

# The Druids' Progress

## Report Number One

From *Ar nDraiocht Fein*, PO Box 456, New York, NY, USA 10034-0456. *The Druids' Progress* ("DP") is published three or four times per year and is sent primarily to the supporting members of ADF. Unless otherwise noted, all contents have been written by, and are (c) 1984 by, P.E.I. Bonewits. See the last page for reprint procedures.

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In this issue: The Beginning of *Ar nDraiocht Fein*; What ADF Will and Won't Be; Some Notes on Indo-European Paleopaganism and its Clergy; What Neopagan Druids Believe; The Political Implications of Reviving Druidism; On Liturgical Languages; Feedback Department; Research Suggestions; Recommended Reading; Misc. Notes.  
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Welcome to the first issue of *The Druids' Progress*. Some of this Report will be familiar to a few of you, since I'm combining materials from several previously published articles with the contents of the first announcement letters about ADF. I'm doing this so I can send out this first issue to new inquirers and give you all the data you need at once. Please note, however, that only supporting members of ADF will be guaranteed future issues. This whole project is being run on the proverbial shoestring... and the original Druids apparently did their rites barefoot! I'll start by reprinting the original "Open Letter" that started the whole thing [with additional notes].

### The Beginning of *Ar nDraiocht Fein*

This is going out to all the people who have written to me wanting Neopagan Druid literature, training and/or fellow Druids with whom to worship. Copies are also going to various Neopagan publications, as well as a few folks who have indicated interest in the general topic of Druidism.

As many of you may know (perhaps from reading my book *Real Magic* or Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon*), I've been a priest of the Reformed Druids of North America ("RDNA") since 1969. I've led groves (congregations) in Berkeley and Minneapolis, and founded others elsewhere; published newsletters (both Druidic and general Neopagan); and wrote most of, edited and produced *The Druid Chronicles (Evolved)*, (the closest thing to official scriptures the RDNA has). I'm also a priest and elder of the Craft, and I've been a Neopagan magician and occultist for nearly twenty years.

I've studied, practiced and written about many different forms of magic and religion over the years, yet always I find myself going back to Druidism. Many people have written to me to tell of similar spiritual histories, of their knowledge that they are meant to walk a Druid path. Yet what can we, who wish to worship and to grow as Neopagan Druids, do for fellowship? The Masonic Druids have much to teach us, yet they are not Neopagan. The "Druidic" traditions of Wicca are interesting, but they're not really very Druidic. The members of the RDNA have no interest at all in being organized by anyone, nor in recruiting and training would-be Neopagan Druids. There doesn't seem to be any organized group of people trying to reconstruct what the

Paleopagan Druids actually believed and did, nor trying to apply such knowledge to creating a Neopagan religion fit for the Space Age.

What can we do? We can do it ourselves! Thanks to the researches of such scholars as Dumézil, Ross, Piggott, Duran and others, we now have a sizable amount of realistic data about Indo-European Paleopaganism and its clergy. But how do we apply this knowledge to creating a modern Neopagan religion? What does it mean to be a Druid in the 1980's? Using accurate information as a starting point, how do we create rituals and fellowship, art and music, polytheologies and lifestyles that will give meaning to our lives and those of others?

Well, of course, I have my own vision of Neopagan Druidism. I see Druids as artists and intellectuals, magicians and clergy, holders of the highest wisdom their cultures (or subcultures) have to offer. This is what they used to be, and what (with sufficient hard work and dedication) they could be again. A number of people have told me that they share my vision and approve of the ways in which I think it could be accomplished. So, after a great deal of soul-searching, I've decided to try once again to see what I can do to create a form of "reconstructionist" Neopagan Druidism.

The purpose of this letter is an announcement of, and an invitation for your participation in, the creation of: *Ar nDraiocht Fein*. The Irish words [pronounced "arn dree-ocht fane"] mean "Our own Druidism," and that's what I have in mind -- a brand new form of Druidism, not just Pan-Celtic, but Pan-European. [By this latter term, I mean to include all of the European branches of the Indo-European culture and language tree -- Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, Baltic, even the pre-Classical Greek & Roman.] Paradoxically, this would resemble the original Paleopagan Druidism far more than any efforts of the last thousand years. It would be based on the best scholarly research available, combined with what has been learned (about art, psychology, small group politics and economics) through the theory and practice of modern Neopaganism, and my own knowledge of the polytheological and practical details of magical and religious phenomena.

I've already started this project, through the organizing of my notes and the beginning of a new book. The purpose of *The Druid Handbook* will be to enable anyone who has a copy to start up their own Druidic grove, or to practice as a solitary Druid. Everything necessary will be included: history, polytheology, liturgy, legal structures, art and music, calendars and customs, etc.

This is where you come in. I'd like to make sure that what I'm creating will fulfill genuine needs in other Neopagans. So I'm going to need feedback, advice and research help from many people in order to make this project work. Unfortunately, I'm also going to need some sort of minimal financing in order to devote the time necessary to do this right (I'm talking about 10-20 hours a week for 2-3 years). Otherwise I simply can't do the huge job of coordinating the research and writing the book in anything less than 5-10 years.

What I have in mind is this: despite my experiences with Pagan publishing in the past, I'm willing to produce a highly irregular, nonscheduled Druid publication [that's what you're reading now!]. This will come out three or four times per year, and will simply consist of xeroxed sheets of dot matrix type. [I'm deliberately going to keep the format as simple as possible, so as to avoid falling into the common Neopagan pit of spending increasing amounts of time and money on improving the physical appearance of the publication, when I should be

concentrating on content.] Issues will include selections from the work in progress; research materials (advice, requests and reports for and from the readers); scholarly, liturgical and polytheological debates; Druidic rituals and guided meditations; and anything else that looked interesting and Druidic around publication time. [And since more and more people are wanting ADF to turn into an active Neopagan religion as soon as possible, I'll be including organizational materials and advice as well.]

Now Druidism is not everyone's cup of tea, so I'm not expecting a large response to this announcement. Professional journals for specialized interest groups charge as much as \$50 per year, but I'm willing to mail out this stuff to people donating \$20 or more per year (depending upon what each supporting subscriber honestly feels they can afford to contribute to the project). That won't be enough for me to "earn a living from my religion," but it could enable me to devote the time and energy needed (not to mention the expense of paper, postage, computer disks, printer ribbons, phone bills, etc.) without my actually losing money on the project.

If you're interested, send your donation to me with a clearly printed or typed name, mailing address, zip or postal code, home and work phones (optional, with hours you can be reached at each), areas of expertise (European languages you can read and write, artistic skills, research background and resources, Neopagan training already received, etc.) and areas of special interest (what you would most like to learn and what you think would be most useful to publish). Make out your check or money order to "P. E. I. Bonewits," and enclose a large [manila 9"x11" or 6"x9"] self-addressed stamped [\$1] envelope. If there aren't enough people who are enthusiastic about the project, the envelopes will be used to return the money of those who have responded. Otherwise, I'll use them to mail out the first issue sometime this Spring. [Obviously, the response, though small, has been enough to encourage me to go ahead. If you're receiving this issue in response to one of ADF's ads, then you don't really need to send in envelopes with your donation, unless you want to help out with the mailing costs on your future issues.]

With a little bit of luck, the blessings of the Gods and a great deal of hard work, we can create an authentically Druidic Neopagan religion our ancestors would be proud of.

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ADF is an idea I have been wrestling with for years: a Neopagan Druid Order whose members would not be ashamed to honestly compare themselves with the original Druids. This requires mature, dedicated and talented people who are willing to invest both time and energy over a long period (remember, the original Druids took up to twenty years each to be fully trained, and they had the advantage of an intact tradition).

