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Spring 2015 ~ Issue No. 68

The Quarterly Journal of Ar nDraíocht Féin





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Publisher: Selene Tawny

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

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Tucson, AZ 85731-7874
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Cover:

Midsummer Altar

by

Amanda Grieshop

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We Are A Religion

Someone I barely knew once came to me with a statement that quite surprised me. She said, “I went to the ADF website and looked around. I read all kind of things. But I still have no idea what ADF is.”

In Ian Corrigan’s article, “What is ADF?” he defines us as, “an independent tradition (denomination) of Neopagan Druidism.” In Isaac’s own article, “The Vision of ADF,” he mentions clergy, among many other things. Even our home page on the public side of our website describes us as “an international fellowship devoted to creating a public tradition of Neopagan Druidry.”

For myself, that all seems pretty clear. Our articles and site use normal religious buzzwords like “denomination,” “clergy,” and “fellowship.” Apparently, it isn’t as clear as mud for folks who have had no experience with religion outside of the big five (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism), and even within ADF some people are resistant to the concept of ADF being a religion.

Indeed, there are both upsides and downsides with ADF being a religion. History shows us many of the problems that churches and religious groups have perpetrated on their people through the abuse of power. When religion is used to force conformity and rigid belief, it has lost its way in the world. Religious extremism has been the cause of much misery, war, and death, and must be roundly condemned wherever it occurs, at home or abroad. When we can no longer laugh at ourselves, or when we start taking ourselves too seriously, then Spirit has fled, and the Kindreds will turn their backs on us all. Luckily, ADF is set up in such a way that I hope we can avoid this trap. But power corrupts, and it is up to all of us to prevent this from happening.

There is also a big difference between being powerful and powerless. As John Beckett (a prominent and wise OBOD Druid) wrote recently, “I don’t want political power for Pagans....I do want Pagan voices in the halls of power.”

And here we begin to see one advantage of being seen as a religion. Religions have much freedom in the western world, particularly in the United States. As a religion, we gain more

respect from outside than we would have as some special interest group. In our dealings with other religions, both Pagan and non-Pagan alike, we are taken more seriously when seen as one. Our numbers are still small, but we're large by Pagan standards. And with numbers comes safety. We all might agree that rigid doctrine and (gasp) dogma are both unnecessary and undesirable, but no one said we have to have these to be a valid religion: our diversity is also one of our strengths.

So let's be clear about this: ADF is a religion. We are incorporated as one and recognized in the United States as a religious organization, even by their national taxation service, the IRS. All the special privileges granted to churches in the United States are granted to us, particularly in tax law. We may differ from other churches in our emphasis on practice, rather than belief, to be sure, but as long as we guard against excess and against too much conformity in belief and practice, our status as an organized religion will protect us and allow us to thrive.

May the Kindreds grant us wisdom and understanding, and may we all grow and thrive through reciprocity with Them and with each other.



So may it be!
~ Reverend
Kirk Thomas

Signyn and Loki by Shiril Sazynski



The Fire in my Heart

Rev. Melissa S Burchfield, ADF Master Bard

As I walk in the footsteps of Those Gone Before,
I'm surrounded with love by my Gods.
My spirit flies high with the Noblest Guides,
And the fire burns bright in my heart.

For I am a Walker of Ancient Ways,
A dreamer of times gone before I was born.
I journey to lands where the trees come to dance
Round the fire that burns in my heart.

I stand 'neath the tree rooted deep in the Earth.
I'm crowned with the stars in the sky.
I'm filled with the powers below and above,
And the fire burns bright in my heart.

The waters of life course their way
through my veins.
Blessings abound in my soul, in my blood.
The mark of the Kindred is left by my touch,
And the fire burns bright in my heart.

The Ancestors offer me knowledge and truth.
The Noble Ones serve as my guides.
The Shining Ones' wisdom and grace
fan the flames of the fire that burns in my heart.

I lift up my voice, singing praise to their names
With my offerings poured out in thanks
in the soil.
I raise up my hands; I invite them to dance
Round the fire that burns in my heart.

I raise up my hands and cry,
"Kindreds, Come dance
Round the fire that burns in my heart!"



Aelius Aristides Pagan Pilgrimage in the High Empire

By: Wayne Keysor

ANALYZING THE PAGAN PILGRIMAGE NARRATIVE

The figure of the religious traveler has been a recurring image within the western literary tradition. Assigned the distinctive title of pilgrim, this figure has walked, ridden, or sailed across the pages of countless works of literature, history, philosophy, and travel writing. The ubiquity of this figure and the pilgrim's liminal status as simultaneously a societal insider and outsider has challenged scholars to attempt to understand the nature and significance of pilgrimage within multiple disciplines. This study has primarily focused on what has become the paradigmatic example of the pilgrim in the West, the Christian pilgrim traveling to Christian religious sites, particularly the Holy Land. However, some recent scholarly work has been done also on non-Christian traditions, both ancient and modern.

This paper will build on both streams of inquiry to

analyze an important, but idiosyncratic, Pagan pilgrimage account from the period of the Roman high empire, the account of the second century Greek rhetorician Aelius Aristides. By examining this narrative, this paper will illuminate certain aspects of sacred place in Greco-Roman Paganism and argue that the Pagan pilgrimage can be understood through Mircea Eliade's concept of a movement towards a sacred center. Eliade's view posits a consistent pre-modern view about how the sacred interacts with the mundane world, and argues that this view depends on deeply held assumptions arising from pre-historic religious thought.

Pilgrimage scholar Jas Elsner characterizes recent work on the subject as falling within three distinctive and often conflicting outlooks: the historical, the anthropological, and the theological. The historical outlook tends to see pilgrimage as

recognizable, bounded phenomenon that is susceptible to analysis on the individual scale. Historians attempt to explore the precise characteristics of particular examples of pilgrimage in order to reconstruct the historical moment. Anthropologists, on the other hand, attempt to analyze pilgrimage as an expression of social processes, such as the formation of group identity or the operations of the state. As Elsner observes, this approach tends almost to "dissolve" the phenomenon of pilgrimage into its social, political, and cultural contexts; thus, effectively dismantling it as a useful category. Finally, contrary to the approaches of the two other groups, theologians tend to see pilgrimage from the inside of religious experience, and usually from within a particular faith tradition.¹

They are considered the "center of the world" because it is at these places that humans once again experience mythic time and space. From the perspective of the believers, these are "zones of absolute reality," sites where the sacred has created a rupture into the profane world and has permanently set it apart.

The approach taken by this paper will be to attempt to combine the best features of both the historical and the theological viewpoints. It will take seriously the notion that at the heart of pilgrimage is an individual, religious

experience, while attempting not to work from within any particular religious tradition. To discount the spiritual dimension is to impoverish our understanding of pilgrimage and to ignore fundamental aspects of human experience. At the same time, this individual, religious experience occurs at a distinct time and place and is characterized by unique attitudes and beliefs. To ignore this reality would be to fall into ahistorical error. An appreciation of both viewpoints is required.

Therefore, this paper will begin by positioning Aristides in time and place and briefly introducing his signature work, *The Sacred Tales*. Publius Aelius Aristides was born in 118 CE in Asia Minor. He was the son of a provincial elite, and based on his aristocratic birth was able to obtain the best education available within his society. His life coincided with the height of the Roman Empire; an empire internally at peace and prosperous.

Intellectually, he participated in the second century movement known as the second sophistic; a period where educated Greek and Roman elites sought to revive earlier classical forms of language and literature, while simultaneously cultivating a scholarly interest in the past.² Aristides achieved considerable fame in his lifetime as an orator, even declaiming in front of the emperor, a singular honor in the highly hierarchical Greco-Roman society of his age. Juxtaposed against this worldly success, however, was Aristides' life-long struggle against chronic illness that left him in agony for years on end and rendered him unable to participate in public life.³

In an effort to find relief from his repeated bouts of serious illness, he turned to the physician-savior god Asclepius, who had an important temple center in Roman Asia at the city of Pergamum. Aristides' devotion resulted in a series of profound dreams and waking visions in which Asclepius appeared to him, and provided a series of cures and encouragements. In gratitude for the god's aid, Aristides penned a very personal, highly idiosyncratic work he titled *The Sacred Tales*, in which he records the actions of the god in his life over a 26-year period, from 143 to 171 CE, in order to thank and glorify Asclepius.⁴ This account provides extensive detail on Aristides' journeys to Asclepius' cult centers and his physical, emotional, and spiritual responses to them.

PILGRIMAGE AND ARCHAIC ONTOLOGIES

It is helpful in examining *The Sacred Tales* to have a structure with which to investigate the underlying elements of Pagan pilgrimage. To provide the theoretical basis to do this, this paper will employ the work of the historian of religion Mircea Eliade. Eliade provides a cross-cultural reading of pre-modern theology that provides a useful vocabulary with which to discuss experiences within different religious traditions in a comparative way.

Eliade argues that pre-modern societies viewed time and history as cyclical. Humans participated in history by engaging in behavior designed to imitate original sacred acts that occurred in mythic time, whether they be the creation of the cosmos or the introduction of important cultural practices or social structures. Effectively, all significant human acts were imitative. Reality was a function of the imitation of celestial archetypes or patterns.

These celestial paradigms were reproduced in earthly ways in the construction of temples, palaces, or cities, or assigned to preexisting natural features like mountains or rivers.⁵

He called these sacred places "centers of the world," by which Eliade meant that within a cultural and religious context, they symbolize most completely the celestial paradigm from which they derive their meaning. They are considered the "center of the world" because it is at these places that humans once again experience mythic time and space. From the perspective of the believers, these are "zones of absolute reality," sites where the sacred has created a rupture into the profane world and has permanently set it apart. These places take part in a reality greater than the apparent or profane reality. They embody most completely the perennial, celestial pattern and because of this, they are more intensely real in a Platonic sense.⁶ This additional ontological weight within these zones of absolute reality make the miraculous possible. Such sacred centers, in the words of Eliade, are consecrated,

...in a space qualitatively different from profane space. Through the paradox of rite, every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical time of the "beginning." Through representation of the cosmogonic act, concrete time, in which the construction takes place, is projected into mythical time, *in ille tempore* when foundation of the world occurred. Thus the reality and enduringness of a construction are assured not only by the transformation of profane space into transcendent space (the center) but also by the transformation of concrete time into mythical time.⁷

In ille tempore refers back to the time when the ritual was first practiced by a god, ancestor, or culture hero, and which is now being repeated by the contemporary human. Applied to the concept of pilgrimage, these ideas suggest that a pilgrimage is a journey to a center of the world in which the pilgrim travels from the profane towards the sacred, simultaneously recreating and taking part in the original sacred act that sanctified the pilgrimage site. Eliade characterizes such a journey in this way:

The road is arduous, fraught with perils, because it is, in fact, a rite of passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to divinity. Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday's profane and illusory existence gives place to a new [*sic*], to a life that is real, enduring, and effective.⁸

The rituals in which the pilgrim engages on the way to the sacred center and the practices he undertakes upon arriving have meaning because they partake in and imitate the original sacred act, drawing on that first act for their power. Seen from this perspective, the driving impulse towards pilgrimage arises from the desire to experience the sacred in its most concentrated and real form, which can only happen at a center of the world.

This religious impulse also can be manifested in a diminished form, experienced as the desire simply to witness the miraculous or the wondrous at a pilgrimage site. However, beneath this tourist impulse lies a tacit recognition, perhaps not coherently expressed, that the sacred center is a place where the wondrous might occur precisely because it partakes of this original divine energy in such a privileged way.⁹

AELIUS ARISTIDES: SACRED GEOGRAPHY AND MYTHIC NARRATIVE

To begin to apply these concepts to the pilgrimages of Aristides, both the parameters of Aristides individual pilgrimages and a broader sense of Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrimage must first be established. One essential fact about Aristides' pilgrimages that must be immediately grappled with is their inherently local character. This local character can be jarring if one immediately thinks of the Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land or the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca as the paradigmatic examples of pilgrimage. For most pre-modern people taking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Mecca, such trips were massive investments in time and impressive logistical problems. Aristides, on the other hand, limited his religious activities to essentially his home province, the Roman province of Asia, which was situated in today's western Turkey, giving them a whole other quality.

Aristides was born in northwest Asia Minor, in

Mysia, on ancestral estates situated in the tribal region of the Olympe.¹⁰ While he did travel outside of the Province of Asia, most notably to Egypt, Rome, and Athens, he retained these ancestral estates through out his life and eventually died there. He spent most of his life in Roman Asia, splitting his time between the Smyrna, of which he was a citizen, Pergamum, and his family estates in Mysia. It was at the temple of Asclepius at Pergamum that he was to have his most profound religious experiences, which deeply affected his entire life. Roman Asia during Aristides' life was one of the wealthiest, most urbanized, most densely populated provinces in the empire. It hosted several internationally known Pagan shrines, as well as innumerable regional and local shrines.

In this, Roman Asia was not unique. The Greco-Roman world was filled with Pagan religious shrines of every sort from the strictly local to the internationally famous and everything in between.¹¹ Ted Kaizer, in his work on Near Eastern shrines in the Greco-Roman world, comments on this diversity by noting that recent work suggests that the empire as a whole lacked, "an articulated religious system that integrated both ritual and belief." For Kaizer and others, this explains why the Romans "were apparently quite content to accept that things worked differently in cult from how they did in myth even if that meant that a god could simultaneously be multiple and singular, local and universal."¹² This willingness to embrace the local within Greco-Roman Paganism, at the cost of some narrative coherence within myth, meant that pilgrimage to holy sites was available to nearly all people, even if only to their local sacred spring.

