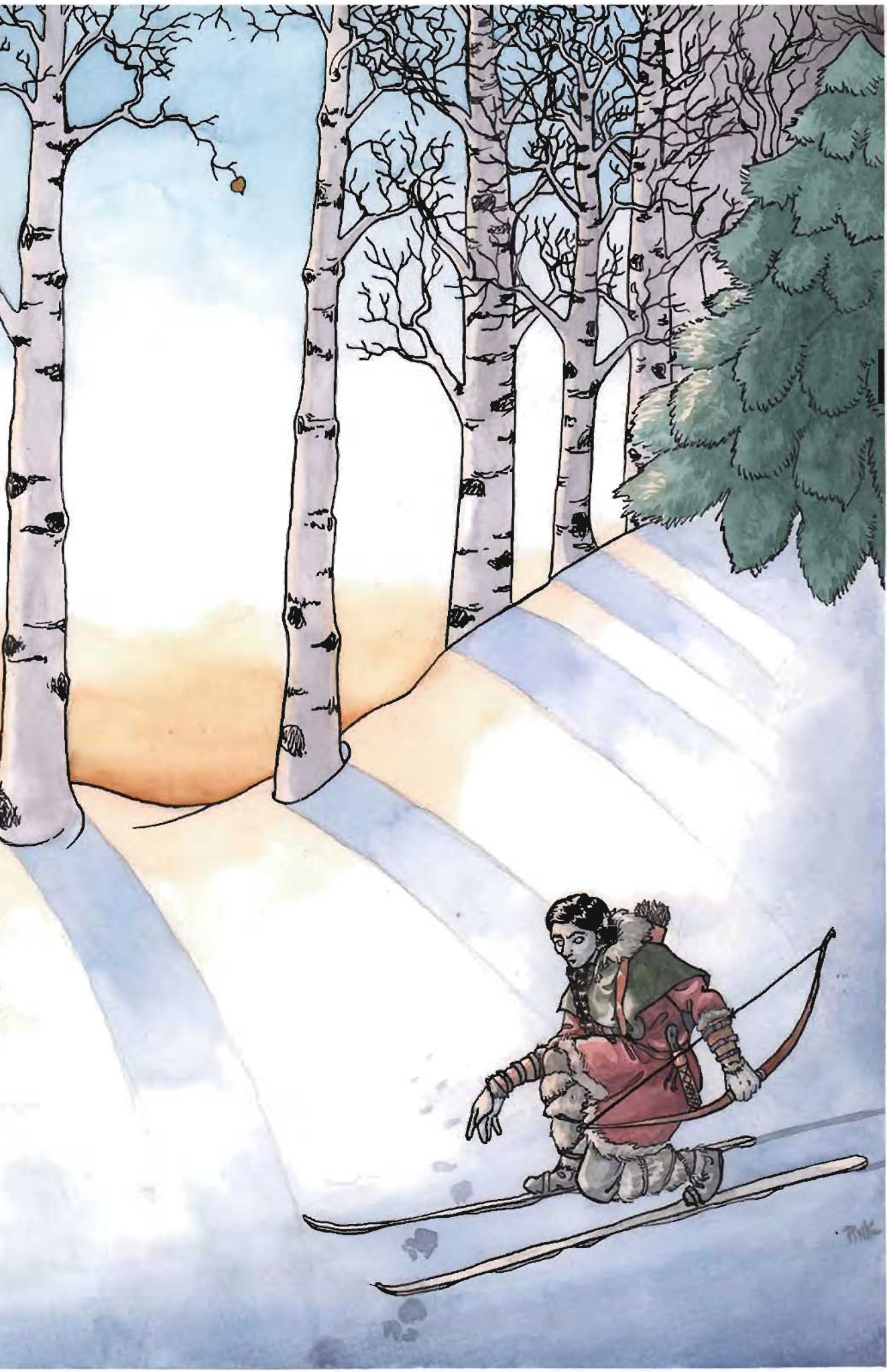


OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Winter 2016 ~ Issue No. 75



TKK

the seed now lies sleeping in silence
in darkness the new year begins

the wanderer rests from his journeys
the bard sings new songs and old tales

last summer's gifts gladden our bellies
bee-harvests refresh us as mead

the hearth fire returns to our people
stored sunlight as heat and as light

slow stars wheel above us in silence
black nights and deep cold hem us in

as earth sleeps throughout our long winter
the seed lies awaiting spring's dawn.

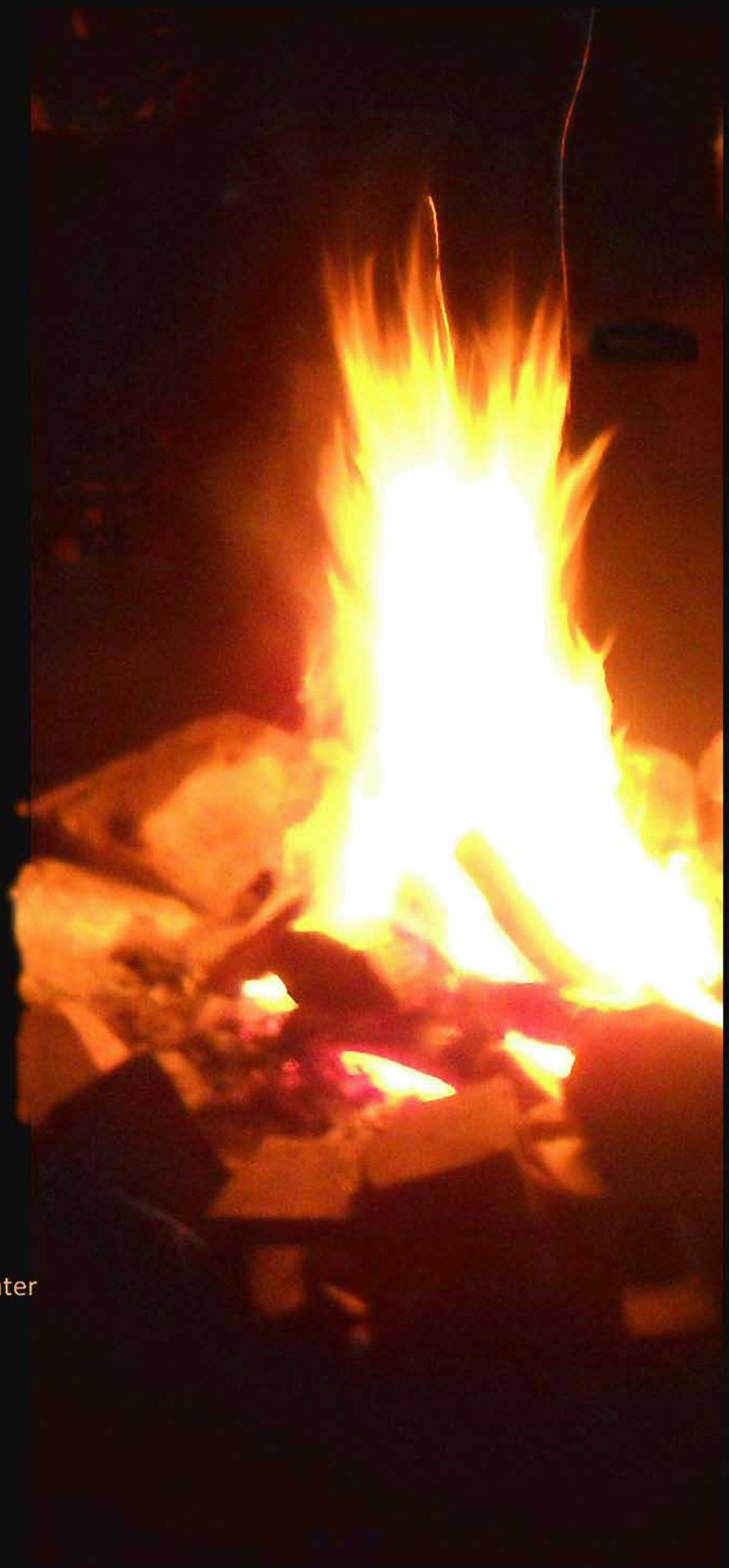




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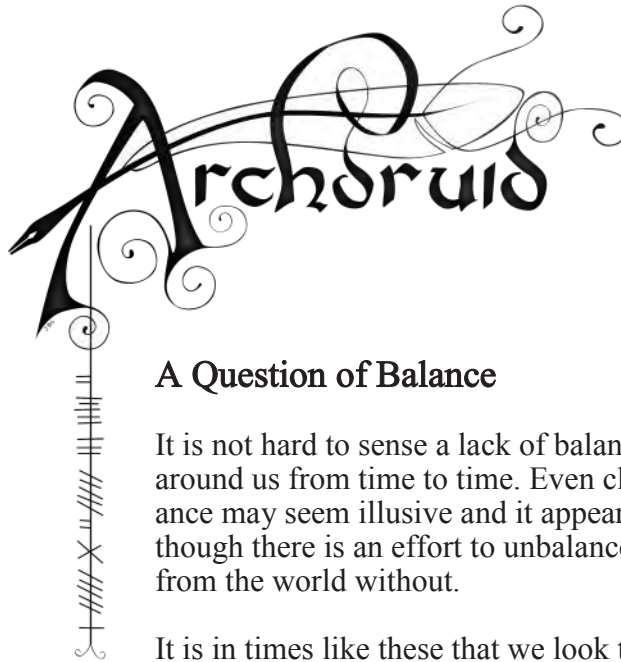
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A Question of Balance

It is not hard to sense a lack of balance in the world around us from time to time. Even close to home, balance may seem illusive and it appears, at times, as though there is an effort to unbalance things in general from the world without.

It is in times like these that we look to ourselves for balance. It is when one looks within to ground and center and attempt to rediscover or to rekindle that balance. Winter and summer are an example of that balance. In one hemisphere we have the longest day of the year; in another we have the shortest day of the year. Somewhere, in some barrow or mound, the rays of light are finding their way down some long-ago constructed passage way to show the treasures and wisdom found therein.

Now that our inner chambers have been enlightened, it is time to DO something as opposed to just finding our center and holding it. While one may assuredly do a Core Order of Ritual to celebrate the High Day, what about the other 55 days in between? I have a suggestion which might help and may be easier than a Core-Order-Ritual-a-Day: how about devotionals?

Devotionals are really all about balance. We make offerings to an entity because we are: a) devoted to that entity, and b) devoted to our practice. An entity, to define my terms, may be an Ancestor, a Nature Spirit, or a Shining One. The divisions thereunder are many and varied.

Devotionals are meant, in my opinion, to be daily events. By building a daily practice, we get better acquainted with the spirits that we work with. Household spirits are a good place to start because we share a space with them on a daily basis. I consider them to be spirits of nature and certainly spirits of the place.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a devotional addressed to Manannán mac Lir. This is something I use on

a daily basis and I wanted to present it as an example that everyone can do, solitary or non-solitary alike. I feel devotionals such as this may help keep a member's interest and practice piqued between High Days. I know that many of our Solitary members feel isolated or alone out there. The use of devotionals, especially as summer and winter bring long days and / or long nights, is a great way of developing relationships and keeping the ADF work alive in our lives, today and every day.

Blessings,
Drum

*Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano
Archdruid, ADF*



Winter Issue of Oak Leaves

by ADF Chronicler Manny Tejada-Moreno

As we witness in Yule the returning of the sun and the promise of warmth, our community has an opportunity to reflect upon the beacons of light it builds through our common work. Oak Leaves is a product of that common work. I hope, as a publication, that it remains a steady light in reflecting our community. So, I invite you again to submit your work whether it be artwork, scholarship, poetry or essays.

I want to take a moment to congratulate G. R. Grove on her recent ordination. Throughout her clerical training, she continued to serve as a bard, a scholar, and an organizer. Yet she still finds time to serve here at Oak Leaves as our chief



design editor. Gwernin is a pillar of service in our community and I am grateful we have her.

I would also like to welcome Brenda Nix Lively to the Oak Leaves team as our new chief copy editor. She joined a few months ago and has worked diligently in the position to smooth the transition from our previous chief copy editor, Race MoChridhe. Race's personal commitments have pulled him away from Oak Leaves for the moment; but he ends his tenure with us having done an amazing job at organizing our editing process.

I live in a part of the world unchallenged by Winter - we now enter a dry season. The solstice here marks a time of planting - we begin a time of continuous harvest until the height of summer. We see a gentler side of the season. Still, while the meaning on the land is different, we witness darkness arrested and a light return.

I hope once again you enjoy the work of our team here at Oak Leaves- and that you remember us during your celebrations. May you have a blessed and meaningful Yule.

Manny Tejada-Moreno
ADF Chronicler

Two Sticks and A Circle: Unifying One's Druid Identity

by Pigeon

Consider the Druid sigil. Two sticks and a circle carry little intrinsic meaning by themselves. But, join them as two staves and a wreath, and it presents a unified symbol of druidic identity, let alone an object structurally more powerful when joined. Or the Awen: three dots, three dashes, three circles. These shapes can be arranged into seemingly indefinite patterns and disparate meanings. Indeed, converting the dots and dashes into spiritual Morse code came to mind. But one pattern out of many--three stars and three rays within the three circles of creation--represents a unified identity that rests on secure, three-legged footing. Or even our own ADF logo. A tree without earth will not stand. Roots without cosmic nourishment will die. And the earth by itself offers a foundation without forms. Put together, the tree is one of the mightiest symbols of nature, life, and awe we can experience.

Observing the above symbols again, the parts came to represent three broad categorical identities: faith, family, and function. By faith I mean my worldview, sense of spiritual direction, and that which makes me "me" and what I hope to pack for this and other journeys. By friends I mean the long line of relationships from close family to distant acquaintances, those with whom our interpersonal interactions are distinct enough to affect personal reflection. By function I mean work, ranging from socially interactive labor that puts food on the table to hobbies, interests, and pursuits that require expending parts of myself in the act of creation. Three equal legs make for a strong and stable stool. I would also prefer three legs set to preferred ergonomic height. Cut one leg too short and the stool falls; cut them all too short and you are left with quite an uncomfortable roost. Thus, my spiritual strength depends on maintaining three equal legs. Yet, how many of us present different spiritual identities amongst friends and functions, and feel our faith wax and wane in the process?

Alas, the only time I feel truly unified is upon waking, existing in a post-dream state as the sun peeks over another subjective horizon. Soon enough, my numerous responsibilities--and their associated identities--jockey for mental position.

While the man who pours his coffee appears structurally the same as the previously recumbent form, the physical identity subtly shifts. Flannel pants transition to a military uniform, followed soon after by driving from one reality to another. In my home space, my wife pinches my unshaven face; in the warrior culture, my coworkers see a collection of patches that track my career and students see a rank symbol that embodies my position--ironically in ADF context, an oak leaf. My speech shifts from loving words to casual banter to crisp orders, my emails from funny cat photos to detailed instructions. The only two symbolic constants are the coffee mug and reading glasses, which future archaeologists will assume carried spiritual and ceremonial meanings (and they will be correct).

From morning to night, my physical, interactive, and symbolic identities shift like an actor feverishly changing between scenes. At best, the identity of the moment matches close to my true self. The average observer sees a bricolage projection designed solely to signal the needs of that particular moment. At worst, I hide myself behind a false projection carefully crafted to signal what I assess the observer needs, wants, or expects to



see. Few people see my true self; others see slices of varying widths and lengths. Sometimes I even question the man in my head versus the man in the mirror. A distaste for shaving does not help.