The response to a rather small mailing of the Open Letter has been remarkable. About ten percent of the recipients have replied, and among them are a dozen linguists (who speak/read/write French, Spanish, German, Irish, Welsh, Russian, Czech, Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, etc.). Several people who come from families that have always considered themselves Druidic have written, as have a few folks who are already students of Indo-European and/or Celtic Studies.

I expected a high proportion of Ph.D.'s and self-taught scholars, since they are common in the Neopagan community, but the actual proportion is amazing! Many have written to say how unsatisfied they have been with the scholarship and technical skills of other Neopagan traditions, and of how they have been looking for a group that took these matters seriously.

I've also had contact from poets, healers, and people who just talk to trees -- and ADF will need these types just as much as we will need scholars (though there is a large overlap, of course). I haven't heard from very many traditional musicians, singers or dancers yet, but I hope we'll be able to recruit some. We also need participation from folks who are active in various ecology and conservation groups; therapists willing to help train Neopagan clergy in pastoral counseling techniques; people from Celtic and other cultural revival movements, and so on.

At this point in the birthing process, details are in short supply, but the general outlines are becoming increasingly clear. I can at least give you some specific ideas as to...

#### What ADF Will and Won't Be:

ADF will be a Neopagan religion based on solid (but imaginative) scholarship in the fields of linguistics, Indo-European studies, comparative religion, archeology, anthropology, Celtic & Norse & Baltic & Slavic studies, history, musicology and polytheology. The scholars we will be basing our research on include Georges Dumézil, Mircea Eliade, Anne Ross, Stuart Piggott, G. S. Littleton, Marie-Louise Sjoestedt, Proinsias MacCana, Myles Dillon, Nora Chadwick, etc. We will not be accepting Lewis Spence, Margaret Murray, Robert Graves, Merlin Stone, H. P. Blavatsky or Iolo Morganwg as scholarly authorities (although some of them may provide poetic inspiration now and then). If we have to fill in gaps in our knowledge with our own imagination, spiritual visions and/or borrowings from non-IE sources, we will go ahead and do so, but always in full awareness of what we are doing (and with full documentation of the process).

ADF will be developing a slow, careful and steady system of training for Druidic clergy, equivalent to that gone through by professional clergy in other religions. We will not be in any hurry to initiate people (though we may create and publish self-dedication rituals for the first level of participation), since an obsession with rank and titles is usually counterproductive to actual spiritual, artistic and scholarly growth. A correspondance course has been suggested and I'm willing to give it serious consideration, once we have the basics figured out.

Although our primary focus will be on the beliefs and practices of our Indo-European ancestors, and on how these can be adapted to modern circumstances, we will not tolerate racism or nonsense about "Aryan blood." The Indo-Europeans were a motley assortment of tribes speaking related languages -- not a "race." All of our ancestors are of mixed blood, and most of the black people in America have (however involuntarily) some European genes. So anybody, regardless of their race or color, who is sincerely interested in participating in ADF will be made welcome. Similarly, the IE peoples are known to have had both male and female clergy, and those tribes heavily influenced by

shamanistic practices frequently had clergy who were ambiguous in their gender identification. For these historical reasons, as well as the fact that ADF is a Neopagan religion, we will not tolerate sexism nor restrict membership or rank on the basis of gender or affectional preferences. Having said all that, let me add that I have no intentions of letting extremists of any persuasion use ADF for purposes not in keeping with our original goals.

We will have a carefully-structured hierarchy, based on actual skills and knowledge obtained and demonstrated, with both upward and downward mobility. The training system will involve the setting of specific standards in all the areas necessary for functioning at the different levels, and these standards will be published in the *Handbook* and widely disseminated throughout the Neopagan media, in order to prevent false claims of rank. Our primary approach is going to be the attainment not just of competency, but of excellence. Democratic safeguards will be built in, but we do not expect everyone in ADF to be qualified for (or even interested in) attaining the rank of clergy. After all, the original Druids were only a small percentage of their Paleopagan communities, and not everyone has (or needs) a clerical vocation. Nor will rank in other Neopagan organizations guarantee equivalent rank in ADF, since we have no way of knowing what standards other groups are using, nor how strictly enforced they are.

The Ancient Druids were polytheists rather than mono- or duotheists; so our primary approach will be a pluralistic one. We are not going to promote any One True Right and Only Way of Druidism, merely whatever happens to work for us. This means, among other things, that we intend to maintain friendly relations with as many other Druid organizations as possible, and will encourage our members to investigate these alternate Druid paths.

We are going to take our time putting the whole system together. Based on solid research and a knowledge of the mistakes made by other Neopagan groups in the past, we can create something magnificent. But like an oak tree, it will take time to become strong, and we have no intentions of trying to force its growth. Within two to three years we should get the primary seeds planted. Then the results will be up to the individuals who have heard the trees whispering in their ears, and who know that they are meant to walk a Druid way.

#### Some Notes on Indo-European Paleopaganism and its Clergy

The term "Pagan" comes from the Latin *paganus*, which appears to have originally meant "country dweller," "villager," or "hick." The members of the Roman army seem to have used it to mean "civilian." When Christianity took over the Empire and continued it under new management, the word took on the idea of "one who is not a soldier of Christ." Today, the word has come to mean "atheist" or "devil worshipper" to many devout monotheists. But those who call themselves Pagan use it differently; as a general term for native, natural and polytheistic religions, and their members.

The following definitions have been coined in recent years in order to keep the various polytheological and historical distinctions clear: "Paleopaganism" refers to the original tribal faiths of Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania and Australia, where and when they were (or are) still practiced as intact belief systems. Of the

so-called "Great Religions of the World," Hinduism, Taoism and Shinto fall under this category.

"Mesopaganism" is the word used for those religions founded as attempts to recreate, revive or continue what their founders thought of as the (usually European) Paleopagan ways of their ancestors (or predecessors), but which were heavily influenced (accidentally, deliberately or involuntarily) by the monotheistic and/or dualistic worldviews of Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam. Examples of Mesopagan belief systems would include the Masonic Druids, Rosicrucianism, Spiritualism, Crowleyianity, and the many Afro-American faiths (Voudoun, Macumba, etc.).

"Neopaganism" refers to those religions created since 1940 or so that have attempted to blend what their founders perceived as the best aspects of different types of Paleopaganism with modern "Aquarian Age" ideals, while eliminating as much as possible of the traditional western dualism. The title of this section should now make a great deal more sense. So let's look at the state of Paleopaganism in Europe prior to the arrival of Christianity.

It's important to remember that a lot of history happened in Europe before anyone got around to writing it down. Around 4000 B.C.E. ("Before the Common Era") the tribes that spoke Proto-Indo-European began to migrate away from their original homeland, which was probably the territory around the northwest shores of the Black Sea. Some went southeast and founded the Armenian, Iranian and Indic cultures. Others went south to Anatolia and Palestine, and became known as Hittites and Mitanni. Those who went southwest to the Balkans became Thracians and Greeks. Others who went west and north established the Celtic, Slavic, Germanic, and Baltic cultures.

All this migrating around took many centuries and involved a lot of bloodshed. Previous inhabitants of a given piece of territory had to be persuaded, usually at swordpoint, to let the newcomers in -- and there went the neighborhood! The pre-Indo-European cultures in Europe (which were not "peaceful matriarchies") were all still in the late Neolithic ("New Stone Age") cultural era, with only stone axes, spears and knives with which to defend themselves. The invaders had bronze weapons and armor with which to fight, plus bronze axes with which to clear the great forests that covered the continent, bronze plows to till the soil, etc.

