis, Tear of the Cloud Grove

2<sup>nd</sup> – "Tree of Life Sweater-Shirt" by Steph Gooch, Stone Creed Grove

### Textiles

1<sup>st</sup> – "Manannan Mac Lir Stole" by Brighde Allen, Sierra Madrone Grove

2<sup>nd</sup> – "Iris Garden Silk Scarf" by Hanna Christiansen Houser, Cedarsong Grove

### 2-D Fine Art

1<sup>st</sup> – "Spirit of the Trees" by Diane Watson, Sassafras Grove

2<sup>nd</sup> – "Gwyn Ap Nudd" by Ashley Bryner, Cedarlight Grove

### 3-D Fine Art

1<sup>st</sup> – "Behku Dream Catcher" by Chris Henderson, Grove of the Seven Hills

2<sup>nd</sup> (tie) – "Drinking Horn" by Willow Nimfeach, Muin Mound Grove

2<sup>nd</sup> (tie) – "Create!" by Jenn Hatter, Cedarsong Grove



*Paper Lantern* by Ted Gilliland



Drinking Horn by Willow Nimfeach

## The Wine Flows

By Diane “Emerald” Bronowicz

The wine flows  
 From the jar to the cup  
 From the cup to my lips  
 From my lips to my veins  
 From my veins to my soul.

Rapture. Release. Madness  
 Sweet clarity in the still moment He enters me  
 and makes me His

Flowing within me as I flow  
 Into the dance.

Taken by His frenzy  
 Bound by His Mystery  
 Freed into ecstasy.  
 Howling and raging my voice joins in the Song of  
 the Night  
 A confluence of catharsis  
 Driven by Dionysos to the depths of delight.

### Photography

- 1<sup>st</sup> – “Bedim (Skadi)” by Amanda Grieshop,  
Cedarsong Grove
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – “The Mating Dance” by Diane Watson,  
Sassafras Grove

### Sacred Objects

- 1<sup>st</sup> – “Prima Mater” by Shawneen,  
Three Cranes Grove
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – “Cernunnos Sickle” by Chris Henderson,  
Grove of the Seven Hills

### Other Crafts

- 1<sup>st</sup> – “Grove Necklace” by Amy Castner,  
Cedarsong Grove
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – “Kerikeon – Wand of Hermes” by  
Chris Henderson, Grove of the Seven Hills

### Special thanks to:

Reception Donations: Shawneen, Jennifer Hatter,  
Michelle Handa, Gretchen Persbacker, Jerry  
Ginzel

Volunteers: Diane Watson, Rob Steiner, Melissa  
Hill, Jennifer Hatter, Jerry Ginzel, Steph Gooch  
Judges: Jean (Drum) Pagano, Athena Moonstone,  
Christine Marvel  
Photography: Ashley Bryner

### Author Bio:

*Amy Castner is Senior Druid Emeritus of Cedarsong  
Grove, current Upper Midwest Regional Druid, and Chair  
of the 2014 Wellspring Artisan’s Competition. She has  
been a member of ADF since 2007.*



Tatiba by Gerald Lambert



## *Bardic Chair Competition: 2014*

**Dave "Thexalon" Kleinschmidt**

**Wellspring Bardic Chair**

Every year at Wellspring, the people gather to feed the bardic fire with tales, poems and song. It is a competition, in that it drives the participants to strive for excellence, but the spirit amongst the competitors is one of support and inclusiveness. It can be a gruelling experience to prepare for and compete in the Competition, but the rewards are many: satisfaction of having conquered nerves and inner demons, recognition of your peers, and most importantly, knowing that you have made your own offering to the bardic arts, and to a tradition that goes back to the first fire.

The Competition has three sections: poetry, song and story. Each category reveals its own beauty, both in diversity of content and delivery. Competitors can choose what sort of piece to perform, which has ranged from traditional pieces re-imagined to original works. Originality, either of content or interpretation, is perhaps the most important criteria in the judges' decision. The imagination that the Bardic competitors use to bring their stories, their poems and songs to life is the energy that inspires the audience and feeds the fire in each of us.

The Bardic Chair winner is not necessarily the one who wins first place in each category, but the one who consistently demonstrates quality throughout their performances. This is where the challenge lies - because everyone has strengths and weaknesses in performing, and by its nature, the Competition highlights both. The only way to combat these areas of weakness as a performer is to practice. This year's winner, Dave "Thexalon", attributed his success to putting in the long hours needed: "I started to prepare the minute the last competition finished," he told me after this year's win.

As an audience member, I have been entertained and inspired by the performances of the Bardic

Chair competitors. As a competitor, I have been humbled and elevated by the work it takes to win, and by the incredible talent that our community holds. And as a judge, I have been challenged to choose a winner, but also came to understand the heart of the competition- which is to witness the embodiment of ADF on the stage- striving for excellence, honouring the traditions of the past, and offering our best selves to the Gods through tale, poem, and song.



The theme I chose to work from was the sacred flame, for two reasons: (1) John "Fox" Adelman and others had been working on kindling sacred flame as a spiritual practice, and (2) I had just spent Wellspring 2013 in various groups of people huddled around said sacred flames so it seemed like an appropriate thing to write about.

Each work connects differently to this theme. The story is about the mythological roots that make what would otherwise be a mundane tool into a sacred object. The poem expresses the human experience of that sacred hearth. The song looks at the situation from the point of view of the sacred flame itself.

### **Poem: *The Center***

*(The god "Foresight" is usually known by his untranslated name "Prometheus", and his story first shows up in the lore in Hesiod's Theogony. I chose to translate his name to match how this tale might have sounded to a listener for whom Greek was the native tongue.)*

There is the hearth at the center of my clan.  
That is the place where I meet with all my folk,  
And share the blessings of my life.

And there is the hearth at the center of my town.  
That is the place where I meet with my leaders,  
And share the blessings of my year.

And there is the hearth at the center of my square.  
That is the place where I meet with my neighbors,  
And share the blessings of my week.

And there is the hearth at the center of my home.  
That is the place where I meet with my family,  
And share the blessings of my day.

But this is the hearth at the center of my being.  
Here is the place where I meet with my Kindreds,  
And share the blessings of each moment.