This diversity and the local character of shrines was built on certain theological assumptions. From the perspective of Greco-Roman Paganism, the qualities of shrines varied not in kind, but rather in magnitude, in a way that is not the case for the monotheistic religions of Christianity or Islam. Jerusalem or Mecca as sacred places are qualitatively different in character for Christians or Muslims than other Christian or Islamic sacred places. In Greco-Roman Paganism, some shrines might host more powerful gods or spirits than others, some might be older, or have more miracles to their record, but they were all essentially of the same character, just more or less.



were properties that had been transferred literally from human ownership to the ownership of the gods. Outside of urban centers, there were numerous natural places that were considered claimed by the gods who dwelled within them. These included groves, caverns, pools, springs, and locations struck by lightening. Finally, tombs and burial grounds were also considered sacred.¹⁶

Each sacred site, whether city, temple, or grove, had its own mythic history and its own ritual order that celebrated and referred back to this history. Each history, while loosely tied into the larger structure of Greco-Roman myth, remained largely independent and as previously noted was not part of a completely coherent narrative as might be expected in the monotheistic, textual religions of Christianity or Islam. Greco-Roman Paganism developed as a religion of independent city states and continued that tradition long after Rome had transformed the political order.

Such a diversity of sacred places meant that pilgrimage as a concept was readily available to almost everyone, regardless of social or economic status, and underlines Eliade's argument that in pre-modern, pre-Christian traditions, sacred centers of the world were multiple and represented places where the sacred has entered the profane world and marked it through the act of some ancestor, hero, or god, a figure often associated only with local traditions.

This diversity is evidenced by Aristides himself, who in spite of the importance that Asclepius' temple at Pergamum had in his spiritual life, also conducted pilgrimage activities in the cities of Smyrna, Elea, Caicus, Aliani, Chius, Aesepus, and Epidaurus.¹⁷ Additionally, in spite of his obvious and genuine devotion to Asclepius, he also dedicated offerings to other gods at other sanctuaries. These included Athena, Apollo, Zeus, and the Greco-Egyptian gods Isis and Sarapis, causing Behr to characterize Aristides as an eclectic Pagan.¹⁸ Based on this pattern, it is evident that Aristides was more than willing to participate in this expansive local diversity that was available to the Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrim of the time.

Based on modern, anthropological research, J.J. Preston argues that four variables govern the prominence of a shrine: the appearance of divine beings, miraculous cures, sacred geography, and difficulty of access; variables whose cumulative affect he characterizes as spiritual magnetism.¹³ Preston's selection of sacred geography as a key element of spiritual magnetism is important to highlight in the context of Greco-Roman Pagan pilgrimage because it is easy in the West, at a time when the sacred tends to be localized in a few discrete places, to underestimate the ubiquity of sacred geography in Greco-Roman Paganism.

Each city had its own tutelary deity who watched over it. Each had its own divine spirit embodying the life of the *polis*; the *genius* of the city in Roman terms.¹⁴ These gods and spirits were taken so seriously by the Romans that:

Before the sack of a city, the *numina* are called forth from the enemy out of respect for religious scruple. That is why the Romans wished to keep secret the identity of that god in whose protection lays the city of Rome. Thus pontifical law forbids anyone from naming the *Dii Romani*, lest anyone should augur them away. And there is on the Capitol a consecrated shield, on which the inscription runs, "To the Genius of the City of Rome, whether male or female." And for the same reason, the pontifices pray, "Jupiter Optimus Maximus, or by whatever other name you wish to be called."¹⁵

Additionally, there were multiple spaces dedicated to the gods inside cities; cult centers of all sizes from the monumental to the strictly domestic. From the Roman perspective, these cult centers

Having established the essentially local nature of Greco-Roman Paganism, it is now important to understand how the sacred geography of these local cult centers was created and in what manner it was experienced by pilgrims. Eade and Sallnow suggest that the pilgrimage practices of Christianity, and possibly all scriptural religions, “can be examined as combining co-ordinates of ‘persons,’ ‘texts,’ and ‘places.’”¹⁹ Coleman and Elsner, however, point out that these elements are present in many other forms of ritual and emphasize that what Eade and Sallnow’s co-ordinates do not include is the element of movement, a vital component of the pilgrimage experience.²⁰ This paper will argue that for non-scriptural religions, the term “texts” might be replaced with the more general term, “narratives.” It is the travelers’ movements through and interaction with locations that obtain special significance by being part of a mythic or religious narrative that makes travel a pilgrimage. Mere geography is transformed into sacred geography by the power of these narratives.

Such narratives might be textual in the case of scriptural religions, but for non-scriptural religions, like Greco-Roman Paganism, they take the form of oral traditions; cultural customs, including the pilgrimage rituals themselves; and the visual arts. These narratives demarcate the sacred from the profane by telling a story that defines clearly, in Eliade’s terms, what is the specific center of the world, as opposed to the profane zone around it, how it was separated from the profane, and what the pilgrim might expect from immersing oneself into the unfolding narrative of the place. By performing the pilgrimage and doing the prescribed rituals, the pilgrim becomes part of the larger mythic narrative, placing him or herself in contact with the immensity which inhabits the locale. As Eliade noted, these rituals reproduce or recount the story of the original consecration, and by performing them, the pilgrim attempts to appropriate a share of that power accrued from the original act of the god, ancestor, or culture hero.

For a devotee of Asclepius like Aristides, the narrative of Asclepius is the story of a savior-healing god who is concerned about the

well-being of humans and will listen to their pleas for relief. The myth of Asclepius, originally transmitted orally, recounts the story of a human son of Apollo, god of healing and plague, who because of his divine parentage and supernatural training gains the power to heal the sick and raise the dead. After his death, he is resurrected as an immortal and dwells, ever-present, in Asclepian temples answering the prayers of his devotees.²¹ Asclepius’ mythic history at major cult centers in Pergamum and Epidaurus created a narrative for the pilgrims traveling to these sites that allowed them to engage emotionally and spiritually with the landscape.

Clifford Ando, in exploring the views of the fifth century Pagan intellectual Macrobius, captures the essence of this Greco-Roman Pagan perspective on the interaction between the narrative of mythic history and sacred geography:

Such carefully prescribed rituals tell the story of the relationship between the god and the pilgrims; they prepare the pilgrim emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually to enter sacred space, bringing him or her back to *in ille tempore*, that mythic time when the god first manifested his power; and they offer the possibility of receiving the benefits of that power.

Mythic history thus concretized the actions of the divine and located them within a material and historical landscape that remained visible and numinous even in the fifth century. The consecration of particular loci by Roman priests thus did no more, and no less, than circumscribe, respect, and order the presence of the holy in the Roman landscape. For Macrobius, the materiality of the landscape did not divorce it from the divine; rather, it was for humans through ritually correct speech and action to understand and respect the divine in the world.²²

This mythic narrative and its connection to the “materiality of the landscape” was further reinforced by the employment of particular rituals and the testimonials of previous pilgrims. These two elements served a didactic function, which intensified the experience of the pilgrim as she moved through the sacred landscape. These two elements can be seen operating at the Temple of Asclepius at Pergamum. A consultation with Asclepius was composed of a series of precisely regulated steps that followed a specific order: abstinence, ritual bathing, payment of a fee, sacrifice, incubation, faith, healing, and thanksgiving.²³

This process began with the pilgrim purifying himself by abstaining from sexual activity for three days before the consultation, as well as by not consuming goat's meat and cheese. On the day of the incubation, the pilgrim was required to be ritually purified by bathing. She was then dressed in white, just as the god dressed in white; a point that underscores Eliade's argument that the ritual seeks to copy or recreate an original sacred act.²⁴ What happens next is reconstructed by Dillon from a partial inscription, the *Lex Sacra*, discovered at Pergamum:

With the consultant dressed in white and wearing a wreath, an animal sacrifice would be made, then cakes decorated with olive sprigs were sacrificed to various gods; the consultant was commanded to put on another wreath when commencing the sacrifice of the cakes. A pig was sacrificed to Asclepius on the altar, and three obols placed into the *thesaurus*. This procedure must have occurred during the day, for the next injunction is to make sacrifices in the evening, that is immediately prior to incubation. Three cakes decorated as before were sacrificed on the altar: two to Tyche and Mnemosyne, the third to Themis. The incubant then entered the shrine, having abstained from all things previously described in the inscription.²⁵

The culmination of this entire process of ritual is the incubation wherein the pilgrim sleeps in the incubation chamber inside the temple hoping to receive healing from the god through a dream. Such carefully prescribed rituals tell the story of the relationship between the god and the pilgrims; they prepare the pilgrim emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually to enter sacred space, bringing him or her back to *in ille tempore*, that mythic time when the god first manifested his power; and they offer the possibility of receiving the benefits of that power.

Beyond the communal rituals of the temple, there were also what might be called personal rituals. These were ritual acts given to the pilgrims to perform by the god directly through incubation. They were intended to affect the cures that the god promised, and Aristides provides a record of some of these often idiosyncratic rites. Here is one example from 146 CE when he was staying in Pergamum and received direction from the god personally through incubation:

First having mounted a wagon, to go to the river which flows through the city, and when I was at the place where it is outside the city, to make sacrifices "at the trench" – for so he called them. Therefore it was necessary to dig a trench and make sacrifices in it to whomever of the Gods it was necessary. Next upon turning back to take some small coins, to cross the river and cast them away. And he ordered some things, I think, in addition to this. After this to go to the Temple and make a full sacrifice to Asclepius, and to have sacred bowls set up, and distribute the sacred portions of the sacrifice to all my fellow pilgrims. Also it was necessary to cut off some part of my body for the sake of the well being of the whole. But since this was difficult, he remitted it for me. Instead of this, he ordered me to remove the ring which I wore and dedicate it to Telephorus – for this had the same effect, as if I should give up my finger - and to inscribe on the band of the ring, "O son of Cronus." And if I did this, I would be saved. After this it is impossible to imagine our condition, and into what kind of harmony the God again brought us. For we engaged in all this, almost as if in an initiation, since there was great hope together with fear.²⁶

In this account is contained a combination of both the personal and the communal. In the casting of the coins into the river, the digging of a trench for sacrifice outside the city, and the removal of the ring, we see a series of personal rituals. In the direction to go to the temple and make a full sacrifice to Asclepius having the sacred bowls set up and distributing the sacred portions to his fellow pilgrims, we see the communal element.

In other instances, the personal rituals occurred completely outside any communal context. Aristides relates that, "... he commanded me to use the mud by the Sacred Well and to bathe there." "On the following night, he commanded me again to use the mud in the same way, and to run in a circle about the Temples three times." Aristides recounts that he followed the god's commands even in the face of a frigid north wind, "I smeared myself with mud and ran around, and permitted the north wind to card me well and fair, and finally going to the Well, I bathed." Later that

year, Aristides records that the god, “ordered me to take some mud pour it on myself, and sit in the courtyard of the Sacred Gymnasium, calling on Zeus, the highest and best God.”²⁷ Such personal rites are at once the direct expression of the results of the communal rites, the proof that those rites remain powerful and effective, and the vehicle through which the miraculous cures are delivered.

Of particular importance to Asclepieia, was the second method of creating and reinforcing the god’s sacred narrative: the display of healing testimonials or *iamata* and their accompanying thank-offerings. These were essential because most Asclepieia did not have a rich mythic histories as compared to other sacred centers in the Greco-Roman world, having only been established in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE.²⁸ “Whereas myths suggested an initial association of a god with a particular locality, the display of votive offerings asserted his or her continued presence at the sanctuary.”²⁹ Asclepius’ prestige and worship was based precisely on his ability to cure sickness, therefore these testimonials and resulting thanks-offerings were central to his narrative. The thank-offerings of past pilgrims, which were extremely extensive, provided visual and sometimes textual evidence of the “unbroken line of divine manifestation” in the temple.³⁰

The power of religious narrative applied successfully to place can be seen in Aristides account of an incubation he experienced while at the Temple of Asclepius in Pergamum:

I dreamed that I stood at the propylaea [entrance] of the Temple. And many others were also gathered together, as whenever there is a purificatory ceremony. And they wore white garments, and the rest was of an appropriate form. Here I cried out other things to the God and called him “the arbiter of fate,” since he assigned men their fates. And my words began with my own circumstances. And after this there was wormwood, made clear in some way. It was made clear as possible, just as countless other things clearly contained the presence of the God. For there was a seeming, as it were, to touch him and to perceive that he himself had come, and to be between sleep and waking, and to wish to look up and to be in anguish that he might depart too soon, and

to strain ears and to hear some things as in a dream, some as in a waking state. Hair stood straight, and there were tears with joy, and the pride of the heart was inoffensive. And what man could describe these things in words? If any man has been initiated, he knows and understands.³¹

The above passage illustrates beautifully the profound affect that this entire process of narrative, place, and movement could have on a pilgrim. Narrative, in particular, has the ability to intensify the experiences of pilgrims within sacred geography and direct their perceptions and observations. William Hutton, in his discussion of another famous pilgrim from antiquity, Pausanias, notes that travelers tend to select and organize their remembrances based on the subjective perceptions of those places that they visited. Thus a travel account is an “intersection between the physical landscape and the cognitive landscape of personal and cultural preconceptions that reside in the observer’s mind.”³²

A traveler tends to make special note of those things toward which he has a predisposition, and these things are better retained in the memory. Such predispositions can be formed even before the traveler experiences the landscape if he is familiar with the landscape from narrative accounts ingested before the actual travel.³³

Hutton goes on to suggest that what makes a pilgrim’s account different from that of other types of travelers is that the author’s commitment to her motivating ideology causes a pilgrim’s mental topography to become more tangible and rigid. These narratives allow the pilgrim to map very distinctly cognitive experiences onto religious models and symbols. “Thus pilgrims tend to approach their destinations with deeply held expectations, and their accounts are suffused with the tension between these expectations and their on-site experiences.”³⁴ The power of expectation as well as the resulting tension can be seen in Aristides’ reactions to a pilgrimage to the springs at Aesepus:

Then we set out, in high spirits, as on a pilgrimage. The weather was marvelous and the road inviting. Poemanenon is a place in Mysia, and in it is a sacred and famous temple of Asclepius. Here we completed about one hundred and sixty stades, and nearly sixty

of these at night, as we started when the day was advanced. And about this place we also met with some mud, from earlier rains, which was easy to cross. The journey was made by torch light. Here I was completely consecrated, as it were, and possessed. And I composed many lyrics to the Savior [Asclepius] himself, while I was sitting in the carriage, and many to the Aesepus, the Nymphs, and Artemis Thermaea, who keeps the warm springs, to free me from all my troubles, and return me to my original state.