The impact of this superior technology can be judged by the fact that, by the time of the Roman Empire, nearly every language spoken in Europe (except Basque, Lappish, Finnish & Hungarian) was a member of the Western branch of Indo-European. Everything west of the Urals was pretty much dominated by a loosely interlinked conglomeration of related cultures, each of which was a mixture of the PIE culture and that of the previous holders of its territory. The largest group of cultures north of the Roman borders was that of the Celts, and the second largest that of the Germans (some authorities consider the Germans to be so closely related culturally to the Celts as to be practically a subset, at least in archeological terms).

Thanks to the work of Georges Dumézil, James Duran and others, we are beginning to have a clear idea of the social, political, magical and religious functions of the priestly "caste" in Indo-European Paleopaganism. I use the word "caste" deliberately, for the Western Indo-European cultures seem to have been built on the same fundamental social pattern as that with which we are familiar in Vedic India:

clergy, warriors, and providers (farmers, craftspeople, traders, herders, etc.). In fact, it appears that a close to exact correspondance can be made between the religious, political and social functions originally performed by a Latin *flamen*, a Celtic *draoi*, or a Vedic *brahman*.

The Indo-European clergy basically included the entire intelligensia of their cultures: poets, musicians, historians, astronomers, genealogists, judges, diviners, and of course, leaders and supervisors of religious rituals. Officially, they ranked immediately below the local tribal chieftains or "kings" and above the warriors. However, since the kings were quasi-religious figures, usually chosen by the clergy, and often completely controlled by them, it was frequently a tossup as to who was in charge in any given tribe. The clergy were exempt from taxation and military service, and in some cultures are said to have spent decades in specialized training.

They seem to have been responsible for all public religious rituals (private ones were run by the heads of each household). Public ceremonies were most often held in fenced groves of sacred trees. These were usually of birch, yew, and oak (or ash where oaks were rare), depending upon the subset of deities or ancestors being addressed, as well as the specific occasion. Various members of the priestly caste would be responsible for music, recitation of prayers, sacrificing of animals (or occasionally human criminals or prisoners of war), divination from the flames of the ritual fire or the entrails of the sacrificial victim, and other minor ritual duties. Senior members of the caste ("the" Druids, "the" brahmans or "the" flamens as such) would be responsible for making sure that the rites were done exactly according to tradition. Without such supervision, public rituals were generally impossible; thus Caesar's comment that all public Gaulish sacrifices required a Druid to be present.

There are definite indications that the Indo-European clergy held certain polytheological and mystical opinions in common, although only the vaguest outlines are known at this point. There was a belief in reincarnation (with time spent between lives in an Other World very similar to the Earthly one), in the sacredness of particular trees, in the continuing relationship between mortals, ancestors and deities, and naturally in the standard laws of magic (see *Real Magic*). There was an ascetic tradition of the sort that developed into the various types of yoga in India, complete with the Pagan equivalent of monasteries and convents. There was also, I believe, a European "tantric" tradition of sex and drug magic as well, although it's possible that this was mostly the native shamanic traditions being absorbed and transmuted.

Only the western Celtic clergy (the Druids) seem to have had any sort of organized inter-tribal communications network. Most of the rest of the IE clergy seem to have kept to their own local tribes. Among the Germanic peoples, the priestly caste had weakened by the early centuries of the Common Era to the point where the majority of ritual work was done by the heads of households.

We don't know whether or not any but the highest ranking clergy were full-time priests and priestesses. At the height of the Celtic cultures, training for the clergy was said to take twenty years of hard work, which would not have left much time or energy for developing other careers. Among the Scandinavians, there seem to have been priests and priestesses (*godar*, *gydjur*) who lived in small

temples and occasionally toured the countryside with statues of their patron/matron deities, whom they were considered to be "married" to. In the rest of the Germanic, Slavic and Baltic cultures, however, many of the clergy may have worked part-time, a common custom in many tribal societies.

It's also common for such cultures to have full- or part-time healers, who may use herbs, hypnosis, psychology, massage, magic and other techniques. Frequently they will also have diviners and weather predictors (or controllers). Midwives, almost always female, are also standard and, as mentioned above, there is usually a priestess or priest working at least part-time. What causes confusion, especially when dealing with extinct cultures, is that different tribes combine these offices into different people.

At the opening of the Common Era, European Paleopaganism consisted of three interwoven layers: firstly, the original pre-Indo-European religions (which were of course also the results of several millenia of religious evolution and cultural conquests); secondly, the proto-Indo-European belief system held by the PIE speakers before they began their migrations; and thirdly, the full scale "high religions" of the developed Indo-European cultures. Disentangling these various layers is going to take a very long time, if indeed it will ever be actually possible.

The successful genocide campaigns waged against the Druids and their colleagues are complex enough to warrant a separate discussion. Suffice it to say that by the time of the seventh century C.E., Druidism had been either destroyed or driven completely underground throughout Europe. In parts of Wales and Ireland, fragments of Druidism seem to have survived in disguise through the institutions of the Celtic Church and of the Bards and Poets. Some of these survivals, along with a great deal of speculation and a few outright forgeries, combined to inspire the ("Mesopagan") Masonic/Rosicrucian Druid fraternities of the 1700's. These groups have perpetuated these fragments (and speculations and forgeries) to this very day, augmenting them with a great deal of folkloric and other research.

These would seem to most Americans to be the only sources of information about Paleopagan Druidism. However, back in the early 1920's a number of Soviet officials went into the Baltic territories of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (which Russia had just taken over). They discovered several villages where the inhabitants had been, well, "busy" for several centuries. In fact, they'd been so busy they hadn't gotten around to converting to Christianity yet! They still had people dressing up in long white robes and going out to sacred groves to do ceremonies... Naturally a swarm of Russian, Hungarian, Polish and other Eastern European social scientists descended upon these villages, with cameras, notebooks and wire recorders. They interviewed the local clergy, recorded the ceremonies and songs, and otherwise made a thorough study of their "quaint traditions" preparatory to turning them all into good Marxists. The results of their researches were published in a variety of Soviet academic books and journals, most of which have never been translated into English. According to James Duran, this material, when combined with the Vedic and Old Irish sources, will give us most of the missing links necessary to reconstruct Paleopagan European Druidism.

The translation of this material, along with some of the writings of Dumézil (and others) that are not yet in English, is going to be an

important part of the research work of ADF for the first few years. And we're going to see if we can get copies of some of the films...

But there are some definite "nonfacts" about the ancient Druids that need to be mentioned: There are no real indications that they used stone altars (at Stonehenge or anywhere else); that they were better philosophers than the classical Greeks or Egyptians; that they had anything to do with the mythical continents of Atlantis or Mu; or that they wore gold Masonic regalia or used Rosicrucian passwords. They were not the architects of (a) Stonehenge, (b) the megalithic circles and lines of Northwestern Europe, (c) the Pyramids of Egypt, (d) the Pyramids of the Americas, (e) the statues of Easter Island, or (f) anything other than wooden barns and stone houses. There is no proof that any of them were monotheists, or "Prechristian Christians," that they understood or invented either Pythagorean or Gnostic or Cabalistic mysticism; or that they all had long white beards and golden sickles.

Separating the sense from the nonsense, and the probabilities from the absurdities, about the Paleopagan clergy of Europe is going to take a great deal of work. But the results should be worth it, since we will wind up with a much clearer image of the real "Old Religions" than Neopagans have ever had available before. This will have liturgical, philosophical and political consequences, some of which we'll be discussing in future issues of *The Druids' Progress*.

#### What Neopagan Druids Believe

Since many of you receiving this issue of DP may be unfamiliar with the Neopagan movements, here's a brief introduction to the basic beliefs that I expect will characterize most members of ADF. These spiritual beliefs are similar to most of those held by other Neopagans (see Margot Adler's book, *Drawing Down the Moon*), and the similarities are far more important than whatever specific distinctions of doctrine or ethnic focus there might be between us and other Neopagans. I should also mention that not all Neopagans who consider themselves Druids will necessarily agree with every point of the following list. Nonetheless, these beliefs will be the roots of ADF's polytheology, the source of the spiritual grove we seek to plant.

