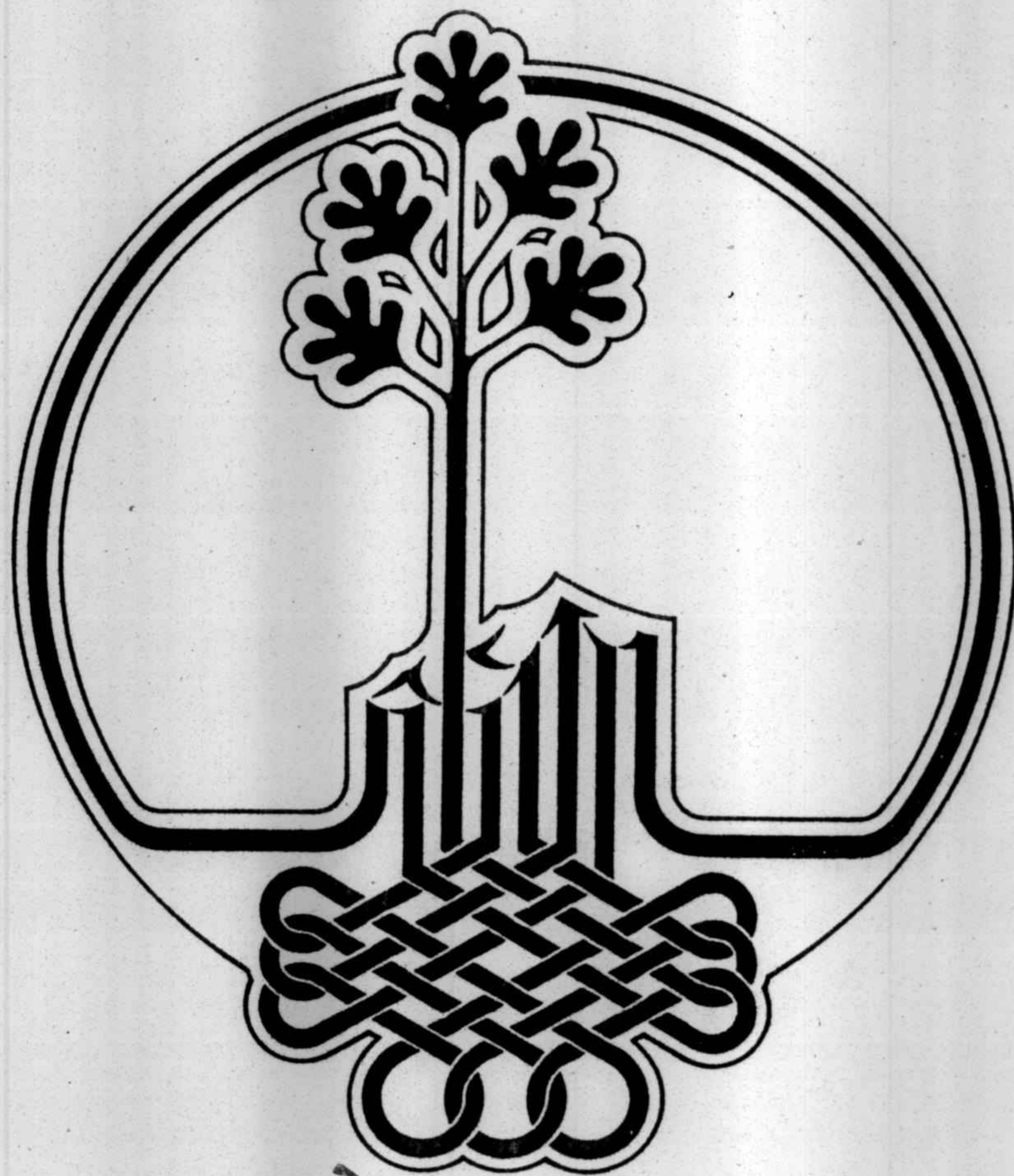


# The druids' Progress

Report Number two



Ar ndraíocht féin

From Ar n̄draíocht Féin ("ADF"), Post Office Box 456, New York, NY, USA 10034. The Druids' Progress ("DP") is published three or four times per year and is sent primarily to the subscribing members of ADF. Unless otherwise noted, all contents outside of the Feedback Department have been created by, and are (c) 1984 by, P. E. I. Bonewits. All items created by other parties are Copyright by them.