I rearrange my two sticks and a circle like pieces of a blacksmith's puzzle, with shapes to represent a husband, father, brother, officer, leader, mentor, follower, servant, and so on. Boisterous at some occasions, reticent at others. Creative in one situation and straight-laced in another. Some identities and their respective signals are outside of my control. My height might signal protection to one viewer while intimidating another, while graying hairs might lend a distinguished air amongst colleagues or plain age to my students. Even something as permanent as my name varies from context to context: James within nondescript interactions, Jimmy to my wife and mother or "James Douglas Fielder!" if I am in trouble with the same, "Pigeon" to my military and academic coworkers (a nickname earned from keeping pet pigeons), and an abortive attempt at Dillon ("faithful") in ADF, as it was also in the SCA many years ago.

Of all things, it was the conflict between Pigeon and Dillon--two names not even birth-given--that partially inspired this essay. My Soldiers and Airmen gave me the name Pigeon as a term of endearment and it was an identity I readily embraced: a loyal, gregarious, intelligent, and goofy bird that is pretty handy with a map. It is now a name I use in almost all my social interactions, to the point that some colleagues do not know my real name. In contrast, adopting the name Dillon for ADF context seemed the logical thing to do at the time, but I realized recently that, aside from being faithful to family and friends, it was a hollow and redundant identity requiring extra energy to maintain for little spiritual purpose. An identity with no reason for being. Thus, at a recent Chokecherry Grove ritual I decided to unify part of my identity under Pigeon and everything the name has come to mean. At least in naming convention, then, I created a sigil from multiple pieces.

Other identifying sticks and circles, however, are fully within my power to wield--coloring my graying hairs aside. In particular, my spiritual identity is mine to command. Or it should be. In an ideal state, all of my "selves" should be balanced: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual¹. My emotions and intellect fray if I physically exhaust myself, or I may take excess

physical risk if I lose control of my emotions. As with the thin-sliced identities above, spreading my selves too thin--like butter scraped over too much bread, as Bilbo Baggins might say--incurs costs measured in fatigue, anger, regret, and other negative manifestations. Speaking to my spiritual identity, I am stronger when I infuse my being with the divine and weaker when diffused. Easy, right? Just present the same spiritual identity in all contexts!

Unfortunately, just being myself is already a great deal of work. A bricolage projection? Slightly tiring, but I have a stable of personality templates I can summon depending on the situation. But the false projection? That's downright exhausting. And demoralizing. A sense that my true self is not worth sharing with others. Being Pagan *and* a military officer magnifies this effect. I feel like Bigfoot: my spiritual identity is open to public doubt as no one really believes I exist; that is, until I am actually discovered and treated as an object of curiosity or derision.

Keeping my spiritual identity bottled up is the simplest solution when viewed objectively, rationally, and dispassionately. This generally suffices until I realize I am the only one without a symbol, book, or prayer suitable for speaking over a Tupperware-boxed lunch in my workplace. Deviation is costly in environments where certain unwritten personal norms are expected, and unifying my own two sticks and a circle under such circumstances incurs risk and effort. The question is, what is the risk of doing nothing? In my assessment, doing nothing is the worst course of action. Keeping my spiritual identities separate offers safety in the short-term, but leaves me fatigued, unmotivated, hesitant, and lacking in self-confidence over the long-term.

The best solution I have found is to actively unite my own two sticks and circle, which requires stepping out of my comfort zone: the nervousness of my first ADF ritual under withering public eyes, attending a Tarot class in a restaurant, volunteering as a lay supporter for earth-centered service members on base, let alone before telling my coworkers I do not fit within the accepted monotheistic paradigm. Or, to take John Beckett's recent call to heart and just practice: practice my faith amongst family and infuse my functions with spirituality². Actively work on making spiritual identity part of every projec-

tion I send, regardless of faith, family, or functional context. I will be first to admit this will not be an easy solution and I have yet to see how costly the journey will be. But doing nothing will certainly cost more.

Footnotes:

¹ Also see the Seven Dimensions of Wellness: social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, occupational, intellectual, and physical. These dimensions capture both internal and external aspects of health and well-being. Available at University of California, Riverside, https://wellness.ucr.edu/seven_dimensions.html (accessed 02 September 2016)

² Beckett, John. "Polytheism Doesn't Need Saving, It Needs Practicing." *Patheos.com*, 01 September 2016. Available at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/johnbeckett/2016/09/polytheism-doesnt-need-saving-it-needs-practicing.html> (accessed 4 September 2016).

James "Pigeon" Fielder is a U.S. Air Force officer and holds a Ph.D. in political science. He researches how individuals make decisions using symbolic information, such as maps, icons, interfaces, and games. This carries into Druidry through studying how magic and divination symbols foster action. He's been an ADF member since 2012, recently started attending Chokecherry Grove events, and is married to the lovely Adara, with whom he enjoys romantic walks on storm-swept and ice-scoured beaches.

Feeling Into the Natural World: An Approach to Working with Nature Spirits

by Ashley Price

The Nature Spirits are probably the most mysterious of the Kindred. They're not human. They don't speak our language, and never have. In the context of Indo-European mythology, we have no real stories about them, no paintings, and little ancient poetry. Even as difficult working with the Ancestors can be for many of us, we at least understand them. They are part of us and what we will someday become. But what personal connection with the Nature Spirits do most of us have? Most people don't have access to land that is not cultivated for human use and enjoyment. Even fewer of us require wild land to meet our basic needs. There has been much ink spilled on the ecological consequences of this disconnect with the natural world, which has also led to a profound ignorance of the non-human. Our basic understanding of the world and our place within it is conceptually and energetically cut off from the wider creation. If we don't see something, don't feel it, how can we relate to it? Our very perception has become so human-centric that very often we simply can't even see what's outside of humanity's direct control. But if we change the way we perceive the world, we renew the relationships that, as human animals, are our birthright.

Perception is not the passive reception of sensory input but an active interchange between us and the more-than-human world. When we sensually experience something (which we do at every mo-

ment of our lives) we are simultaneously creating meaning and interacting with another being. That being may be alive, or not; intelligent, or not; but in our very noticing of it we create an interaction with it.

There are a lot of assumptions inherent in these statements, and dare I say it even articles of faith. The nature of perception and the creation of meaning has been the object of study of fields as diverse as philosophy, history, linguistics, and cognitive psychology for decades, if not longer. It would be outside of the scope of this work (and the patience of most readers) to go into these in depth. Because of this, I ask that for the purposes of this paper the reader choose to believe these assumptions, and I would direct interested people to my bibliography for resources to explore them further.

We engage with the world with our bodies; our physicality is inescapable. As much as reason, abstraction, and imagination have brought us, we cannot truly transcend the possibilities of our physical form. While the Gods and Spirits are experienced primarily outside of our physical perception, our understanding of them is filtered by our experience as sensate beings, and our clearest communication with them involves sensation. Beyond the standard five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing, there is another sense that I'll call "feeling". It is less well studied because it is not well-defined, yet it provides im-

portant information to us constantly. This feeling sense is physical; we experience it in our guts, in our skin, and in our minds. It is also aesthetic. We can talk about how art “feels”, or the “feeling” of a room. Importantly, we can tell through this sense who is safe to be around, and who is not.

There is a nearly infinite amount of sensory information in the world that our brain has to constantly process. One way it has learned to do so is through what’s called “sensory gating.” In order to not be overwhelmed, the brain automatically filters out unimportant information. As an example, I have the capability of noticing every tuft of the carpet I’m sitting on, but I almost never do so. As I’ve written the last sentence, my attention was drawn to that sensation, and I have just noticed that there is a slight rise in the pattern under my left thigh, probably by one of the swirly design elements woven into the fabric. One way to change our sensory gating is to simply bring our attention to an input.

By learning to consciously engage with this feeling sense and to trust it, we can learn to work more directly and more deeply with the natural world and the spirits who inhabit it. The following techniques, which form a foundation of my spiritual practice today, are designed to reacquaint you with your feeling sense. I have been greatly inspired by the work of naturalist writers, especially David Abram and Stephen Harrod Buhner. Most of this essay has been based on their writings.

Noticing

Walking along dirt paths, I learned to slow my pace in order to feel the difference between one nearby hill and the next, or to taste the presence of a particular field at a certain time of day when, as I had been told by a local dukun, the place had a special power and proffered unique gifts.
(Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous* 20)

The first step to reengaging with more than human world is to simply notice it, observe it, and let it pique your interest. Start paying attention to things you haven’t before. There is a dizzying array of places to start. Look carefully at the grainline in a piece of wood. Walk barefoot in the grass and notice where there are clumps, and twigs, which areas are wetter or drier, where the soil composition changes. Really notice the tem-



perature difference as you go deeper into a lake; are your toes colder than your ankles? What about your thighs? How much so?

Observe something small, often overlooked. Have you noticed the complexity in a patch of moss? What about the way the pattern of bark changes as a tree twists towards the sun? The layers of life right at our feet are as awe-inspiring as the most magnificent vista, if we just look at them.

Robert MacFarlane’s latest book is a perfect demonstration of how our relationship with the land shapes the way we think. “Landmarks” chronicles old and obscure words for a variety of natural phenomenon in the British Isles. There are words for specific glimmers of snow in certain lighting conditions, types of breezes, the sound a hoof makes in pine needles, and literally thousands more. All of these concepts were significant enough to warrant their own word, and the fact that this vocabulary exists shows our culture’s history of close relationship with the land.

Another excellent resource for learning how to read the natural world is Tristan Gooley’s “The Lost Art of Reading Nature’s Signs.” He discusses topics as wide ranging as the change in color of grass on one side of a ditch vs. the other, how to tell the history of a forest by noticing the age of the trees, how wind shapes a tree, and how you can navigate from details like these.

I also must mention Robin Wall Kimmerer’s books. Both “Braiding Sweetgrass” and “A Gathering of Moss” are beautiful depictions of how one indigenous scholar relates to the land, and how this interaction is a deep part of what it

means to be human.

How does it feel?

“Most of us moderns pay scant attention to our directly felt impressions of the world. We hardly notice such impressions anymore, or we straightaway translate those qualitative sensations into the quantitative world of facts, and information” (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 93)

As a rationalistic person with a very busy mind, I have a tendency to both narrate everything I’m doing and analyze it. My brain is nearly constantly filled with words, ideas, chatter and I often get stuck in my own head. When I do that, I don’t feel, and don’t connect with the world. What I’ve found is that by actively engaging my feeling sense, I can turn this off. With that part of me quieter, learning about the natural world is less an exercise in memorization and much more about creating a relationship.

You can choose to turn on your feeling sense whenever you wish, and like any skill the more you do so the more robust it will be. The easiest way to begin is to choose any object, natural or manmade, and notice it. Let your eye follow its lines. Look more closely to find the details, the pattern of details, how it moves in the breeze or its place in its surroundings. When you have a good sense of what this thing looks like, ask yourself a simple question – How does it feel? Not how do *you* feel, but the object itself. A sense impression should arise immediately. Is it cold, stark, soft, friendly, vibrant, fading, cozy, maddening, waiting, watching?

Choose another object, and do the same thing. This time, notice any difference between the sensation you get from each object. How does a book feel compared to a chair? A tree compared to a car? A beetle compared to a blade of grass? How does your neighbor feel?

I want you to give yourself permission to trust your feeling sense, and to use the information that it gives you. It is an incredibly powerful ally, and one not to be discarded.

Gating and imagination

Working directly with the feeling perception will, over time, change your sensory gating system.

This can be both amazing and overwhelming. When my sensory gates are more open, colors are brighter and more varied, visual distances create visceral reactions, and my ability to drill down and notice the layers upon layers of life and information is absolutely dizzying. At its most intense I’m in awe at the symphony of wonders around me and distracted like a puppy overwhelmed by scents only it can distinguish.

From a mental health perspective, learning to connect with the physical world in this way has more than anything else in recent years helped me out of depressive funks and anxiety attacks. It’s by no means a cure for mental health issues, but it has been a useful tool to have at my disposal.

Opening yourself to the symphony of sensation we all move through is amazing, but it is important to learn to find meaning there, and for that we need our imagination. Imagination in itself is a way to process and store information, in a way that is directly meaningful to you. As Buhner says,

“Every person has their own unique interior representation during this kind of perceiving. That is, the feeling tone that emerges, if you allow it to deepen, is translated into certain interior representations that are unique to you. Your individual system takes the feeling experience and turns elements of it into other sensory modalities in order to store it as memory.” (Buhner 295)

When I began this work this idea of imagination bumped right up against my prejudices, as I always associated “imagination” with “fantasy.” Learning to trust my ability to create images that carried meaning and to trust that as true was very much part of learning to trust my senses at all. Living in a culture that prizes abstraction and equates goodness with following the dictates of experts, it can be a radical act to trust your own experiences. In my opinion, it ultimately comes down to healing the rift between mind and matter, self and other.

David Abram argues convincingly that awareness is provoked by our interactions with the non-human world, and that our understanding of the world is fundamentally experiential and sensual. With that in mind, “how much sense does it make to continue to say that each of us has our own self-sufficient mind neatly tucked inside our particular head, while the surrounding Earth is just an

object, utterly bereft of all intelligence?” (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 126-127)

To really work with the spirits of the land requires an expanded definition of consciousness.

Following conversations

One of my favorite activities when I go into the woods is to listen to the conversations around me. Animals and plants communicate regularly, and if we open ourselves to their words we can follow along. Two birds in the tree tops cawing back and forth can communicate over great distances and amid the cacophony of other sounds, but the thread of communication between them is palpable. Or when walking along the edge of a wetland and seeing a frog after a leap into the waters at your approach, trumpeting a warning to their kin, only to reemerge moments later watching you; you can feel their awareness and follow it to find the eyes tracking your movements.

One of my earliest experiences with this occurred on a foraging stop in my neighborhood. It was mulberry season, but my normal mulberry patches were picked over. I was disappointed, wondering where I would find more mulberries for dye, but decided I could at least use this time to connect with the trees. I opened my senses and felt myself step back from my normal mental chatter, feeling the sun, the wind, the life around me. Walking along the windbreak robins swept in front of me, probably eating the mulberries that I'd been looking for. Suddenly, there was a burst of twittering I couldn't ignore, an urgency in the tone. I saw two robins arguing; there was anger, but at this time no violence. My attention was drawn to them, and the spot they were arguing over. There was a break in the weeds, so I decided to explore. Just beyond the windbreak, hidden from view, were two heavily laden mulberry trees. The birds showed me where to find the berries I sought, and that day I took home almost two pounds.

There's always a distinct feeling whenever I enter a forest; a sense of relief, of peace, of difference. Before I enter a forest I almost always say a quick prayer to the spirit that governs it, asking for permission to enter, and almost always I can feel its response. There's a sense of consent, or welcome, or occasionally rejection. As I enter, the symphony of sensation takes on different notes; certain individuals will stand out more. One tree will anchor the others, a squirrel will chitter its warning, a young upstart will make his voice rise above the

crowd. At the same time, they are all speaking together, creating the song of the forest that is more than the sum of their notes, and qualitatively different.

Nature spirits are like people in that way. A crowd is made of individuals, but the crowd feels different and behaves differently than any individual will. When working with the nature spirits, we can both approach the crowd and the individuals within it.

The deeper I get into this practice, the more I find that I'm befriending individuals, who are in turn helping me on my path. At the same time, I know which groups I need to visit to meet a certain need. For example, the wetland near my neighborhood is where I go when I need to get out of my head, the forest is where I find guidance and vision, and the prairie where I feel most at home (I'm pretty lucky to have such variety within walking distance of my house). And the more I work with these spirits, the more they give me, the more I realize how much need they have of us and how much we can give in return. This knowledge is not something I can put in words at this time, but something I feel, very clearly.