1) We believe that *divinity is both immanent (internal) and transcendent (external)*. We see the Gods as being able to manifest at any point in space or time, including within human beings, which they might choose, although they may often have their preferences. Often this develops among some Neopagans into pantheism ("the physical world is divine") or panentheism ("the Gods are everywhere"). We tend more towards the latter position.

2) We believe that *divinity is as likely to manifest in a female form as it is in a male form, and that therefore women and men are spiritually equal*. We insist on a dynamic balance between female and male deities honored and/or invoked at every ceremony, and a strict gender balance in whatever theories of polytheology that we eventually develop. We're "liberals" about women's rights and gay rights, but not "radicals;" that is to say, we're unwilling to subordinate all our other principles in order to promote this particular principle. People who wish to make feminism or gay activism the absolute center of all their spiritual activity will probably be happier in other groups.

3) We believe in a *multiplicity of gods and goddesses, all of whom are likely to be worthy of respect, love and worship.* Sometimes we believe in these divinities as individual and independent entities; sometimes as Jungian "archetypes of the collective unconscious" or "circuits in the psychic Switchboard;" sometimes as aspects or faces of one or two major deities (the "High God/dess" and/or "the Goddess and the Horned God"); and sometimes as "all of the above!" We feel that this sort of flexibility leads to pluralism (instead of monism), multi-valued logic systems and an increased tolerance of other people's beliefs and lifestyles. All of these are vital if our species is ever going to learn to live in peace and harmony amid a multiplicity of human cultures.

4) We believe that *it is necessary to have a respect and love for Nature as divine in her own right, and to accept ourselves as a part of Nature and not her "rulers."* We tend to accept what has come to be known as "the Gaia hypothesis," that the biosphere of our planet is a living being, who is due all the love and support that we, her children, can give her. This is especially important in our modern era, when 3000 years of monotheistic belief that "mankind is to have dominion over the Earth" have come close to destroying the ability of the biosphere to maintain itself. Many Neopagan groups refer to themselves as "Earth religions" and this is a title which we believe Neopagan Druidism should proudly claim, and which we should work to earn. Thus we consider ecological awareness and activism to be sacred duties. If the ecology, conservation and anti-nuclear movements are ever to have "chaplains," we should be among them.

5) We believe in *accepting the positive aspects of western science and technology, but in maintaining an attitude of wariness towards their supposed ethical neutrality.* The overwhelming majority of Neopagans are technophiles, not technophobes. We tend to be better scientifically educated than the general population, and thus we have a religious duty to speak out about the economic, political and ecological uses and abuses of science and technology.

6) We share with most other Neopagans a *distaste for monolithic religious organizations and would-be messiahs and gurus.* Obviously, this places the founders of Neopagan religious traditions in a complex position: they need enough religious authority to focus the organizations they're founding, but not so much as to allow them (or their successors) to become oppressive. Since the pluralistic approach denies the existence of any One True Right and Only Way, and since Neopagans emphatically insist upon their own human fallibility, we expect to be able to steer ADF between the Scylla of tyranny and the Charybdis of anarchy.

7) In keeping with this, we believe that healthy religions should have a *minimum amount of dogma and a maximum amount of eclectism and flexibility.* Neopagans tend to be reluctant to accept any idea without personally investigating both its practicality and its long-range consequences. They are also likely to take useful ideas from almost any source that doesn't run too fast to get away. We intend ADF to be a "reconstructionist" tradition of Druidism, but we know that eventually concepts from nonDruidic sources will be grafted on to our trees. There's no harm in this, as long as we stay aware of what we are doing at every step of the way, and make a legitimate effort to find authentic (and therefore spiritually and esthetically congruent) parallels in genuine Indo-European sources first. As for flexibility,

Neopagan Druidism is an organic religion, and like all other organisms it can be expected to grow, change and produce offshoots as the years go by.

8) We believe that *ethics and morality should be based upon joy, self-love and respect; the avoidance of actual harm to others; and the increase of public benefit.* We try to balance out people's needs for personal autonomy and growth, with the necessity of paying attention to the impact of each individual's actions on the lives and welfare of others. The commonest Neopagan ethical expression is "If it doesn't hurt anyone, do what you like." Most Neopagans believe in some variant or another of the principle of karma, and state that the results of their actions will always return to them. It's difficult for ordinary humans to successfully commit "offenses against the Gods," short of major crimes such as ecocide or genocide, and our deities are perfectly capable of defending their own honor without any help from mortal busybodies. We see the traditional monotheistic concepts of sin, guilt and divine retribution for thought-crimes as sad misunderstandings of natural growth experiences.

9) We believe that *human beings were meant to lead lives filled with joy, love, pleasure, beauty and humor.* Most Neopagans are fond of food, drink, music, sex and bad puns, and consider all of these (except possibly the puns) to be sacraments. Although the ancient Druids appear to have had ascetics within their ranks, they also had a sensualist tradition, and the common folk have always preferred the latter. Neopagan Druids try to keep these two approaches in balance and harmony with each other by avoiding dualistic extremes. But the bedrock question is, "If your religion doesn't enable you to enjoy life more, why bother?"

10) We believe that *with proper training, art, discipline and intent, human minds and hearts are fully capable of performing most of the magic and miracles they are ever likely to need.* This is done through the use of what we perceive as natural, divinely granted psychic powers. As with many other Neopagan traditions, the conscious practice of magic is a central part of most of our religious rituals. Unlike monotheists, we see no clearcut division between magic and prayer. Neither, however, do we assume an automatic connection between a person's ability to perform "miracles" and either (a) their personal spirituality or (b) the accuracy of their theological or polytheological opinions.

11) We believe in *the importance of celebrating the solar, lunar and other cycles of our lives.* Because we see ourselves as a part of Nature, and because we know that repeating patterns can give meaning to our lives, we pay special attention to astronomical and biological cycles. By consciously observing the solstices, equinoxes and the points in between, as well as the phases of the moon, we are not only aligning ourselves with the movements and energy patterns of the external world, but we are also continuing customs that reach back to the original Indo-European peoples and beyond. These customs are human universals, as are the various ceremonies known as "rites of passage" -- celebrations of birth, puberty, personal dedication to a given deity or group, marriage, ordination, death, etc. Together these various sorts of observations help us to find ourselves in space and time -- past, present and future.

12) We believe that *people have the ability to solve their current problems, both personal and public, and to create a better world.* Hunger, poverty, war and disease are not necessary, nor inevitable. Pain, depression, lack of creative opportunity and mutual oppression are not necessary either. What is necessary is a new spiritual consciousness in which short-sighted greed, power-mongering and violence are seen as absurd, rather than noble. This utopian vision, tempered with common sense, leads us to a strong commitment to personal and global growth, evolution and balance.

13) We believe that *people can progress far towards achieving growth, evolution and balance through the carefully planned alteration of their "normal" states of consciousness.* Neopagans use both ancient and modern methods of aiding concentration, meditation, reprogramming and ecstasy. We seek to avoid being locked into single-valued, monistic "tunnel realities," and instead work on being able to switch worldviews according to their appropriateness for each given situation, while still maintaining a firm spiritual, ethical and practical grounding.