When I was at Poemanenon, the God gave me oracles and kept me there for some days, and he purged my upper intestinal tract and not quite for the last time. And a farmer, who did not know me, except by reputation, had a dream. He dreamed that someone said to him that Aristides had vomited up the head of a viper. Having seen this vision, he told one of my people and he told me. So much for this.

When he sent me to the Aesepus, he ordered me to abstain from the baths there, but he prescribed other regimens every day. And there were purifications at the river by libation, and purgations at home through vomiting. And when three or four days had passed, there was a voice in a dream that it was over and it was necessary to return. It was all not only like an initiation into a mystery, since the rituals were so divine and strange, but there was also coincidentally something marvelous and unaccustomed. For at the same time there was a gladness, and joy and a cheerfulness of spirit and body, and again, as it were an incredulity if it will ever be possible to see the day when one will see himself free from such great troubles, and in addition, a fear that some one of the usual things will again befall and harm one's hopes about the whole.³⁵

In Aristides, we see the religious ecstasy of a pilgrim who has a successful encounter with the divine. The landscape through which he moved transported him into a religious experience, which ended with a feeling of, "gladness, and joy and a cheerfulness of spirit and body." His torch lit journey to the springs, shaped by his raised expectations, is taken in "high spirits" and this optimistic frame causes him to characterize the weather as

"marvelous" and the road "inviting." While on the trip, he receives direct communication from the god through oracles. The personal rituals in which he engages throughout his journey are "divine and strange," akin to an "initiation into a mystery." The rituals allow him access to the god's power by virtue of their connection to the god's narrative, and Aristides mention of initiation recalls Eliade's observation that, "attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, *an initiation* [italics mine]; yesterday's profane and illusory existence gives place to a new [sic], to a life that is real, enduring, and effective."³⁶

Evidence of Hutton's tension between expectations and on-site experiences is also contained in the account. Based on the sacred narrative in which he takes part, Aristides expects to receive relief from his sickness, and he does, but once cured, he also experiences fear about the continued efficacy of the cure. What happened at the site raises further expectations and creates tensions about whether these new expectations might be realized or disappointed.

CONCLUSION

Aristides account gives us a rare glimpse into the inner, spiritual life of an ancient Pagan. Furthermore, his pilgrimage experience illuminates some of the underlying characteristics of Pagan pilgrimage, and gives us insight into the intensely local nature of Pagan pilgrimage in the Greco-Roman world. Through *The Sacred Tales*, we see the complexity and variability of ancient belief and how it interacted with the physical space through the medium of narrative. Aristides remains a valuable source for modern Pagans in understanding how ancient Pagans conceived of religious space and their relationship to it.

Footnotes:

1. Simon Coleman and Jas Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present in World Religions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 198-200.

2. For more on the influence of the second sophistic on Greco-Roman pilgrimage, see Marco Galli, "Pilgrimage as Elite Habitus: Educated Pilgrims in Sacred Landscape During the Second

Sophistic,” in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 253-290.

³ C.A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert – Publisher, 1968), 1-14.

⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 4-6.

⁶ Ibid., 14-17.

⁷ Ibid., 20-21.

⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁹ For a discussion of the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism in the Roman world, see George Williamson, “Mucianus and a Touch of the Miraculous: Pilgrimage and Tourism in Roman Asia Minor” in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 219-252.

¹⁰ Behr, 1-3.

¹¹ Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, “Visual Dynamics in Healing Pilgrimage,” in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186.

¹² Ted Kaizer, “In Search of Oriental Cults. Methodological Problems Concerning ‘the Particular’ and ‘the General’ in Near Eastern Religion in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd 55 H. 1 (2006): 39.

¹³ Ibid., 38-39.

¹⁴ Clifford Ando, “The Palladium and the Pentateuch: Towards a Sacred Topography of the Later Roman Empire” *Phoenix* Vol. 55 No. 3 / 4 (Autumn-Winter 2001): 394-397.

¹⁵ Ibid, 400.

¹⁶ John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), 63-76.

¹⁷ Behr, 121-128.

¹⁸ Ibid., 148-161.

¹⁹ Coleman and Elsner, 202.

²⁰ Ibid, 202-204.

²¹ James E. Bailey, “Asklepios: Ancient Hero of Medical Caring,” *Annals of Internal Medicine* Vol. 124 No. 2 (15 January 1996): 259.

²² Ando, 391.

²³ M.P.J Dillon, “The Didactic Nature of the Epidaurian Iamata,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 101 (1994): 255.

²⁴ Ibid, 244-247.

²⁵ Ibid., 246.

²⁶ *Sacred Tales II* 27-29.

²⁷ *Sacred Tales II* 77.

²⁸ Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, 187.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 187-188; Dillon, 257-260.

³¹ *Sacred Tales II* 31-34.

³² William Hutton, “Religious Space in Pausanias,” in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity*, in Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 297-298.

³³ Ibid., 298.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Sacred Tales IV* 3-8.

³⁶ For a discussion of the nature of Greek mysteries and their psychological and cultural underpinnings, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 276-278.

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Prayer to Manannan

by Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

We look for a guide, Lord,
From the depths of the well where the
ancestors lay,
To the spring of memories,
Where their wisdom abides,
Far across the sea

We look for a guide again, Lord,
From one land,
Across the mighty sea,
To another,
Where Nature Spirits dwell,
Far and afield

We look for a guide, once last time, Lord,
From this place,
To the shining skies above,
Where Gods abide,
And prayers rise up,
Like the smoke from our fires,
Far above our heads



Polytheistic 12-Stepping

By: *Leslie Domnu-Hooper*

In most addiction recovery programs, you will find the following 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous observed:

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

(Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, p.59)

Many come into a 12-Step Program and have a difficult time with the ‘God’ concept and how that applies to them, especially when their beliefs are polytheistic and not the majority religion found in a typical meeting. Isaac Bonewits wrote an article about recovery in 1990 that said:

“Perhaps the major one for a Neo-Pagan is the fact that, despite an officially ‘nondenominational’ position, most interpretations of the program use mainstream monotheistic language when talking about the divine. The overwhelming majority of Twelve Steppers talk about an omnipotent, transcendent male deity as their ‘Higher Power’ (and for them it works). The underlying theology is guilt-based and emphasizes the powerlessness of the individual in the face of addiction and/or obsession. These problems have been used by some Neo-Pagans to avoid getting the help they need.” (Bonewits)

Although AA may come across as a monotheistic program, it is one that can fit any religion as it is more of a spiritual program than one of following a Dogma of a specific religion or group of religions. Many of the founding members of AA were proclaimed agnostics and atheists. Therefore, another set of steps was formed and used. Division grew amongst people wanting programs that fit their personal beliefs better and splinter groups formed, such as The Recovery Spiral. Many Pagans use this “other” group of steps (or have adapted their own):

Pagan 12 Steps

- We admitted that we were harming ourselves and that our lives had become overwhelming.
- Came to believe that a power within ourselves and our world could restore us to balance.
- Made a decision to move our wills and our lives toward that Divine Presence.
- Made a searching and fearless ethical inventory of ourselves.
- Admitted to ourselves, to the Divine Presence, and to others the exact nature of our harm.
- Were entirely ready to have our harmful patterns replaced by ethical coping skills.
- Asked the Divine to transform us, giving us rebirth in our lives.

Made a list of all beings we had harmed, beginning with ourselves and including our world, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Made direct amends to all whenever possible, except when to do so would violate the Rede.

Continued to take personal ethical inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it and corrected it.

Sought through action and meditation to improve our conscience knowledge and contact with the Divine Presence, seeking only to choose harmony with the greatest good.

Having had a spiritual awakening as results of these steps, we offered this opportunity to others and practiced these principles in our lives.

(Collins, p.3)

Having realized the problem with the monotheistic thought process, members of the community have felt left out or different from others and not able to communicate the way they feel their Higher Power is a polytheistic view point.

Having realized the problem with the monotheistic thought process, members of the community have felt left out or different from others and not able to communicate the way they feel their Higher Power is a polytheistic view point.

Yet, when you use that term “Higher Power” and allow it to mean the Kindreds or Gods and Goddesses, it is easy to share. In a recovery program, when people allow themselves to share in a general manner using similar terms, the help needed can be sought and achieved. Personally, when sharing, I talk about relationships in general and not my lesbian relationship rather than making myself different from the group. This allows a person to feel comfortable with me and allows the recovery program I am in to work in unity. It also allows a person to stay connected to a greater mass of people in recovery and not have a relapse when things move out of place.

Anonymity is often brought up. It is the basis of the spiritual foundation in these programs, bringing humility and self-sacrifice. When you take this concept and apply it to the details of your life, keeping them out of the general meetings and only sharing in general, it can bring great peace. Then with a sponsor on a one-on-one basis, you can

share in more detail exactly as you believe. If the sponsor is true to the concepts and principles, it will not make a difference as they have a common belief that there is a power that will help you stay on track. Let us look how these compare:

Step 1: *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.* We are surrendering to the fact that we were gluttons in our use of the substance and let it control us. Listing the ways we let the addiction control us and move us to fulfill the need is a wonderful way to learn how we took power out of the “self” and those whom we follow and gave it to a substance. We can also see when we let our selfish ways rule the day to get that drink or drug, we were unmanageable and not working for the betterment of the whole. Many of us do not want to admit we have a problem until it is too late and we can no longer do anything about it alone. In the Pagan version of the step, we talk about harming

ourselves and being overwhelmed. Though these are both true aspects of the sufferer of the disease, not all can relate to this as a reason to change. One can work through being overwhelmed and come through still doing many of the same things that they

used to do. For one with a disease such as addiction or alcoholism, it is more than an overwhelming part of life, it is means we do not have personal control over that area and need outside help. When overwhelmed, we can usually cope and move on, and many can do this alone. With addiction or alcoholism, we have tried on our own and failed, therefore realizing we need help as we no longer want our life spinning out of control.

Step 2: *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.* First off, no one says that this has to be one God and just like everyone else’ in a program of recovery. It just simply means that there is something more than me that can help me as my efforts alone could not do it. In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book, we see that AA does not demand we believe anything (26). All are suggestions. The Pagan step two says “*Came to believe that a power within ourselves and our world could restore us to balance.*” Though this is a nice

Hearth Culture	Deities Who May Help with Recovery
Irish/Celtic	Brigh, Brigid, Dian Cecht, Airmed, Lugh, Nuada,
Welsh	Anu, Llud Llaw Ereint, Lugh,
Norse	Tyr or Eir
Gaulish	Alaunus, Atepomarus, Glanis, Grannus, Vindonnus, Lenius, or Sirona
Roman	Angerona, Angitia, Bona Dea, Cardea, Carne, Endovelicus, Febris, Pilumnus, Vejovis, Meditrina, Nodens, or Sirona
Greek	Aceso, Aegle, Artemis, Apollo, Asclepius, Chiron, Hygieia, Iaso, or Panacea
Slavic	Pereplut or Zywie
Other possibilities	The Crane Garanus, Nature Spirits, Merlin, or alcoholic and addiction recovering Ancestors

thought, many of us have lost the belief in self to make the next right decision and need this power to come from somewhere outside of us. In a 12-Step program, it is common to find people using the group that they belong to as the power greater than themselves. This works in time till a person can figure out what that is and how to reach out or harness it. If you have a hearth culture practice in ADF, you may wish to explore the following deities (there may be others) who may decide to help you along your path:

Step 3: *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.* Too often people read that and stop with the word God, they do not read on to see as we understand Him. So if a person sees “God” as more than a one-male-over-all God, that is fine! “He” can become multiple Deities, Ancestors, and Nature Spirits to the polytheist. Some suggest choosing a light-bulb until you find something else—or choose your sponsor. For this step, my sponsor had me write out what my understanding was regarding my religion. She learned about me and in reality we were not that different. The Pagan Third Step just says the same thing in a more general manner. The key to this step is deciding, making a commitment. It is the first step to saying that we will take on Piety in a way that will improve our life and not just in a dogmatic manner. This step is also one that shows Wisdom, that we do not know it all and need help. It is an action step on our part, an oath you might say that we will let our life have help and not be selfish in the control or power of things. The price if we don’t keep it? The “yet” of

the disease: jail, institution, or death. This step is not actually where we keep our commitment, though. We just decide that we will. Both ways say to make a decision to turn our will over or towards a Divine presence.

Step 4: *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.* This is where we take a look at what we are holding on to that is hurting us. We don’t look at any one’s part but our own actions. We examine where we have been resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid and write it down on paper. We learn to see how our actions were the cause of our problems and pain. In the Pagan Step Four, it says to take an ethical inventory. “Moral” means pertaining to, or concerned with the *principles* or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong; whereas “Ethical” means being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession. These two words come down to the similar meaning and are generally synonyms of each other. Therefore, this is where two different ways of a step say the same thing. Either is doable for a polytheistic person.

Step 5: *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.* Still God is a general term here. The important part is that you admit to yourself out loud the exact nature of your wrongs, and doing it with someone else helps you keep honest. The differences of the Pagan 4th Step and this one is that it says Divine Presence and others. Yet it is the same thing. One does not have to tell many people, just one person who is trusted. It does not have to be a group of people.

Step 6: *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these*

defects of character. If you take the word God out and replace it with those to whom you pray, then there is no problem. This can also be done by asking those who are close to help make you aware of when those defects arise. Once a list is made, you can also meditate on how to make the opposite of that defect active in your life. In the Pagan 6th Step, it says ready to have our harmful patterns replaced by ethical coping skills, which sounds like asking character defects to be removed.

Step 7: *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.* When you have a relationship of “a gift for a gift” with the Ones whom you follow, you can give something good to Them in order for Them to take away something or instill the good of the opposite side. “Him” does not have to mean the Christian God; “Him” could mean Daghdá or another male Deity—or better yet: a Goddess! The 7th Pagan Step is to ask the Divine to transform us, giving us rebirth of our lives. Again, this is just another way of saying the same thing. All we are doing is praying to whom we follow to take the negative actions we do habitually out of our life and replace them with positive habits.