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Our official ADF logo, shown on the front cover, was drawn by Jim Odbert, from an idea by PEIB (based on a Scots clan badge).

*Special thanks are due to Gavin & Yvonne Frost  
for their assistance with the production of this issue*

*Neep-neep notes:* This issue was produced on an antique Apple II+ (Fnord), an IBM PC, an IBM clone, and a Leading Edge (Mitsui O'Kelly), using Screenwriter II and WordStar. Thank you Jim Chin for making the translation from Apple DOS to MS-DOS. The Irish Gaelic type faces were created on the MS-DOS machines with Fancy Font (anyone who already has Runic, Sanscrit, etc. FF faces, please send copies!).

## A Word from the Archdruid



I'd like to thank all of you who have been waiting patiently for Report Number Two of *The Druids' Progress*. Here it is, and I hope you'll feel it was worth the wait.

Because of the inordinate delay between the first issue of DP and this one, and since some of you have been waiting months for any kind of a personal letter from me, I think some explanations are in order. Much of the following may be familiar to you, since it's an update of my mass mailing of last fall. So I'm going to start it with a warning and end it with a similar notice.

*((Reprint Alert!))* Last summer I started a new job as the chief technical writer for a company that sells computer hardware and software. As is common in small companies in this field, I had periods of relative calm (in which I have free time to work on more important matters, like ADF) alternating with periods of 70-hour workweeks when I hadn't the time to go home and even read my mail, let alone answer any of it!

Last fall I had hoped that the project I was working on would be over by the first week of October, at which point I was supposed to have a few days off, when I could work on ADF. This did not actually happen. They just came up with more projects for me to do. I then got caught by some dental and veterinary emergencies which made it impossible for me to quit the job. I seemed to be caught on the same treadmill that so many of you have talked about. *((End Reprint Alert))*

The only reason I was able to get the time together to input stuff on disk (including a letter to volunteers and this issue of DP) was through the clever ploy of getting sick and having to stay home with the flu. Unfortunately, it was a real flu.

All this convinces me more than ever that it's necessary to develop the Neopagan community to the point where we can support fulltime clergypeople. I'd have the fourth or fifth issue out by now if it hadn't been for such trivialities as paying the rent or buying groceries.

But this is not a fundraising plea. I'm simply trying to explain how weeks and months can go by without anything visible emanating from me. On those rare occasions when I've had the time and resources to write, either on DP or to the members personally, I've been totally frazzled.

So what's the situation at this point? Well, I think I'm going to be able to work out a method for sending my letters on tape cassettes to volunteers who will type them up and mail them out. I'm a very slow typist, and I can dictate correspondence much faster than I can write it.

As for transcribing the long letters and articles people send in for DP, I think I have a solution that a few of you will recognize -- I'm going to make the Feedback part of DP a type of "A.P.A." APAs are "Amateur Press Associations" common in Science Fiction Fandom, and basically consist of round-robin letters that are collated and mailed at regular intervals. Each participant produces camera-ready copy of his or her "zine" along with enough xerox/printing money to make copies for the whole mailing list (or else ships in pre-printed copies, ready for collating, which won't be practical for us most of the time).

I'll go into more detail on this at the beginning of this issue's Feedback section. The bottom line is that an APA-style Feedback section would take some of the work off of my shoulders and spread it out among those of you who wish to communicate with each other. The next issue of DP can come out much more quickly, if a lot of you send in zines, since I could simply make DP#3 mostly your introductory zines, and let you do some of the talking for an issue (besides, I already have it half written).

Please bear with me folks. It's obvious that I bit off more than I could chew, when I tried to combine working on the Druid Reconstruction Project with starting a fulltime corporate job. I think the APA/Feedback idea might be a solution for getting DP out more frequently, and the tape recorded correspondence method might solve that problem as well.

As for the problem with my job taking my time and energy away from ADF, I've come up with an answer -- quitting the job. By the time you receive this issue, I will be once again working part time as a computer consultant. This will lower my income, but at this point it's a price I'm willing to pay.

That's it for now. Thank you all very much for your patience and good thoughts. Now, onward...