14) We believe that *human interdependence implies community service.* Neopagan Druids are encouraged to use their talents to help others, both inside and outside of the Neopagan community. Some of us are active in political, social, ecological and charitable organizations, while others prefer to work for the public good primarily through spiritual means (and many of us do both). As Neopagan Druids we have the right and the obligation to actively oppose (physically and spiritually) those forces which would kill our planet, oppress our fellow human beings, and destroy our freedom of religion. Also, however, we have a constant need to evaluate our own methods and motives, and to make sure that our actions are coming from the depths of our spiritual beings, and not from petty or short-sighted desires for power.

15) We believe that *if we are to achieve any of our goals, we must practice what we preach.* Neopagan Druidism should be a way of life, not merely a weekly or monthly social function. Thus we must always strive to make our lives consistent with our proclaimed beliefs. In a time when many people are looking for something solid to hang on to in the midst of rapid technological and cultural changes, Neopagan Druidism can offer a natural and creative alternative to the repressive structures of mainstream monotheism. But our alternative will not be seen as such unless we can manage to make it a complete lifestyle -- one with concern, if not always immediate answers, for the problems of everyday life, as well as the grand cosmic questions.

Obviously, there's a great deal more to Neopaganism in general and our version of it in particular. The details of Neopagan polytheology will develop over the years. The section of the *Handbook* dealing with beliefs will consist of statements with commentaries (and even arguments) about the meanings of the statements. The purpose of this format is multiple: to emphasise that there are no final answers to the great questions of human existence; to express clearly that Neopagans can disagree with each other about subtle details of interpretation, while still remaining members of the same religion; and to allow the belief system to grow and adapt to changing cultural and technological needs. Neopagan Druidism is to be a religion of the future, as well as of the present and the past.

### The Political Implications of Reviving Druidism

This topic really deserves more space than I can give it in this first issue, but I think it's important to mention the basics. I've been trying to tell people for years that magic and religion are political (what do you expect from a graduate of U. C. Berkeley?), for the simple reason that anything which involves power of any sort is political. We need to have extensive discussions of both internal and external politics and power within ADF, but for now I want to focus on the external.

Throughout all known human history, people who had hidden knowledge (whether of healing, weather prediction, mathematics, or magic) have used their exclusive possession of that knowledge as a source of power, for purposes that were good, bad or weird. The warrior caste has always done its level best to take that knowledge away from the clergy and to put it to political, economic and military use. Today, almost all the hard and soft sciences have become tools for those who wish to control their fellow human beings. The polluters, the exploiters, the oppressors, the conquerors -- whether calling themselves "capitalists" or "communists" -- they are the ones who control nearly all the technology of overt power and a great deal of the tech for covert tyranny.

One of the very few ways we have of defending ourselves and our fellow passengers (human and other) on this Spaceship Earth is through the careful and judicious use of magic. National governments and private enterprises are spending millions of dollars (and rubles and pounds and yen) trying to develop psychic powers into dependable tools for warfare and oppression; while most of us who should be learning precise techniques and careful timing, in order to use magic and the power of the Gods to defend ourselves and our Mother Earth, have been busy being misty-eyed romantics, not wanting to "sully our karma" by trying to do magic that might really work (that is to say, for which we would have to take personal responsibility).

As a result, we have assisted the very forces of oppression which we claim to oppose. We are partly responsible for the poverty, hunger, pollution, disease and early deaths which dominate so much of our planet. Occultists have assisted by being unwilling to put their talents to the test by using them for "mundane" or "lowly-evolved" purposes. Ecologists, Celtic nationalists, and would-be revolutionaries have assisted by being unwilling to use nonmaterialistic technologies to cause changes in the material world (after all, if Freud and Marx didn't mention magic as real, it can't possibly work). The creation of Neopagan Druidism may be able to help change those attitudes.

Despite the efforts of liberal Christian clergymen to make us forget the physical and cultural genocide committed by organized Christianity against the peoples of Europe, there is simply no way to ignore the fact that monotheists in power always seek to silence competing voices. We cannot look to the mainstream churches for our physical and spiritual liberation, for they are the ones who took our freedom away in the first place. Marxist atheism is no answer either, for it is also a product of the monotheistic tunnel-reality, and seeks to impose its dogmas and holy scriptures just as strenuously as ever the churches have. Those who want to live in a world of peace, freedom

and cultural pluralism, must look beyond the currently available, "respectable" (i.e., monistic) alternatives they have been presented with by the mass media, and consider new alternatives.

Many people think of Neopaganism in general, or Druidism in particular (if they think of them at all), as just being "odd" religions, with no political implications worth investigating. But I believe that Neopagan Druidism has important political ideas which should be considered, especially by those concerned with the survival and revival of the Celtic peoples.

*Druidism is political because one of the primary tasks of the clergy has always been to ride herd on the warriors.* (This may be one reason why the premedieval warriors welcomed the Christian missionaries, because they perceived -- correctly -- that the Christian priests would be far more likely to play ball with them than the Druids had been. After all, if the world is ending any day now, why bother controlling your local warriors?) Since the primary threat to life on this planet now comes from out-of-control warriors, it's time we started taking that duty seriously again.

*Druidism is political because only a Nature worshipping religion can give people sufficient concern for the environment.* Monotheism is a major cause of the current state of the world's ecology. We need a strong and public religion that tells the polluters, "No, it is not divinely sanctioned for you to rape the Earth."

*Druidism is political because the Druids have always been the preservers of the best of their traditional cultures.* The Mesopagan Druids of Brittany and Wales, for example, are directly responsible for assisting the revival of the Cornish language and tradition from the very edge of extinction. The various traditional preservation and independence movements, such as the Celtic, Flemish, Baltic and other related movements in Europe, need religious and cultural leadership based in their own cultures. Druidism can help create an environment in which such leadership can develop.

*Druidism is political because it offers a worldview completely different from that of the monotheistic/monistic tyranny that now controls our planet.* One of the many things that any religion does is to shape the ways in which people see the world around them. We need a religion that offers people a multitude of options, rather than the traditional western either/or, black/white, win/lose choices.

*Druidism is political, at the bedrock level, because it can teach people how to use their Gods-given psychic and other talents to change the way things are.* Make no mistake, magic works, at least as often as poetry, music or political rallies do. Magic is a form of power that we, the people of the Earth, have available to use, not just for psychological "empowerment" (making ourselves feel better) but to actually control the individuals and institutions responsible for our planet's current mess. If we are unwilling to use magic, then we had might as well resign ourselves and our descendents to either a life of slavery in a homogenized, pasteurized world, or a quick and painful nuclear death. And what excuse will we give to the "Lords of Karma" then?

## On Liturgical Languages -- or Why We're Using Modern Irish

In the field of linguistics, there is something called the "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis." This states, roughly, that the language you think in influences the types of thoughts you are capable of thinking. There are certain concepts in Japanese, for example, that are extremely difficult to express in English, and vice versa. How this works is simply unknown, though linguists and psychologists are on the track of finding out.

What is known, at least to those of us who have tried the experiment, is that if you invoke a Celtic deity in a Celtic language, you get answered! Even with my badly pronounced, kindergarten-level grasp of Modern Irish, I have been able to perform ceremonies, both publically and in private, where the amount of spiritual energy raised was lightyears beyond anything I have ever been able to do with those same deities while speaking English.

This probably is because of the magical Law of Similarity -- by using Irish I am making myself more similar to the minds of the people who created/discovered the Old Gods and Goddesses of Ireland. In any event, I have heard the same story from people invoking Norse deities in Icelandic and Vedic ones in Sanscrit.

One of the magical goals of ADF is to "awaken" the Old Goddesses and Gods of our ancestors from their centuries-long sleep. I believe that one of the most effective tools we could use to accomplish this would be to do our ceremonies in the old languages -- eventually in Proto-Indo-European itself, or at least the major western branch.