Each flame a sacred gathering.  
Each flame a communal bond.  
Each flame with a history.  
Each flame with goddess present.  
Each flame a triumph.

Now let us gather at the center.

**Story: *The Finding of Fire***  
**(retelling of Hesiod)**

In the earliest days of the world, there Gods, and there were Beasts, and there were Men. The Men feared the Gods, because the Gods were much older and much wiser than Men. And the Men feared the Beasts, because the Beasts were faster and stronger than Men could hope to be. Sometimes the Beasts would attack the Men's village, and the Gods would send hail or drought, and the Men suffered. So the Men came together in council, and decided to leave tribute for the Gods and Beasts in the hopes that they would be left in peace.

They built a high altar and left trinkets for the

Gods, and left food for the Beasts in the nearby forest. The Gods seemed to listen to the Men, and sent no more hail or drought, but the Beasts did not understand Men's gifts and continued to attack the Men. And so the Men suffered still.

One of the Gods was named "Foresight", and it was his job to observe and predict what would happen. He had an idea, and went to the king of the Gods to explain it:

"Ah, sir, you see how those Men down there keep offering us gifts? Perhaps we could make them our allies by helping them against the Beasts."

"Why do we need allies? We're Gods, and the Men have nothing we care about."

"Not even the occasional dalliance?"

"You leave my private life out of this! And don't tell my wife! Now listen, remember why I'm in charge here? I overthrew my father and his crew. He overthrew his father and his crew. These Men are our children - what do you think would happen to us if they got too strong? We cannot help them, and that's all there is to it."

"But wouldn't it be nice to have Men down there happily doing what we want? We could enjoy more of their gifts, watch their triumphs in our name, ..."

"Enough! You are forbidden to do anything to help them, do you understand?"

But Foresight had known what the king might say, and he had a plan. He went to the highest parts of

the heavens, and took a small piece of the Fire he found there, and headed down to the Earth to give it to the Men.

But the king of the Gods noticed what Foresight was doing, and knew he had to stop Foresight from delivering his gift. He sent a

storm, and flung a lightning bolt \*KABOOM!\* at Foresight. The king then rushed to where Foresight was, grabbed him and dragged him to the far ends of the Earth, and chained Foresight to a rock, and sent a bird to peck at him every day.

Some Men heard the commotion, and came to investigate what had happened. There they discovered Fire, still burning, forgotten on the battlefield. They were scared of it at first, but decided this might be useful, took it back to their village, and tended it, and cared for it. The Fire kept them warm, it allowed them to see at night, and the next time the Beasts attacked the Men brought out pieces of Fire and scared the Beasts away, and the Men could prosper.

Generations went by, with Men becoming stronger and wiser with the help of the Fire. And one day, a great hero of Men was wandering the Earth when he discovered Foresight, still chained to the rock.

*Each flame a sacred gathering.*  
*Each flame a communal bond.*  
*Each flame with a history.*  
*Each flame with goddess present.*  
*Each flame a triumph.*

"I was wondering when you would get here!"  
 "How did you know I was coming?"  
 "Listen, I am Foresight, and I knew that if I helped Men one day Men would find me, and help me in return."  
 "But why are you chained here?"  
 "That's not important right now. If you release me, I will be an aid to Men henceforth."  
 "But how do I get you out? If these chains are too strong for you, a God, surely they are too strong for me."  
 "Remember the tool that saved you from the Beasts? Try that."  
 The hero took the Fire bundle from his pack,

and rekindled it near the chain. As the chain heated, it became weaker, and Foresight and the hero pulled and bent and tugged until Foresight was free.

Foresight was good to his word. And so now, if you have a difficult decision to make, sit quietly by the Fire and listen carefully - the voice of Foresight will whisper from the flame and tell you the path of wisdom.

**Author Bio:**

*Dave "Thexalon" Kleinschmidt is the 2014 Wellspring Bardic Champion. Prior to receiving this award, he had since 2009 composed and performed a new song for every High Day rite. He joined ADF in 2008 and completed the Dedicator Program in 2011. In addition to his bardic work, he also serves as Polemarkbos of the White Owls Kin, the Hellenic interest group of ADF, and as Scribe of Stone Creed Grove.*

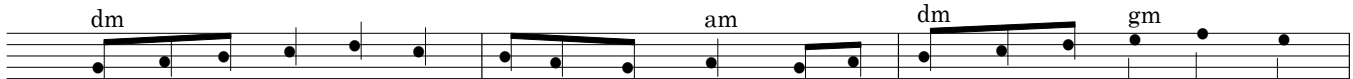
**Here Now I Burn**



Here now I burn, give you heat and light. Here I burn, keep you warm at night. So let me  
 And still I burn, this sym- bol of sun, Yes I burn, while you sing for fun, So let me  
 And still I burn, re- li- a- bly here, Still I burn, and drive a- way fear, So let me  
 So let me burn, and ho- nor me true, Let me burn, my ma- gic im- bue, So let me



burn keep - ing the folk safe with my wel- come sight.  
 burn sta - ying a fo- cus un- til wor- ship is done.  
 burn bring - ing the sense of en- chant - ment near.  
 burn and my po- wer will give you the strength to get through!



Born at spring - time's star - ting days, As my pries- tess- es tend me through  
 Built up be- fore the rite's op- en- ing phase, As the folk join their voi - ces  
 Bring me your of- fer- ings to kin- dreds three, And I'll make sure they pass be- yond



all times and ways. The all- con- tin- u- ing Sa- cred Cen - ter  
 sing - ing my praise, A gate- way to the bright world high a- bove  
 where bless- ings be, I'll spread the gifts a- bove, share the scent with love,



Moth - er's le- ga- cy where the ci- ty prays.  
 Smoke will rise up to gol - den rays.  
 And re- turn wis - dom to set your joy free!

This should be taken at a moderate pace. The rhythm should fall naturally into a 3+3+2 pattern, which matches some common drumming rhythms and guitar strumming patterns.