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Ashley Price lives in central Illinois and has been a member of ADF since 2004. She recently completed the Initiate Program, where she was told in no uncertain terms she had to start writing about what she's learned. Along with other projects she is working to explore the connection between mysticism and the natural world.

A Road Trip with Deity

by Slaine na Mailpe

A couple of years ago, John Halstead, a popular blogger on the hub Patheos.com posted a blog entitled "Who Are We Talking to Anyway?" Halstead identifies his belief system as Humanistic Pagan. Those are not labels I would apply to myself, but his question struck a nerve down deep inside of me so, at the time, I was also muttering, "Yes...who?"

I grew up in a fundamentalist Christian church and I had many experiences of communing with God during that time. I loved the church; the building, the people, the songs, the ritual – all except the politics. I didn't believe that the God I knew and was so close to was behind or in favor of any of the bigoted, homophobic, misogynistic, public-manipulating politics that have come to define "the church" to the public. For years, I smiled and nodded from the pews, while cringing internally. It was the way I had been taught to react to things in the church I disagreed with. My mother and grandmother did the same. Eventually, I got the point where I couldn't take my own hypocrisy anymore.

Trying to find some way to stay at the church I loved, keep my relationship with God solid, and live my life in the way that I believed was right, I re-approached the New Testament teachings of Jesus as if no one had ever studied them before. What I saw was one, a man who was passionate about reconnecting his people to their god; and two, a centuries-long game of telephone that eventually written down as "inerrant" scriptures. I did not see a savior. I did not see "God in the form of man". This caused confusion, but not catastrophe; I never prayed to Jesus anyway. I prayed to GOD, but the god of the Bible didn't appear to be my god, so who had I been talking to all this time? And who had been talking to me? I began a long journey of spiritual tourism to find out.

I read countless books and said prayers, meditations, and rituals invoking one deity after another hoping to hear his (I assumed it was a "him") familiar voice acknowledging that I'd pegged the

right one. Yet, time after time, I heard nothing and I felt nothing. Every prayer that I uttered rang false in my own ears – like it was all pretend. It was emotionally crushing, but I continued on the journey. I had to. I had been in a relationship with a god who was real and that relationship had worth – and now that god was missing from my life and I couldn't rest until I had him back again.

Then, one night, I was doing a guided meditation that was intended to help me meet and establish a relationship with an archetype I could work with in the future, and meet him I did. It was HE. We were in a very large open room, with windows looking out over mountains on one side and a great wooden door on the other. There was a round fireplace in the middle of the room and we were sitting in front of it, each on a large, cushioned wingchair. I was excited, staggered, and stunned. When I finally had the clarity of mind to say something, the thing I blurted out was "What am I supposed to call you now? Which one are you?" He looked at me and smiled in the way that you smile at a small child who is trying to act like a grownup. He said that it didn't matter what I called him. In fact, he said he probably only appeared to me as he did because I had been raised to view him as male my whole life. After the meditation was over, I knew that this god was not going to be found in a book nor would he enter the room because of an invocation. My god was in my head; he was a part of my own psyche.

I had assumed that when I answered the question "Who have I been talking to?" I would then arrive at end of my spiritual tourism, having found an answer and a home. Instead, the god I had so fervently searched for jumped in the back seat to come along for the ride. Along the way, he has made it possible for me know, worship and work with other deities – who are *also* in the back seat pointing me in new spiritual directions and encouraging pit stops at all the quirky roadside stands along the way.

I have only recently realized that this journey will never be over, and I am so happy that we will never stop talking.

Þorbjörg's Charm Bag: the Tools of a Spákona

by Rev. D. Rowen Grove

The tale of Þorbjörg, sometimes called the “Greenland Seeress” is often considered from its magical aspects; here I propose to examine her gear described in *Eirík's Saga* from a more archaeological viewpoint. As Þorbjörg was known to travel to different households to work magic or divination, Þórkell, a prominent farmer in the district, invited her to his stead to work a rite of *seiðr*, or *spá*, (prophecy). The winter had been hard, and there was sickness and a shortage of food; many “were curious to know their fates or harvest-expectations” (Grundy, web). She arrived in the evening, together with the person sent to escort her, and upon her arrival, was “well received there, as was the custom when someone should take this woman up on her habit” (*ibid*). Kunz translates this passage, “as was the custom... when a woman of this type was received,” (658) implying that seers were as a class



held in good esteem. Þorbjörg was the last surviving one of nine sisters, all of whom had had the same abilities.

Þorbjörg's clothing and gear are described in some detail. Grundy's translation:

“She had a blue mantle fastened with strings, and stones were set all in the flap above; on her neck she had glass beads, a black lambskin hood on her head with white catskin inside; and she had a staff in her hand with a knob on it; it was made with brass and stones were set above in the knob; she had a belt of touch-wood, and on it was a large skin purse, and there she kept safe her talismans which she needed to get knowledge. She had on her feet shaggy calfskin shoes with long thongs and large tin knobs on the ends of those. She had on her hands catskin gloves, and they were white inside and shaggy... She had a brass spoon and a knife made of tooth mounted with a double ring of copper, and the end was broken off...”

Let us consider her gear, one item at a time.

The shaggy calfskin shoes with long thongs and tin knobs on the ends are mildly interesting, but probably simply functional.

The touch-wood belt is a little puzzling; “touch-wood” is usually defined as dry, decayed wood or fungus, suitable for use as tinder. Jones translates this word in the same way as does Kunz.

The brass spoon and the knife of “tooth”: Jones renders the knife as, “an ivory-handled knife” (135). This may have been walrus or even narwhal ivory; both substances survive in Viking-era artifacts, from hair pins to dagger-hilts (Liebgott, 203). Knife and spoon may or may not be of a magical nature, although it's interesting that they were considered worthy of mention.

Her cloak is variously described as “decorated with precious stones” (Kunz, 658) or “a blue

mantle fastened with strings, and stones were set all in the flap above” (Grundy, web), or “a blue cloak with straps, which was set with stones right down to the hem” (Jones, 134). There was clearly some ornamentation involving “stones”, although where and how is a little uncertain; there are no surviving textiles from this era which are so decorated. The color of the cloak is *blár*, which Kunz translates as black, while Grundy, Paxson, Jones, and Blain render it as blue. According to Zoëga’s Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic, *blár* may be translated either way (57). It is a dangerous and magically significant color, sometimes worn in the sagas by persons setting out for revenge.

The black lambskin hood is described in the original as *svartan*, which is specifically black, rather than the ambiguous *blár*. Again, it may be simply functional, although a black lambskin would have been more unusual, perhaps more exotic, than a grey or brown one.

The hood lining and gloves: the cat-skin question. Were the creatures from which the skins derived actually “cats”? There has been a fair bit of debate on this: the fur is described as “hairy”, or “shaggy,” and martins, young bears, including polar bears, ermine, and other creatures have been suggested. Cleasby notes that the noun *köttr* originally denoted a martin-cat, or weasel (137), and the term may have been used as a by-name. In one possible burial of a *völva*, the woman had been wrapped in a bear pelt, although the type of bear is not known. (Price, 242) If the animal in question was Þorbjörg’s particular magical creature, a totem or “spirit animal,” and if it had been a different sister, the fur might have been fox, seal, or some other sort.

A necklace of glass beads: Arabic traveler Ahmad ibn Fadlan commented on the great popularity of glass beads among the Norse, and they are a frequent grave-find. To have a whole necklace, rather than a few beads on a cord, is an indication of status. Price also mentions a grave find in which the woman had apparently worn a necklace of glass beads, together with some silver charms or amulets, including one in the form of a chair carved from a log. These little silver chairs have been found in several women’s graves; could they be ritual “high seats?”



The decorated staff: the staff appears to have been characteristic of the *völva* even towards the end of the Heathen period; according to Grundy, the word *völva* itself comes from a root meaning “magical staff”, or “wand carrier.” He adds that *völva* is a looser term than either *spákona* or *seiðkona*, used indiscriminately for either sort of magical practitioner (web). It may be that Þorbjörg’s staff was not simply a common aid to walking; as one who sometimes walks with a staff, I can attest that a decorated metal knob on the end does not improve its usefulness in a cold environment. In one burial from in Köpingsvik, there is a staff or wand of iron with bronze detailing and a small model of a house on the top. This is the grave of the woman who had been wrapped in a bear pelt (Price, 235). Similar wands, with assorted decorations, have been discovered in over forty female graves, and Price considers that a number of the supposed “roasting spits” found in other female graves of the era may instead be ritual objects. In a wagon burial from Fyrkat, Denmark, the woman had an iron staff, silver toe rings, and a silver chair amulet like those discussed above.

The charm bag: “a large skin purse, and there she kept safe her talismans which she needed to get knowledge” (Grundy, web). Jones’ translation is similar: “a big skin pouch in which she kept those charms of hers which she needed for her magic” (134). This is her bag of magical items: amulets, charms, perhaps herbs; although they are not described farther, we may speculate from archaeological evidence. In the Fyrkat wagon burial, a

wooden box had held a pellet from an owl, some small bones from birds and mammals, and a pouch of henbane seeds, which when thrown into a fire produce a hallucinogenic smoke which causes a sense of flying. A leather pouch of cannabis seeds was found in the Oseberg ship, and carved stones, crystal spheres and pierced animal teeth in other burials. Diana Paxson suggests that the contents of Þorbjörg's bag were probably "the kind of things you find in folk magic in general", i.e. herbs, precious stones, or amulets with magical inscriptions (interview).

As Þorbjörg's tale continues, she was offered a special meal, including some porridge of goat's milk, rendered by Jones specifically as "goat's beestings" (135), (i.e. the very rich milk produced by lactating mammals just after giving birth,) and a dish made from the hearts of all living creatures which were available. While there is no indication as to why the hearts were significant for her purpose, this is clearly not what was served to everyone, and as there was a shortage of food, it would have been a luxury. And, as many trance-workers know, a high protein meal is a great help in recovering from such work. After supper, Þorbjörg was asked how soon the assembled people could expect answers to their questions, and she responded that she would first spend the night there. Paxson suggests that, "by sleeping at the farmstead and eating the food grown there, the *völv* established a physical and psychic connection... that helped her to answer questions about the land and the people living there" (*Oracle*, 49). She may also have simply been tired from travelling.

Late the following day, "she made the preparations which she needed to have to carry out *Seiðr*" (Grundy, web). Jones says that "she was fitted out with the apparatus she needed to perform her spells" (135). Her preparations or "apparatus", as Blain points out, could have included putting on special garments, smudging the area with herbs, praying to her Deities or spirit guardians, or even ingesting some kind ofentheogen (33), but we have no additional information on that point. Although Þorbjörg is earlier described as a *spákona* rather than a *seiðkona*, the rite for which she was preparing is specifically referred to as *seiðr*, Grundy suggests that "her chief function was as a prophetess, and that her use of *seiðr*/mediumship was a last resort rather

than a normal activity" (web). Her chair for the rite is referred to as a "high seat", and cushioned with a pillow stuffed with hen's feathers. Paxson comments that we lack the context to know if this was only for comfort, or if there was some additional magical significance (interview).

Once Þorbjörg was prepared, she requested that a woman or women perform special "wisdom chants", called *varðlokur*. It seems that these were becoming rare, for no one present knew them; this may have been because they were needed for *seiðr*-practice, rather than the more general foreseeing of *spá*-craft. Eventually, a young woman called Gundrid admitted to having learned the chants from her foster mother, although she herself was "neither magically skilled nor a wise-woman" and was reluctant to sing these songs as she was a Christian, but was eventually strongly persuaded by the host of the gathering. The other women formed a "warding ring" surrounding Þorbjörg on her chair, and Gundrid "spoke the chant" (Kunz, 659) very well, and in a fair voice. The nature and purpose of the chant is somewhat open to interpretation; Kunz translates *varðlokur* as "ward enticers" (659) or chants intended to attract spirits, while Jones renders it a "spirit-locks" (136), and Davidson says that the word is "connected with the idea of shutting or enclosing" (161). Many modern *seiðr* or *spá* practitioners speak of such chants as an aid to enter a trance state, but in the context of the saga it seems to have been performed to attract and please spirits or Powers; it could have been structured to achieve both ends. Gundrid's superior performance did please the Powers, and Þorbjörg was able to access much previously-hidden knowledge, and to predict an improvement in local conditions and a bright future for Gundrid. She then answered questions from individuals: "[s]he was free with her information, and little of what she said failed to come about" (Jones, 137).

A few more threads may be picked out of this account: Þorbjörg came from a magic-working family; all her sisters had been seers as well. She wore some distinctive and perhaps unusual garments, and her decorated staff may also have been indicative of her status. She was received respectfully, as was customary for those of her profession, and offered a special meal. She had a

bag of charms and other magical items, some of which were used in her pre-ritual preparations. To work her magic, she was seated on a high seat made comfortable with a feather-stuffed cushion, and some other woman or women were required to sing the necessary magical songs for her to commune with her spirit-allies; the working may have involved some degree of trance-journeying. Note that it was not asked if any *men* knew these chants, nor were men included in the warding-ring; this was specifically women's magic.

On the day following her ritual at Þórkell's stead, someone arrived from another settlement to escort Þorbjörg to their own stead to work a similar rite for the folk there. Clearly her services were in demand.

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Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She is an Initiate of ADF, chief of the Seers' Guild and preceptor of the Scholars' Guild, and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. Rowen is also a co-founder of Chokecherry Grove. (And yes, "Grove" is her legal, mundane surname, and has been since she was born.)

Ode to an Older Winter

by Dr. Avery Jenkins

This afternoon, in the interstice between yesterday's grand journey and tomorrow's return to the mundane, I spent a few hours splitting the remains of our woodpile. Cleanup from the recent blizzard had covered most of it, until the warmer temperatures and rain exposed the upper half once again. I decided to take the moment to split and stack what I could yet reach, as my remaining -winter versus split-wood calculations were leaving a gap which would only be closed by a truly abnormally early spring or the addition of more wood under the deck. Not choosing to gamble on the former, I grabbed my maul and headed out back.

It was the quintessential late New England winter afternoon. Sullen clouds sat above the trees, outlining the dark, leafless tree limbs below them. I stood at the bottom of a gravel driveway, now half mud and half ice, bounded at the end by a dirty pile of snow with my last remaining row of unsplit wood poking out. It was cold, but a half-hearted cold. The biting, challenging cold of January was nowhere to be seen. A sweatshirt was sufficient outerwear, though I decided against the kilt, primarily because of the depth of the snow I would have to clamber through to get to my wood.

"Winter's getting old," I thought.

I hefted the maul. "So am I."

I had grabbed my 8-pound maul. It's not really my favorite maul. It's just a touch too heavy to wield for the longer splitting session I had in mind for the afternoon, and lacks the finesse of my 6-pound maul. But the handle of the six-pounder has gotten a bit too dry this winter, and

the head wobbles to the extent that I'm sure I'll leave it deeply buried in the maw of some slightly-split piece of stringy wood, leaving me to flail about with wooden handle and frustration.

I wish I had remembered to let it soak in a bath of neatsfoot oil overnight, but I hadn't. The eight-pounder, though, is equipped with a fiberglass handle which must be attached to the head with some sort of NASA space glue, because nothing I have ever done to it has ever so much as loosened it. And I've managed to behead virtually every handled tool in existence, from a double-bit axe to a pick mattock.

As it turned out, the bigger maul was the right call. At this point, I'm splitting wood a little past it's prime. Not yet punky, but dried past the point where grain has much governance over the split. Frozen as it is, when hit from a blast from Big Boy The Maul, the wood explodes apart, making me feel like a cross between Paul Bunyan and the Terminator. Pieces fly for 3 feet before landing, and I secretly hope someone is watching my display of lumber prowess.