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## The Circle System of A.D.F.

### Some Thoughts on the Training of Neopagan Clergy:

The overwhelming majority of religions on this planet require many years of hard study and training before a woman or a man is admitted into the ranks of the clergy. This study and training usually includes not only the acquisition of magical and religious knowledge, but also the mastering of skills in such diverse areas as counseling, teaching, art, music, drama, dance and the basics of what each culture has in the way of science and technology.

Among the Paleopagan Druids, this training may have taken as long as twenty years. In the modern western world, outside of a few fundamentalist denominations, this training is done through several years (as many as ten or twelve in some groups) of college level classes and experiences.

However, for several reasons, there is no universally (or even commonly) accepted system of qualifications for Neopagan clergyhood. Most Neopagan magical/religious groups are outgrowths of the 60's counterculture, and they thus have strong egalitarian dogmas. The idea that clergy could be "better" than the members of their congregations, in any way at all, has been repugnant enough to be nearly "heretical." The Protestant Christian ideal of every person (or at least every man) being their own minister has been accepted by many Neopagans without examination of the historical or magical causes behind the creation of that ideal.

As I have mentioned before, Neopagans have a tendency to be strong individualists and are often extremely distrustful of both leaders and organized political structures. Most Neopagan groups prefer to stress informal collective decision making. Such factors are especially prevalent in the more self-consciously feminist Neopagan groups, such as those now calling themselves the "Dianic Craft." This is understandable, since the overwhelming majority of mainstream religious hierarchies have been grossly male-chauvanistic, at least insofar as the exercise of overt power has been concerned. (Oddly enough, the religious groups that have been run by the worst MCPs are often the ones most dependent upon the support of and covert power manipulations by their women members!)

In any event, thanks to these and other factors, the very concepts of religious organizational structure and of specialized qualifications for clergyhood have been discarded by many people as male plots against women. Most Neopagan groups, because they tend to be supportive of the feminist movement, have gone unquestioningly along with this assessment.

Most Neopagans who become priests or priestesses do not attain their positions because they have studied, mastered and then demonstrated specific skills relevant to their chosen roles. Rather, they become members of the clergy because (a) they have belonged to the group for a minimum length of time, (b) their house is the one everyone meets at, (c) they are so nice that nobody wants to hurt their feelings by denying them a higher rank than they really deserve, and/or (d) they have gotten *very* close to the High Priest/ess.

Although individual organizations occasionally have clearly defined and strictly enforced standards for their own clergy, those standards are seldom applied outside of such groups. And having any kind of standards at all is the exception, not the rule.

Does it matter? For nondruiddic groups, perhaps not. Many Neopagan traditions seem to get along just fine (or think they do) without a highly trained clergy at all. A surprisingly large number of Neopagan clergy have become competent through sheer experience (the old "sink or swim" method). Yet being a priestess or priest is not an easy task, as most of us have found out. In order to keep up with the demands made upon us, we wind up needing the skills and knowledge of magicians, psychics, polytheologists, therapists, scientists, artists, dramatists, politicians, public relations experts and healers. Juggling all these activities, when our training was haphazard at best, makes for a frustrating and difficult "career" in the Neopagan clergyhood.

Now add in the fact that Neopagans currently have a strong prejudice against paying their clergy any money at all, let alone enough money to allow them to function as fulltime religious workers. This forces us to study and practice our clergyhood on a parttime basis, usually while holding down fulltime jobs in the mundane world.

Put it all together, and you have a splendid recipe for creating frazzled, scattered, incompetent, but very sincere priests and priestesses who, if they take their responsibilities at all seriously, suffer professional burnout after only a few years. They then leave the community, taking with them what knowledge and training they *have* managed to accumulate.

I've suffered this sort of burnout myself, and seen several of my fellow clergy go down in flames. I would rather this did not happen with ADF. It's a topic I've been thinking about for many years and which I've discussed at great length with my sibling clergyfolk.

Now here's my plan.....