# Celebrating the Ancestors with Children

By Jan "Skylark: Avende

As the harvest season ends, we begin to approach the Samhain holiday. Secularly, many of our kids are getting ramped up for Halloween. Costumes! Candy! Oh my! This tradition is well known, and thoroughly practiced, and allows an excellent segue for us to begin to introduce some of our traditions into our children's lives. One of the common altar pieces that work to honor our dead is the Ancestors box. If you don't already have one, it can be a powerful experience to create one with your children, and help them to develop a practice of ancestor worship. You will need a box, preferably with some sort of latch, or alternatively some cord or rope to tie the box shut, as well as things that represent your ancestors.

Because kids still think in very concrete terms, the first ancestors they will probably want to think of are those immediately past from within the family. Grand, or great-grandparents. And because many children love begin told stories, this is a perfect way to begin a tradition of honoring the dead. You can do the prep work for this by finding either photos or something else that reminds you of these ancestors. Share their story with your children and describe how they lived and what they were like. What did they look like? What did they like to do? Is there a funny story that still makes you laugh whenever you think of them? Did they give you advice that you'll never forget? The point here is to make your ancestors come alive for your children. If you children remember some of these ancestors invite them to tell what they remember of them.

As you delve deeper into the creation of your ancestor box, remember that not all the ancestors we honor are those of our blood. You can begin to include cultural heroes or icons, pagan leaders who have passed, people who have fought for values you hold dear. This collection of ancestors is meant to represent who you and your family hold dear.

Now, if you don't have a box created yet, you'll want to make one. This is where you will need the latching (or rope for tying) box. Everybody likes having a nice place to stay when they are visiting somewhere, with things that make them feel welcome and comfortable. Have your children help you to brainstorm how to decorate your family's ancestor box, because this is where the ancestors will come to stay when they are visiting. You may want to paint the inside and/or outside of the box. You may want to write inspiring messages around the edges. This may also be a time where you share more stories about what your ancestors liked to do. Many of my ancestors were avid card players, and so one of the things to include could be a deck of cards.

After your box looks how you like, now it is time to start putting the tokens that represent your ancestors into the box. Remember, these can be many, many things: photographs, playing cards, paper and pen, stamps, pressed flowers, seeds, anything. (As a side note, I would not include any food items as you'll be sealing the box for the remainder of the year, and you really don't want something rotting in there or bugs or animals to get into the box.) As each item is put into the box say:

"[Name], we remember you.

We tell of your virtues, we tell of your flaws

We tell of your life so that you may live on.

Live through our words, and live through our line.

Love will circle around and keep your soul alive.

[Name], we honor you."

You can have your child say the words, or have them put the items in the box, or both. Once all the representations of your ancestors have been put into the box, you will close it up following your celebration of Samhain. The box should be closed and latched (or tied) for the remainder of the year. You will open it again as you approach Samhain next year. The exact timing is up to you, whether it's something as simple as two weeks before

the feast day, or the new moon/full moon before the feast day. Open it based on the other traditions your family has built.

Having an ancestor box will often lead to the creation of an ancestor altar with the box begin the center piece. This is an excellent way to help weave your family's practices into your lives in a way that your children and both see and participate in. For example, if you have family dinners, throughout the year you can make up a small plate of food for the ancestors, and let your child put the Ancestors plate on the altar for the duration of the meal. Help you child say a prayer to the ancestors in the morning, and give them a cup of coffee. Revisit the stories of your ancestors occasionally through the year, and help your child begin to build that relationship.

**Author Bio:**

*Jan "Skylark" Avende has been a member of Three Cranes Grove and ADF since 2009. She is very close to completing the Initiate Path and hopes for Initiation to take place at Festival of the Midnight Flame this year. She is currently serving as the Regional Druid for the Heartland Region, the Chief of the Bardic a Guild, and the Arkbon of the Hellenic Kin in addition to being the mother of an amazing little girl who shares a name with the Hellenic Muse of Comedic Poetry, Thalia.*



**Moments before the Second Battle of Mag Tured**

*by Wayne Keysor*

Dark blossom opens  
on a golden field.  
Summer grass ripples.  
A quiet that is not quiet.  
You kneel on the waiting earth,  
silent captains around you.  
The flowers' last gift,  
insubstantial wisps of white  
caught on your brow  
like delicate snowflakes.  
You rise,  
crane unfolds its wings.



**WAELCYRGE**

by: Finn McMillan

What do you see? What do you see?  
Your eyes are closing.  
What do you see? What do you see?  
As you are dying.

I am not alone  
And I am flying,  
I come not alone  
To where you lie.

Feeding! Ha!  
I'm feeding! I'm feeding!

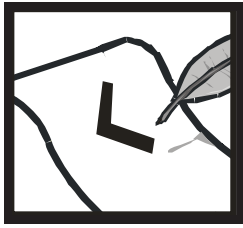
Nothing to be, nothing to see  
This bleak last knowing.  
Let it all be, leave them to me,  
Your eyes are going.

Feeding! Ha!  
I'm feeding! I'm feeding!

What do you see? What do you see?  
What here's worth saving?  
Nothing to see, ah no, there's nothing to see,  
What's left, well it's fading away.

I am not alone,  
The light is flying.  
And I come not alone  
To where you lie.

I'm feeding! Ha!  
I'm feeding! I'm feeding!



# Website Review

*By Rev. Robb Lewis*

Back in 2010, when Anthony Thompson stepped down as ADF's Information Manager, he recommended that I take over as I had already done a lot of work on the website, and shown that I have some relevant programming skills. Ever since then, I have said that it felt like he threw me under the proverbial druid killing bus. Like so many of the unseen jobs within ADF, most people rarely ever see how much work is involved. With this article, and the conclusion of a major change in the ADF web infrastructure, I wish to give everyone an idea where we were and how far we have come. So, let's first look at the state of things when I took over the job.

When I first started working deeply with the website starting around 2009, it was obvious we were running on old technology. We had a couple thousand web pages, but they were all static pages. That meant that if you wanted to change a menu item, or something on the header or footer, you needed to put that code on every single page. We had scripts to do such a thing, but they were not obvious at a quick glance on how they worked. This difficulty is a big part of why the look of the website never really ever changed. I can only remember adding a couple menu links after that time, and other than that, everything stayed the same.