Step 8: *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.* This list includes the people to whom we owe amends and sometimes that is very hard to do. It is not saying that we are going to go out right now and do it, it just says make the list and become willing. In the readings of AA, we learn these are personal relationships. This can be Deity, Ancestor, Nature Spirit, living person, ourselves, institution (s), or any other thing that we could harm. It is not limited to just living people, as some people believe when they first see this step. It is only through the help of our sponsor and the books of AA that we learn how this is so much more. The Pagan 8th Step teaches this to be all beings and including our world. I can see why they would get detailed about this, but when you take time to study the steps and work with someone, you soon learn that there is more to a step than what it first says.

Step 9: *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.* Here we go to those we harm and make amends, saying “I was wrong, how did I hurt you and how can I correct it?” not assuming we know how we hurt them exactly or what it will take to correct it. We also remember that we cannot cause more

harm in asking amends to anyone involved, including ourselves. The Pagan 9th Step says to obey the Rede. which refers the Wiccan Rede: “And it harm none, do as you will.”(Collins). First thought when I got to this step is that not all Pagans follow this Rede, and they have limited this to Wiccans, or only one type of Pagan, which is what they were supposed to avoid doing! Therefore, in my mind, saying not to cause harm is the simplest, most inclusive way to include all religions into the program.

Step 10: *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.* This is where we make sure we stay on track, and it is a continuous step until the day we die. The difference in the Pagan 10th Step is that it says to correct it. AA literature says it is not just simply saying “oops, sorry,” but rather, it is seeing what we did and working hard not to repeat it (Big Book, 86-88). In our lives, we will find defects that we did not even know about in the preceding steps. Think of it as peeling back layers of an onion and that we will always be learning good and bad about our self.

Step 11: *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.* First off, we all pray! We just do it differently. Through time at the altar and in ritual, we build a relationship with whom we follow. Again there is that phrase, “as we understood Him” not this way only. Praying only for their will, meaning: we are getting out of the “self” and looking for ways that can better serve others. When we give our life to service, we are given so much more in return than when we let the “self” run riot. The Pagan 11th Step says to “choose harmony with the greatest good.” It is still seeking things other than our selfish motives.

Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.* To get this step, we must have done all the ones before it. This step says we wake up to that spiritual side of our self, give what was given to us to others, and practice this not just in AA but in all areas of our life. This three-part step brings it all home. The Pagan 12th step says the same thing just a tad different. When something is good, why change it?

Having had this up-close look at the steps, it is easy to see how one can use the traditional 12 Steps in their route to recovery. When we are not being selfish and saying “that does not fit me,” but instead generalizing, following the traditions, holding true to unity and the singleness of purpose, and looking for the commonality of the people in the program, we find our program can strengthen and grow. It is just as my sponsor says, “What is more important, being dead right or working for the betterment of all? And on a scale of 1-10 how important is it to your sobriety?” Let us work with the traditional steps and see a world full of those in recovery who are there and can help us along the way.

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Lesley Domnu-Hooper has been a member of ADF since 2006, completed her Dedicant Program in 2009, and is currently working on her GSP (this article is based on one of those essays). She has served ADF as Chieftain of the Welsh Kin and leader of the Solitaries SIG. She is actively involved in the ADF Members in Recovery yahoo group (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/recovery_ADF) and bids anyone wishing to join the group a hearty welcome.

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To Indravayu, Mitravaruna, and the Aśvins

~ *Ceisirr Serith*

This cup of unmixed tea I set out for
Indravayu, that which awakens and enlivens
to these two of great power.
This cup of tea mixed with milk I set out for
Mitravaruna,
The cow's gift given to me I now give
to those of the true laws.
This cup of tea mixed with honey I set out for the
Aśvins,
sweetness for those of the honey-soaked goads,
to the two who rescue and heal.
To you three, you six, I set out these cups,
to refresh and empower you,
mighty gods.

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

The Well of Mystery

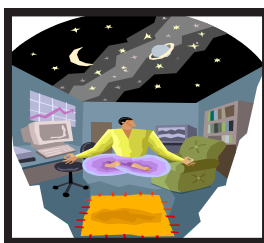
by Wayne Keysor

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:

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Making Waves-

Science Converges with Out-of-Body Experiences

By: Michelle A. Bassett

For millennia the phenomena of dream walking, astral projection and remote viewing has been experienced by indigenous cultures, spiritual shamans and even curious researchers. The aforementioned terms are just a sampling of names that refer to what is now commonly referred to as out-of-body experiences or OBEs. However, over the last 50 years, what was once most commonly seen as a heightened spiritual occurrence has now been breached by the curiosity of science; seemingly closing a gap seldom tread by either side – spirituality meets science.

By examining the OBE through the knowledge and training of shamans and the indigenous cultures throughout the world, scientists have been able to partially ascertain what area of the brain seems to be responsible for inducing such a state of being. Additionally, researchers have also utilized scientific methods in order to reproduce the same experiences.

Medical experts define an out-of-body experience as a sensation that occurs when an individual's mind feels like it has separated from his or her body. Such experiences have been documented to occur during surgery, sleep or even a trance-like or meditative state. (*Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition, 2009*).

While this general explanation also appears to be supported by lay persons throughout the globe, some paranormal researchers differentiate OBEs from astral projection. To them, the primary difference is that an OBE is considered an involuntary experience whereas astral projection is viewed as deliberate and intentional. However, the perception of both – the consciousness separating from the body – appears to be identical. (Out of Body Experience (OBE))

The commencement of an OBE varies between cultures, shamans or practitioners. Some used

hallucinogenic drugs or herbal mixtures to enter the appropriate state of mind, while others simply enter into a deep meditative state. Nevertheless, one common denominator that is shared by many travelers is the introduction of sound to initiate the experience.

For example, some shamanic practitioners use the steady pounding rhythm of a drum, the constant shake of a rattle or even rhythmic chanting while the he or she is entering into a meditative state. Such methods are helpful in soothing and relaxing the individual, aiding in their out-of-body journey and serve as a method to open the veil between

our reality and the spirit world. (Penczak, 2006)

Many question, who or what grants the traveler access to these other realms or levels of consciousness. Is it some innate psychic ability that only those who have been trained by the experienced elder can learn or is it a part of our body,

such as our brain, that acts as a conduit for travel? According to a shamanistic branch of Tibetan Buddhism that is practiced in Southeast Asia known as, Bön, it is believed that a small part of the brain called the pineal gland is the “gateway to alternate states of consciousness.” (Peake, 2011, p. 17)

The pineal gland has long since been speculated to be an integral part of the OBE. CW Leadbeater, a student of Helen Blavatsky, the founder of the Dzogchen School, believed that the pineal gland was a section of the brain that acted as a recipient to higher plane energies. (Peake, p. 25) In fact, it is the only part of the brain that doesn't contain a paired section on the opposite hemisphere. (Peake, p. 96)

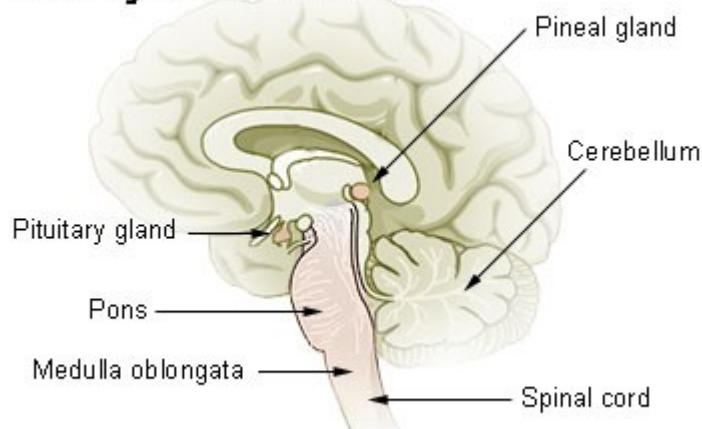
As seen in the following diagram, the pineal gland is located behind the brain's third ventricle, nestled

For millennia the phenomena of dream walking, astral projection and remote viewing has been experienced by indigenous cultures, spiritual shamans and even curious researchers.

deep within the organ. The cells in the pineal gland secrete the hormone melatonin. Melatonin helps regulate sleep and is also associated with reproductive development and boosting the immune system. (National Cancer Institute) Could this organ and its hormonal secretion be

believed that the human body oscillates at 4 Hz – hertz. It has been suggested by others fascinated by the experience, that the introduction of other vibrations or frequencies can cause our body to directly interact with the sounds. (Mattson, 2008)

Pituitary and Pineal Glands



By introducing different frequencies into the listener’s earphones, it is believed that the brain is guided to a high level meditative state, the first stage of an OBE. For example, if the left side of a listener’s ear phone is projecting 20Hz and the right ear is receiving sound at 40 Hz, the difference in frequencies is not audible to the listener. However, the brain “hears” the difference of the two frequencies, 30 Hz. It is this variance of frequencies that Monroe’s group, and others who have conducted similar experiments, believe is essential. (Mattson, 2008, p. 26)

connected to the mind’s ability to escape the body?

This brings us to question whether science can induce the same OOB result as the techniques honed by more primitive methods. According to the research performed by Robert Monroe, the answer is, “Yes.” Monroe is considered by many the most renowned astral traveler and it was his experiences that spurred sciences involvement into the phenomena.

In 1958, Monroe, who worked in radio and television began to question whether or not background noise can help amplify a listener’s ability to concentrate by blocking out other sounds. One day while his family was away at church, he decided to put his theory to the test. The result of this experience was the first of many for Monroe. By utilizing sound, Monroe was able to initiate an OBE. (Monroe, 1971)

After several years of experimentation, in the early 1970s, Monroe and a group of researchers developed a sound system that induced an OBE in the listener. The method, now referred to as Hemi-Sync continues to be utilized by The Monroe Institute as well as being made available for purchase in CD or MP3 format for users to enjoy in the comfort of their homes.

According to the research headed by Monroe, it is

In order to understand this phenomenon further, I decided to participate in some personal research. I used one of the audio products developed by The Monroe Institute in order to hopefully induce my own experience. (Peyote & Naasko, 2006)

Coming into the experience, I was completely skeptical. I was expecting some calming music and perhaps a brief weekend afternoon nap. My 9-year-old daughter had just been picked up by my adult niece for an afternoon visit to watch a movie and have dinner. My 13-year-old son was charged to “guard the fort” and not disturb me during my session. Armed with his X-Box game controller, he happily obliged.

I proceeded to lie down flat on my back on my bed. The music was loaded to my iPod and I inserted the ear buds. The music was what I would describe as very new age. Synthesized tones full of relaxing rhythms. I had set up my iPod to play on a loop so it would automatically repeat after completing the whole recording. While I didn’t experience what I would call an OBE, I did have an interesting result.

After listening to the audio for a brief amount of time, what I estimated to be about five minutes, I heard my daughter and niece come into the house – chatting away. I figured she must have forgotten something and they had to turn around and come

back. It was then that I found out that I had been listening to the recording for approximately three hours. I experienced a complete lapse in time. While I have absolutely no explanation as to how this happened it was definitely a fascinating outcome.

Our world continues to expand and our fantasies and myths sometimes even turn into commonplace reality. For example, explorers once voyaged out toward the horizon to see if their ships would fall off the edge of the Earth. Today, not only do we know that it is not possible to fall into nothingness, but we yearn to turn our eyes out into the unknown universe. In regards to out-of-body experiences, what is now considered a mystery of the body and mind may soon become a new way to communicate. As we learn more about the phenomenon, we may find that someday we will be able to converse with friends and family living across the globe or even loved ones who have passed away. The science of sound continues to make waves in the vast ocean of the unknown.

Author Bio:

Michelle Bassett has been a member of ADF since 2012. She is the Grove Organizer for the Star of the North Protogrove in Minnesota. Michelle's background is in comparative religion and transpersonal psychology. She currently is involved in outreach ministry in her area and is looking forward to broadening her focus to help families with loved ones in hospice care as well as prison inmates. She is a wife and busy mother of four.

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A Solitary Invocation to the Kindreds

by Dara NicDhana

A Child of Earth comes to honor The Kindreds:
Noble Ones,
Of fur and feather,
Mighty Ones,
Of blood and bone,
Shining Ones,
Of love and magic,
I call to you, Dear Ones!
Join me here
At my hollows.
Walk with me
To the Inner Grove.
Bless my work,
Beloved Ones,
As I bless you.
Let my worship keep you strong,
Let my voice carry your song,
always.
Kindreds, accept my sacrifice.



Taliesin and Aneirin - Christian Bards or Pagan (Part 1)

By: G.R. Grove

Introduction.

Throughout its recorded history, Welsh poetry – true to its Indo-European roots – has been first and foremost praise poetry: praise of the king, praise of heroes, praise of the Christian God, and (somewhat later in its development) praise of country, of beautiful women, and of love. The earliest examples of this poetry of which we have record is that attributed to the historical poets Taliesin and Aneirin, who probably sang in the second half of the sixth century CE (c. 550-600 CE), mostly in northern Britain. These two, together with Talhaearn Tad Awen, Cian, and Bluchbard, none of whose work survives, and with the anonymous authors of a few other early poems, are called in Welsh the *Cynfeirdd* – the “first” or “early bards” – and their surviving work is almost entirely praise poetry of one sort or another. Traditionally these early bards have been assumed to be Christians. This paper will examine the background of that assumption, and will perhaps reach a different conclusion.

Although the question of the dating of this earliest material is complex and contentious, I will assume for the purpose of this discussion that at least some of it, in at least some core parts, is the work of the early bards to whom it has long been ascribed. If I say, then, that a poem “is Taliesin’s”, the reader should interpret this statement as meaning “some scholars think that this poem may have been composed originally by a historical sixth century bard called Taliesin; other scholars may disagree.”

The Bards.