Nobody is, though, except for the puppy who comes out to visit and request a piece of freshly-split wood to chew on, and the birds hiding in the bushes, having their pre-supper conversations at an unusually exuberant volume. It is that chatter, as much as anything else, that tells me that, although spring may not yet be here, winter's strength is waning and his power fading. A month ago, they were largely silent, conserving every ounce of energy for the enormous task of keeping warm and staying alive. I'm not that anxious to

see old winter go; like most New Englanders, at least those of us outside the cities, winter brings his own pleasures along with his trials. Few memories are so strong for me as that of drinking my morning coffee next to a flaming wood stove, feeling its heat ripple past me into the rest of the house. Those silent moments are a treasure.

Without warning, the birds' chatter silences, as a cold north wind kicks up. Winter's assertion that he's maybe not so old. Well, neither am I, for that matter, and I ignore the sudden temperature drop, splitting a few more logs to reach my goal, which is to bring the woodpile even with the top of the snow. Just to teach him who's boss.

After splitting, I carry a dozen or so wheelbarrows of split wood and stack it under the porch, where I hope it will dry out enough to be useful for me by the time I need it.

I lean the wheelbarrow against the wood, and then go back out to retrieve the maul. Picking it up, I feel the muscles in my back. They aren't sore, and they probably won't be, but they've been used just enough to feel wanted and loved.

I look one last time to the low clouds of a stale winter sky. They still aren't talking.

I turn to go inside. It's been a good afternoon.

Dr. Avery Jenkins joined ADF in 2014, and is a member of Charter Oak Grove.

Let's Talk Vocation – Mentoring

by Rev. Jan Avende

It shouldn't really come as a surprise to anyone who knows me that part of my Vocation, part of my Call, is mentoring. That thread of passion has woven its way through many aspects of my life, from coaching to college organizations to my professional life in teaching and into my role as an Initiate and a Priest. Being a mentor can be a tough job, but it is immensely rewarding work for me. It is one of the things that drives me.

I want to be helpful to others, to aid them in their growth, and to give them the tools and skills they need to do the work they want to do. In a way, I want to put myself out of a job, though I know that new people, new mentees, will continue to come along. But there is great joy and a sense of



accomplishment, in seeing a mentee reach a point where you can step back because they no longer need you.

As mentors, we seek to help our mentees feel welcomed, valued, and part of their own learning process. We walk alongside them, providing support and insight, and encouraging reflection, risk-taking, and confidence in their growing skills. The mentorship relationship will grow and change with time, and that is a good thing. The way that relationship between mentor and mentee develops allows for learning to flow back and forth, and for a guided, yet organic, method of growth to occur.

When I mentor someone I talk with them. I prod them when they need it. I'm a sounding board. They are the team leader and I'm their point person, their support person. When they need something I can't do, or I don't know, I find them that resource, or that other person that does know something more, or even different than me, and I make that connection.

When you're a mentor, you're in it for the long game, and certainly not for any sense of immediate glory. You start with your mentee, where ever they may be along their path, and you walk with them. Within many organizations, there is this push as a mentor to get your mentee over the threshold of whatever it is that you're mentoring them for. Whether you're mentoring them as a prospective leader of your organization, as a student teacher, or as an aspiring priest, the push is to get them to that new position, to get them to and through that Rite of Passage.

But that isn't enough. It isn't good enough for the mentor to lead that person, their mentee, up to the threshold of this new position in their life, and then shove them over it. Especially when there may or may not be someone on the other side to catch them, and reintegrate them back into their organization, or society, or church as a person with this new role. When you go through a transition, a Rite of Passage, there is a state of liminality that occurs. And after the state of liminality there is a state of *communitas*, of being part of the community.

Part of the role of a mentor, and especially for me with how I view my role as an Initiate, is to walk with that person up to the threshold, through the

liminal space and time with them, and be there for them on the other side as well, to help them adjust to their new role.

I've had some great mentors, especially as I've entered the ADF Priesthood. They've encouraged me and given me the opportunity to grow and learn and take chances. They've been there for me when I struggle, and cheered me one when I've succeeded. The best have also been the ones that walked with me at the beginning of my path, and have continued to walk with me at each successive step along the way. These mentors, they've helped me navigate these waters and come to grips with my Vocation, my Calling. They've become my peers.

So, what are some dispositions and qualities that good mentors have? What does being a good mentor look like? What does a good mentor do, especially internally? Here are some ideas:

Mentors of New & Aspiring Clergy Should:

- Consistently reflect on their practice and performance of ritual to identify areas of potential growth.
- Engage in ongoing learning and continually strive to improve their own practice.
- Know and use a wide repertoire of effective liturgical and pastoral strategies.
- Be approachable, patient, and trustworthy.
- Share skills, knowledge, and resources with their community and peers.
- Exhibit a positive attitude and passion for clergy work.
- Attentively and actively listen.
- Be skillful at coaching that generates reflection.
- Value the opinions and ideas of others and be able to accept an aspirant priest as a developing member of the clergy.
- Invest their time and commit to supporting an aspirant priest's spiritual and liturgical growth.

ADF also has an active mentoring program where post-Dedicant students can request a mentor through the ADF Preceptor.

Rev. Jan Avende has been a member of ADF and Three Cranes Grove since 2009. She is an ADF Initiate is active as an officer and member in many of ADF's subgroups. She enjoys writing rituals and prayers on request and talking with others about how they practice Our Druidry. You can see more of her writing at hellenicdruid.wordpress.com.

Sehet mich

See me

BR

BR

Vo. 
Se - het mich, Kin - dred drei, hier im

6 
Zen - trum steh'n. Durch die Tore

11 
klingt mein Ruf, dass ihr ihn sollt hör'n.

17 
Lie - be schenk ich euch und Res - pekt

21 
für euch und eu - er Werk! Kommt her - bei, Kin - dred

28 
drei, auf ein Wie - der - seh'n!

Sehet Mich

by Birgit Reinartz

English text:

See me, Kindred three, in the center here!
Through the gates I call you: Will you lend me your ear?
Love I give you and respect for you and your good work!
Come to me, Kindred three, let us meet again!

The song can be heard at <http://werkewald.de/lied-sehet-mich/>

Oðin

by Rev. G. R. Grove

Prices two-fold paid you,
pain for knowledge gainful;
sight you gave for seeing
stronger, deeper, longer.

Rough the cost of rune-craft,
riding nine nights, pride-bound,
self's own gift made sacred,
spear-pierced, wind-wracked, fearless.

Name-rich roamer knowing,
night-dark-cloaked, foe-frightener,
raven-lord, blood-rager,
riding corpse-steed Sleipnir.

Blood-made mead's swift-bringer
bought from giant's daughter,
pleased by night of pleasure,
poetry sweet-flowing.

Seiðr-working, skald-craft,
shape-change, death-escaping,
web of false truth-weaving,
wait you still day fated.

Binder and unbinder
bound the wolf who soundless
howls – awaits his hunger.
High one, hail, O Viður!



Midwinter: Pwyll

by Rev. G.R. Grove

In Arawn's halls you spent a year
atoning for your actions ill;
you sorrowed not, nor did you fear
except at night, while you lay still

beside a woman passing fair –
fell Arawn's wife. You did not stir
to touch, or stoke her shining hair;
your forethought kept you safe from her.

At end of year, to fight you went
with summer's king, and cut him down;
refused to strike him twice; and spent,
he lifeless lay on bloody ground.

A prince again in your own land,
you found the woman whom you sought
and married her. Your warrior band
dispatched the badger that you caught.

At last a son was born to you,
but vanished quite; her women made
a plan, and to avoid their due,
the blame on fair Rhiannon laid.

But Teyrnon, he who found the boy,
and reared him with his loving wife
perceived a likeness; to your joy
they then restored him to your life.

Still friends with Arawn, gifts you made
to him, and he gave gifts to you;
perhaps in Annwn's gentle glades
you hunt with him in friendship true,

and wisdom's name which still you bear
befits you well. You journeyed long
to win the crown which now you wear.
Dark Annwn's head, receive our song!



A Song for Late November

by Rev. D. Rowen Grove

The Sun is slipping southward
As the wild geese calling fly,
And the edges of the daylight
Have been nibbled from the sky
By the hungry mouse of winter,
And there grows a gnawing dread
That this time it is forever,
And the year is truly dead.

The wind that sang in summer keens
A dour and mournful cry;
It dances with the blades of ice
And slashes through the sky -
It cuts the clouds to ribbons
So that sleeting rain pours down,
Till the bright brocade of autumn
Lies in tatters on the ground,

Perhaps the sun will come again
Or so the old tales say;
In time the light will strengthen
And this dark, give way to day.
But for now the wind is crying,
For the light's a fading spark
And the shadows wrap around us -
As we go into the dark.

Shine, Apollo Helios (a Midsummer song)

by Slaine na Mailpe

Joined on this the longest day
are two who rule with blazing crowns
to hold the night further at bay,
caressing fields, farms, trees and towns
Apollo, shine on us the light.
Helios, drive the sun with might.
We raise our arms and faces high
to feel your warmth and praise your sky.

In your radiance may we bask,
as we share meals upon the ground.
To dance before you is our ask,
to frolic here while time's unbound.
Apollo, shine on us the light.
Helios, drive the sun with might.
We raise our arms and faces high
to feel your warmth and praise your sky.

And in the darkening months ahead
when cold winds begin to murmur,
we'll lie cozy in our beds and
praise you for this grand Midsummer.
Apollo, shine on us the light.
Helios, drive the sun with might.
We raise our arms and faces high
to feel your warmth and praise your sky.



Go Gently Into That Good Night

by Rufus Brock Maychild

Go gently into that good night
Growing old is indignity enough
Howsoever disgraceful you spent your years
Death is a time for grace, rage not.

Once there was one who so feared to die, Jack
was called in life
He cursed the Great Queen who would have
loved him
Withered to will o the wisp
No breath, no blood, no wit, world wandering al-
ways.

On Samhain night we light the lantern
In Circle, wise ancestors gathering, guiding lost
souls home
Jump that sad queue, who feared of life no less
than death
All that lives must die, it holds no shame.

It's true that it's dark at first.
Dark as to dive a sump in cavern deep
No need to hold your breath this time
And soon you'll surface, and find the light hasn't
died.

Waiting there you'll find your guide
Mother maybe, or lover's hand again
Perhaps a child so grieved over,
Grown now strong and beautiful as you always
knew

For some, the shining ones will come
In the old days you knew who'd you'd get
Now they deploy in flexible schedules worldwide
But at least the management work their share

So you might meet shining Hecate,
Radiant maiden, saffron robed
Holds high the torch, though she knows the way
No crossroads choice challenges Her.

Once Anubis howled the moon in desert dry
Black dog will lead you now from Welsh wetness
To a new land, no less green, but more glowing
His nose knows the track.

As a pure white doe Artemis arrives with no
warning

Except one's whiskers whitened
Follow Her heedless, She will not wait
Hares dance around, her drum resounds.

Glorious Sigdrifa favours the fearless, but fosters
the fear-filled
Falcon-feathered cloak she lends, straight the
flightpath
Valhall or Folkvangr await, your battle need not
have been in blood
Healing hands soothe all mortal pains

Some say the way is long
Nine days Hermodr passed on Helroad
Aback the Faerie horse True Thomas waded
blood red to the knee
Peerless Psyche fed her honeyed cakes to the rav-
ening

But those stories may be askew
For it is easy enough for the living to come to
death's door
The hard road is to return to this same life
Heartblood pounding still, wits wondering.

It is but the tiniest step to take.
A wall of stone but less than ankle-high
Crowning the cap of rounded hill
Leap it and laugh

Then downhill all the way, easy, run it like a
child
Come soon to the willow-shaded well, where
most drink deeply of forgetfulness
You can choose, you are a child of earth and the
starry heaven
Drink instead of the Well of Memory

Persephone heard the call, long time past...
Mother, she said, to golden-haired Demeter, "the
dead need me, I must go to them".
She made her promise, she will perform,
As She returns She will do no less for you.

So do go gently into that good night
Greet Sons of Stars and Daughters of Light
Be it of chocolate, or of mead, drink with delight
Dance then with the spirits, Blessed Hight.

*NB: Written as an answer to the much-quoted whinge
by Dylan Thomas – acknowledgements of course to
him and all those whose images have been shameless-
ly plundered – those of old now nameless to us, Char-
lene Spretnak, Ursula Le Guin and.... note: 'hight'
makes a good rhyme – it's mock-old-english meaning
'be called', a word much favoured by William Morris.*



The Long Man of Wilmington:
Poetry and artwork by Christina Marvel

Mysterious guardian of the Southern Downs,
Left and right staves point -
A Journey towards Earthly Wisdom
And a journey towards the Divine.
In the springtime we dance round your
Whitened form;

A giant striding the Downs;
Secrets hidden under loam and chalk.
Warrior Man,
Long-Armed Man,
We build the Bale fires high-
And sing your tribute-
Into the starry skies.

A Short Ritual for the Recently Deceased

by Cat Heath

*“Remember man as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I,
As I am now so must you be,
Remember man that you must die.”*

(Keister 132)

Death, affects us all. It is one of the few things that any of us can be certain of in this life, that one day, our bodies will fail, and we will take our last breaths. It's uncomfortable to think of, and as a culture we go to great measures to try and hide death. A long time ago, my mother told me of her aunt, a well-loved lady whose funeral was so well attended in her village that it's become a part of that ancestress' story. But what did my great-aunt do that made her so well-thought of in life?

There was a time, at least where I grew up, that women saw you into the world and then saw you out again. When the midwife was also the one to lay you out once you were gone, and prepare your body for burial. As after birth, she would be the one to wash any blood and fecal matter from your skin, before dressing you in burial clothes. That was what my great-aunt did. That was the service she performed for her village. It might be said that there was an awareness of death in those days, one that we have largely lost now. The intimacy of family or people known personally to the family preparing the dead is mostly gone, and the funerary industry takes pains to remove any reminder of death from the process. Make-up is applied to give the appearance of sleep, little plastic eye caps covered in spikes are used to hook the eyelids closed, and in some places, laws mandate that cremains contain no discernible bone fragments.

Nowadays, you can even order a cremation for a family member without getting up from your computer. All you need is a credit card and literally everything will be done for you – your relative's cremains delivered by mail in a plain cardboard box.

However, as ADF Druids, we count the Mighty Dead among the Holy Powers deserving of our reverence and worship, and when loved ones pass, not only do we have to see to the physical

remains, but I think many of us also feel called to take care of the newly dead on a spiritual level as well.

Around Yule time, my mother contacted me with the news that her brother had been diagnosed with a particularly aggressive form of pancreatic cancer. He's always been one of my favorite uncles, a genuinely funny man who seems to be facing the grave with the same level of humor as he has pretty much everything else in life. When he passes, it'll be an extremely sad day for my family.

Unsurprisingly, my uncle's terminal status has got me thinking about how to take care of him after he goes. I live on a different continent from him but I know that my family will take good care of his remains. I know that he will not die alone and that he'll probably find his final resting place in a graveyard where other family members also rest. The only thing I can really do is to take care of the spiritual side of his passing.

I think it's important, when looking at creating rituals for the dead and taking care of that spiritual side of things, that we are clear in our goals for those rituals, even if we cannot truly know what happens after we breathe our last. For me, the first goal of this rite was to mark his passing in a formal way, not only in the sense that I would be acknowledging his death and what he means to me as family, but in the sense of letting the Mighty Dead know that a kinsman would be coming. Secondly, I wanted to ritually begin a period of time between death and when he would be considered a part of the Mighty Dead in my hearth cult. You will notice that the photo remains unframed for now, and I plan to only frame the photo (symbolically acknowledging him as one of the Mighty Dead) after at least a year, or when I have received indication (either through dreams, divination, or other forms of seership) that he has made that transition.