Another part of our old site was how we were securing it. Some private directories, such as for the clergy or office, were protected by server side passwords. These were easy to not keep in sync, or forget to add someone in, so they were often being fixed. The worst part was that the usernames were case sensitive! Our log in system was almost as bad. We were not using any of the modern hashing techniques for securing passwords, but were just doing character rotation techniques. That is why we were able to retrieve your password if you forgot it. That is just a horrible thing to be able to do, especially in this day and age. If a website ever says they can retrieve your password, think twice about giving them your password.

The final part of the old website is the back end software. This was all custom coded by Anthony over at least 10 years. It did it's job, but it was lacking in some areas. It was also showing it's age as time wore on and Anthony was not available to maintain it. I had to become a quick study in Python to fix things

when they broke, and of course if you are not intimately familiar with a code base, one fix can easily cause another issue. From my perspective, maintaining this unique code was not sustainable.

Now, please don't go reading into what I just said there. Anthony did excellent work. He created a custom Content Management System (CMS) when they truly were in their infancy throughout the web. He did an amazing job throughout his years in the position, and he deserves major credits for getting us to where we are. When he passed the torch to me, it was time to think about changing.

And thinking about changes is just what I did. I installed on my personal machines various CMS systems that were open source and have an enthusiastic user base. The other thing I wanted to see was a system where the average user did not need to know HTML in order to create a new page. The biggest ones by far are WordPress and Drupal. After testing, playing around with how the base installs worked, and seeing what extensions or modules were available, I settled on using Drupal for our back end. It seemed like it fit our needs, and it had most of what we needed available as modules. This was towards the end of 2010 and start of 2011 when this decision was made.

At this point, I set out, with the help of the web team, to put together a new website. While the content would not be new, everything else would be. Drupal and the associated modules gave us a very good starting point. We were able to make the content entering be WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get), connect directly with our mailing lists, have better security overall, and make a website that we can completely change how it is displayed in a matter of minutes.

The other thing about using Drupal is that we were able to use databases for our website. The way all the modern CMS software works is by storing all the content in a database and generating the web page when you go to it. That is why you will often see things like /q?node=1 or a whole string of nonsense in your URLs. What it is doing is telling the database what to find and serve up. It is also what makes it

very easy to change things around as I could just enter a URL into the database and point it to any page I want... voilà, an instant copy and I didn't even have to move any files. Of course that is just a simple example, there is a lot more that we are doing, but we are truly relying on the power of databases to run our website.

The ADF requirements that could not be fulfilled through existing modules required a custom solution. The rosters we've all used, and the training stuff, that's all custom, and that is actually all rather complicated to put together properly. It is this customization that took the longest time as the coding of the custom modules was primarily done by me, and as most of us here, I also have a day job and other obligations to deal with. I kept plugging away though, and had help from some other ADF members randomly through those couple years. In the end, about 23 thousand lines of custom code were created for our website. That is not including the few thousand lines of code that go into the formatting of how the website looks. When people ask why it took so long, that is the answer I give.

Finally, in the summer of 2013, I felt we were at the point where we had enough working code that it was time to migrate all the web pages we had over. That was about 2500 individual pages that had to be moved, checked to make sure they were copied correctly, verify the URL, author, date of authorship, and many other little things. Because this could not be 100% automated, it involved humans looking at it, and let's be honest, humans do make mistakes. Thankfully the majority of the material came across as it was originally, and some things have been fixed since because they didn't. I have to give a big thanks to those that participated in the broken link contest. Without them, many of our dead links, or inadvertently broken links were found and fixed.

About this same time, the ADF store was having issues with it's site. Having a near ready install, we created a sub-site in Drupal and installed the UberCart store software on it. We didn't do much customization on it, and Selene was able to get it up and running relatively easily. We've had a few tweaks to it since it went live, but overall, it has been working well. What was even better was that we could change the look of the store to make it look like the ADF website, whatever it looked like, by a couple clicks of the mouse.

At the end of September, we were ready to move things over, and final testing began. Then, the first weekend of October, we switched the site over to the

new back end. This for the most part was just running a couple scripts to get users into the database, update their passwords, and moving files around to the right locations. We were now running a modern website. Of course, when we went live, people started doing things we didn't expect, and bugs were found. These were fixed as they came in, and even now, many months after we went live, we keep finding little things that go wrong, and we keep fixing them. Finally, at the Spring Equinox, we all saw the power of using a modern CMS when the theme was changed over to something new for the first time since I have been with ADF.

At this point, you may think we're done, but we are not. As we went on with the new website, it became apparent that our host for the website, and our host for our lists, were not living up to our expectations. We began a search to see where our new home should be. We looked at shared hosting, but our e-lists would not be able to moved to them. We looked at Virtual hosts, but they too didn't suit our needs. We ended up looking at dedicated servers, and ultimately, at the end of April of 2014, we bought a dedicated server. At the start of May, we moved our website over to the new server with few issues.

At the end of May, we were slated to move our e-lists over. When I started looking at that, I did not realize how much work it would involve. The first issue, and the biggest reason we were looking to leave our host for our lists was due to something Yahoo! did at the end of April. Basically, what they did was tell all e-mail servers out there that if an email comes to them with a yahoo address, but not from a yahoo server, delete it. Our e-mail lists were sending on the emails using whatever original email address sent it. This meant that some of our users would not be able to read emails from Yahoo accounts. This needed to be fixed, and the newest version of the mailman software had a way to fix it.

The other thing that happened at the same time was we wanted to get forums up and running. As the forums look at the from address when determining who sent the email, it was imperative that whatever solution we came up with be implemented at the same time, or else we would get a bunch of emails from anonymous users that were not really anonymous. In the end, we were able to take the email from the lists and change it around so the forums could process it correctly. Along with all of this, the forum software had to be integrated with the website software so that usernames, passwords, and emails were kept up to date.

Then came moving day, May 30, 2014. I started the night out by finding that the old list server was not

consistent with the archives. I had to take the local copy I keep and upload them to the website. Once this was done, the archives were regenerated with no issues, or so I thought. Shortly after I got the archives up, and was testing a list to make sure it works, I got an email saying a disk partition was full. At this point, I contacted support, and they fixed it, they thought. I came back to complete the move the next morning and found that the web interfaces were not working. Again, contacted support, and a couple hours later, everything was working just fine. The bulk of the day though was importing the messages into the forums. If the messages were not imported before the lists went live, things would get screwed up. This literally took all day. Finally, I invited everyone that was subscribed to the lists to join the appropriate lists.