The British bards were in their functions the descendants of one of the three Celtic learned classes – Druids, Bards, and Seers – described by a number of the classical writers, and argued about ever since. In Britain the druids were suppressed by the incoming Romans in the first century CE, but the bards survived; and after the Roman withdrawal (c. 410 CE) they flourished, adapting

their performances as needed to the environment in which they moved. In Ireland, as the druids declined in status, losing their religious function to the Christian priests and becoming simply magicians, the seers – the Irish *filid* or high-caste poets – acquired some of their lore-keeping and judicial functions, while splitting their poetic functions with the lower-caste bards. Whether or not something like this happened in Britain, with the British bards acquiring some of the druidical functions as the druids and seers disappeared, is a matter for speculation. Be that as it may, the *Cynfeirdd* were highly respected professionals whose craft was important to their society. They were not only poets in the modern sense, but genealogists, historians, performers, entertainers, and publicists (Bromwich lxxi). Theirs was a craft of memory and oral transmission in a mostly illiterate society; they proclaimed the deeds of heroes, and knew the descent of kings.

In Ireland their counterparts the *filid* were one of only a few groups who could travel freely though the little kingdoms, and the honor price of an *ollam fili* – a chief poet – was equal to that of a minor king (Kelly 46). Even in Medieval Wales the master bard or *pencerdd* had high status and privileges beyond that of most king’s officers, including an honor price equal to that of the king’s judge (beside whom he sat at feasts), and a lodging with the *edling* or king’s heir (Jenkins 38-39). The satire of the bards was feared as much as their praise was desired, and when Aneirin sang that poets of the world determined the hero’s worth, he made no idle boast. The poets were well paid for their services: lines from the *Gododdin* show that Aneirin had been given rich gifts, including a fine gilded spear, by the warriors he praised, while Taliesin’s praise of Cynan Garwyn starts with a list of the valuable items he has received: “a hundred horses with silver trappings; a hundred splendid, colorful mantles; a hundred bracelets; and ... a beautiful sword with a worthy scabbard” (Evans 82). Even allowing for poetic exaggeration, this is “fine pay” indeed (another, punning, translation of that poet’s name).

Our information on Taliesin and Aneirin as individuals is limited to the little that can be gleaned from their work. On the slight evidence of the one (possibly early) poem by Taliesin to Cynan Garwyn, a prince of Powys based near modern Shrewsbury, and of later traditions (Bromwich 509-510; Williams xxxix; lix; lxi), it has been suggested that he was a native of that area, who subsequently journeyed north to Elmet (an area north and east of modern Manchester, possibly located on the east side of the Pennines) (Charles-Edwards 13), whose prince he praised in two surviving songs. The main body of Taliesin's surviving work, however, was composed in Rheged (a kingdom which may have included modern Carlisle) (Charles-Edwards 13), and consisted of eulogies to its ruler Urien and an elegy to Urien's son Owein (Williams xxix; lix-lxi). The sort of mobility implied by these three locations is plausible; the later Medieval *Gogynfeirdd* ("Poets of the Princes") traveled freely throughout Wales, and their Irish counterparts traveled throughout the Gaelic-speaking world (Bromwich 510).

Aneirin, on the other hand, may have been a native of the kingdom of Gododdin (an area which included modern Edinburgh) where his work was composed. Another hypothesis, however, based on a poetical reference to him as "the son of Dwywei", places his origins farther south, between Elmet and Gododdin, as a possible younger son of Dunod Fwr ap Pabo Post Prydyn, the prince of an area adjoining Elmet and Rheged, who married Dwywei daughter of Lleenog – the sister of Gwallog ap Lleenog, the ruler of Elmet whom Taliesin praised. If this is correct, he might also have been a younger brother or half-brother to Saint Deiniol, founder of the monastery of Bangor in North Wales (Bartrum 167; 191). The Welsh Triads preserve a tradition that Aneirin was killed by a hatchet blow to the head, inflicted by one "Heidyn mab Enygan" – a suspicious name, considering that the court of Gododdin was located at Din Eidyn (Bromwich 70-74; Charles-Edwards 6), but outside the limits of this investigation.

Depending on largely hypothetical reconstructions of the relationships among the latter three kingdoms and their Anglo-Saxon neighbors, historians have located the *floret* of these two bards anywhere from the middle of the sixth century CE to the first quarter of the seventh

century CE, with the last quarter of the sixth century being most likely. It is time now to take a closer look at the religious environment of the courts where they sang.

The Christian Britons.

Like many other strange cultural innovations, Christianity first came to Britain through the Roman Empire. The earliest evidence of its presence is around 200 CE, with its first British martyrdom (St. Alban) dated to about 251-259 CE. In 313 CE it was declared tolerated by Rome, and in 395 CE it became the state religion of the Empire. Even by 314 CE, when at least five British clerics attended the Council of Arles, it was evidently well established in southern Britain. The religion may have spread to the region north of Hadrian's Wall and westward into parts of Wales before the end of the Roman period. By the time of the Roman withdrawal in c. 410 CE, it seems to have been well established in many parts of the island, reaching perhaps as far north as the old Antonine Wall which spans the narrow strip of land between the Clyde and the Firth of Forth, at the latitude of modern Glasgow and Edinburgh. There is plentiful historical and archaeological evidence for it in these areas from the sixth century onward (Laing 207). Later historical records refer to Saints Dubricus and Illtud as being active in southeastern Wales c. 475 CE, St. David in southwest Wales during the later sixth century (Laing 208), Ninian in southern and east-central Scotland around the mid-fifth century, Kentigern along the Clyde-Forth axis in the sixth century, and St. Columba in northern and western Scotland after 563 CE (Laing 322).

In the absence or uncertainty of contemporary written records, what sort of physical evidence can we use to document Christianity's spread? Archaeologists have looked chiefly at burial practices, incised stone monuments, and chance finds on sites of occupation. In the past, a form of group burial called the "long cist" cemetery was considered diagnostic of the presence of a Christian community. These graves consisted of a supine extended burial – the body was buried on its back with legs extended, not crouched – often with the head to the west and the feet to the east, and usually without grave goods. However, this form of burial has been found to have been normal throughout much of Europe in the Roman

and sub-Roman periods, and to have been used by both Christians and pagans; it is not now generally considered evidence of Christianity (Charles-Edwards 45-46; Fraser 37; Harding 217-218; but see Smyth 34 for a contrary opinion; Laing e.g. 305 and Carver *Surviving* 40-47 are ambivalent). The “long cist” description refers to a box-like stone grave lining, often without bottom or lid, surrounding the body; these were more common in the north of Britain, but were also found in other areas as well. In Scotland they have been shown to predate Christianity in some areas (Harding 195), but do seem to have become more common after its arrival.

Inscribed stones are another matter, those bearing crosses as well as (usually Latin) inscriptions being unequivocally Christian, but they are less common than long-cist cemeteries (although they often accompany them, especially those datable to our period of interest). There are about twenty of these stones known in northern Britain between Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall, dating from the fifth to the eighth century CE. There is some archaeological evidence for possible Roman period churches at three sites on Hadrian’s Wall, one of which (Vindolanda) also has a sixth century memorial stone (Laing 303). Christian memorial stones dating back to as early as the fifth century CE and possibly earlier have been found at Whithorn in Galloway (an area which may have lain in Rheged), a site associated with St. Ninnian (Laing 303-304). A long cist cemetery near Edinburgh is accompanied by a late fifth or sixth century CE inscribed stone called the Catstane, now unfortunately within the perimeter of Edinburgh airport; this is the only known Christian memorial stone in Gododdin territory (Laing 304; Harding 218).

All in all, Christianity seems to have been widely present in much of Britain during Taliesin and Aneirin’s period, although what percentage of the population considered themselves Christian, and how deeply that religion affected their daily life, may be another matter. [In the next installment of this paper, we will consider the Britons’ pagan neighbors.](#)

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Earth Mother Invocation

by Kerry Scott

I'll speak to you of drifting sand,
Cold dirt, and crumbling stone,
Where far below lie broken wood,
And ash, and dusty bone.
Planted in a field in rows,
Or under earthen mound,
She takes back all her children,
To her womb beneath the ground.
As she cradles and reclaims
All bodily remains,
Deep within her belly lies
The Lord Hades' domain.

Her maw the cavern entrance
Where freed spirits leave the light,
Her blood, a river pushing boat
With souls all packed in tight.
Within her crags and fishers deep,
The Wealth-Lord's diamonds form,
While up upon her surface,
Left friends and family mourn.
But if a loved one's voice is what
A kinsman needs to heal,
She gives of harvest bounty
For to share a silent meal.

She watches as they carve a name,
A memory in stone,
Where far below lie shining wood,
Still face and covered bone.
Planted in a field in rows,
Or under earthen mound,
She takes back all her children
To her womb beneath the ground.
And as she cradles Ancestors
Deep in Hades' domain,
Their memories, their knowledge and
Their love always remain.

Blueberry Wine

by Arthur Shipkowski

My most famous potable is my blueberry wine, made from the fruit itself at home and initially fermented on the skins. It's won multiple competitions and is a big part of why I now run the Trillium brewing competition instead of enter it. Here's how I make it.

Per gallon produced [1], you will need:

3 pounds of blueberries
2 pounds of sugar
water to make one gallon total volume
1-2 Campden tablets
An appropriate amount of pectic enzyme and yeast energizer (look on the packaging, since this seems to vary).
You will also need a package of Wyeast's Sweet Mead yeast.

Dump the sugar into some of the water and heat it to boiling (this helps ensure that things are dead), in batches if necessary. Meanwhile, use a blender to chop the blueberries into paste, preferably using a middle-of-the-road setting. (I can hear the wine purists coming after me now). Dump the blueberry paste and the still-hot sugar water carefully into your primary fermenter, and add any extra water and the Campden tablets. Put the lid on loosely (if a plastic jug) and cover any opening loosely (I use a towel). Go do other things, because it'll take a while to cool down, trust me. When it has cooled down to about room temperature, add the pectic enzyme, yeast energizer, and yeast. Cover for real, with a fermentation lock or other such device. Let ferment for three weeks. Re-rack into a secondary fermenter (preferably glass), filtering pulp with a strainer to reduce loss of liquid [2], and then let ferment for two months. Re-rack into a new-fermenter, and let ferment until fermentation ceases.

[1]It well may be that a full gallon of water is needed to get on true gallon of output.

[2] Towards the end it will become impossibly slow; however, this thick mixture can be placed in a plastic juice container, placed in the fridge with the top on tight (loosen briefly on occasion to let gas out), and it will turn into ugly but tasty champagne. Adventurous souls only (it's in plastic for a reason).

Author Bio:

Arthur is the current Members Advocate, who must be really dedicated to serve in this difficult yet rewarding position once more. For his efforts in service to the organization as well as his always-welcome contributions of wit and brewed deliciousness, we thank him.



Adventures with Cancer

By: *Erin Picard*

On November 12th, 2012 I was diagnosed with three forms of stage four cancers: lymphoma, sarcoma and bone cancer. All were located in my lower back. Prior to this, I had been having difficulties with my health (obviously). I couldn't walk further than 10 feet without having to sit down because the pain was so bad. I was drinking water like it was going out of style, which meant I was drinking a one litre bottle every 20 minutes. And, of course, that meant going to the washroom all the time too. I also had a blood clot in the femoral artery of my left leg. Two months before I was diagnosed with the cancer, I was hobbling around on my sore leg, doing every ultrasound they could to find the blood clot. I had 4 ultrasounds before they finally found it. At first the doctors thought I had a blood infection because my leg was swollen so badly.

When they found the blood clot, I was elated! Finally, a reason why I was so sick. So I went on Coumadin (tm) for it, and had weekly blood tests. However, I was still sick, and getting sicker by the day. I took time off work and eventually used up all my sick time. So then I was forced to take a week off work, without pay. When I came back to work, I couldn't concentrate; I was dizzy, slow, and very tired. I came home on the 9th (a Friday) and promptly ran my car into the side of the garage. I didn't want to go to the hospital, but by the following Monday, my parents had to take me in. I slid into a diabetic coma that day and I was in that coma for the following two weeks. I had diabetes insipidus.

When I came out of the coma, they finally told me of my diagnosis. I was put into a ward, and my vitals were taken every 4 hours. When I found out, I was stunned, although a bit relieved because I was finally taken seriously. I knew there had to be a damn good reason why I was so sick! I stayed in the hospital until my chemo treatments were started.

What I wanted to tell you all, is that during this hospital stay, I had a green hospital gown. It just

happened to have the Brigit's cross stamped all over it! Now, Brigit had been a patron Goddess of mine for many years, and I wear a Brigit's cross around my neck. But during this hospital stay, I didn't have it on. I told all my nurses about it, and would you believe, no one knew? The Patron of healing, and no one knew! I was baffled. It raised my spirits. I had a few friends visit me, but my mother was my constant rock. She came every day (except two because of huge snow storms). I first had a doctor who said that my chance of survival was 0.04%. She wasn't optimistic. Not sure exactly, but after I had that visit where she told me the stats, I never saw her again. (Goddess bless my mother!!) I had a new doctor, and she was much more positive.

I prayed to Brigit every day. My clothes were a constant reminder of her powers. I had prayer circles going on, toasts at Bløts; one of my friends even started up a Facebook group for me to find me a bone marrow donor. (That was the last ditch effort if the chemo didn't work). I left the hospital in February, and I started my chemo (2013). I had 6 rounds of chemo, each lasting 2 hours every two weeks. After this, the doctors checked my tumors. They said that it was worse than expected and that I should go in for ICE treatment (a specific kind of chemo named for the drugs they use). This was for heavy duty cancers, for people they didn't expect to survive. This was 3 rounds of chemo, 3 days in a row, for 8 hours a day. This landed me right back in the hospital. I was in the hospital for 3 weeks this time. I couldn't walk anymore. I was hooked up to more fluids than I could count. I prayed to Thor for strength and Brigit for healing to get my butt out of that hospital room! Finally, I told the doctors that I wasn't going to stay in the hospital any longer. So they gave me a week, and I left on the Friday.