The ritual I present below is what I have created so far. It can be done as part of the Core Order of Ritual, or simply done as a short stand-alone rite. I plan to do this rite as soon as I hear news of my uncle's passing, but have given myself a three-day time limit from his death day in which the rite

must be performed.

The Rite

You will need:

Water in a small receptacle
A photo of the deceased (unframed)
Candles
A shrine or altar set up to the Mighty Dead

Set the receptacle of water slightly away from your ancestor shrine/altar set up in honor of the Mighty Dead. Dip your fingers in the water and then touch them to your forehead while saying,

"I purify myself that I might approach the sacred without causing offense"

Dip your fingers in the water again before bringing them to your mouth,

"May my speech be rightful and errors forgiven"

Dip your fingers once more into the water before bringing them to your heart,

"May the Kindreds know my heart and allow my approach"

Then approach the shrine with the photo, take three centering breaths and light the candles. If you have photos of ancestors on your shrine/altar, look upon them, really focus on them, try to bring them into your consciousness before saying the following prayer.

*"To those that wander and those that watch
To those that sleep peacefully down below
I pray for one who comes to you
A kinsmen journeys on the road"*

*One of our line has passed
And weeping family mourns
Make ready the hall and set the places
Welcome our kinsman home"*

Place the photo of the recently deceased on the shrine. Just set it down, close to the other photos without displaying it.

*"To those that wander and those that watch
To those that sleep peacefully down below
I pray for we who carry on
We are one less while you are one more"*

*All that we are you have been
We'll all set feet on that road
May the tears be few and joy renewed
Until the day Death too carries us home"*

Extinguish candles. End rite by either covering the shrine or walking backwards from the shrine area into a hallway or other room. Wash hands and face.

Works Cited

Keister, Douglas. *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2004. Print.

Cat Heath joined ADF in 2013, and is a member of Hallowed Ground Protogrove.

The Return of the Holly King

by J D "Hobbes" Hickey

He was rested and he was ready. The warm sunlight washed over his skin and he smiled in this daylight that never seemed to end. Indeed, the longest day always held such promise for him. It was a day of new beginnings in the endless cycle of his existence.

He dressed quietly: cotton shirt, leather jerkin, loose fitting trousers. Comfortable, protective, but they allowed for easy movement. He knew his opponent would be slower now, but that didn't mean he wasn't strong as an ox. Even a glancing blow would leave a mark that would haunt him for days, even weeks after.

The gnarled oak staff felt comfortable in his hand as he traced every ridge, every knot hole. This staff had been his steadfast companion for as long as he could remember. It was the extension of his will, it was the expression of his ferocity, but he always wielded it with compassion. A man needed to be strong, but a king also needed to serve.

The Holly King shook off his reverie and strode forward with purpose. He almost danced down the stone steps and followed the path with a spring in his step. Everyone he passed tipped their hats, spoke words of encouragement, and he took it all in with a smile on his lips. Today would be a good day. Today would be a victory.

The glade of trees towered over him as he walked in their shadow. The sounds of the town and all the people drifted away, replaced by whispering breezes and the skittering of unseen animals in the underbrush. The path was clear, but rough. The Holly King knew it well through, and even through there were new branches in the way and the odd log blocking the path, he made good time.

But suddenly, he heard something. It was a new sound, a foreign sound, something that was out-of-place for this sacred grove. He stopped suddenly and listened, the hand gripping the oak staff. There it was again! It sounded like the cry of a wounded animal, but unlike any creature he knew. He closed his eyes and imagined the grove, listening for the sound and locating it on his mind map. He broke into a sprint, confident that he was headed in the right direction. He broke through the underbrush, stumbling over an unseen root and found himself in the sacred grove.

The grove was wide and circular, ringed by trees and underbrush. The grass was lush, but trimmed and small, white flowers dotted the landscape. In the center of the grove was a small bonfire and two benches. A man sat slumped over one of the benches, his head in his hands as he sobbed. A swell of pity rose in the Holly King's chest, but also confusion swirled in his mind. Who was this man and how could he have found this grove? It was protected by the ancient magics so that only the brothers Oak and Holly could find it. The Holly King quietly sat on one of the benches facing the man and waited for a few minutes, but the man did not look up. The Holly King cleared his throat and tapped his oak staff on the flagstones beneath his feet.

"Yes, I know you're there, my brother," said the Oak King, clearing his throat. He sat up and wiped his eyes. The Holly King was taken aback for a moment: his brother look haggard, road-weary. At this time of year, the elder Oak King would carry the evidence of age and wisdom in his countenance, this was the first time he looked in his brother's eyes and did not see the green fire of his youth and vitality.

"My brother," the Holly King whispered, laying his oak staff on the ground at his feet. "What ails you so?"

"I have failed the people," his voice broken with



emotion. He rested his elbows on his knees, his shoulders heavy and tired.

"Not true, not true! This is folly," replied the Holly King, shaking his head. "I have seen the people and times are good and the people are content with their lives."

"You have been away too long, my Lord. This is supposed to be the high point of the year where the people can come together with joy, with love, to celebrate family, friends, and life." The Oak King removed his crown and examined it carefully, his fingers tracing each jewel, each contour. "The sun is highest in the sky and this the longest day, which is supposed to fill the people with hope for a strong future. And yet, I feel their hope fading, their joy diminished."

"This is the natural order of the world, of life!" the Holly King replied, trying to be reassuring. "There are good times and there are bad times. Life is never perfect, never without its flaws."

"Blood flows in the streets!" cried the Oak King. He threw the crown to the ground and gripped the bench with both hands. "Fear is over-taking the world, and when that happens, the people turn on each other. Love is abandoned, greed over-powers the mind, and desperation rules the will of the people. I was supposed to lead them to joy and prosperity, but despair, intolerance, and violence threatens to wash them all away in a crimson tide! I have failed them!"

The two men sat across from each other in silence. Dark clouds formed over them, a light rain darkened their clothing and it masked the fact that both men wept. The Holly King stood up, stepped over his oak staff, picked up the crown, and placed it on the bench. "Move over," he whispered and his brother shifted over to make room for him. The Holly King sat and gently placed his arm across



The Bad Dream

by Joy Ann

Ireland circa 980 A.D.

Uneasiness shrouded the druid upon arising that morning. Attributing it to bad dreams he could not remember, he worried to his brother the Seer, "Isn't it interesting how the body remembers the feelings of a dream?"

his brother's shoulders and embraced him.

"Could we not have this battle today," the Oak King said softly, hanging his head, avoiding the other's eyes. "With everything I've seen in the past months, I cannot fathom adding more violence to this world, even symbolically. The thought of raising a hand against you is more than I can bear."

"Of course. You have earned your rest. My Lord, let me be your guide, your humble servant. It is time for you to rest."

The Oak King rose from his seat, one gnarled hand gripping his brother's shoulder. The Holly King understood and stayed seated. The Oak King picked up the crown and placed it gently on the other man's head. He picked up the oak staff and said "Rise, Holly King. After this day, the light will fall. The days will shorten and the nights will lengthen. May be the people will find wisdom in the darkness you bring."

The Holly King rose and both men held the oak staff. "I will lead the people to hope once again. The darkness has always been a healer, and a time of rest and reflection. By the time the Winter Solstice arrives, I promise you that the people will once again be refreshed and ready for the light that you bring."

The two men watched as the sun dipped low in the sky, the clouds layering the horizon in blankets of orange, pink, and white. Just as the sun melted from view, the two men disappeared.

John David "Hobbes" Hickey is a writer and storyteller based in Montreal, Quebec. He has been a member of the ADF since 2009 and is the Grove Bard for Thornhaven Grove. You can listen and watch his performances at www.johndavidhickey.ca.

Benjamin replied, "Pay heed to what you encounter at the Grove today, Morleigh."

The Seer's clipped tone and emphatic demeanor compelled Morleigh to hasten anxiously toward the door, out in to the early morning fog and cold misty rain. The archdruid of the last remaining grove, unceasingly resistant to the ongoing efforts of the cross and the crown to recruit druids into the service of their Lord, Morleigh felt uneasiness turn to apprehension, an inner knowing he could neither deny nor explain away. He knew better than to ignore Ben's advice. And his unusual aversion to listening, to heeding the inner knowledge, common sense, and experienced intuition the gods gave him, only impressed upon him the nature of what he tried to avoid. Denial would not serve him here.

Treading deeper into the forest, he saw that the familiar pines and bushes stood straighter and stronger, demanding attention. Transfixed by a hawthorn tree, he slowed down, and narrowly avoided the grasping thorns of the blackthorn bush. He paused, breathless, feeling the omens. *Huath...and straiif...* and his fight or flight reflex surged. A disquieting sense of the unknown renewed in this life warned him of a relentless, predatory force. He had been a sagacious defender of the old ways and his people in the past, and now again he was compelled to endure a knowledge, what some might call a prophecy. But his anxiety only increased for he knew there was no prophecy—there was only The Plan.

The senior member of the Grove had faced all manner of threats, danger, and enemies with bravery and fortitude, and strode forward... But this unseen force permeating the earth, creatures, water, and air urged him to move. His mindful

gait shifted to the determined stride of a hunter in pursuit.

“What am I looking for? What I seek is anonymous and omnipresent—hidden in plain sight.” He trotted for a distance. Then, through the cool, dismal fogginess he trudged—plain trousers and tunic soaked through mud and wet slapping branches to the inner forest.

Continuing into the deeper part of the woodlands, unfamiliar oppressiveness in the atmosphere grew. Here, where he spent countless hours in contentment and mystical union, a creeping desolation cloaked the trees, brush and animals. Closing in, permeating, Morleigh attempted to use his skill in telepathic communication, “Benjamin, *come, and bring the others, quickly, we—*”

The portal slammed shut.

“What is happening to me?”

Another plea for help.

“Shining Ones—hear me.”

An uncharacteristic cursory invocation—he could not feel the presence of heart and mind to utter a sincere plea for guidance and protection. The cloud prevented him from feeling the comforting presence of his gods. His natural protective functions and essential abilities to discern weakened, and he felt his personal sovereignty trickling from his essence.

Pushed forward by a strong wind, he stumbled into the grove.

He entered the inner sanctuary circle of the grove and confronted by an enormous black horse standing still as a statue; he stepped back. Atop the beast, a rider in monk robes peered suspiciously as Morleigh feebly attempting to regain his bearing, and surveyed his grove. Ringed with large stones, the usually pristine sacred space resembled a deserted campsite. The fire pit was littered with broken branches and surrounded with black feathers and a dead fish—in the pit, bird eggs lay on a bed of leaves, cracked and leaking. The Tree of Life next to the pit was missing most of the branches and leaves. He turned his head back toward the stranger.

“Morleigh, you are required to visit the Elder Mordechai at dusk tonight—come alone.”

Eyes concealed by the large grey hood of his flowing robe, the long drawn face tensed. He hunched over, the small gold cross on a leather cord around his neck swung forward. The horse grew impatient, skittish, and the monk was overly fierce in correcting it.

A moment of lucidity.

What manner of monk is this—there are reluctant non-believers pressed into the service of the church—but this creature...

Weakening in the knees and trembling in the gut, his thoughts dissipated. The air close as a closet, heavy full of dull energy, enveloping Morleigh, his personal power seemed to evaporate. The monk breathed in deeply and exhaled loudly. The druid felt small, the birds stopped chirping, small creatures ceased rustling in the bushes and the breeze stopped.

“Well?” he droned.

“Yes of course brother—I’ll be sure to arrive tonight as the elder wishes—”

The monk turned the horse abruptly and commanded it to run out of the grove.

Shuffling to the nearest rock, Morleigh sat in a slump, and then began to breathe fully. He felt a light breeze cool the perspiration on his brow as the clouds open up, and he saw the sun’s reflection in small puddles. Cheerful birdsongs resumed, and his mind cleared.

A raven swooped in and perched on the Tree of Life. Morleigh watched the large bird settle itself; the emissary returned his stare, then pointed his beak downward. Morleigh’s gaze followed the bird’s directive to the dead salmon and then a large black snake emerged from behind a stone, slid up to the fish, opens its mouth wide around it, and slowly swallowed it whole.

Joy Ann is a solitary member of ADF of just over one year. Currently working on “Heed the Arya: Beware the Patibulum” a story based on alternative history sources, metaphysical experiences, conspiracy research and other influences to encourage questioning and finding answers.

Book Review - Tvaer Galdraskraedur or Two Icelandic Books of Magic

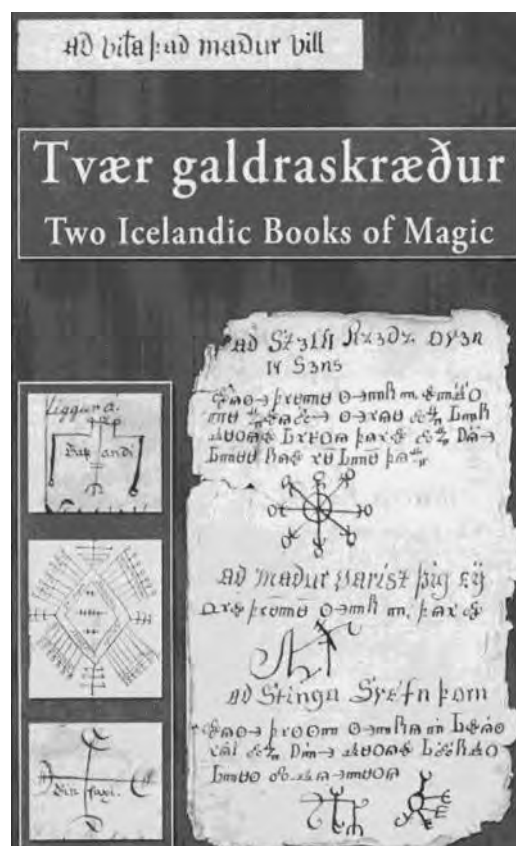
by Morgan Daimler

Tvaer galdraskraedur / Two Icelandic Books of Magic, written and translated by Magnús Rafnsson (263 pages, paperback). Hólmavík : Strandagaldur, 2009. ISBN 9979958456. [photo on file]

I recently read Tvaer Galdraskraedur or Two Icelandic Books of Magic, a book offered by Strandagaldur (Icelandic Museum of Sorcery and Witchcraft). Since I very much enjoyed it I thought it would be a good choice to review.

This is a fascinating work that is, effectively, excerpts from Icelandic grimoires. Each rune stave is shown with a short description in Icelandic and English which describes how to use it and what it does. The book itself is a consolidation of several surviving grimoires from 17th and 18th century Iceland and includes staves for a variety of things, often with multiple staves for any single purpose. These include everything from winning in court or catching a thief, to testing a woman's virginity or turning her heart to you, to casting out spirits and protecting from witchcraft. Two versions of the somewhat infamous "Fretrúnir" are given, which I was pleased to see, as they comprise one of the more interesting aspects of Icelandic rune magic. There are also several prayers listed, all thoroughly Christian, although in other sections the Norse Gods - particularly Baldr, Thor, and Odin - are invoked. There is a section which offers a variety of seals, along the lines of what one might find in a ceremonial magician's text, like the Lesser Key of Solomon. I will warn readers though that at one brief point several descriptions/prayers are translated not into English but in Latin, so if you don't speak either Icelandic or Latin you won't be able to understand what those few runestaves are for.