### Going around in Circles:

To begin with, I'm stealing the idea of using "Circles" of development and commitment from the old Church of All Worlds, who in turn got it from Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* (see Margot Ader's *Drawing Down the Moon* for details). Everyone's familiar with the idea of "inner circles" that secretly run supposedly democratic groups. In point of fact, every large organization is actually run by a small number of people, regardless of what they may tell the general public. This is due to factors involving human communication capabilities and varying degrees of dedication, as well as with the commonly mentioned (and less ethical) motives of greed and power-hunger.

With ADF, I want everything to be as open and aboveboard as possible. We're starting out by stating that our structure is one of circles within circles. The more hard work, dedication and time a person is willing to put into ADF, the further they will progress towards the inner circles where increasing power and responsibility will eventually be wielded. But we will never put pressure upon anyone to go further or faster than they are ready to go.

I could have chosen other symbols for this system. Ladders, for example, or even climbing a tree (that's both Druidic and Shamanistic), would provide an image that would be very heirarchical. But such climbing images also imply (a) that the people "on top" are spiritually better than those "below" them, and (b) that only a few people can be on any given level at a time.

Or we could use a pyramidal structure, which allows more people to be on the lower levels, with fewer and fewer near the top. But that symbolism would make some folks think we were running an imitation of the Catholic Church, or even (Danu forbid!) a "pyramid scheme."

The advantage of using the image of circles within circles is that *all of the circles can be viewed as being on the same horizontal plane*. As mortals, we all stand upon the same Earth, and no matter how high a tree or building we might climb, the stars are just as far above us as they always have been.

It's probable that many people in the inner circles will be more "spiritually evolved" than those in the outer circles, at least if our training system is doing what it's supposed to do. But it's also entirely likely that some people will deliberately choose to stay in the outer circles for personal reasons that have nothing to do with their spiritual development. For this reason, we're going to try to avoid referring to "higher" and "lower" circles, even if we do use a numbering system for them. Instead, we'll call them "inner" and "outer" circles, and talk about "inward" and "outward" movement between circles.

Currently I'm thinking in terms of five Circles, the Fourth and Fifth of which are now unpopulated. The Circles indicate particular degrees of commitment, of knowledge acquired, of experience gained, and of skills mastered.

The First Circle is composed of people who have dedicated themselves to learning about Paganism in general and Druidism in particular. Most of them do not intend to study for the clergyhood, but they do desire both Neopagan fellowship and a course of Druidic study. This is the Circle that, ten or twenty years from now, will constitute the bulk of our congregations.

The Second Circle is for those who have decided that they want to take a greater role in the affairs of a local grove, or to organize one if none exists in their area. Some of the members of this Circle will be preparing themselves to become priests and priestesses through studying for the Third Circle.

Membership in the Third Circle will be a rough equivalent of having gained a Bachelor's Degree at a good university, and will also be the minimum Circle for holding clergy credentials from ADF. Third Circle members will be running local groves and performing all the duties of the clergy, including training members of the outer circles.

Preparation for the Fourth and Fifth Circles will parallel studies for Master's and Doctoral Degrees. Further Circles will correspond to "post-doctoral" work.

(Where do I fit into this system? As an individual Druid, I consider myself to be in the Third Circle, with the Fourth still a couple of years away. As the Archdruid of ADF, I'm in the unnumbered "innermost Circle" -- but not at the Center. That spot is reserved for the More-than-Mortal.)

Now it's time for some further details on the training system. We'll look first from the direction of further defining the Circles themselves, and then examine the Study Tracks that run through every Circle.

### Details on the Circles:

#### *First Circle:*

Entry Requirements: There are no special requirements for joining the First Circle, other than a commitment to working with your advisor (for the time being, that's me), a desire to learn, and a willingness to work hard. Folks who wish to function in the First Circle should notify me, and perform some sort of self-dedication ritual (see elsewhere in this issue).

Study Program: consists of (a) keeping a journal; (b) reading and discussing introductory books and attending introductory classes in the various Tracks; and (c) beginning practical work in some of the Tracks.

Minimum Duration & Testing: People are expected to normally remain in this Circle for at least one year, and there is no regular testing period for remaining in this Circle.

Graduation Requirements: (a) achieving satisfactory results on testing for all 13 Tracks; (b) making a written or oral report on your First Circle experiences, with a self-evaluation of your progress; (c) showing and discussing your journal; (d) making a formal request for advancement; and (e) working with your advisor(s) and group (if any) to create an appropriate Second Circle initiation.