I was out around May 2013. At home, I had my shrine to Thor, Odin and Brigit. It was in my room so I could see it every day. I stayed in my room for a good month before my mom started nagging me about getting out of bed and starting

to walk. I had Personal Support Workers, nurses and doctors in for home visits. I walked with a walker, and steadily gained my strength back. All this time, I was in limbo. I was going for tests to see if the cancer had shrunk, but it was too soon. So, over the summer, I learned how to walk. I had lost over 100 pounds. I was heavy before this, but thank the Gods I had pounds to spare. Another thing to note, was that I was told I had these cancers for 2 years before I was diagnosed. Now I had started a new job in Nov. 2010. I had a year's probation to do before I was permanent. So I was just finished with my probation, when I started feeling ill. In our collective agreement, I had full long term disability insurance and I was guaranteed the same job to come back to if I returned within two years. I was told that the chemo would work in my system for 9 months before we knew if it had actually killed the cancer. So I waited and used this time to get walking again, driving even. March 4th, 2014, I went into my oncologist's appointment, and was told that I was in full remission! I had beaten all 3 cancers!

So now, three months later, I'm back at work, part-time. I work 11-3pm and other than leg pain (ironically in my *right* leg), and a bit of joint pain in my knees, I'm back to normal! It was a bloody miracle. I was praying, my friends were praying, my family of course, were praying. I shouldn't have survived.

Hail Thor! Hail Brigit!

The 9 noble virtues were strong and present for me and my friends and family during this time. Please let me elaborate:

Wisdom: My mother, through all of this, knew what treatment I should have, with the counsel of doctors, nurses and technicians.

Piety: During my stay at the hospital and during my convalescence, my friends and family prayed for me. I was toasted at the local kindred Blots. At the Red Maple Grove rituals, I was honored during personal offerings. I kept Brigit in my heart, and prayed every day.

Vision: I became a better person for all of this. I

know now that I'm more than just a dot on the landscape. My ties are far reaching. I affect people, and I cherish my folk; even those I didn't know personally, who were on my bone marrow donor FB group.

Courage: I faced adversity, certain death, and after a brief period of depression, I came back stronger, with a will to live that got me through. I had doctors telling me that it wasn't possible to beat this cancer, and I decided not to listen to them, and to believe instead in science and keep the faith that I would be here to tell this story.

Integrity: I used to believe that I couldn't do anything on my own, that I needed help all the time. True, I needed the doctor's and nurses' help, but it was up to me to believe that I could do it, that I could push through and beat this thing. I

Courage: I faced adversity, certain death, and after a brief period of depression, I came back stronger, with a will to live that got me through. I had doctors telling me that it wasn't possible to beat this cancer, and I decided not to listen to them, and to believe instead in science and keep the faith that I would be here to tell this story.

had support and I believed in myself that I could walk again, go back to work again. All things are possible if you believe in yourself.

Perseverance: Days were long in the hospital. I was exceedingly tired. I walked every other day, to push

myself to get to the point where I could leave the hospital. I knew I could see this through.

Hospitality: Whether it was from trying to put a smile on my face when family and friends came to visit me in the hospital, or doing the same at home when the nurses came to see me, I managed to be welcoming and hospitable.

Moderation: Exercise in moderation! I had to be patient with myself to pace myself through my rehabilitation.

Fertility: While in hospital, I read a lot. Many books. I had great conversations with many friends and family who visited me. Since I was classified as in remission, I've had a renewal of my faith, and determination to succeed. I'm currently in the Science Director's office replacing the Executive Assistant for a few weeks while she's away on holidays. I was going to pursue a new career, but then decided that I'm going to do the best job I can at the one I have now.

I have a new lease on life, and I'm not going to waste it. Thanks to everyone for the constant prayer and support I've received over the last 2 years. I won't let you down.

Author Bio:

I'm Erin Picard, member of ADF since 2008 with Red Maple Grove, in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (with a hiatus for 2 years because of the cancer). I am currently working on liturgies for my grove. I have started on my Dedicants Program. Getting back to life, fulfilling our motto "why not excellence?" to the fullest!



Imbas in Silence

by Garren

With all my pain, all my grief, all my agony,
With all the hurt of a lifetime,
I shout into the darkness,
And then there is only silence, blessed silence.
A thousand hilltops have cried out
And have only been met with nothing.
No answering shout, no ring of remorse.
There is only quiet.
In that quiet, that total silence,
I stand in awe.

There is majesty in silence,
A feeling of presence in absence,
A presence beyond all comprehension
But palpable.
It fills me and surrounds me,
Yet it has no scent, no physical sensation.
It is not visible to the eye, nor leaves a taste on my tongue.
Even without a sound, it speaks volumes.
My ears are filled to the point it is overwhelming;
But I relish it, I crave it.
I need it as I need air to breathe,
Water to drink, food to eat.

I fear without it I will die.

It is a necessity of life,
The nectar of the gods.
I must partake it daily or go insane.
In the emptiness I feel fulfilled.
Only in absence do I feel whole,
When there is nothing, there is everything.

Most don't see it that way.
Their vision is clouded by the constant noise
Of life, of the world, of man.
One must seek that which we have done our best
to hide
With our cell phones, our tv's, our lifestyles of
unfulfillment.
We busy ourselves to hide from ourselves,
Who we are, and who we could be.
Only in the absence of all
Are we left to face ourselves.
Each individual seeing himself or herself
Not as they believe,
Not as they portray,
But as they are.

Only when the trappings of life are stripped away,
Only when each of us is in silence.
In that awesome presence of nothing and of all,
Do we see what truly is.
To see the self,
And acknowledge the truth of that revelation.

Most will never reach this point.
Some will hide in their delusional reality.
Some will attempt the journey
Only to abandon it shortly therein.
Some will strive valiantly for years,
But never find it.
Circumstance and doubt will thwart
Their honest seeking of the path.
Other misguided souls will believe they have
found it
When they find what answers
They had preconceived at the start.
The answers can only be found within.
They are not known until they are discovered.
The journey must be undertaken
With no idea of its destination.
Only in blindness of the path's end will one see it.
Only in silence will one hear one's soul.
It is an epiphany all can have.



A Disposable Society

By: Chelly Couvrette

“When who you are is thoroughly caught up with what you own- with the things you display on your body or in your home- conspicuous consumption becomes central to the cultivation of a self and to structures of social value and distinction” (Hawkins, viii). Almost everyone in society uses products that are wasteful and unnecessary that add to this conspicuous consumption. Items such as acne wipes, air fresheners, disposable toilet cleaners, and disposable coffee cups from your favourite café or coffee shop are all parts of this wasteful society in which we live. However, the question we need to ask ourselves is what do these really do to our environment and what can we do to stop it?

When looking at the amount of garbage our society produces, what we don't see is the waste that comes from producing these products. This phenomenon is called the “wasteberg”. This term, coined by Arthur H. Purcell helps the human brain visualize the amount of waste that consumers see versus the amount of production waste that they do not. Production waste is like an iceberg; consumers see 1:19 of its total amount. If we were to take a Canadian Tim Horton's medium sized disposable cup for an example, the weight of the cup is 12.2 grams (4.3 ounces). By the ratio of the wasteberg, one can conclude there are another approximately 19 times (if you round to a percentage of 5%) that one does not see. By doing the math you can find that there are approximately 231.8 grams (8.17 ounces) of waste that is not seen by the consumer. That is one quarter of a kilogram or half a pound of waste for every Canadian Tim Horton's medium sized cup! This doesn't even account for people who ask for their coffee to be double cupped, or those who drink tea which is automatically double cupped.

The effect on the natural world for our disposable society is significant as well. Due to all the plastics and sludge that have made their way into the ocean, we now have the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (Wikipedia). This patch, although not visible from satellites, is an area of plastics and sludge in

the North Pacific Gyre. It is categorized by particulates within the upper water column of the ocean. These plastics are affecting the marine wildlife, such as the albatross and jellyfish, as they are mistaking these items for food. In some cases, chicks die from being fed plastics by their parents (Wikipedia). These plastics end up in the sea is because of us. By reducing the amount of disposable products that we use, and reducing the amount of conspicuous consumption we participate in, we can reduce the amount of garbage that has to be dealt with by our regions, and reduce the growth of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

In order to reduce our disposable ways, we have to think about what we are purchasing. We must take a look at our everyday life and determine what disposable products we use the most. For some people it is coffee cups, for some it is tea bags, for others it is cigarettes or paper towels. Each of these disposable items has non-wasteful alternatives such as using cloths instead of paper towels and reusable coffee filters instead of paper ones. In order to learn how to reduce the disposable items in our lives, our best resources are our elders. They were around before we had all of these disposable items. They can tell you how things used to be done, and how we can go forward with using more reusable alternatives. By doing these simple things, we can reduce our waste, reduce our conspicuous consumption, and reduce the strain on our planet.

Author Bio:

Chelly Couvrette has been an ADF member since 2006. She has completed the Initiates Path and is currently serving as the secretary of the bardic guild and the Purswarden of the naturalist guild. Her interests are wide ranging and she looks to the god Lugh as the master of all skills.



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The Blessed Dead

By: Rev. Amber Canon

Down the road past the hawthorn grove,
just beyond the pines,
You will find a well-worn path,
that wends away and winds,
Beyond the barrows of the old farm land,
where many crops look to the skies,
Beware the thorns that defend,
an entrance to the other side,
Sacred grove of mighty oaks,
elms and ash, and wild vines,
You will find a presence there,
when Ancients speak and time unwinds,

Stone altar, a pile of rocks, and charred ground
mark the place,
When the moon shines down,
its silver light, this becomes a sacred space,
Sparks of wisdom fly, light your fire there,
with good flint and alder wood,
Holy words to bless an aging well,
where waters heal the pain of childhood,

Listen for the Ancient One,
Speaking in forgotten tongue,
He calls to you inside your head,
Don't forget our Blessed Dead,

Centuries have passed since you climbed
atop the mound,
Where fairy spirits fill the air,
The night wind moans with a haunting sound,
Lightning crackles everywhere,
The farm is all tattered now,
no crops rise to greet the sun,
The walking path is worn and fading now,
Yet the hawthorn still stands as sacred guardian,

To the secret lair, where pagan songs were sung,
Hear the lonely owl, the warning jay,
darkness' sullen tone,
As you cross the old threshold,
back in time to the sacred grove,
Hear those Ancients now,
My how those mighty oaks have grown,

Listen for the Ancient One,
Speaking in forgotten tongue,
He calls to you, inside your head,
Don't forget our Blessed Dead,

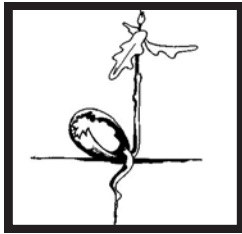
Stand astride the corridor,
between mystical and new,
As the moon washes over verdant land,
Cleansing all with a morning dew,
Hear the words call out to where you stand,
Myth and wisdom merge at the holy grove center,
Waiting for a wild God who wears the antlers,
Quench the thirst of the Ancient Ones,
That you will pray for them again,

Crows cross the sky, moving east to west,
Moon hares gather without a sound,
Torch lights begin to sway in an eerie dance,
An omen and a blessing on holy ground,

Listen to the Ancient One,
Speaking in forgotten tongue,
He tucks his cross inside, and carries on,
Praying for the Gods to shift the tide,
He makes his offerings inside your head,
Don't forget our Blessed Dead,
Sacred waters of the holy land,
the dew that leaves the forest wet,
Raise your hands in pride and pray aloud,
The Gods haven't left us yet....

Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah,
Hear the Ancient One,
Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah,
The Dead, the Gods and we are one...





The Utility of a Portable Temple

By: Thomas Brown

Review of: *Traveling Magic: A Druidic Ritual Kit*

By: Rev. Ian Corrigan

The Traveling Magic kit is a great utilitarian design for portable Pagan magic. It contains all the necessary images for a working temple with creative applications for trance, seership, and magic. It is the perfect arrangement for those pursuing the Initiate path (or our Priest) of ADF; its application for new or seasoned Druids is remarkable. This kit is designed with piety, courage and moderation in mind for establishing a Home Shrine or getting back to the basics of Our Druidry style work. Ian's creative stream in producing this set makes absolutely perfect for people on the go and incarcerated members as well. Less is definitely more with this kit. I wish that was the case in the lengthiness of this review.

The contents are amazing. The kit contains images of the Fire and Well along with alternate images for the tree and gate (for holding the Cosmos in vision). The deities that are honored in every ADF rite, Earth Mother and Gatekeeper, are presented as temple images; as well as, the Dagda Mor, Brighid the High One and each of the three Kindreds. There are also images for blessing and working magic in Ian's unique and very Celtic way. The mini-Ogham card set is an invaluable balancing the kit with thoughtful insights into furthering the work. These are the tools for going from trance, to magic to divination in a clear and easy pattern.

I began reading the mini-grimoire -as a student of Ian's work- and immediately recognized the numerous applications for students of magic and Druidry. The notes in the mini-grimoire on the images, ritual and potential application spark the imagination and lead to deeper meanings of vision, trance and magic. An overview of ADF's order of ritual and a simple blessing rite is included. This is truly a traveling Magician's tool kit.

Once the initial excitement was over, an immediate plan was to use the kit for ten days and experiment with the images as part of my established



devotionals and weekly rituals. What I discovered is that the portable temple can be used for devotionals, moon rites and full rites of sacrifice all by itself, but should be used as a foundation for establishing these activities.

Here are some examples often days' worth of work: There is an ease to with the variety of symbols. For example, placing the "World-Tree" on the box establishes the "triple" flame (one the box, one on the image and one on the back). Voila, a triple flame! Now, when starting a new day, the tree or Cosmos sigil is useful for devotional work. In the past, my devotionals were done in front of a simple fire image or Tarot cards for the Kindreds. Later, I added a "Crane" or other token as a focus. At night the gate image is perfect for simple devotional work for Ancestor veneration. However, I added a small ceramic skull so the Ancestors will have eyes, ears and mouth to share Their wisdom. I shall explore, in further detail, doing "court" style magic with Brighid the High One and Dagda Mor. That work will be shared with the Frog Stone Circle. I also discovered that the kit has a solution for simple devotional workings and full rites provided by the complex of images.

In short, the temple images have multiple uses in conjunction with the storehouse of Ian's work

contained in the Book of Nine Moons, Book of Visions, Book of Summoning and Sacred Fire, Holy Well. If an ADF student is struggling with the practicum work of magic, one only needs to get this kit! If piety is rolling up one's sleeves and doing the work, then vision and wisdom are balanced with this kit.