The book's biggest drawback is that it does not get into the theory or history of the runestaves or runic magic, although it does briefly discuss a history of the grimoires in Iceland during the introduction. However there are other books on the market that one could buy that do get into the theory if you want that end of things. I'd recommend having at least a basic knowledge of runic magic or runestaves if your interest in this book goes beyond curiosity. That said though, the collection of staves offered is impressive and the descrip-



tions attached to each - although short - are very interesting and include details like what materials to use, what (if any) words to say, and where to place the stave.

This book is a good investment for anyone interested in runestaves or in the history of Iceland, as a lot can be gleaned from looking at the topics of the staves. For example, apparently people were mostly concerned with fishing, lawsuits, women, thieves, trading, evil spirits, overcoming enemies, and hexing livestock. And occasionally cursing their enemies with dysentery. For modern runic practitioners having access to such a wide collection of staves with the attendant descriptions is invaluable. Definitely worth getting a copy while they are available.

Morgan has been a witch since 1991, an Irish reconstructionist since about 1994, and heathen since 2006; she also practices seidhr. She loves studying other paths and other ways of doing things and enjoys discussing religion, philosophy and spirituality with people from diverse paths. She joined ADF in 2001, and is also a Druid in the CR Druid group the Order of the White Oak.

This review was previously published on Morgan's blog, [Living Liminality](#), on January 7, 2014. It is reprinted here in a slightly edited form with her permission.

From Roots to Branches: The Nature of Evil Ancient and Modern

by ADF Vice Archdruid Rev. Carrion Mann

“Evil” can be defined as something “*having qualities tending to injury and mischief; having a nature or properties which tend to badness, mischievous; not good; worthless or deleterious; poor*” (Webster’s-Dictionary Online). Beings whose actions and intentions stand to cause injury and mischief, those who stand against good and light, who cause pain, suffering, sorrow, distress, injury, and general calamity through their evil, have existed throughout the recorded history of our cosmos. Evil within the world basically finds its origin in several different locations, and its presence existed not only within ancient Indo-European society, but within the modern world. Evil can be found within an individual, it can result from deeds and actions of an individual against society, and it can be found in demons and other beings that stand outside the order of the cosmos. The nature of evil may violate sacred law, cause impurity, and may work against the order maintained by humans and the gods and spirits in society and in the cosmos. Additionally, there is what I refer to as ‘necessary evil’ or the mischief that intentionally creates necessary chaos to feed the cosmos. While often misinterpreted, necessary evil is critical in some circumstances to maintaining the order of the cosmos.

The evil that resides within individuals most often results from experiences and crises that cause adversity, strife, and stress in their mundane lives. One cannot, however, rule out possession as being cause for the nature of evil within, which really falls into the second category of evil. The ill or evil caused by adversity, stress, and strife brings unrest, chaos, and discord to an individual’s life and may cause an individual to become lost or out of connection with the cosmos and its beings. If this adversity, stress, and strife are not addressed, it can lead to imbalance and ill deeds, such as crime. Crime in ancient society, not unlike our modern world, brought punishment and was believed to pollute an individual, requiring purification. This evil brought consequences and the need for purification also to the family of this individual and at times to entire cities. Punishment often required repayment for loss in-

curred with the crime and time was not a factor in the repayment. It did not matter if a debt remained at the time of someone’s death; the debt would follow them to the afterlife (www.adf.org/articles/philosophy/crimesp.html).

Exile was also a popular way to deal with individuals polluted by crimes. Exile in a modern context has been replaced by imprisonment, and restitution for crime is still mandated in many cases by the law. “*In Greece a serious crime would make the criminal polluted. It would call for ritual purification of the city and anyone with whom he’d come into contact. The crime itself was often an offense against at least one of the gods, and divine justice might call for pursuit of the criminal by the Furies, a trip to Tartarus, or payment exacted in future lives*” (www.adf.org/articles/philosophy/crimesp.html).

In a modern ADF context, Deborah Kest suggests that when a member of ADF commits a crime, leadership needs to consider whether the offense broke sacred law, and if so, purification rituals should be held for those that the polluted individual had contact with in the community. Additionally, the offending individual may need to be removed from the ADF community until such a time that they have paid for their crime. Finally, she suggests offering the offending individual ideas for how to pay for his or her crime in spiritual support. It is then up to the individual to pay this restitution to the gods and spirits and humankind (www.adf.org/articles/philosophy/crimesp.html). Fortunately, “adversity teaches prayer” (Burkert 264), and the evil that resides within individuals can be effectively addressed by the individual through regular meditation, prayer, and ritual. Within ancient Greek society, the people believed that crisis on a large scale resulted from the wrath of the gods and spirits. This wrath caused bad harvests, disease, wars, defeat and general infertility. If the gods and spirits were appeased, however, with sacrifice and prayer, wrath would be replaced by blessing (Burkert 264).

From a modern ADF perspective, according to



Ian Corrigan, one of the intensions of ADF ritual is to empower and rectify the souls of our worshippers. “The most consistent and personal result of sincere participation in ritual is the creation or strengthening of the patterns of our spiritual cosmos in the souls of individual worshippers” (www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/intentions.html). Through creating and strengthening the patterns in themselves, participants can overcome the negative effects of the mundane world and restore order and balance to their beings. If through their actions an individual has violated sacred law and angered the gods and spirits, the weight of this crime or ill deed falls squarely on this individual’s shoulders and the repayment or retribution owed the gods and spirits will need to be worked out between the individual and those spirits that were offended. Additionally, we continue to offer ritual, sacrifice, and prayer to gain the favor and blessing of the Kindred and not their wrath.

To discuss specifically how ill deeds affect the relationships between humans and the divine we must first examine this relationship, and also the relationship between humans, the divine, and the cosmos. Relationships in Indo-European society were reciprocal and based on the *ghosti-principle of a gift for a gift. “With his friend a man...should be friends ever, and pay back gift for gift; laughter for laughter he learns to give, and eke lesing for lies” (Hollander 20). This principal within ancient society was also reflected in other relationships within the cosmos. Within Norse mythology, the well at the base of the Yggdrasil feeds the tree and in turn the tree feeds the waters of the well. At one point, the tree is the host and in the next the guest, as is the well. This relationship also existed between humans and the gods and spirits, between humans and the cosmos, and between the gods and the cosmos (<http://www.ceisiwrserith.com/ritual/theory/doingwhatthecosmosisdoing.htm>).

As in Norse mythology, the *ghosti relationship is also evident in Vedic culture and myth. Evidence of this gift for a gift relationship can clearly

be seen from the lore in the actions of the God Agni, who is not only the God of the sacred fire, but also the fire itself. As the fire, Agni is logically the God responsible for transforming and carrying all sacrifices to the Gods. Within the lore, Agni brings a sacrifice of nectar to the gods. This gift or sacrifice “refreshed the gods, whose light then increased: the sun rose in the morning, the moon became full again, the cold season turned to warmth”, and the gods returned Agni’s gifts as rain to nourish the earth (Mahony 109). In the preceding example, nectar was offered through Agni to the gods and they returned the gift to the earth in the form of rain, not only to aid the cosmos as a whole, but also to help the world of humankind.

The existence of evil in our modern world is just as prevalent and threatening as that which existed in the ancient Indo-European world; what has changed to some extent is the perception of that evil and our methodologies in response to it in a modern context. Good deeds in general were important and determined the worth of an individual in ancient society. *The Sayings of Har* contained within the *Poetic Edda* shed further light on how the nature of evil in ancient Norse society was viewed, as well as the importance of valuing good versus ill deeds: “*For from evil man not ever wilt thou get reward for good; a good man, though, will gain for thee the love and liking of many*”, and again verse 128, “*Hear thou, Loddafafnir, and heed it well, learn it, ’twill lend thee strength, follow it, ’twill further thee: in ill deeds not ever share, but be thou glad to do good*” (Hollander 33). An individual’s deeds that produced fame were linked to the favor and protection of the gods. Additionally, deeds were believed to live on far after death for good or ill. Within Norse culture this belief is illustrated by the words of the *Havamal* verse 76, “*Cattle die and kinsmen die, thyself eke soon wilt die; but fair fame will fade never, I ween, for him who wins it*” (Hollander 14).



The ADF vision statement not only gives examples of actions to be considered ill deeds in our modern world, but also contains a call to action against ill deeds and the evil forces that threaten our modern world. Isaac Bonewits explains the vision of ADF and calls upon the Neopagan religions in general in his following statements: “*We see talented and well trained Neopagan clergy leading thousands of people in effective magical and mundane actions to save endangered species, stop polluters, and preserve wilderness. We see our healers saving thousands of lives and our bards inspiring millions through music and video concerts and dramas. We see Neopaganism as a mass religion, changing social, political, and environmental attitudes around the world and stopping the death-mongers in their tracks*” (www.adf.org/about/basics/vision.html). This vision advocates for Neopagan unity against the global forces of evil in both our mundane and spiritual endeavors.

ADF’s mission is best expressed as “*ADF is working to combine in-depth scholarship with the inspiration of artistry and spiritual practice to create a powerful modern Paganism. We’re researching and interpreting sound modern scholarship (rather than romantic fantasies) about the ancient Indo-European Pagans – the Celts, Norse, Slavs, Balts, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Vedics, and others. Upon these cultural foundations we are working to build a religion that these ancient people would appreciate and*

understand yet one which has depth and power for modern people. We’re developing genuine skills in composition and presentation in the musical, dramatic, graphic, textile and other arts. We’re bringing together people trained in ritual, psychic skills and applied mythology to bring the remnants of the old ways to life. We’re creating a nonsexist, non-racist, organic, flexible and publicly available religion to practice as a way of life and to hand on to future generations” (www.adf.org/about/basics/what-is-adf.html).

Through our organizational mission we seek to fulfill the spirit of Isaac’s vision. Ian Corrigan explains the organizational progress in line with Isaac’s vision as, “*Since our founding in 1983, we have succeeded in building the foundations of this vision’s reality. We have local congregations, called groves, in many cities throughout the U.S. and Canada, along with a handful in other countries. Within those groves we are designing powerful magical and religious ceremonies to bring the blessings of the gods and goddesses to our world*” (www.adf.org/about/basics/what-is-adf.html). And just a few short years later, we not only have groves and solitaries in many cities in the U.S. and Canada, but this has expanded to groves and solitaries in many cities around the world. To build upon the work outlined in the mission and vision, each grove is charged with doing a quarterly community service project, and many groves have picked up humanitarian and environmentally friendly projects to aid our communities and our world. From the description of the mission, forging allies through ritual among the gods and spirits continues to be viewed as necessary, not only to the work of our mission, but also to Isaac’s vision.

Additional tools developed with the vision and mission in mind are the ADF nine virtues or values. While not a mandatory moral code, they represent an expression of values shared by the members of the organization and exist to encourage a code of behavior that if implemented by an individual, stands to benefit the life of member in a positive way, while aiding them to effectively participate in the mission of ADF. Logically speaking, we would have no need for the virtues, values or codes of ethical behavior, if we did not have human beings acting contrary to them and harming others and our cosmos as a result.

Utilizing the wisdom of the ancient Indo-

European cultures to build a foundation for a response to evil in the present, we naturally look to the philosophy and lore of these cultures. John Michael Greer defines “argument from evil” as “an argument against theism that holds that the existence of horrific, pointless suffering and evil in the world disproves the existence of a god” (200). This argument falls short of validity in an ancient Indo-European context. Ancient Indo-European cultures were, first and foremost, polytheistic, and as such, the existence of evil was most certainly not proof of the non-existence of the gods, but proof of the existence of demons and forces of darkness and chaos, whose role was to oppose the gods and humankind and fight against the power of life, that of humans and the cosmos and light, the power of the gods. Demons and other forces of darkness are the second classification of evil that we find within the ancient Indo-European world and our modern world. One must keep in mind that in order for an effective response to evil in the form of the forces of darkness and demons to occur, the relationship between the gods and spirits, humankind, and the land must be successfully maintained by all parties for the well-being of all is dependent upon these relationships.

Within the Greek ancient world, the identity and function of demons or *daimons* is relatively confusing. Plato and his pupil Xenocrates had much to do with the creation of the popular perception of a demon or *daimon* as a “lowly spiritual being of a preponderantly dangerous and evil character” (Burkert 179). However, contrary to Plato’s and Xenocrates’ definition, the word *daimon* has been separated from the word demon in many instances within Greek lore. The word *daimon* has been associated with the Olympian gods and with protective guardian spirits who accompany humans from birth. *Daimons* are also referenced as the intuition residing within by Socrates, and as the relationship between character and a human being, while also being associated at the same time with apparitions and evil spirits that brought illness (Burkert 179-181). Within Greek mythology the race of beings which stood against the Olympian Gods were known as the Titans. This race of harmful forces was defeated in battle by Zeus to “establish dominion and just order” with the cosmos in their defeat (Burkert 122).

Within Vedic culture the harmful, dark forces whose role was to destroy life are embodied in demons, such as Danavas, Raksasas, and the Yatudhanas. The Vedic people feared dragons and

demons like Vitra, who could withhold the waters from humankind and the cosmos. Deities were invoked in protection against these “demons of darkness, disease and drought” (Mahony 60-61). The relationship between humankind and the Gods and the fight against these demons is evidenced in the Vedic mythology concerning the winning or freeing of the waters by Indra. Vritra, the serpent, captures and sequesters the “rain cloud cattle” or waters from the people, causing a drought (Littleton 338 & 339). The warrior god Indra then slays Vritra releasing the “rain cloud cattle” back to the people. Through his deeds Indra’s status and power as a war god increases, and he becomes the ultimate ruler of the Earth, Sky, and everything in between (Puhvel 52).

For the Norse and Irish Celtic cultures, these beings were identified as “those older Gods or tribes that fought against our Gods” (Ellison 91). In an Irish Celtic context from the *Book of Invasions*, we find two groups of Gods that stood against the Tuatha De Danann as they invaded Ireland, the Fir Bolg and Fomorians (Green 130). For the Norse, the Aesir battle throughout the mythology with beings among the pantheon including Loki and his horde, Fenrir, Jormungand and Hel, as well as etins, trolls and the frost giants. From verse 50 of the *Voluspa*, ultimate evil approaches the battle field prepared for a war that aimed to destroy the worlds and the gods:



“Sails a ship from the east with shades from Hel; o’er the ocean stream steers it Loki; in the wake of the Wolf rush witless hordes who with baleful Byleist’s brother do fare” (Hollander 10). As the forces of chaos and darkness battle with the gods and they begin to die, cosmological responses also begin to occur, *“ ‘Neath sea the land sinketh, the sun dimmeth, from the heavens fall the fair bright stars; gusheth forth steam and gutting fire, to very heaven soar the hurtling flames”* (Hollander 11). In these passages the fight between the gods and spirits and the forces of evil is clearly illustrated, as is the link between the existence of the cosmos and the gods. Within Norse society individuals turned to the gods and spirits for aid against evil and suffering that occurred in their mundane lives. *“May hallowed wights bring help to thee, Frigg and Freya, and favoring gods, as off thou warded evil from me (and hastened hither help to bring me)”* (Hollander 280).

Beings often referred to in ancient lore as demons or forces of darkness represent a class of beings acknowledged in ADF as the Outdwellers. Many ADF rituals continue to address the Outdwellers in many different ways. Some choose to utilize a warrior approach and guard against them, while others utilize the actions and intentions of a magician to keep them at bay. What is important for our work is that it is made clear to those who stand against our gods and the human participants in our work, that while we recognize the function of these forces and beings, we choose not to enter into relationships with them, and that we stand with our gods and spirits against them. I am opposed to the step of addressing the Outdwellers in the ADF Core Order of Ritual being reduced to an optional part of our liturgical order, because it most certainly is not an optional part of the world we live in. We have some members who choose to honor these beings instead of acknowledging them, and these individuals form relationships with the forces of chaos and the beings that stand against the gods and men. They perceive them as misunderstood, and find personal value in relationships with them. I find this unsettling in many ways. I don’t see how this cannot damage the relationships between these individuals and the gods, and once they intentionally invite these beings into themselves, as in the case of possession and channeling, or into the world, they have given these beings additional power against us, our work, our

world, and our gods.