My first Irish teacher informed me that Irish is the most conservative of all the western tongues. He said that people could spend two or three years learning the basics of Modern Irish, then two or three on Middle Irish, then on to Old Irish. Once we have managed to learn Old Irish, we will essentially be speaking Western IE, and be able to successfully invoke any of the deities of ancient Europe.

Now it's obvious to me that the same trip could be done starting out with Modern Welsh, Icelandic, German or any one of the other modern IE languages, and I will certainly encourage people to do so. But Irish seems to require the fewest steps between the modern and the ancient tongues (except possibly for Welsh?), and there are far more books and tapes available for it than for any other Celtic tongue.

So for the time being, we will be using Modern Irish as our "official" language for documents and liturgy. I have already experimented with rituals in which Irish invocations are alternated with their English translations, and these have worked very well. People wanting to submit ceremonial scripts in languages other than Irish are welcome to do so, but please use this alternating translation method, so that the rest of us, who don't speak whatever language you are using, will be able to enjoy your work.

It won't be necessary to be a linguist in order to participate in ADF ceremonies, but I expect that all our would-be clergy will have to learn at least a basic vocabulary in one of the liturgical languages. While there are some people who seem to be, for example "tone deaf," and who will therefore never make singers of themselves, almost anyone with sufficient motivation can learn a child's level vocabulary in almost any language.

Twenty years from now we might all be using Western Indo-European in our rites, but in the meantime we're going to be a polyglot group.

Irish is my personal choice, for esthetic and linguistic reasons, but I certainly mean no insult to all our other noble tongues, so -- *Bail o na Déithe ort!* ("well being from the Gods on you").

### Feedback Department

Here are some of the letters I've received so far, in no particular order. Since none of the writers expected their words to be published, I've left out their names this time. In the future, I'll assume that people intend their names and addresses to be printed, unless they tell me otherwise. Many of them suggested areas for Druidic research and I'll be organizing a list of these for the next issue of *The Druids' Progress*.

\* \* \*

I was so happy to hear from you and very enthusiastic about your project. I feel it will not only benefit me and my coven but others in the Craft now and to come. More important, I know it will be authentic and not just another "money maker." I'm enclosing a check for 25 dollars, with a promise of future donations ..... I would like to see rituals for weddings and funerals ..... May the Goddess walk beside you. -- Missouri

I hadn't really been thinking much about the impact ADF might have on the Craft, but since many people in the Craft are sincerely interested in Paleopagan Europe, there is obviously going to be curiosity about our project among Crafters. As a Craft priest, I've learned many practical details about creating and performing rituals, which I plan to incorporate into the discussions of general principles of liturgical design. And of course, rites of passage are vital to any living religion, so we'll be sure to have scripts for weddings, funerals, comings-of-age, etc.

I'm damned glad you're back at it again. I don't think your contributions to the Pagan community have ever been rightly appreciated ..... It's very, very good to have you at it again. -- Connecticut

I'm glad to hear that you are once again becoming active in Neopagan affairs; your voice of skeptical belief has always been a most welcome antidote to the extremes of passion which have tended to dominate modern western magic ..... a section on ancient languages (Old Irish, Old Welsh, Old Norse, Gothic, etc.) would also be of great help, as scholarly materials on these tongues are often difficult to penetrate ..... and what is the proper pronunciation for *Ar nDraiocht Fein*? My Irish grammar has two-and-a-half or three different pronunciations for each word, depending on the dialect, and that's Modern Irish, since the orthographic reform.

Again, welcome back, and I invoke the Powers of the Gods by Whom my people swear to assure the success of this undertaking. -- Pennsylvania

*We'll be having regular articles on the old languages in The Druids' Progress, starting out with some derivation maps from PIE. Pronunciation is a major problem with Irish (as with many other tongues). Every teacher I've had so far has pronounced the same Irish words differently. Currently, I'm pronouncing the phrase "arn dree-ocht fane." Thanks for the blessing. We need all the Help we can get!*

*It is with great enthusiasm I welcome your invitation for participation in a new Neopagan Druidism. I am not usually given to making contributions of a religious nature; however, I feel I have a personal stake in this project. In the past I have made attempts to construct something in hard copy that might organize my thoughts and assign a logical approach to Druidic theology; but I have been hampered by inadequate training, no fellowship, and a pitiful lack of reference materials. Realizing the difficulties involved in this sort of project, I respect the enormity of the commitment you have made and fully support your efforts ..... I've exercised creative ability in art, poetry, and writing ..... As for suggestions, I would like to see phonetic pronunciations for Gaelic; also a few ritual curses to be cast at mis-users of nature ..... The best of luck to you in this project. Perhaps now we can change the term "Druid" from a label to a reality. -- Minnesota*

*As you'll see from other parts of this issue, we plan on providing fellowship, training, references, pronunciations and, yes, curses and blessings for appropriate parties. Your artistic background is more than welcome.*

*I have called myself a Druid (to myself, mostly) since high school days almost 40 years ago. We just moved to a place with a large oak and brought wild California truffles from our old place. We made it a Samhain celebration, scattering the dried pieces ..... Do you know the poet St.-John Perse? Even though he won the Nobel Prize, not many know of him. I enclose excerpts, because I think his epics unite the old and the future in a way nothing else does. -- California*

*One of the encouraging things I've noticed from the response to my first mailing has been the number of fully grown adults interested in participating. It looks like we're going to have a very wide age span, from kids to grandparents. Feeding the oak tree is a very ancient Paleopagan custom, in fact, it appears to have been a major part of the old grove ceremonies! The poetry you sent was very enjoyable. Other readers should definitely look him up (in French or English).*

*I'm glad you're out of retirement or whatever it is you've been in. As you must surely know, we need your spiritual and mental input. -- Texas*

I would be overjoyed to help sponsor such an endeavor. The lack of knowledge of anthropological authenticity has been a problem (small, tho it is) in my relationship with many other Pagans. I feel there is often too much sci-fi in the attitudes of many groups ..... Since money symbolically represents our valuation (to most of us, anyway) of persons, directions, etc., I feel I should offer more than 25 dollars, tho I can't afford more at the moment. I will be happy to send another 25 later ..... -- Missouri

*Actually I'm rather fond of fantasy and science fiction literature myself. But I agree that many other Neopagan groups are less than rigorous in keeping their various levels of reality clear and distinct.*

Yes! Yes! Yes! As a seeker of knowledge I was thrilled to receive your announcement and am enclosing my check and self-addressed, stamped envelope. -- California

*Short, brief, and to the point! Your letter was a very welcome arrival on an otherwise depressing day. It cheered me up considerably. Thanks.*

I have always been an admirer of your book *Real Magic*, and wish you success with *Ar nDraiocht Fein*. I am an Indo-Europeanist and Celticist...I'm now involved in exchanging info with an Indian gentleman in New Delhi concerning Druids' similarities with Brahmans of old Aryan India ..... I fully agree with the IE comparative mythology of Dumézil, and I think Eliade is truly one of the better scholars concerning Paleopagan religious matters ..... I hope that we can purge modern ideas of Celticism and Druidism from this [Gardner, Spence, Murray, etc. derived] garbage without becoming ethnocentrists or dogmatic fanaticists. -- Texas

*I think we'll be able to "purge" the nonsense without getting pompous and dogmatic, as long as we retain our collective sense of humor about it all. As for ethnocentrism, I intend to nip any tendencies towards that right in the bud!*

Thank you for the opportunity to share in the realization of your new project. Ever since I read Margot Adler's book [*Drawing Down the Moon*] several years ago, I've been interested in finding just such a book as you have in mind to produce. I can think of nothing lacking in the list you gave as to what would be included in the work ..... As for areas of expertise, I'm not sure that I have any that would be beneficial to the project. I am a professional driver with a liberal arts education and little related experience other than the desire to see your book become a remedy to my lack of knowledge and learning in the field; as well as possibly finding some of the answers I've been looking for. -- California

*A professional driver is liable to have one talent many scholars lack: the ability to test ideas in the mundane world. No matter how*

pretty a system we devise, if it doesn't meet the practical needs of daily life, it won't be a real success. People like you are the ones who will keep the rest of us practical. Welcome!