For full rites of sacrifice, I set the images in the proper patterns using the Cosmos sigil for the gate. Every image was familiar and evoked spoken charms I had not uttered in a few months. For Druid Moon rites, I omitted the blessing token, switched from using the "Cosmos Sigil" as the axis-mundi to the "Cosmos Sigil at the Gate" and followed the Order of the Crane (and 3CG) pattern thus focusing on the omen. Both versions are visual markers for obtaining proper states of trance and entering "...into the World of Spirits." This is exactly what any beginning student or seasoned Druid of Our Druidry needs - piety in a box!

Ian says in his blog Into the Mound: "This is one of those "Maybe someone will like it" projects. I like it, that's why I did it, but I hope it might be useful to others. Travelers; students in dorms or at their parent's hearths; visiting ritualists in hospitals or even prisons; folks with kids or limited free space might all have a use for a ritual kit that can be carried in a suit-coat pocket, briefcase or purse" (posted Saturday, March 29, 2014).

I agree.

Also on Ian's Into the Mound blog, Shawneen Bear says, "This sounds, in addition to being a nifty travel model...being realistically an incarcerated members only choice for ritual gear/nemeton. Has anyone considered offering them free of charge via a sponsorship model to prisoners? In other words, the prisoner's mentor/sponsor assists/picks up the cost of supplying this to them. What do the folk think 'bout that?" (posted Stmday, March 30, 2014 at 6:26PM).

The utility of this kit in a restricted environment is boundless as Ian's work has indicated and Shawneen Bear has concluded. I received the kit through Rev. Kirk Thomas as a donation from Ian for the Frog Stone Circle. My biggest hurdle now is getting more kits for the men and a system to purchase or acquire more. Donations of materials

are always welcome, but only if there no other options (like an ability to purchase this kit). The men of the Frog Stone Circle welcome any opportunity to further our Paganism.

I have been sharing the kit with Norse Heathens, Wiccans, interested Neopagans and fellow Druids. Each person I spoke with speculated if the kit could be used with those other traditions. My immediate answer was yes, with some reimagining and creativeness, but it is uniquely an Our Druidry creation. There may be crossover applications, but I haven't fully explored those options (yet). As time goes on the kit is utilized, maybe an alternate Norse, Hellenic or Slavic kit would appeal ADF members? It should be noted that I believe this kit would also serve the needs of Druids who belong to any splinter group of ADF. Furthermore, I have experimented using the kit for Druid Clan of Dana (FOI) rites without difficulty. Any ritual tradition where fire and water meet and the Gods are present can use this kit.

I will continue to explore the utility of the Traveling Magic kit. As Odin shared the Runes with Gods and non-Gods, now Ian has pulled from the "Well of Wisdom" this kit to share with the folk. I shall also share what I've learned from this small kit with members the Frog Stone Circle and the folk of ADF. This kit is a treasure to be shared for the future of Our Druidry.

I highly recommend the Traveling Magic kit as a primer for ADF style of Druidry and as a touchstone to mystical transformation. Ian has provided a tool chest for rectifying the personal souls of the folk. This work will definitely help overcome some of the psychic wounds of mortal life while teaching a mystical path of personal piety and devotion to all our members. This kit thoroughly compliments Ian's work and adds to ADF's storehouse of the liturgy that can be enjoyed by everyone. Ian, I say thank you -Go raiblz maitli agai (gora mah-agit)- for sharing your wisdom.

Author Bio:

Thomas has been a member of ADF since late 2009 and is now a Candidate for the Initiatory Current of Ar nDraiocht Fein. He has completed the DP, GSP and the first circle of the BGSP and SGSP. He is a circled member in the Order of Bardic Alchemy, Order of the Crane, and Order of the Dead. He is also a prisoner member at CRCC in Connell, WA.

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Shadow's Few

by Chelly Couvrette

A cloud darkens the sun from view,
A crow caws as it lands in a yew,
Shadows hide the day from view,
As I look at the ogham fews.

A branch together, a branch apart.
This group does try to report.
Each one is different, each one is new,
as I look at the first five few.

Birch tells of new beginnings,
This is Birch's blessing.
Rowan speaks of things at home,
not too far do we roam.

Alder reveals uniqueness and intuition,
which can tell of premonitions.
Willow teaches us of change,
never truly out of range.
Ash shows us interconnection,
which can result in protection.

A branch together, a branch apart.
This group does try to report.
Each one is different, each one is new,
as I look at the second five few.

Hawthorn gives counseling
protection and cleansing,
although watch out it its brambles sting.

Oak provides strength and wisdom,
however, that is a given.
Holly shows our persistence,
normally, in spite of resistance.

Hazel brings inspiration and intuition,
which can bring ideas to fruition.
Apple gives us multiple options,
knowing this can change one's actions.

A branch together, a branch apart.
This group does try to report.
Each one is different, each one is new,
as I look at the third five few.

Vine tells us to trust ourselves,
which can help us fill objectives.
Ivy teaches us self reflection,
which can help with selections.

Reed shows us how to make order from chaos,
Although the act doesn't quite feel right.
Blackthorn warns of unexpected change,
sometimes this warning is long ranged.
Elder shows us beginnings and endings,
this will normally pull at our heartstrings.

A branch together, a branch apart.
This group does try to report.
Each one is different, each one is new,
as I look at the last five few.

Silver Fir gives a warning,
about one's spiritual roaming,
Gorse shows us collecting,
different types of the offerings.

Heather teaches healing and patience,
which can be learned from the ancients.
White poplar decides to bend but not break,
This strength you cannot fake.
Yew tells us of new beginnings and letting go,
although sometimes this can come to blows.

The cloud moves, the sun is in view,
The crow caws as it leaves the yew,
Shadows no longer hide the day from view,
As I put away the ogham fews.



Little Acorns

What a Wonderful Spring!

By: Phoenix Rose (Amy Fleming),
(To the tune of "What a Wonderful World")

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

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

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

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

Little Druid Devotional Prayers

by Traci (Ravenna Blue)

Morning Prayer:

Kindred three please come to me
As I begin my day.
May virtues reign and wisdom gain,
And good fires light my way.

Evening Prayer:

Kindred three please come to me
As I lay down to sleep.
So rested mind and peace I find
In guarded slumber deep.

Challenge

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

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

Parents/Caregivers: Please send submissions via email to oak-leaves@adf.org

A Charm for the Kindreds

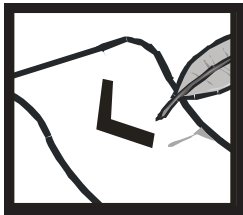
by: Rev. Melissa Hill

Fire ignite in my heart and I'm free
Water washing over me
I am one with the sacred tree
I am the world and the world is me

River Mother flows along
as we walk and sing our song
hand in hand our love is strong
to the earth we do belong

Spin and spin our dance begins
Mighty dead we make our call
Turn and turn our fire burns
Mighty dead we love you all





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

by Ian Corrigan

ADF Clergy Retreat 2014

This past weekend Tredara hosted the ninth annual retreat for ADF's clergy. I've written some about these before (here <http://intothemound.blogspot.com/2009/01/elder-wise.html>, and here <http://intothemound.blogspot.com/2011/10/dance-of-silver.html>) and these weekends remain some of my favorite moments of our busy year. The growing cadre of ordained ADF Druids (whatever) is the most skilled and focused group of ritualists I get to work with any given year, and we've been involved in a long-term project that is coming to a fuller completion.

Many readers will know that our Druidic system addresses the spirits in three large categories (Kindreds, we say) – the Gods, the Dead and the Sidhe. This last category becomes de-ethnicized to the 'nature spirits', though that presents problems. In fact this Third Kindred remains a confused catch-all for a variety of animist and folkloric categories of spirit. Thereby hangs the tale of the work this past weekend.

Our Order of Ritual always involves calls to two specific deities – the Earth Mother, or All-Mother, and the Gatekeeper, or Lord of Wisdom. These two have become the patrons of our Clergy Council in the category of the gods. While we may address them at home in specific local and cultural names, when we work together we satisfy ourselves with broader category-titles. Nevertheless the offerings are made, and the work gets done.

Some years ago we began working with a category of the Dead that we call the Ancient Wise. In this we hope to make contact with those from old times who can teach us more directly than we can learn from books. Using a vision-locale that we have developed over many years, we regularly commune with allies that we have made among the Wise.

So we found ourselves looking for an angle on formal alliances with, and within, the Third



Kindred. Of course each of, working on our own, has personal alliances. There is no requirement that our priests have formal spirit-alliances, but the training offers lots of opportunities, and I think most do. Collectively we are multi-ethnic, though united in our work at the Fire of Sacrifice and our service, as we say, to the Gods, the Land and the Folk. The diversity of personal mythic model among us makes the matter more complicated.

Having made alliance with two categories, we have been discussing and experimenting with the third. The problem, in my mind at least, has been that I wanted to be able to narrow the focus of a working from the countless kinds of the wights. My studies into the spirit-tech of the grimoires led me to want to evoke and pact with a specific list of 'herald' spirits that could act as intermediaries between mortals and the Many Kins.

My problem was that I couldn't generate any enthusiasm in the members for the idea. We attempted a version of it three years ago, in the Silver Court work described at the link above. I was fairly pleased with the results, but several in the group weren't, even those who had strong visions. The results didn't 'stick' very well or get taken into cult in the priesthood, as the Ancient Wise had done so smoothly. After a lively discussion both on-line and on our Friday discussions at the Retreat, we ditched the 'specific heralds' idea.

I can surely understand resistance to the concept of selecting any single being or small group of beings to represent the innumerable kinds of spirits in their nearly infinite places. Part of my goal was to choose from a category of 'nature spirit' that was easily available in whatever ecosystem one might work. The members of the Council brought a variety of familiars and allies to the work. Trying to decide on a single one – or even a single class, just wasn't going to happen. The inclination was to do a general 'convocation' call, and see who showed up.

The Council has developed/discovered a specific Inner vision locale in which we meet the Ancient Wise. We have toyed for some while with the idea of using another section of that landscape for Landwights work. We began our Saturday working by journeying to that locale in our usual way, together at a lightly-consecrated fire. By speaking with our existing allies we got confirmation on our basic notion, and various other omens that shaped the later work. We also drew a runic omen (because we had runes with us...) that we felt gave us the OK to proceed.

We decided to work in the late afternoon, then retire to dinner and music. Weather conditions were chancy so we resorted to the fire-room in our barn, a mostly-closed room where we can still have open fire. Not the most romantic or evocative setting, but it's good to have choices. We were comfortable for trance, which is a fair trade.

Framing the work in a full liturgy of sacrifice, we offered to the Mother and the Gatekeeper, the

Ancient Wise, and then I made a call to the Many Clans, supported by others as their voices were inspired. Unlike the earlier rounds of work, which included fully-guided trances, I simply led the crew to the edge and sent them on, telling them to 'arrive in our place by the ways you know'. This is the blessing of work with an experienced group.

We worked in silence for some while, then returned. We had also set ourselves to do a simple sending of healing to several members and kin who were in need, so we did that work and then retired. The evening that followed was a delight (for me) of making music and beery fellowship.

The next morning we discussed our visions. I'm going to keep the majority of the content of that private at this time. In the 18+ of us who reported significant vision (we had one person ill with an allergy attack who missed the rite) there were two or three obvious repeating motifs and commonalities. These reflect several mythic patterns associated with Druids, such as wind and winged messengers. While the whole business wasn't the specific spirit-mining I had envisioned the company had strong visions, and seeds are planted that are likely to grow.

Nine years after beginning these Retreats the ADF priestly training program is in full operation. In that time the Clergy Council (as clumsily call it) has also slowly developed an esoteric pattern that we share with new members as they arrive. In this we don't intend to be secret as much as discrete, to keep the keys and operative symbols limited to those of us who share an oath.



The oath of our priesthood is neither secret nor complex. We say: I swear to Honor the Gods, to love the Land and to serve the Folk, and to this honor, love and service I dedicate my hands, my heart and my head.

Even as we build the national Pagan religious organization that helps make those goals real in the common world, so we build the relationships with the Shining Ones, the Middle-World co-dwellers, and the Mighty Dead. May what we work on the Inner become true in the mortal world, and the old ways be renewed!



Baucis and Philemon

Retold from Ovid, *Metamorphoses VIII*

By: Rev. Melissa S Burchfield, ADF Master Bard

Long ago, when the realms of Gods and humankind were not so separated by the veil, Jupiter and Mercury had quite a debate regarding the selfish and sometimes unkind nature developing among the people, for it seemed they were forgetting the very basis of all relationships: hospitality. *Xenia*, hospitality, was arguably the most important of virtues, a perfect reflection of the *theoxenia*, the hospitality that exists between the folk and the Gods. Mercury was insistent that the people were growing increasingly self-centered, caring little for the wants and needs of others, but Jupiter held a ray of optimism, for he had seen great kindness in their hearts during his adventures among them. Mercury proposed that the two should visit the people and see for themselves the state of their hearts.

Disguised as simple peasant-folk, Jupiter and Mercury descended to Earth and began seeking refuge among the people of Phrygia. The first house visited was ornately decorated with columns and surrounded by a luxurious landscape of exotic plants and lavish gardens. Before they reached the front door, they were intercepted and returned to the street—and not quite as gently as they would have liked! The second house was equally as elaborate, though smaller and seemingly more inviting. However, the Gods were met with similar treatment and shown not an ounce of kindness.

On they walked through the village, with door after door slamming in their faces, their bellies left empty and their bodies taking on a chill. Finally, the two came upon the house of Baucis and Philemon. It was a rustic cottage, simple but cozy. When Jupiter and Mercury knocked on their door, Baucis and Philemon took pity on their state and immediately brought them in from the weather, offering them what food and wine they could spare. They shared pleasant conversation over their meals, and before long, Baucis noticed that although she had filled their glasses several times, the pitcher remained full, and the wine was sweeter and richer than ever before.