To give you an idea of what kind of data we are dealing with here: The mail messages, uncompressed take up 1.8 GB of storage, and when expanded by archiving, they took up 7.9 GB. We have well over 385,500 email messages over 85 lists. We also have over 13,000 list subscriptions, which does not subtract out the duplicate emails that are subscribed to multiple lists. We also currently have almost 3000 different web pages on our website, and countless documents, text, and multi-media files, and well over 8000 links.

Now, the project I started working on in late 2010 has reached the end. We are now running on a modern CMS, everything is consolidated back onto one server, and we now have forums for the first time. There is still more to do, such as upgrading the CMS to the next version (which will require a lot more custom coding), and maintaining our server. The server is now our responsibility, and we will be able to control when the software is upgraded and patched which should result in less disruptive down times. We are also considering ways to put our server to work for us to reduce the costs of the website. Overall, we're paying roughly the same today as we were last year, but we now have ways where we can make our server work for us and potentially bring in money.

In closing, a big thank you for everyone that has helped throughout the years. You're too numerous to name, but you know who you are. I also request that if you are interested in helping out, or if you have found issues

with the website, please email the webmasters at [ADF-Webmaster@adf.org](mailto:ADF-Webmaster@adf.org)

Some new/useful links:

<https://www.adf.org/user/password> to request a password reset

<https://www.adf.org/store> to purchase things from the store

[https://www.adf.org/mailman/private/LISTNAME\\_lists.adf.org/](https://www.adf.org/mailman/private/LISTNAME_lists.adf.org/) for the mailing list archives (replace LISTNAME with the lists name, e.g. ADF-Announce) See <https://www.adf.org/forums/lists/archives.html> for how to reset your archives password.

<https://www.adf.org/webforum> for the new ADF forums

<https://www.adf.org/members/new/index.html> Area for new members.

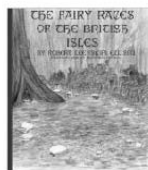


Author Bio:

*Rev. Robert Lewis has been a member of ADF for 15 years, and been in various leadership positions since 2007. He is currently the Secretary and the Information Manager (aka Webmaster).*

### Rev. Robert (Skip) Ellison

Archdruid Emeritus of Ár nDraíocht Féin is pleased to announce the latest book from his publishing company - **Dragon's Keep Publishing!**



### The Fairy Races of the British Isles

Authored by Skip and illustrated by Rhiannon Ellison

ISBN: 1497430232

Available from Amzon.com at:

<http://tinyurl.com/lo7urno>

Or it can be ordered from your favorite bookstore!

Also available is:

### The Divine Liver:

The Art & Science of Haruspicy As Practiced By The Etruscans and Romans - ISBN: 1483903982

Available from Amzon.com at:

<http://tinyurl.com/oeof885>



# Jan's Little Room – A Personal Column on Magic Arts

by Ian Corrigan

Hello all. By the grace of our editorial staff I'll be presenting a column for the next several issues of OL. My topic, for at least the first while, will be magic, its meaning, method and application in our Druidry. Some of these articles have appeared in my blog, *Into the Mound*, but each will be edited (and, one hopes, improved) for this format.

## Magic?

What does the term 'magic' mean in context of modern Pagan spiritual endeavor? I find myself trying to answer this question over and over. I find the topic discussed over and over in Pagan writing. What makes this word so difficult, so confusing, so likely to produce conflicting definitions in different minds?

It seems to me that the word sits fairly comfortably on those working the various spiritual techniques developed in the renaissance and modern times. Grimoiric magic, Hermetic ritual magic and the various methods that are referred to as theurgy or thaumaturgy seem to be able to define themselves as 'magic' in a way that is almost, or overtly, in opposition to 'religion'. In the context of Christian orthodoxy these techniques were plainly proscribed, or at best barely tolerated, and that required a vocabulary for the plain distinction between 'religious' ritual and spiritual techniques and 'other' ritual and spiritual techniques. Following the custom of Greek and Roman literature, Europe came to use the term 'magic' to refer to these other methods.

When we go outside of the Euro-Christian model, the whole matter becomes less dichotomous, and so less simple. In most pre-Christian systems (and many modern non-Christian ones) the techniques that we know as magic – self-empowerment and energy work, theurgic invocation, spirit-art, empowerment of talismans and images, leveraging events through hidden influence, divination, etc – are often entirely integrated into the category of 'religion'. There might be specific vocabulary



terms for each, but there is no need for an overarching term like 'magic' to distinguish them from regular practice.

This leaves the would-be Traditional Pagan in a funny place in relation to modern usages of the term 'magic'. In many ways our religious practice is based on principles and practices that have been taught in the west as magic. Correspondence, consecration of images, trance and meditation are all core practices of a working Pagan spirituality. It is entirely reasonable to say that ancient religion was 'based on magic' as long as we recall that the ancients themselves would never have said such a thing. A statement like that is true only in a modern usage in which magic means 'technical application of spiritual arts for the production of specific willed effects'.

The key words there, for me, are 'technical application' and 'willed effects'. In my opinion magic is primarily a body of human skill, applied to the spiritual (and secondarily the material) realm in order to produce desired outcomes. This brings me to the reason I took up this topic.

I keep reading people saying things like 'magic isn't something you do, it's something you are'. These folks tend to use 'Magic' to refer to some (to me) ambiguous 'magicness' in the universe, perhaps to the sense of wonder and spiritual awe

that accompanies some spiritual effects. They seem to want to promote magic to a station even higher than I would place it – to keep it in the realm of the ‘unknowable’ or of ‘mystery’. I guess I understand this – but for me the ‘unknowable’ only exists so that I can figure it out – I don’t really perceive value in the existence of that which cannot be understood. There’s lots of value in things which we \*don’t\* understand, and in things which any one of us may never understand in a lifetime, but not so much in the existence of things that are not meant to be understood, at least sufficiently to put them to use.