#### *Second Circle:*

Study Program: (a) more advanced exploration in the various Tracks; (b) continuing your journal; (c) assisting any First Circle members in your geographical area. You may choose a Specialty while in this Circle, such as healing, teaching, counseling, leading worship, divination, movement awareness, etc.

Minimum Duration & Testing: Members would normally stay in the Second Circle for at least two years. After two years, you must either retake the tests that got you into the Second Circle, or else take those for the Third.

You can try for the Third at any time after this, but if you choose to stay in the Second Circle, you must requalify every other year.

Graduation Requirements: (a) achieving satisfactory results on testing for all 13 Tracks; (b) making a written or oral report on your Second Circle experiences, with a self-evaluation of your progress; (c) showing and discussing your journal; (d) making a formal request for advancement; and (e) working with your advisor(s) and group (if any) to create an appropriate Third Circle initiation.

### *Third Circle:*

Study Program: (a) advanced study and skill gaining in the various Tracks; (b) continuing your journal; (c) assisting First & Second Circle members in your area; (d) teaching at least one class -- on the topic of your choice -- every year you stay in this Circle; (e) leading private and public ceremonies, including general worship celebrations and rites of passage; (f) changing your life's pattern dramatically -- going on the road if you've been settled, settling if you've been a wanderer, a drastic change of occupation, etc.; (g) choosing a Specialty if you haven't already.

Minimum Duration & Testing: Members would normally stay in this Circle for at least three years. After three years, you must either retake the tests that got you into the Third Circle, or else take those for the Fourth. You can try for the Fourth at any time after this, but if you choose to stay in the Third Circle, you must requalify every three years.

Graduation Requirements: (a) achieving satisfactory results on testing for all 13 Tracks; (b) making a written or oral report on your Third Circle experiences, with a self-evaluation of your progress; (c) showing and discussing your journal; (d) having successfully run a healthy congregation and having performed all the routine duties of a priest/ess for at least two years; (e) making a formal request for advancement; and (f) creating an appropriate Fourth Circle initiation.

### *Fourth Circle:*

Study Program: (a) continuing advanced study and skills training; (b) assisting outer Circle members in their work; (c) spending at least one month in residency with your advisor; (d) teaching at least one class in your specialty on a continuing basis, and one other class every year you stay in this Circle; (e) continuing to perform the usual clerical duties; (f) intensive practice of your Specialty on a professional basis; and (g) helping to run the national activities of ADF, as well as leading and advising one or more groves throughout their time in this Circle.

Minimum Duration & Testing: Members would normally stay in this Circle for at least four years. After four years, you must either retake the tests that got you into the Fourth Circle, or else take those for the Fifth. You can try for the Fifth at any time after this, but if you choose to stay in the Fourth Circle, you must requalify every four years.

Graduation Requirements: (a) achieving satisfactory results on tests for all 13 Tracks; (b) making a report on your Fourth Circle experiences and self-evaluation; (c) writing or producing a thesis on your Specialty; (d) having trained at least one fully qualified successor for your grove(s) into the Third Circle; (e) making a formal petition for advancement; and (f) creating your ordination rite for the Fifth Circle.

### *Fifth Circle:*

Study Program: (a) writing or producing a thesis that ties together all your studies, in all 13 Tracks; (b) assisting outer Circle members; (c) practicing your Specialty professionally; (d) supervising the activities of several groves; (e) helping to run ADF's international activities; and (f) continuing to grow.

There are no minimum duration, testing or graduation requirements for the Fifth Circle, since the Circles that would be inner ones to this are not yet defined.

### **Details on the Study Tracks:**

Here are the Tracks as I currently conceive of them: (1) Survival and Physical Health, (2) Therapy and Counseling, (3) Communication, (4) Psi, (5) Social Sciences, (6) Physical and Biological Sciences, (7) Movement Awareness and Discipline, (8) Art and Music, (9) Drama and Liturgy, (10) Philosophy and Metaphysics, (11) Comparative Religion and Mythology, (12) Mysticism and Altered States of Consciousness, and (13) Interdisciplinary Studies.