Philemon, noticing that his wife had frozen in place staring at the wine pitcher, inquired if she was

feeling well. In a hurried whisper, she replied, “The Gods have come among us!” Philemon and Baucis raised their hands in supplication and apologized for their simple home and fair. Philemon immediately thought of slaughtering their goose to make a proper meal for the Gods, but when he went to catch it, it ran into Jupiter’s lap for safety and set the God to laughing.

“Philemon,” Jupiter replied. “There is no need to slaughter this fine goose. Your hospitality has been plentiful. It is not how much you give with your hand that is most important. It is what you give with your heart.” Jupiter sighed. “I wish I could say as much for the others we have met along our way. I am going to destroy this city and all the people who turned their backs on us. In reward for your generosity, I give you these instructions that you may be spared. You must climb the mountain with me as far as an arrow can shoot in one pull and not turn back until we reach the top.”

The four set off up the mountain in silence. Baucis and Philemon were disturbed by the sudden claps of thunder and rushing water behind them, but they never turned from their path. A single tear fell down Baucis’ cheek as she fought to suppress the sense of loss that overwhelmed her, though she, too, had felt the sting of the selfish nature of her neighbors. Once they reached the summit and were permitted to turn round, they saw a sight both disastrous and magnificent to behold. The town had been destroyed by a great flood, but where their humble cottage once sat there was now an ornate temple.

“Baucis, Philemon, because you still hold sacred the virtue of hospitality, I will grant you one wish,” said Jupiter.

“Thank you for your great kindness,” replied Philemon. “My desire is only that my Baucis and I be permitted to stay together forever.

When the time comes for one of us to leave this place, I wish the other will make the journey, as well, that we may enter the afterlife hand-in-hand.” Jupiter saw the sparkle in Baucis’ eyes as she gazed at her husband, basking in his love for her and knew her wish to be the same.

“Very well!” Jupiter exclaimed with a clap of his hands. “I hereby appoint you as the Guardians of this temple for all of your days. When your time has come to pass on from this world, you shall pass as one.” And with that they were gone.

The couple spent the remainder of their days keeping the temple in proper shape, providing shelter, food and companionship for all those who entered their space. They worked hard, but their stores were never low and their hearts were never fuller. When their time in the mortal realm had reached an end, they walked out into the deserted boggy terrain where they were transformed into an intertwining pair of trees, one Oak and one Linden, to remain in one another’s arms for all time.

To the Nasatyās, Indra, and Sarasvati

by Ceisinn Serith

This honeyed milk to you, Nasatyās.
This sweet drink to you, Indra.
This pleasing draught to you, Sarasvati.
To all of the gods, this draught of sweet hon-
eyed milk
I set out in offering to please them for their
pleasant consumption.



Springtime

by Chelly Couvrette

The sky was clear and blue,
Not a cloud was in my view,
The birds would sing,
Their songs did ring,
On this peaceful day in spring.



News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Rev. Crystal Groves

Completed: Clergy- Circle 1

Date completed: October 2014

Rev. Francesca Hedrick

Completed: Clergy –Circle 1

Date Completed: October 2014

Protogrove & Grove Approvals

Numena Proto Grove, ADF

Mantua, NJ

Date founded: November 1, 2014

Shining Valley Proto Grove

Rochester, NY

Date founded: November 20, 2014

~ Congratulations to all! ~

Upcoming Events

PantheaCon

February 13-16, 2015

San Jose, Ca

ConVocation

February 19-22, 2015

Detroit, Mi

Trillium

April 16-19, 2015

Cross Junction, VA

Wellspring Gathering

May 21-25, 2015

Sherman, NY



The
**Wellspring
Gathering**

May
21 - 25, 2015

Brushwood Folklore Center
Sherman, NY

**The Wellspring
Bardic Chair**

**Artisan's
Competition**

Hekate Ritual

**Warrior
Games**

AADF Annual Meeting

Saturday Evening Performance by

Crystal Ball

Ren-rock and Celtic Fantasy

www.stonecreed.org

seniordruid@stonecreed.org

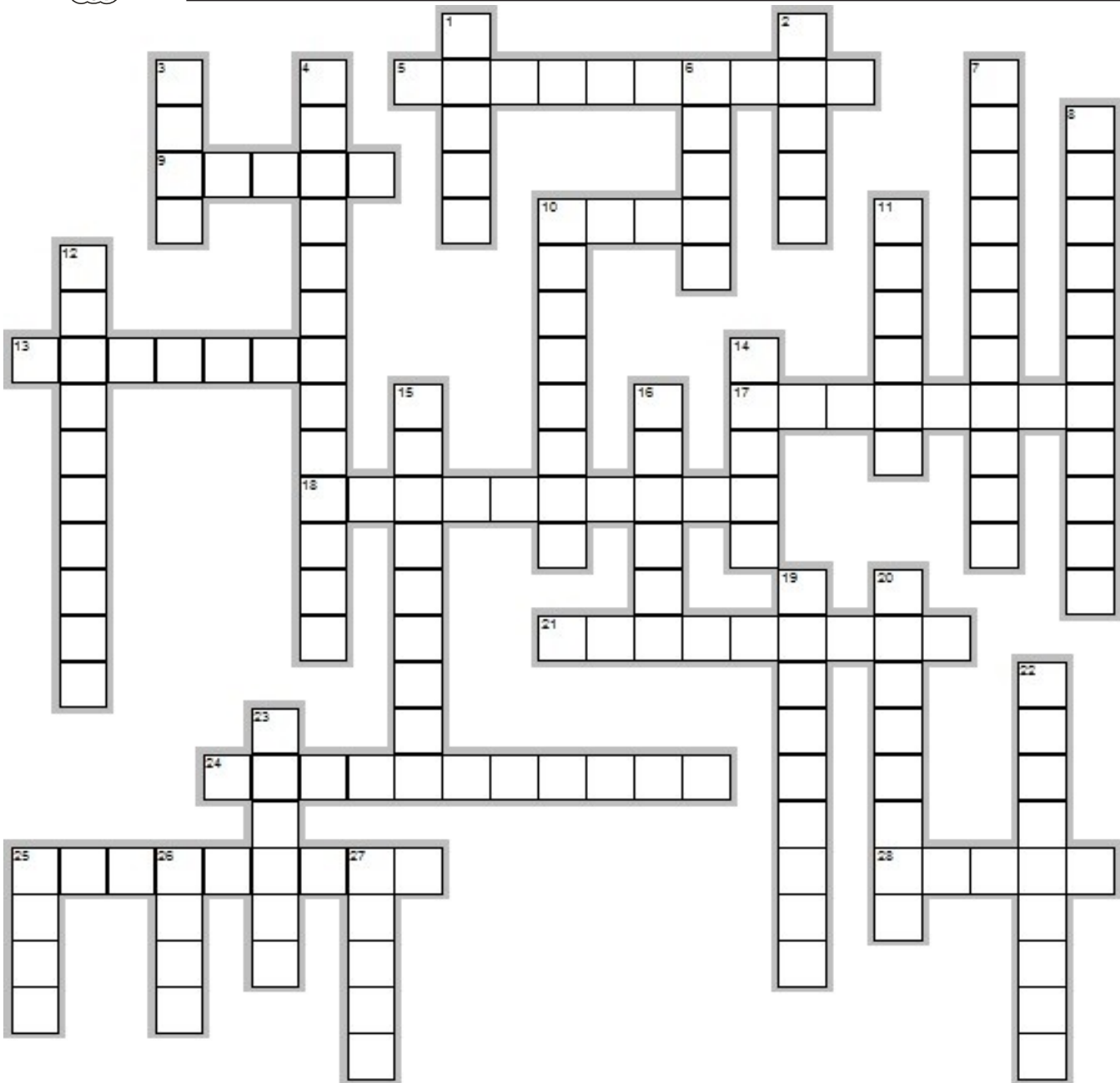
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Crossword Puzzle

Norse Mythology

By Chris:)



Edging Crossword.com

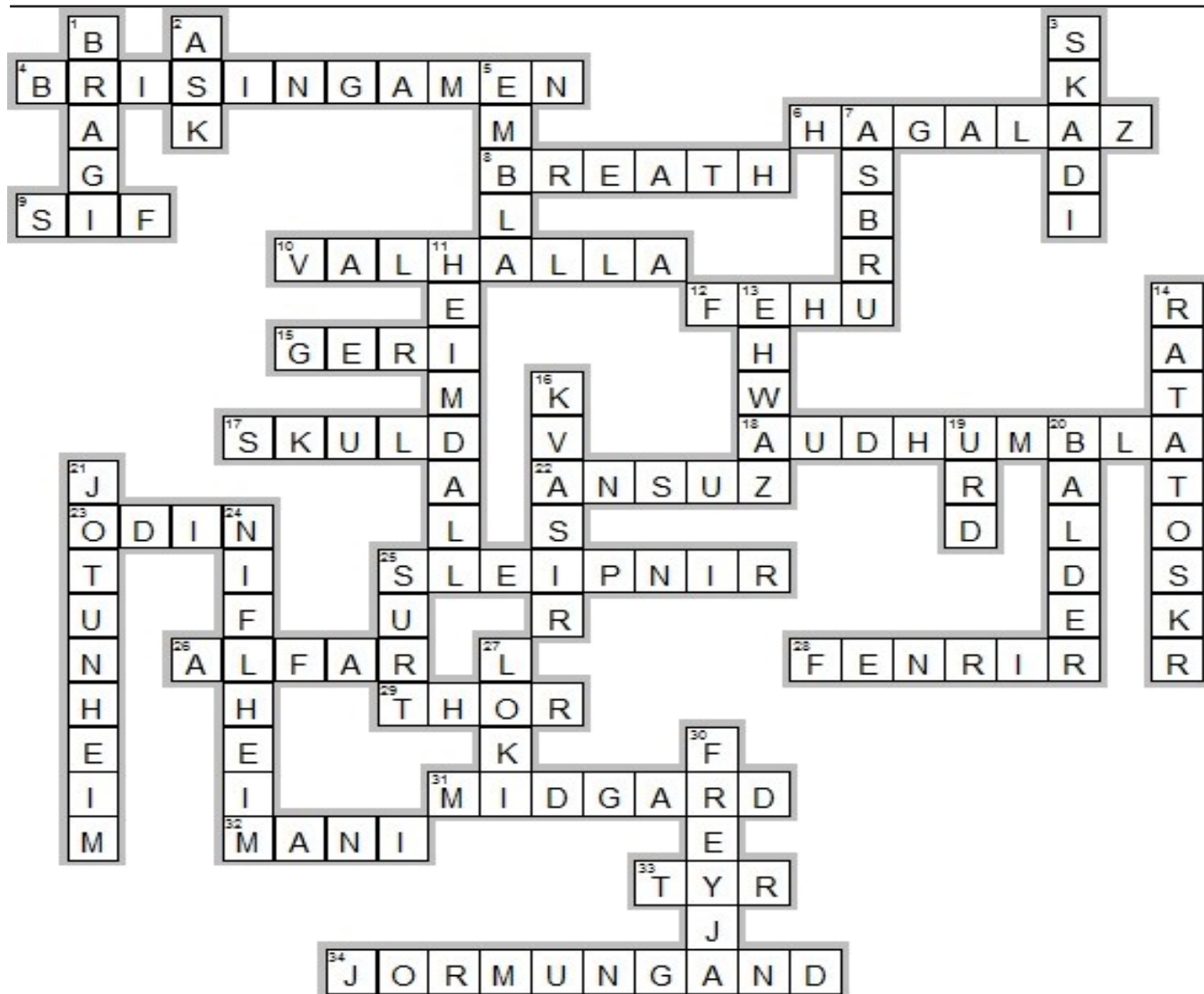
Across

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5. She had three wicked step sisters | flower |
| 9. He was Psyche's mysterious lover | 21. He lured the towns' children out of town with his music |
| 10. In the tortoise and the hare the tortoise wins this__ | 24. Little red riding hood was going to visit her |
| 13. He rode a magic carpet | 25. She lived with seven dwarves |
| 17. This tiny boy was swallowed by a cow | 28. The little mermaid who dreams of being human |
| 18. This little girl was born from a barleycorn | |

Down

1. This young lion would be king
2. She fell through a rabbit hole
3. This fellow planted some magic beans
4. This little guy thinks the sky is falling
6. The shoemaker found these creatures making his shoes
7. Hansel and Gretel made a trail of these
8. The story of a cat who wins a princess for his master
10. She let down her hair for the prince to climb
11. She was held prisoner by the Beast
12. She broke into a bears house and slept on their bed
14. Rumpelstiltskin spun this into gold
15. This story has a supernatural key that bleeds
16. Only a kiss from a _____ could wake up sleeping beauty
19. His nose grew when he lied
20. Tinkerbell is his best friend
22. In this story 3 dogs do a soldier's bidding
23. He pulled the sword from the stone
25. The ugly duckling was turned into a _____
26. He huffed and puffed and blew a pigs house down
27. In three Billy goats gruff- this lives under the bridge

Last Issue Puzzle Key





ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

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Additional Leadership Positions

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



Submission Guidelines



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

References and Notations:

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

Medium of Submission:

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

oak-leaves@adf.org

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

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

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

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

Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender.

Art Submission Guidelines:

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

Deadlines for submissions are:

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





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
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 Address: _____ P _ S _ C
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 Country: _____ Phone Number: _____ Birth Date: ___/___/___ (mm/dd/yy)
 Email Address: _____ P _ S _ C

The information on this form represents a:
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If this is a new membership, where did you hear about us?

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

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

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

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 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: _____



Muin:

Varied vine,
Stretch to the sun,
Prophecies behold

Briatharogam Con Culainn:

"Path of the voice"

Gort:

Sky blue dream,
Seek the centre,
Find the way within

Briatharogam Morainn mac Moin:

"Sweetest grass"

ad astra per aspera

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- Pyrosonic
- Steev English
- One World Puppetry
- ...and more to be announced!
- Oberon Zell-Ravenheart
- Rev. Ian Corrigan
- ADF Ritual
- Paw-Paw Drum-Jam Fire
- Saturday Night Bonfire
- Pufferdome Extravaganza
- Co-op Kid Village