In a modern context, the definition of Outdweller includes not only those beings who stand against our Gods and humankind, but also some elements of the argument of justification put forth by the concept of Theodicy are echoed in our modern approach. Some individual members and Groves choose to acknowledge and banish the forces of evil and darkness that dwell within and cause chaos within each of us, our inner demons. It does stand to reason that if demons exist within the macrocosm, inner demons and forces of destruction would also exist within the microcosm unless they were banished by regular meditation, prayer and ritual. I have met individuals from within and without of ADF who attempt to justify suffering and evil according to the arguments set forth by Theodicy, and they very much remove any fault from gods for evil and suffering in the cosmos, and accept that suffering and evil does not result from divine action, but from free will. Evil and suffering like natural disasters or crimes are also explained as the products of misused free will by human and non-human beings, and suffering and evil result as the consequence of sin (Greer 55-57). I believe that for some, removing the fault of evil and suffering from divine action is a leftover from their Christian past. I happen to believe that suffering and evil can result from both free-will of human beings and from divine action. The ancient Indo-Europeans peoples also believed that the divine were capable of producing evil and suffering if angered and this suffering and evil was incurred as divine wrath brought on by the action or inaction human beings.

Natural disasters, such as, earthquakes, disease, and eruptions, are viewed by some polytheistic cultures as being the work of demons, who are permitted to do what they will as servants of higher powers displeased by humankind. The Greek Philosopher Porphyry “understood evil demons to be the cause of epidemics, earthquakes, and all kinds of calamities—as does the philosopher” (Cook 177). Celsus sheds further light on polytheistic belief, in claiming that “thirty-six demons have charge of the human body and can cause good and ill health” (Cook 96). Natural disasters for the ancient polytheistic cultures were also attributed to being without the protection and favor of the gods. Natural disasters and disease resulted from a violation of the relationship that exists between humans and the gods. This violation can be seen in the acts of



refusal to attend temple, refusal to honor the gods' images, dishonoring the temples, altars and images of the gods, and refusal to attend public sacrificial ritual and worship. Porphyry assigns blame to the arrival of Jesus, being responsible for the absence of protection from the gods. "No one, he claims, has seen public evidence of the gods' help since Jesus has been honored" (Cook 124). In an Indo-European context failing to attend sacrifices aimed at continuing a relationship with the gods, continuing or gaining their help and protection, and upholding the cosmos through acts of ritual sacrifice (Lincoln 168) would be viewed as humans abandoning or violating the human part of the relationship contract or obligation between the Powers and humankind. These violations would result in the absence of the gods; leaving humankind without their protection and aid, therefore potentially having devastating effects on the cosmos itself and the human beings dwelling within it in the form of natural disasters and disease. Ancient sacrificial ritual was performed in the microcosm to impact the macrocosm and benefit "the heaven, sun, moon, earth, fire, water and wind" (Lincoln 169).

In addition to the examples of *ghosti relationships in Indo-European society and mythology, there also exist beings whose nature is chaotic and they exist to be instruments or agents of chaos, because it is chaos that feeds the ultimate order of the cosmos and in turn chaos is fed by

order. An example from Norse mythology of this type of being would be the squirrel, Ratatoskr, who runs up and down the world tree chattering gossip and causing upset among the other animals living within the tree. One could say that Ratatoskr intentionally shakes the order that exists within the tree. Additionally, he is accused of gnawing upon the tree, causing a perpetual death and growth cycle. He is not evil, really, but an instrument of chaos and destruction that insures the order of the cosmos. These types of beings are found within most, if not all, mythology of Indo-European cultures and appear to come from among all three of the Kindred. There are numerous examples throughout IE mythology of "deities behaving badly" according to modern ethical standards and the virtues of most individuals within our society. For example, within modern society, stealing, deception, and telling lies are obviously considered unethical and unvirtuous. However, within Greek mythology Hermes, the divine trickster and God of thieves, is well known for committing just such unethical and unvirtuous acts. Hermes wastes no time establishing his trickster nature, for on the very evening of his birth he steals the cattle of Apollo. He then kills two of them, conceals his crime, crawls back to his cradle, and when confronted lies to Zeus about his deeds. From the unethical and unvirtuous actions of Hermes in this adventure he "invents fire, fire sticks and sacrifice" (Burkert 157). In the end it is Hermes' unethical and unvirtuous action that ultimately breaks the taboo on Apollo's cattle, making sacrifice possible (Burkert 156 & 157). Hermes' knack for thievery and deception is deemed useful to the Olympian Gods on several occasions as he is the one called upon to steal the imprisoned Ares from a brazen barrel and the first considered when the Gods were contemplating the stealing of the desecrated corpse of Hector. Hermes is instead sent on a mission of deception, appearing to Priam as a young chariot driver, who aids him through the gates undetected by the guards to address Achilles and retrieve his son's body. Hermes then orchestrates once again through deception Priam's safe return. Additionally, Hermes' extraordinary skill in the art of deception enables him not only to enter the realm of dead, but also to return from Hades at will, for it is once again Hermes that steals Persephone back from Hades.

When speculating on why some of the Gods

engage in unethical and unvirtuous acts, one first must consider that in ancient IE society what was ethical and virtuous was different from what modern society has deemed ethical and virtuous. The thieving of cattle, for example, was often considered virtuous as long as the deed went undetected and the cattle were not stolen from within an individual's tribe or community. Deceiving, tricking, and telling untruths to those outside of the immediate cosmos was also not viewed as an unethical, unvirtuous action or evil, but often quite the opposite. Finally, there are examples, such as the stealing of Apollo's cattle by Hermes, where his seemingly unethical and unvirtuous act illustrates the very nature of the God, creates the chaos needed to feed the order of the cosmos, and orchestrates necessary change in the cosmos. Additionally, perception weighs heavily upon these acts. For what is it that separates the acts of the Gods from those of demons, the patriot from the terrorist, or murder from sacrifice, but merely one's perception?

In conclusion, the view of the nature of evil in ancient Indo-European cultures is quite similar to that of our shared ADF world view. We continue to recognize the potential for evil within ourselves, and continue to address this evil through our personal work and mundane lives. We continue to acknowledge global evil that threatens our cosmos, and requires actions on behalf of human beings and the divine to stop it. We recognize the importance of building strong relationships among our allies, the gods and spirits, in order to combat this evil. We also recognize the negative impact of evil and ill deeds on our relationships with the divine. Additionally, demons and dark forces continue to be acknowledged for their function within our cosmos, and the chaos they produce continues to be mitigated by the gods and spirits and the very cosmos itself. Evil and the chaos it causes, for example, is evident in the actions and function of the ancient Norse being, the squirrel Ratatoskr, whose chewing causes destruction on the Yggdrasil, and this destruction is mitigated by the Yggdrasil itself. Evil and the suffering it causes can result from divine action, further necessitating human beings to live up to their part of the relationship that exists between the gods and spirits, the cosmos and humankind. Ill deeds and evil acts do not return a gift for a gift, and violate the sacred laws of hospitality; these deeds continue to negatively impact our fragile cosmos, and continue to require action on



the part of humankind and the Kindred to ensure the existence of our world through the *ghosti relationship. Ritual, sacrifice and prayer continue to be critical to our relationship with the gods and spirits and to our fight against the evil that threatens our cosmos.

The mission of ADF has provided a foundation from which we have built an organization and our work is truly just getting started; however, in order for the ADF vision set forth by Isaac Bonewits to become a reality, all members must continue to work within our mission and continually address the nature of evil that dwells within and without. Individuals within ADF must not allow evil to corrupt their inner locales and must take ownership for addressing evil at a personal level. Maintaining balance and unity with the cosmos is critical to not allowing evil to overwhelm individuals on a personal level. Incorporating the ADF nine virtues into our mundane and spiritual lives can aid us in our personal struggles against adversity. Individuals working according to the mission and vision of ADF should not build relationships with Outdwellers, whose nature and actions stand against all that we work to uphold and achieve; nor should we partake of ill deeds or

have ill intentions for our actions. We should instead be working ritual, performing sacrifice and prayer to strengthen ourselves and our relationships with the Gods and Spirits, thereby weakening the hold of evil over us. The ancients knew the wisdom in avoiding the nature of evil on all levels. In the mission of ADF Ian Corrigan speaks of the creation of a spiritual path the ancient Indo-Europeans would “appreciate and understand”, and in order to do this we cannot forget the lessons of the past. We must continue to see the wisdom of our Indo-European ancestors as evidenced within the lore and mythology of these cultures, and effectively utilize and shape this wisdom for use in the present day. In looking to the future of ADF, failure to adequately address the nature of evil in its many forms stands contrary to our mission, vision, and the success of the organization as a whole. Failure to effectively address evil will result in devastating consequences in both the microcosm and macrocosm for human beings, the gods and spirits, and the very cosmos itself. In this fight against evil we must forever remember the motto of “Why Not Excellence?”, for it is in its spirit that we will take personal responsibility for the fight against evil, stay true to our ADF mission, make Isaac’s vision a reality and ensure the continued existence of our world.

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Rev. Kelley “Carrion Mann” Kingston is the Vice Archdruid and Preceptor of ADF, and a Senior Priest.



Awen Bag

by Kelly "Adara" Fielder

This bag is perfect for hanging around your neck during a ritual, and having some offerings inside. Or use it to collect treasures from Mother Nature.

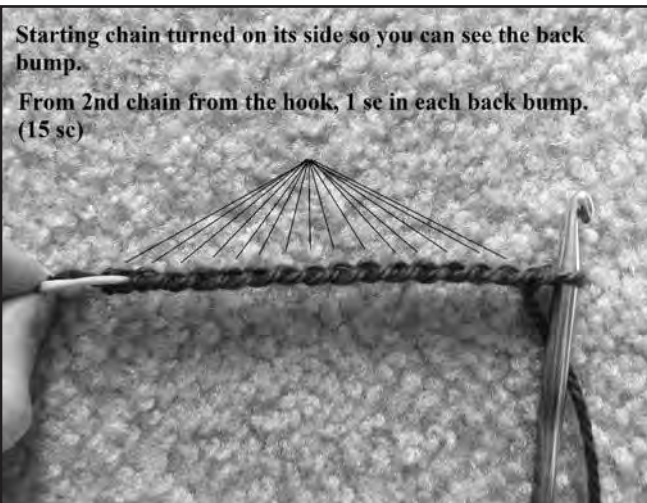
Materials:

H hook
Worsted Weight Yarn. 57 yards of Main Color. 3 1/2 yards of Secondary Color
3/4 inch Button
Sewing Needle
Sewing Thread to match your Main Color Yarn or Button.
Straight Pins
Tapestry needle

Please note that the yardage and gauge checks are based on the fact that I crocheted this bag tight. I wanted a tight-knit solid bag with no gaps between the stitches. You are welcome to crochet a bit looser but your bag will be bigger.

Pattern:

Chain 16 (gauge 3 3/4 inches)
Round 1: In the second chain from the hook, make 1 sc in the back bump of each stitch across (15 sc).



Now you are going to crochet in the stitches as you normally would, and not in the back bumps. Turn your work 90 degrees clockwise and make 1 sc in the end of the row. Turn your work 90 degrees clockwise and make 1 sc in each stitch across (15 sc). Turn your work 90 degrees and make 1 sc in the end of the row. (32 stitches)



Do not slip stitch or join or add extra stitches or chains. Each round will have 32 stitches. Use a stitch marker to mark the last stitch in each round. You will notice that as you crochet your rounds, the stitch marker will move from the left side edge of the bag to near the right side edge of the bag. This is supposed to happen. Just keep going.

Rounds 2-16: 1 hdc in each stitch around
(Measurement check at end of round 2: 1 inch by 3 3/4 inches.)

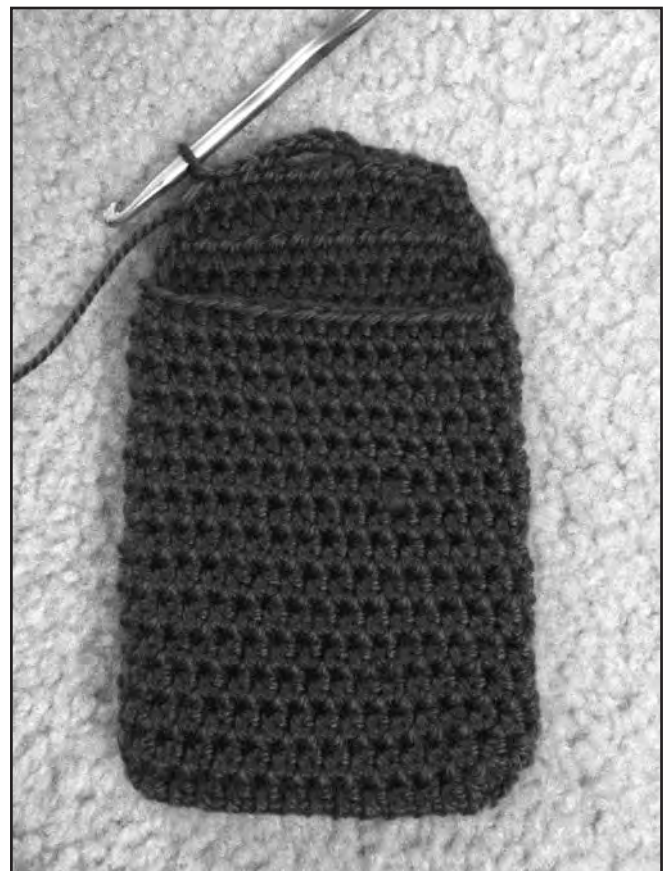
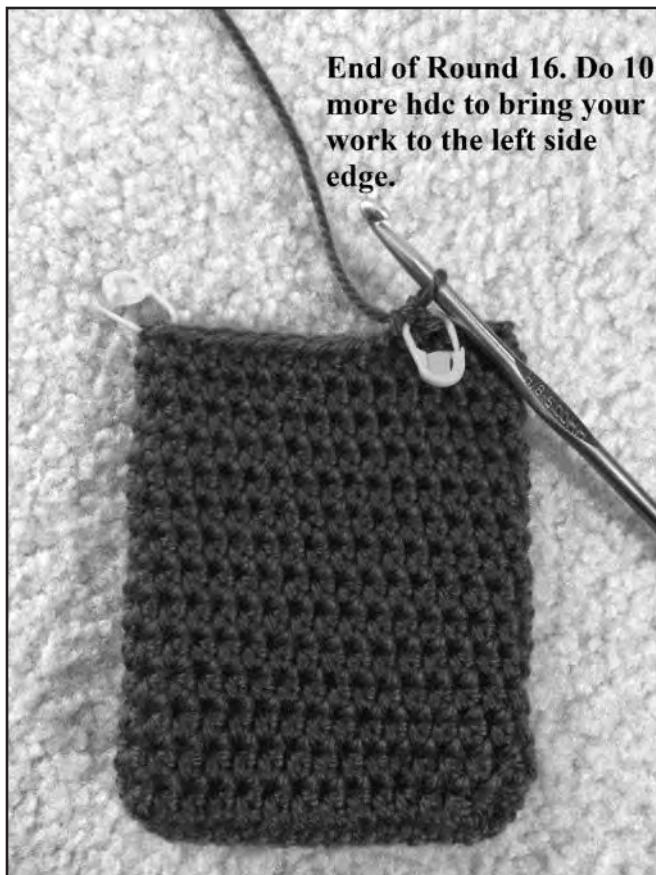
At the end of round 3 your work should start to resemble a shallow canoe.