Be aware that, although I'll say "you" throughout this description, and talk about the needs of clergypeople, not all of these references will be relevant to every one of you reading this, since some of you may choose to remain in the First or Second Circles. Right now, and throughout the early years of ADF, a majority of you are at least interested in studying for the clergy. Those of you who want to stay in the First and Second Circles will become a higher proportion of the total membership as time goes by.

You should also note that as I use the term herein, "exploration" can consist of reading books, attending classes, having an apprenticeship, etc.

*Track 1 -- Survival and Physical Health:*

First Circle: you explore your own physical environment (urban, rural or wilderness), in at least two areas of study. You could learn how to do simple plumbing, or repair bicycles, or grow a garden, or find edible wild plants. You analyze your personal work habits and interests, and explore available opportunities for developing marketable job skills. Also, you analyze your health and nutritional patterns, and begin some form of regular physical exercise (which can be from Track 7).

Second Circle: you explore a different environment than the one you usually live in. You begin efforts to use your job skills to find satisfying, ethical and growth-oriented employment (working for yourself or others). Also, you begin to get rid of harmful physical addictions, and continue to exercise and practice good nutrition.

Third Circle: you visit a brand new environment and learn its survival skills. You earn enough money through right livelihood to take care of your needs, without interfering with the rest of your life. You continue your exercise and nutritional work, and rid yourself of any remaining physical addictions.

Fourth Circle: you learn total adaptation to a foreign environment (through programs such as "Outward Bound," for example). You develop sufficient economic prosperity to be able to devote most of your time and energy to noneconomic activities.

Fifth Circle: you take full responsibility for the safety and training of others in an environment new to them.

Purpose: to make you confident and competent in dealing with the "Earth Plane" levels of reality, whether you are fixing machines, living off the land, programming computers, or raising hogs. Clergypeople should be healthy, well "grounded" and practical, if they expect to be of any value to those who ask for help.

*Track 2 -- Therapy and Counseling:*

First Circle: you explore at least three systems/theories of therapy.

Second Circle: you join a therapy group of some sort, or receive therapy as an individual. You explore one type of therapy in depth and three others to the point of familiarity (any or all may be the same as in the First Circle). You explore ways in which your concurrent studies in Divination techniques (Track 4) can be applied to counseling.

Third Circle: you develop counseling skills through taking at least three practical classes, enrolling in a training program, being apprenticed to a counselor, etc. You develop specific techniques for applying divinitory insights to counseling.

Fourth Circle: you counsel others on a frequent basis.

Fifth Circle: you teach counseling techniques to members of the outer circles.

Purpose: to give you both theoretical and practical training in counseling others, as well as to attain psychological health yourself. Therapy of one sort or another is an integral part of any clergyperson's activities.

### *Track 3 -- Communication:*

First Circle: you explore the history, techniques and theories of the general field of communications, in such areas as linguistics, cybernetics, nonverbal communication, dialects, mass media, etc.

Second Circle: you continue the general studies begun in the First Circle. You decide upon a foreign language to learn and begin. You obtain access to some sort of computer and begin to become computer literate.

Third Circle: you continue your foreign language studies to the point of being able to recite prayers and invocations. You continue your general and computer studies, developing practical skills as in Track 2 for this Circle.

Fourth Circle: you continue your foreign language studies to the point of being able to compose and perform entire rituals, and to hold a normal conversation with a native speaker. You continue the study and mastery of other communication skills as appropriate.

Fifth Circle: you continue your foreign language studies to the point of genuine fluency. You teach this language and other communication skills, and may begin a second language.

Purpose: to give you both practical and theoretical training in clear and effective communication. A large number of the problems clergypeople have to deal with stem from faulty communication, and skills in this area will tie in directly with counseling activities.

Foreign language study is required (a) to give you a different worldview in a way that no other method can duplicate; (b) to enable you to be effective in working with people from more than one culture; (c) to weaken the cultural chauvinism so common to English speakers; and (d) for magical and religious reasons outlined in previous essays.

Computer study is required because, within twenty years, being computer illiterate will be as much of a handicap as being text illiterate is now. You should, at the very least, know something about a part of your environment that is going to have a major impact on the lives of your congregation. And once you learn how to log-on to national databases, you'll find computers a remarkably effective tool for your own research.