To me one of the great strengths and attractions, and intrinsic attributes of Druidism (also a liability) is individualism. E.g., while there are set invocations, the tales are full of Druids or Files spontaneously adlibbing spells ..... along with word- or poetry-power, I view the other intrinsic inarguable aspect of Druidism to be what I'd loosely term "Nature-ism" -- that man is a part of Nature. One befriends power, does not command it as such; one doesn't go around "caging demons and dictating" to them. Instead, for example, you give a power a gift and request something in return (a very different approach from that used in many ritual magic fields ..... Dumézil is a genius but with more than one bee in his bonnet and rather an obsessive approach ..... and I should hope that you disagree with at least 1/3 of my ideas/suggestions; full agreement would make any exchange redundant and waste. -- Washington

Actually, I do disagree with just about a third of what you sent me, but that's part of what this project is about! Go ahead and send in your ideas and arguments for future issues -- just remember that everybody else will be having fun too. And the poetry you sent was some of the best I've seen in a long while. Let me know which ones we can print.

\* \* \*

I intend future issues of *The Druids' Progress* to include as many scholarly discussions of articles and previously published letters as possible. The content rules are very simple: let's all just stick to the primary topics around which ADF is being organized, and fight like ladies and gentlemen. Nobody's career will depend upon being published here, so we're free to be clear, brief and informal. Letters (like articles) will be minimally edited for clarity and length by myself and (eventually) a few other professional copy-editors. Please don't use the passive voice, or ten words where three will do. Items of 1000 words or less we can consider a letter and retype into our computer (Fnord) ourselves. Anything longer than 1000 words we'll call an article, and these can be sent on an Apple-II-plus disk (presently I can handle text files produced by the Screenwriter or Applewriter programs), or sent over the wires as soon as I finish getting a modem installed. If you don't have a computer available, or if your article is very long, send me a copy and info on how the rest of ADF can get copies. Or I can let you know how much it would cost to xerox it and send it out as a supplement in the next *The Druids' Progress* mailing.

If you are mixing a letter for publication with one for private communication, please mark the different texts in an obvious fashion, so I don't accidentally wind up printing something you wanted kept confidential!

What sorts of things should people send in? Well obviously, reports on your own research and experiences, as mentioned in the "Research Suggestions" section of this issue, as well as other matters of direct application to the understanding and enjoyment of Druidism.

As time goes by, we'll be branching out into less scholarly and more artistic, psychological, political, magical and spiritual topics, and we can expect a reasonable amount of controversy to develop. I'm looking forward to it! If we all remain committed to the search for truth and beauty, we can argue our heads off and still remain friends and colleagues. It should be fun.

### Research Suggestions

In order to accurately reconstruct Paleopagan Druidism, a great deal of research needs to be accomplished. Simultaneously, work needs to be done on finding the best methods for adapting what we learn from this research so we can combine it with what we know from other sources, in order to create a truly healthy and successful Neopagan religion. Here's a partial listing of what needs to be done:

We need to translate the work of Dumézil and other European scholars of Indo-European Studies, as well as the (predominately) Slavic and Finno-Ugric writings about the Baltic survivals. We already have a full professor of Slavic Studies willing to coordinate the translations from Russian, Czech, Polish, etc. We need more people who can read and translate various European languages, ancient and modern. The translators will have to track down most of the materials themselves, working through subject searches in libraries with collections of foreign academic books and journals. Future issues of DP will list folks who have volunteered to work with specific languages, as well as titles being worked on or which we need.

We need to compile a list of all the classical Greek and Roman references to the Druids and their colleagues. Most of these are already available in English in the Loeb series. Piggott made a good start at listing them, but we need to make our own anthology, so that these texts can be compared to our other sources.

We need a list of all the early "Lives" of the Christian missionaries which discuss European Paleopagan clergy. Some of these may still be available only in Greek, Latin or Old Church Slavonic, and we will have to make our own translations of the relevant parts. Similarly, we need to compile all the old Irish, Scots, and Welsh references to the Druids and their practices. Most of these are in English by now, but we'll have to check the literalness of the available translations. The early Vedic materials, especially the *Rig Veda*, have a wealth of useful information, which needs to be extracted from the best of the current translations, organized, then compared with the original Sanscrit.

Naturally, we should put together a bibliography of reliable books and articles on these topics written by modern scholars, and make any necessary translations. I don't want to go any further back than 1930 or so (except for genuine "classics" that have not been significantly outdated by later research). Too much writing on Druidism has been clouded by romantic notions from before the turn of the century; it's time we acknowledged that more solid research has been done in the last thirty years than in the last three hundred. The progress in Druidic Studies has been part of the knowledge explosion like every other scholarly area. We'll be publishing suggested titles for people to read in every issue of *The Druids' Progress*, and they should spark some lively arguments in the Feedback Department.

I see a major function of ADF (especially during our first few years) as networking dozens of paid and nonpaid scholars together from many different fields. Those of you who have contacted me previously, as well as those just joining, should send me a brief (250 words or less) letter, suitable for publication, outlining: the research you have already done, and which you would like to do; the translations you have made or are willing to make of relevant texts; papers or books you've written on these topics (and the cost to the rest of us for copies); the sorts of data you would like to receive; recommended readings at various levels of expertise; and the precise names and mailing addresses (with phones?) that other members of ADF should use to contact you. Even those of you reading this who have no interest in creating new religions, will find this networking aspect of ADF of benefit to your personal research (there's nothing quite like having an interdisciplinary crowd of friendly critics on tap).

Here (in no particular order of importance) are some specific questions that need to be answered: What were the specific color attributions for the various castes of the different IE societies, and for levels within those castes? For example, we know that white, red and brown were assigned to (respectively) the clergy, warriors and providers in the Celtic cultures. Green, however seems to have been used for both the providers and for the diviners within the Druid caste. Blue was sometimes used for providers, and sometimes for warriors (at least among the Norse), and folk tradition assigns it to the Bards within the Druids. Was it also used as an identifying color by the Skalds, or the musicians/poets of other IE cultures? What colors did healers use? Weather workers?

Why did the clergy caste remain powerful among the Celts (at least until the Romans showed up) and so weak among the Germans? How comparatively powerful was it among the Balts, Slavs, and archaic Greeks and Romans?

What were the precise training methods used to transmit the oral literature of the clergy caste? Do the Vedic and Irish sources provide enough data to reconstruct these techniques?

What role, if any, did the clergy play in terms of "low magic" -- healing, hexing, influencing the weather, etc. Did they only work on those matters involving the welfare of their entire tribe, or were they available for private consultation? If the latter, did they mostly help the warrior caste and ignore the providers as individuals?

A common mythological pattern among the IE peoples tells of how the two upper classes conquered the lowest (in India, the three then went on to conquer a fourth: the Dravadians/Sudras). Just how much class prejudice or snobbery was there back then? Were people who did magic for the lower classes considered full clergy, slummers, or outlaws?

What were the common liturgical patterns used in various sorts of rituals by the different IE cultures? Were similar deities always worshipped with similar rites, or were cultural variables more important?

It appears that ash groves were used to substitute for oak groves in those areas where oaks did not grow well. What other tree substitutions were made, and why? What ritual roles were played by other trees, such as willows (associated with women's magic?), elms or maples?