(Now, I’ve often stated that I’m an agnostic of sorts, in that I don’t think the human senses and mind are capable of directly perceiving (especially spiritual) reality or of ever being certain that we know what’s “really” going on. Nevertheless our senses and comprehension are pretty good. They allow us to build material objects that last for thousands of years and construct spiritual methods that produce results over centuries. So I’m generally willing to accept the approximate Truth we can arrive at by our will and skill as Good Enough To Get Started.)

So I vastly prefer to use the term ‘magic’ to refer to a body of skills that humans use to shape and direct spiritual forces, rather than use it to refer to the forces themselves. That is I don’t think there’s ‘magic all around us’ in a literal sense. There are spirits, and powers, and relationships all around us, but ‘magic’ is the body of talents and skills – ritual, vision, knowledge of natural powers, etc. – that allow us to speak with the spirits, experience the Otherworlds and build relationships with the Gods. So, we could say that there is “magic all around us”, as the old ritual song says, we might mean that we are surrounded by the wonders we have made, by the relationships we have built.

Sometimes I think people perceive the above approach as reductionism – it turns magic from a cosmic wonder into a tool-bag and a set of methods. I’m afraid that, to a certain extent, it may be so. But I think the ‘magic-as-cosmic-principle’ feeling also devalues our divine human powers of shaping and making. In my own Pagan world-view the divine lives in us (among many other places...), in the souls and talents and skills of humans. Our ability to shape wood or make music or bargain with spirits is of the same kind as the

ability of Gods to shape mountains – just in smaller supply. This is certainly, in itself, a wonder. We might say that this approach to magic moves the object of wonder from the strange and hidden in the outside world to the skill and power of the divine in the self.

On another level I think I detect a sort of ‘faith not works’ feel to the idea of magic as a sort of ‘thing’ that exists of itself in the cosmos. There is a certain sort of spiritual model – both Christianity and Buddhism have versions of it – in which human effort doesn’t really count in the business of achieving gnosis, or wisdom, or whatever we might call ‘enlightenment’ or ‘adeptship’. In such systems all that a student can do is prepare themselves, and hope that the result occurs. It seems to me that in these models gnosis isn’t something you do; it’s something that happens to you. I suppose this has value for those who want to weaken the grip of the social mask-ego on the broader psyche. It reminds the student that the ‘them’ they usually perceive isn’t the do-er of the deeds, or even the primary target. But again I feel like this is throwing out the baby with the bath – discarding the reality of human spiritual power in favor of ‘surrender’ to a divinity, or a magic, outside of the perceived ‘self’.

Alright, that’s taken us down a road a bit from the starting point of the meaning of ‘magic’. I continue to like a definition such as ‘spiritual skills applied for personally willed goals’. I suppose that, for the sake of our modern understanding, we might contrast that with ‘religion’, by which I might mean ‘spiritual skills applied for customary or community goals’. Is this a distinction the ancients would have made? Hard to say.

Romans made a distinction between public rites and private rites, with the former well-regulated and the latter mainly left alone. For the Greeks and Romans ‘magic’ had the connotation of ‘foreign’, referring to the wandering Persian ritualists who claimed to be able to command the Gods and spirits by their rites. Nevertheless Hellenic religion was full of trance-oracles, bribing of Gods for gain, consecrated images and talismans and the things we might now call ‘magical’. It seems to me that among cultures with a more ‘professional’ priestly class, such as Vedic, Persian and Celtic, there is greater chance of a

specialist discourse developing in which technical methods of invocation, trance, etc. are discussed. Celtic sources leave little to judge from, but we do have classical descriptions of their devotion to religion, divination and sacrifice, with direct comparisons to the Magi. Persians and Bharati cultures had ‘magical’ practices integrated into their religion – astrology and planetary spirit-art, for instance, are gospel-orthodox in those traditions. We don’t see much of that in Roman religion – I know of no Roman instruction to sacrificers on how to properly involve the mind in sacrifice. We do see it plainly in post-Vedic material, and perhaps by inference in the hymns themselves. Vedic culture simply calls such things ‘knowledge’, though they have technical vocabulary for the various rituals and practices.

In some Paganisms we also see some or most of this knowledge preserved as esoteric – it is for the few, for those trained and accepted into the priestly work. This sense of esotericism contributes greatly, I think, to the later notion of ‘magic’. Once again we see this much more clearly in some cultures than others, and it seems to me that Celtic cultures fall on the side of esotericism, with its specialist priestly-poetic class.

As a modern practitioner of both public priestly ritual and more arcane skills such as divination and spellbinding I will probably continue to find a use for the English word ‘magic’ as distinct from other types of spiritual practice. I suppose I’ll continue to argue for its use to mean ‘body of human spiritual skill’ rather than ‘intrinsic wonder of the cosmos’. Of course one can simply use ethnic terms when we want to be specific – seid and galdr, briocht and pishog – and that’s probably a good plan, but doesn’t make modern theoretical thought about these things any easier. Using good English descriptive vocabulary is also a good plan – talk about invocation in a technical sense, develop (steal, co-opt, etc) terms for states of awareness and trance, have terms for various practical-magic goals, that allow us to talk technically about willed use of spiritual skills without referring too often to that broad and difficult category of ‘magic’.

**Author Bio:**

*When the world was still young, Ian Corrigan was forged from the mists, and from that misty place he rose, tall and*

*proud, wise and loud, to join us in the middle realm and share his knowledge of occultism, ritual skills, and general weirdness and mayhem (mayhem!). Ian is not as rare and highly elusive as he was in his formative years, having built a strong web presence via his blog “Into the Mound” where he continues to spout his Druidry-related magico-religious goodness. He can be seen playing guitar with his lovely wife and long-time best friend, Liafal, who is the Queen of Hospitality and Patience—and she would have to be to be so happily married to Ian of the Mists, the Lore Master and Mage.*



*Missy Burchfield at Shining Lakes Grove Samhain*  
by: Rev. Melissa Hill



# News and Announcements

---

## *Dedicant Path Completions*

### **Mike Kann**

Date Completed: March 2014

### **Wayne Keysor**

Cedarlight Grove, ADF

Date Completed: March 2014

### **Matthew James (Forest Wolf)**

Date Complete: April 2014

## *Guild Program Completions*

### **Hearthstone**

Circle 1 of the Liturgists Study Program.