Measurement check at the end of round 8: your work should be 3 3/4 inches by 2 1/2 inches.

Measurement check at the end of round 16: 3 3/4 inches by 4 1/2 inches)



That is the end of the rounds for the body of the bag. You will notice that your stitch marker is over near the right side edge of your work.



Do the following to bring your work to the left side edge of the bag: 10 hdc stitches.

Now you are going to be working flat to make the flap for the bag. For this part, I like to place stitch markers at the beginning and the end of each row.

Row 1: Turn your work. Skip the first stitch. 1 hdc in the next stitch, and in the following 14 stitches. (15 hdc)

Row 2: Turn your work. Skip the first stitch. 1 hdc in the next stitch, and in the following 13 stitches. (14 hdc)

Row 3: Turn your work. Skip the first stitch. 1 hdc in the next stitch, and in the following 12 stitches (13 hdc)

Row 4: Turn your work. Skip the first stitch. 1 hdc in the next stitch, and in the following 11 stitches (12 hdc)

Row 5: Turn your work. Skip the first stitch. 1 sl st in the next stitch, and in the following 3 stitches. Chain 4, skip 3. 1 sl st in the last 4 stitches.

Fasten off and weave in end.

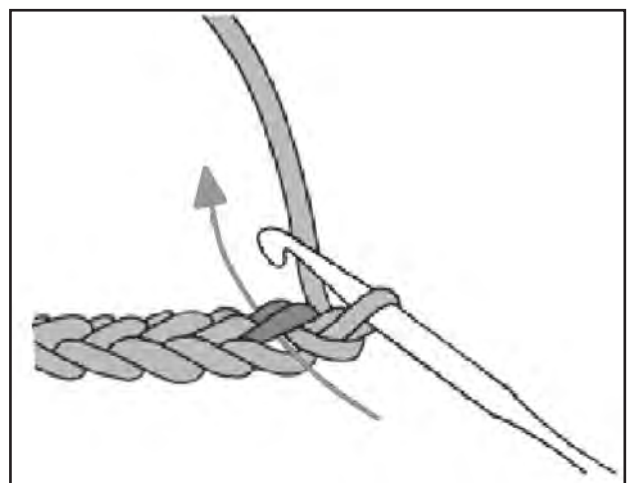
With a needle and thread, sew the button onto the body of the bag so its placement lines up with the buttonhole when the flap is closed.

Strap:

Make a chain (with a long tail) that is long

enough for the bag to rest against your lower chest when your work is finished. You want the bag to comfortably fit over your head when you take it on and off.

After making your strap foundation chain, you are going to hdc in the 2nd chain from the hook and in each chain across. Insert your hook between the bottom loop and the back bump, not at the top loop of the chain. When you insert your hook to yarn over, the top loop and back bump will be on top of your crochet hook.



When finished, fasten off, but leave a long tail. Use that tail to sew that end of the strap to one side of the top back of the bag with a tapestry needle. (Use the tapestry needle to move the beginning long tail to the inside of your bag) Use a tapestry needle to sew the other end of the strap to the other side of the top back of the bag. Do not to twist the strap.

Awen Symbol:

Switch to Secondary Color yarn.

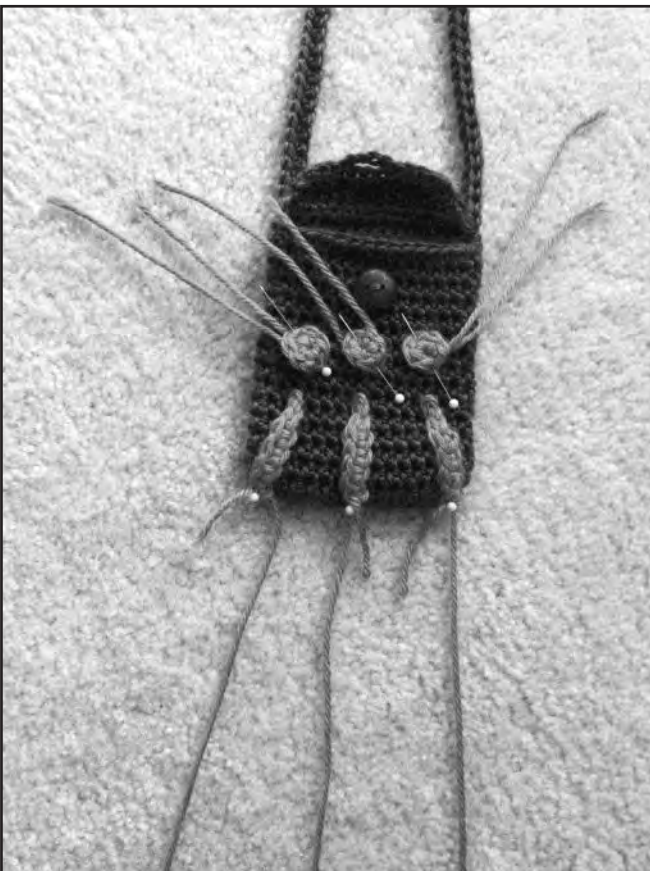
3 Rays of the Awen (Make 3, obviously)

Chain 7. Using the same hook placement that you used for the strap (see above illustration), Sl st in the second chain from the hook. Sc in the next 5 stitches. Leave a tail. (mine was 9 inches) These tails will be used to sew the Awen rays to the front of the bag with a tapestry needle. Use some straight pins to hold the rays to the front of the bag.

(Length measurement on a finished Ray is 2 inches and is almost shaped like a long triangle)

3 Drops of the Awen (Make 3, obviously)

Start with a Magic Circle. If you don't know



how, there are several YouTube videos that will show you

Crochet 6 sc in the magic circle. Pull on the beginning tail to close the circle, and slip stitch into the first stitch to join. (*measurement of the circles is 3/4 inch*)

Leave a tail that is about 6 inches long. Use some straight pins to hold the drops to the front of the bag, above the rays. Use the beginning and end tails to sew the Awen drops to the front of the bag with a tapestry needle.

Turn the bag inside out and weave in any loose ends. Turn the bag right side out and enjoy your Awen Bag.



Please note that you may sell your finished project, but you may not sell this pattern.

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Kelly "Adara" Fielder has been a member of ADF since 2011. She completed the Dedicant Path in 2012. She is a flamekeeper for Brighid, and a Reiki practitioner. She has recently started attending rituals with Chokecherry Grove ADF.

The Poets

Rev. D. Rowen Grove : *A Song for Late November*. Rowen joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She is an Initiate of ADF, chief of the Seers' Guild and preceptor of the Scholars' Guild, and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. Rowen is also a co-founder of Chokecherry Grove. (And yes, "Grove" is her legal, mundane surname, and has been since she was born.)

Rev. G R "Gwernin" Grove: *Oðin and Midwinter: Pwyll*. G R has published four collections of poetry and four historical novels (with a little magic) set in 1st and 6th century Britain and Ireland. She is an ADF Initiate, Chief of the Scholars Guild, and one of the Bardic Guild's four Master Bards. She was ordained in 2016.

Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano: *A Manannan mac Lir Devotional*. Drum has been a member of ADF

since 1984 (he was ADF's eighth member). He is an ADF Senior Priest and an Initiate and our current Archdruid. He enjoys working with his various altars, spending time in Nature, and studying and teaching the Ogham.

Rufus Brock Maychild: *Go Gently Into That Good Night*. Rufus lives in Wales, and joined ADF in 2014.

Christina Marvel: *The Long Man of Wilmington*. Christina Marvel is a professional painter in Columbus, Ohio. She has been in ADF for the last 3 years.

Slaine na Mailpe : *Shine, Apollo Helios*. Slaine joined ADF in 2015, and is a member of Raven's Cry Grove.

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Amber Ferrebee (Avelyn)

Completed: 1st Circle Clergy program
Ordination date: August 18, 2016

Dale Frampton

Completed: Dedicant program
Date completed: July 2016

Ashley Price

Completed: Initiates program
Date completed: August 16, 2016

G.R. Grove

Completed: 1st Circle Clergy Program
Ordination date: September 9, 2016

~Congratulations to all~

Protogrove & Grove Approvals

Willow at the Crossroads PG

Elkhart, IN

Date founded: June 30, 2013

Twisted Root PG

Eugene, OR

Date founded: July 30, 2016

Three Branch River Grove

Portsmouth, VA

Date of charter: August 1, 2016

Proto Grove of the Gathering Waters

Troy, IL

Date founded: September 9, 2016

Announcements

The Druid Moon Podcasts 2016

11/7 12/12

[Ar nDraíocht fein](#) – You tube channel

www.adf.org/events

For more festival info

TAROT

By: Chris:)

H	F	V	E	M	F	D	T	S	Q	C	R	Q	U	Q	N	T	U	P	J
P	J	U	D	G	E	M	E	N	T	A	H	N	G	S	H	H	S	N	X
Q	B	N	Y	A	U	P	M	V	T	U	O	A	Q	H	D	R	A	K	X
S	V	G	D	A	O	A	P	S	I	O	V	K	R	N	G	M	S	C	J
W	K	D	R	J	T	L	E	Q	M	L	H	Y	N	I	D	A	U	U	A
O	S	N	E	M	T	Y	R	W	E	I	B	N	D	E	O	N	M	C	P
R	L	H	O	A	M	H	A	A	W	O	Z	M	G	S	O	T	Q	L	P
D	Z	K	J	G	T	O	N	N	S	P	E	N	T	A	C	L	E	S	G
S	Q	V	H	I	V	H	C	D	Y	T	A	F	T	O	W	E	R	O	C
E	W	D	M	C	G	X	E	S	N	H	X	M	E	N	L	G	F	S	U
E	O	K	D	I	P	D	E	A	P	Q	H	C	L	I	O	L	L	E	P
S	D	R	H	A	D	R	H	M	S	U	I	E	W	O	Q	K	K	V	S
D	I	R	G	N	G	P	I	F	P	T	F	M	R	H	V	X	O	B	K
Q	U	I	U	Y	O	D	Y	E	S	E	E	A	W	M	E	E	P	J	H
P	F	S	W	R	N	N	W	U	S	U	R	M	F	O	I	K	R	X	X
H	I	O	E	B	W	T	J	H	S	T	Z	O	P	J	R	T	B	S	F
E	F	I	O	S	I	W	A	M	E	E	E	H	R	R	W	L	O	R	V
D	H	B	S	L	O	P	C	U	G	E	Z	S	E	D	E	K	D	T	R
S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H	P	I	V	L	J	S	Q	U	S	Z	I	O
E	Z	R	A	H	N	C	D	X	I	C	H	V	X	A	H	T	S	E	I

This month's puzzle is a word search on the tarot—list of words to find on next page.

Words to find:

CHARIOT
CUPS
DEATH
DEVIL
EMPEROR
EMPRESS
FOOL
HANGEDMAN
HERMIT
HIEROPHANT
JUDGEMENT
JUSTICE
LOVERS
MAGICIAN

MOON
PENTACLES
PRIESTESS
STAR
STRENGTH
SUN
SWORDS
TEMPERANCE
TOWER
WANDS
WHEEL
WORLD

Tear of the Cloud Grove, ADF

Proudly presents ADF's
First Hotel Convention

*Ghosti-Con 2017

To be held at the Best Western, Albany Airport Inn in Albany,
NY
March 23 through March 26 2017

Early Bird Registration closes February 9, 2017:
\$125 for adults, \$80 for children 6-14, children 5 and under free.

Regular Registration closes March 9, 2017:
\$140 for adults, \$100 for children 6-14, children 5 and under free.
Day Passes \$50

Registration includes programming and lunch/dinner for the con-
vention.

Hotel rooms available through the Grove for \$89 a night.

For more information and to register:
<http://www.ghosti-con.org/> info@ghosti-con.org

The Kitchen Druid



Recipes from

Chokecherry Grove ADF

CHOKECHERRY GROVE HAS PUBLISHED
A COOKBOOK!
YOU CAN BUY ONE NOW AT LULU.COM.



ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

Archdruid	Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Vice-Archdruid	Rev. Kelly 'Carrion Mann' Kingston	adf-vice-archdruid@adf.org
Treasurer	Rev. Sara Blackwelder	adf-treasurer@adf.org
Secretary	Rev. Crystal Groves	adf-secretary@adf.org
Members Advocate	Desiree Cook	adf-members-advocate@adf.org
Chief of the Council of Regional Druids	Rev. Amy Castner	adf-cord-chief@adf.org
Chief of the Council of Senior Druids	Flip Rutledge	adf-cosd-chief@adf.org
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Sean Harbaugh	seanthedruid@gmail.com
Non-Officer Director	Cathy 'Selene Tawny' Wayman	selenetawny@twc.com
Non-Officer Director	Leesa Kern	firewomanpg@gmail.com
Non-Officer Director	Rev. Caryn Laney-MacLuan	caryn.adf@gmail.com

Additional Leadership Positions

Administrator	Jane Wayson	adf-administrator@adf.org
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Isaac Bonewits	[deceased]
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Ian Corrigan	tredara@ncweb.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman	john.adelman@trw.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Kirk Thomas	druiddkirk@gmail.com
Chronicler	Manny Tejada-Moreno	adf-chronicler@adf.org
Information Manager	Luke Landry	adf-info-manager@adf.org
Listmasters and Moderators	Rev. G. R. & Rev. D. Rowen Grove	adf-listmaster@adf.org
Preceptor	Rev. Kelly 'Carrion Mann' Kingston	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Store Manager	(vacant)	adf-store@adf.org
Webmaster	Luke Landry	adf-webmaster@adf.org

Committees

Clergy Council	Chair: Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Council of Lore	Chair Rev. Kelly 'Carrion Mann' Kingston	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Grove Coordinating Committee	Chair: Rev. Caryn Laney-MacLuan	adf-gcc-chair@adf.org
Grove Organizing Committee	Chair: Rev. Nancy McAndrew	adf-goc-chair@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee	Chair: Rev. Melissa Ashton	adf-prison-ministry@adf.org

For information on **Regional Druids** please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/members/org/cord/>

For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html>



Submission Guidelines



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

References and Notations:

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

Medium of Submission:

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

oak-leaves@adf.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADF Membership Rates:

Regular Membership _____ years @ \$30/year = \$ _____
 Prisoner Membership _____ years @ \$10/year = \$ _____
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Non-Members _____ years @ \$25/year = \$ _____

Total Due \$ _____

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

Under 18 Membership Waiver

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

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

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Parent/Guardian Printed Name _____

Notary Seal:

A Manannan mac Lir Devotional



Hail to you, Manannan mac Lir,
God of the Irish Sea,
Lord of the Isle of Mann,
He who walks upon the waves.

There are rocks that jut from the water, my Lord,
Please protect me from them;
There are eddies that form along the shore, my Lord,
Please protect me from them;
There are pitfalls and traps along the Way, my Lord,
Please protect me from them.

As I begin my journey this day,
Please stand with me, my Lord;
As I continue my journey this day,
Please walk with me, my Lord;
As I near my destination,
Please consul me as to the path ahead, my Lord.

Help me to walk with wisdom today,
And every day,
Let me walk the Narrow Way,
The Watercourse Way,
And set me true to my course.

Accept this offering my Lord:

I honor and I thank you,
Manannan mac Lir.