What about the role of women in the IE clergy? For that matter, since most of the mythology we have left is "epic" (i.e., macho) poetry of the warrior castes, how much can we reconstruct of the actual IE beliefs about goddesses? Wendy O'Flaherty has written what seems to be a good book (see "Recommended Reading" section) on goddesses in ancient India, with references to other IE cultures, but most of the recent writing on goddess worship in ancient Europe has been far more reflective of current sexual politics than of modern scholarly techniques. Who can we trust as honest in this area?

Naturally, folks will want to send articles on other topics. Those of you who have researched archaic religious poetry, for example, could send brief discussions of meters, rhyme schemes, alliteration techniques, etc. These would have to be done in both the original languages and in English transliteration and translation, with examples of new poems (they don't have to be great) demonstrating the forms, so that the other poets among us can try our hands at writing invocations, etc. We could also use theoretical and practical articles on polytheology, ritual techniques, pastoral counseling, training methods, and other areas of interest to Neopagan Druids.

Perhaps it will help if I mention things I don't want to see: theories about a Universal Ancient Matriarchy, discussions assuming the supposed antiquity of Neopagan Witchcraft, ravings about "Aryanism," colorful tales about "shamanism" using the word in its currently vague and sloppy meaning, historical essays that take Graves, Stone or Morganwg seriously as sources...

You get the idea. The whole stress of the ADF is going to be on excellence in every area, and good scholarship is going to be one of the major roots of our tree. We simply can't afford to slip into the romantic nonsense and revisionist history that have characterized most other Neopagan religions. This doesn't mean that we have to be hidebound conservatives in our research, but it does mean that we should plan on keeping friendly but critical eyes on each other's work. Let's keep our feet firmly on the ground while we're up there flying through the skies of our creative imaginations.

#### Recommended Reading

Littleton, C. Scott: *The New Comparative Mythology, An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*. Third edition, Univ. of California Press, 1980, 8.95. This is simply the best critical introduction to Dumézil's work, with an extensive bibliography of relevant books and articles by Dumézil and others. Because of this listing, I'm only going to mention one other of Dumézil's books by name here.

Dumézil, Georges: *The Stakes of the Warrior*. Too recent to be included in Littleton's bibliography, this appears to be an updated version of one of his most important works, *The Destiny of the Warrior*. Univ. of Calif. Press, 1983, 14.95.

O'Flaherty, Wendy: *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*. She gives an extensive discussion of the sexual politics of the IE myth system using sound research and a clear presentation. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980, 9.95. She's also the author of *Shiva, the Erotic Ascetic* as well as a recent translation of the *Rig Veda*.

Piggott, Stuart: *The Druids*. Quite simply, the best book written on the topic so far. Piggott covers the archeological, classical and historical evidence concerning the Druids, both Paleopagan and Mesopagan, in a very antiromantic style. Despite his testy attitude, this is one book I have always made required reading for would-be Druids. Originally published in 1968, as part of the Ancient Peoples and Places Series from Thames & Hudson, this is now available as a small paperback from Pelican (at 6.95 or so). The series, by the way, is well worth investigating, since many of its titles (Powell's *The Celts*, Chadwick's *Celtic Britain*, Arbman's *The Vikings*, Gimbutas' *The Balts*, Davidson's *Pagan Scandinavia*, Henderson's *The Picts*, etc.) are extremely valuable and trustworthy guides to further study.

Niel, Fernand: *The Mysteries of Stonehenge*. This is a remarkably good introduction to the realities of Stonehenge. He makes it very clear that the Druids had nothing to do with building the place, and gives a fascinating account of its actual construction. Avon Press, New York, 1975, 1.75.

Adler, Margot: *Drawing Down the Moon*. This is the best book that anyone has published about the Neopagan movements in America. But note that the discussions of Reformed Druidism are not necessarily reflective of what is going to be done with ADF. Beacon Press, Boston, 1981, 8.95.

Bonewits, P.E.I.: *Real Magic*. Obviously, I'm going to recommend my own book as a basic introduction to the theory and practice of magic. I've included an extensive bibliography of other titles that will also be helpful. Creative Arts Book Co., Berkeley, 1979, 7.95.

Ross, Anne: *Pagan Celtic Britain*. An expensive hardcover, this is nonetheless an invaluable introduction to ancient Celtic culture. She discusses goddesses, sacred birds and animals, the cult of the severed head and other topics not usually covered in any detail. Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1967, 25.00. Ross was also the consultant for:

Place, Robin: *The Celts*. This is officially a children's book from the "Peoples of the Past" series (Macdonald Educational, London, 1981). The series also includes *The Vikings*, *The Normans*, *The Saxons*, and other titles. Each is a richly illustrated (large pictures on literally every page) discussion of daily life among ancient peoples. Place's book is weak on the Druids, but the detailed pictures of clothing, houses, tools and weapons, hairstyles, etc. are well worth the price (usually 6.00-10.00 in the U.S.).

Friedrich, Paul: *Proto-Indo-European Trees*. Primarily a linguistic monograph, this is the only book that covers in detail the various species of trees known to have had names in the PIE language. He includes a great deal of religious and symbolic details without always realizing that he is doing so. This should be in every Neopagan Druid's library. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970, 15.00?

## Miscellaneous Notes on This and That

I'm still ambivalent about whether I should make *The Druids' Progress* available through ordinary subscriptions, or if I should send copies only to people who are actively involved in the reconstruction process. Such a decision involves, among other factors, a trade-off between the advantage of having increased funding for the project, vs. the disadvantage of allowing less interaction with actual participants. Feedback from the rest of you will be appreciated. I will probably send exchange copies to other Druidic publications, and a handful of scholarly newsletters, but not to very many others. Production and mailing costs are simply too high to allow me to send out dozens of extra copies.

The funding on this project, as I mentioned on page one, is slim, to say the least. As more and more letters come in from people, I'm beginning to realize just how big a job this could turn into. It could easily grow to require forty or fifty hours per week. I'm willing to put that kind of time in, but my landlord, phone company and local grocery store want me to pay in cash, not mistletoe. I've spent too many years as a starving scholar to want to slip into that situation again. The money that gets donated is being spent on (a) research costs, (b) production costs for DP, and (c) keeping me alive and healthy. People who fear that I may be living a lavish lifestyle will be welcome to inspect my digs, and I will probably print regular financial reports. Those of you who can afford to donate more than the suggested minimum of twenty dollars per year (and Brigid bless the few of you who have already done so) will be warmly appreciated.

As for the structure of ADF, we haven't got one yet. Eventually I plan to take out papers as a "nonprofit religious association," but that won't be really necessary for a while. I do want the emphasis to be on maximum autonomy for local groves, consistent with maintaining some sort of organizational identity. As time goes by, we will work out all the organizational details necessary to keep ADF going.

One of our supporting members wrote, *Nil tu ard-draoi agam*, ("you aren't my archdruid!"), so I should probably say something about that. I'm calling myself ADF's Archdruid simply because (a) I've called myself an Archdruid for ten years in the old RDNA, and (b) ADF is my baby. I suppose I could say, "it's my football, and my backyard, so we'll play by my rules," but that's not really what I'm trying to communicate. I've started up ADF specifically because a number of people have told me that they think I'm qualified to do so, that is, because they respect my scholarly and spiritual authority. That's a hard burden to carry (especially for someone who hates gurus!), but I'm going to do my best. On the other paw, I've seen far too many Neopagan organizations grow to the point where the membership "democratically" threw out the very founders themselves. That will not happen to ADF. People either trust me or they don't. If they do, then I'm their Archdruid, and I'll listen to their feedback. If they don't, then I'll be glad to steer them towards (or help them found) other groups. Considering how few the perks are, I think I'm entitled (you'll pardon the expression) to call myself *Ard-Draoi, Ar nDraiocht Fein*.