Date Completed: March 2014

### **GR Grove**

Circle 1 Liturgists Study Program

Date Completed: March 2014

### **Rev. Kelly Kingston (Carrion Mann)**

Circle 1 Liturgists Study Program

Date Completed: May 2014

## *Clergy Ordinations*

### **Rev. Melissa S. Burchfield**

Ordination at: Summerland Festival 2014

### **Rev. Matthew Rutledge**

Ordination at: Midnight Flame Festival 2014

## *Clergy Consecration*

### **Rev. Kelly Kingston (Carrion Mann)**

Circle 2 Clergy Training Program

Consecration at: Summerland Festival 2014

## *Clergy Elevations*

### **Rev. Kelly Kingston (Carrion Mann)**

Elevation at: Summerland Festival 2014

### **Rev. Amber "Ayliah" Cannon**

Elevation at: Summerland Festival 2014

## *Initiate Path Completion*

### **Rowen Grove**

Initiation Completed: Wellspring 2014

~ Congratulations to all ! ~

## *Upcoming Events*

### **Summerland Gathering**

Aug 14-18, 2014

Yellow Springs, OH

### **Festival of the Midnight Flame**

Sept 4-8, 2014-03-16

Bellaire, MI

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

*HearthFire Host Table* by: Rev. William E. Ashton

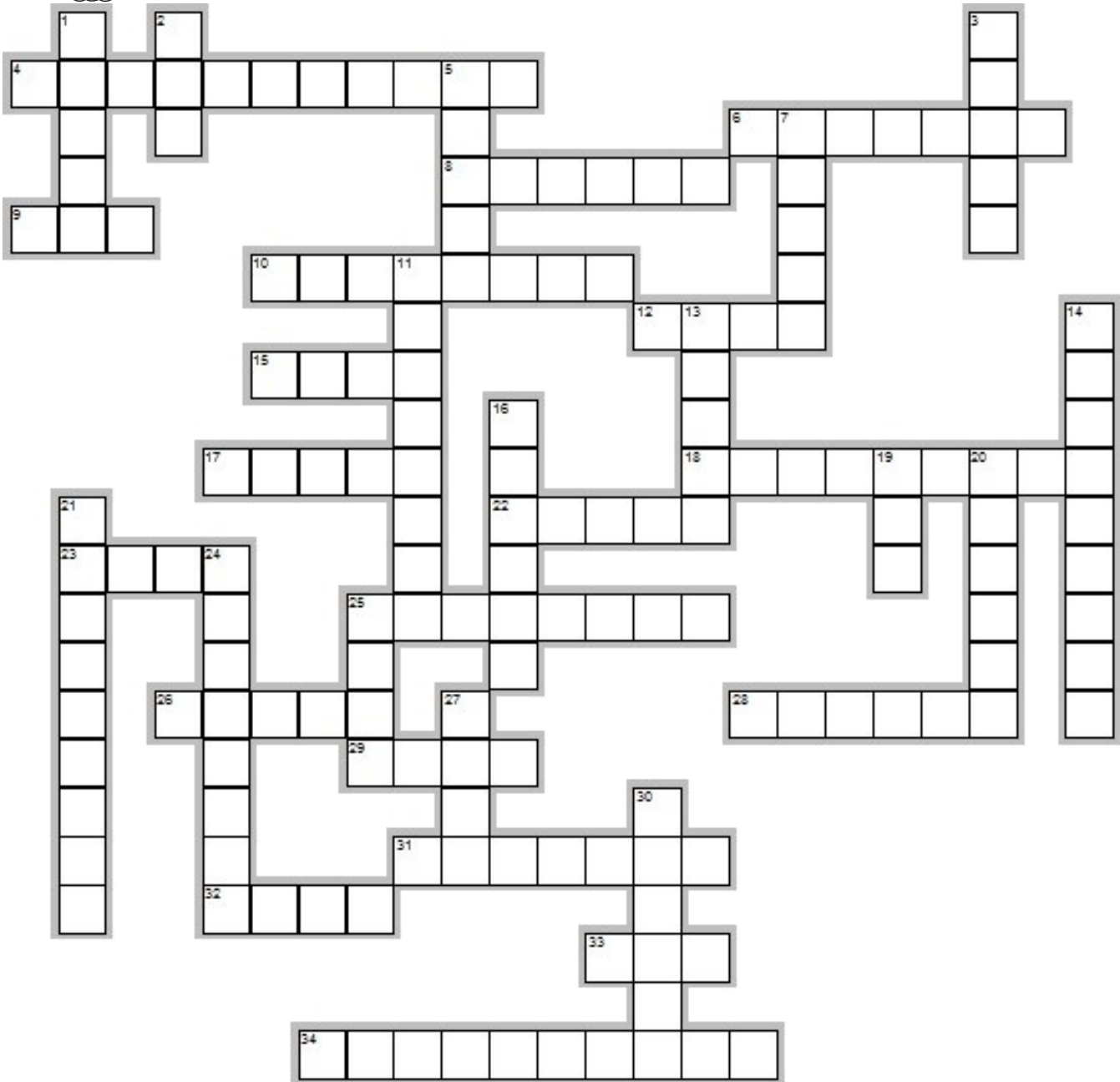




# Crossword Puzzle

## Norse Mythology

By Chris:)



Edgemoor.com

## Across

4. Freyja's necklace
6. Hail Rune
8. Gleipnir ingredient fish \_\_\_\_\_
9. She of the Golden hair
10. The Hall of the fallen
12. Wealth rune
15. A Wolf of Odin
17. Future Norn
18. Nurshed Ymir
22. Odins Rune
23. Bor & Bestla were his parents
25. Loki's 8 legged offspring

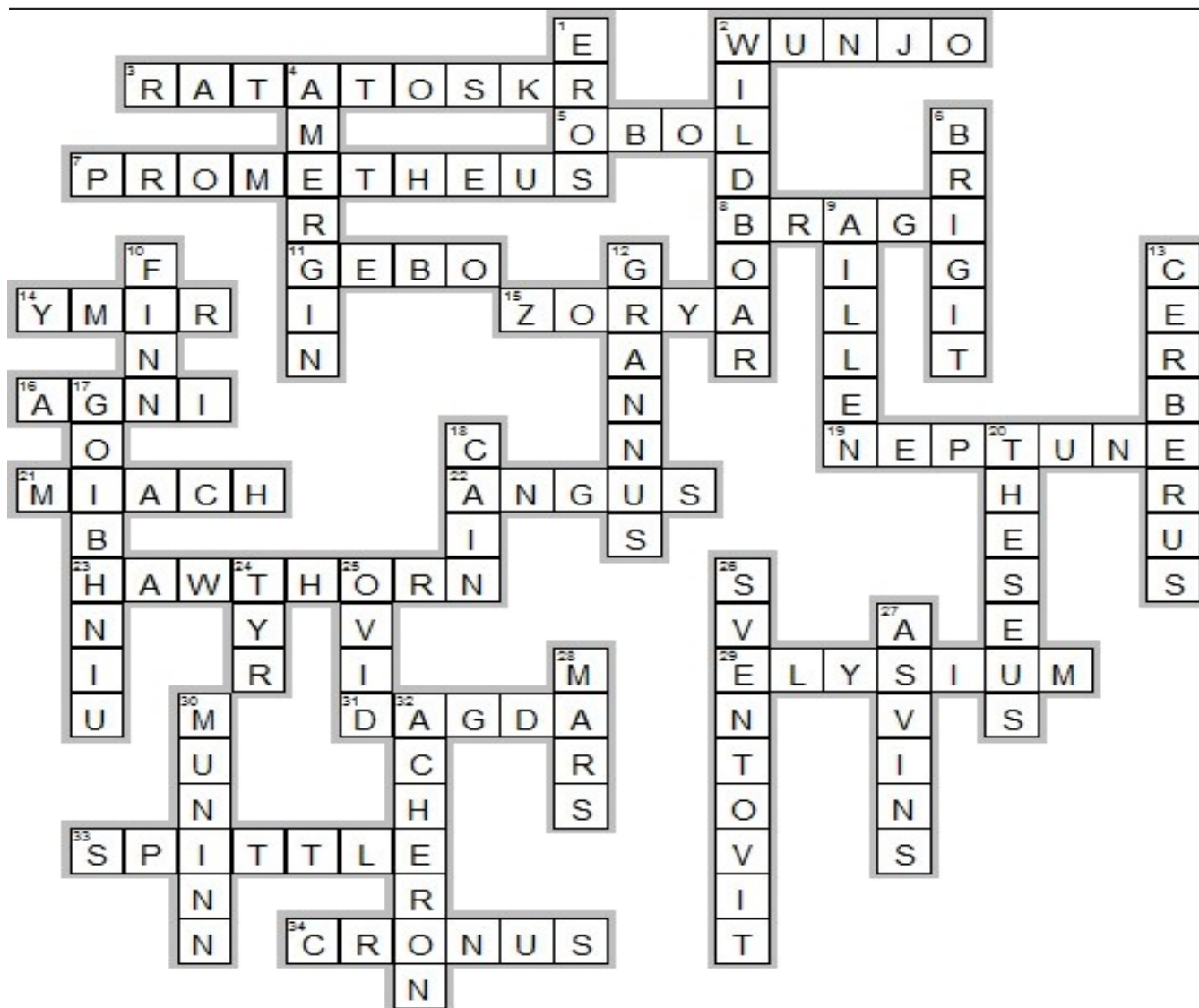
- 26. The Elves
- 28. He kills Odin at Ragnarok
- 29. Mjollnir was his
- 31. Mans dwelling place

- 32. AKA The Moon
- 33. God of war
- 34. The sea serpent

## Down

- 1. Husband of Idun
- 2. The First Man
- 3. She placed the snake above Loki's head
- 5. The first woman
- 7. AKA Bifrost
- 11. This God was born of 9 mothers
- 13. Horse rune
- 14. Yggdrasils messenger
- 16. Man made of Spittle
- 19. Norn Past
- 20. Hoder Killed him
- 21. Giants world
- 24. Abode of Hel
- 25. Ragnarok's Fire Demon
- 27. He mated with Angrboda
- 30. Feather-cloak Goddess

## Last Issue Puzzle Key



Espresso Press



# ADF Directory



## The Mother Grove

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

## Additional Leadership Positions

Administrator	Selene Tawny	adf-administrator@adf.org
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Isaac Bonewits	[deceased]
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Ian Corrigan	tredara@ncweb.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman	john.adelman@trw.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
Chronicler	Selene Tawny	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](mailto:oak-leaves@adf.org)**

Please send one submission per attachment specifying the format, author's name, your email, and membership status. Be sure the title of the piece and your name are at the top of the page, and you have checked it over for spelling and grammatical errors. Also: please include a brief ADF-related bio for all articles and essays.

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

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

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

Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender.

## Art Submission Guidelines:

We now accept photos as well as drawings and computer generated pictures. Some of the color pictures will need to be modified to grayscale but we will do that as necessary. We would like to have pictures submitted at 300 dpi, and in a useable format such as .jpg, .png, tiff, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at [adf-ol-art@adf.org](mailto:adf-ol-art@adf.org). Contact the Art Director to inquire whether hard copies of your art may be submitted, depending on scanner availability.

## Deadlines for submissions are:

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





# Ar nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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

## Membership and Subscription Form

One form per person please.



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

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

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

If this is a new membership, where did you hear about us?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 If this is a membership renewal please state your ADF membership number:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

In which ADF Grove do you intend to participate in, if any?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am 18 years of Age or Older: { } Yes { } No (If no, see waiver below.)

### ADF Membership Rates:

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



Duir (Oak):

Beckon black  
Dark brown heartwood  
Mysteries await

Briatharogam Con Culainn  
"most carved of craftsmanship"

Tinne (Holly):

Dark and grey  
Shaft of a spear  
Ready for battle

Briatharogam Con Culainn  
"one of three parts of a weapon"



Nion or Ash:

Green and leaf  
Deep run the roots  
Connecting all worlds

"Establishing of peace"  
- Briatharogam of Morainn mac Moin

Huathe or Hawthorn,

Purple thorns  
Clear the clutter  
Tear away the old

"Most difficult at night"  
- Briatharogam of Con Culainn