### *Track 4 -- Psi:*

This is divided into three subtracks: magic (active psychic skills), divination (passive psychic skills), and parapsychology.

First Circle: you explore lightly (say, one class or book each) three systems of magic and three of divination. You explore the basic history and techniques of parapsychology.

Second Circle: you gain a working knowledge of one system of magic, one system of divination, and one specific aspect of parapsychology.

Third Circle: you repeat the activities of the Second Circle, but with different systems and aspect.

Fourth Circle: you combine the two systems of magic or begin to invent a new one. You combine the two systems of divination or begin to invent a new one. You design and perform at least three original parapsychological experiments.

Fifth Circle: you continue study and creation as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to enable you to perceive and control the energies present at ceremonies; to help you to use both magic and divination in your healings and other spells; and to give you traditional, personal and scientific awareness and mastery of the supposedly "supernatural" aspects of religion.

*Track 5 -- Social Sciences:*

This Track includes psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science and history.

First Circle: you explore at least three areas lightly.

Second Circle: you choose three areas and take at least one class in each.

Third Circle: you take another two or three classes in one of the sciences, which should be related to your Specialty.

Fourth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to give you background and training in the social sciences, and to give you awareness of cultural conditioning and the dynamics of individual and group behavior.

*Track 6 -- Physical and Biological Sciences:*

This Track includes physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, medicine, etc.

First Circle: you explore at least three areas lightly. You study the ecology of your local environment (can be the same as Track 1 work) and begin recycling at home.

Second Circle: explore a different science, learn more local ecology, and participate in ecological and/or alternative energy activities.

Third Circle: you take another two or three classes in one of the sciences, which should be related to your Specialty.

Fourth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to make sure that you aren't ignorant about mainstream materialistic science. Not only will you have access to useful information, but you will also gain two polytheological advantages: you'll be able to deal with hostile critics who may claim that Neopagans are antiscientific, and you'll avoid inventing spiritual teachings that conflict with the major findings of the mainstream sciences (such as evolution or heliocentrism). The study of ecological principles will have a direct application to your lifestyle and an inevitable effect upon your spiritual growth.

### *Track 7 -- Movement Awareness and Discipline:*

This Track includes dance, gymnastics, martial arts, hatha yoga, tantra, etc.

First Circle: you explore two different systems, and start paying attention to how you move your body.

Second Circle: you pick a system and begin intensive physical study (1-2 hours per week for at least a year).

Third Circle: you continue intensive practice in the first system, reaching whatever is traditionally considered an "intermediate" level (such as a "brown belt" for example). You choose a second one to begin.

Fourth Circle: you continue work to become "advanced" at your first system and "intermediate" at your second.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to make you more aware of your own body's movements (and those of others), and to improve the amount of selfcontrol you have. This Track ties in well with several others -- Track 1 (exercise and survival), Track 2 (physical therapy), Track 3 (nonverbal communication, body language, etc.), Track 6 (physiology), Track 9 (ritual dance), etc. Thus, training in Track 7 can frequently be used to fill requirements in the other Tracks.

### *Track 8 -- Art and Music:*

This Track includes drawing, painting, stained-glass work, pottery, sculpture, singing, poetry, playing an instrument, etc. Artforms covered in other Tracks, such as dance or drama, are not included herein, since the emphasis in this Track is on nonmoving artforms and music.

First Circle: you start dabbling in several areas. You explore at least two arts within each the two "types" covered in this Track -- static arts and musical arts.

Second Circle: you begin intensive study of an art within either of the two types.

Third Circle: you continue your intensive study in the art you chose in the Second Circle, and begin intensive study in an art within the other type. For example, if you chose woodcarving (a static art) in the Second Circle, you might choose drumming (a musical art) in the Third. Or if you chose harping in the Second, you might choose embroidery in the Third.

Fourth Circle: you continue intensive study of both artforms, working on ways to integrate them into your liturgical and other activities.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to enable you to appreciate and create two and three dimensional images and sounds, which can be of value in liturgical, therapeutic, communicatory and other clerical activities. It should be combined with other Tracks to cover requirements in both, such as by studying musical therapy (Track 2), drawing your own Tarot deck or carving your own runestones (Track 4), playing music for ceremonial dances (Track 7), painting stage scenery or embroidering vestments (Track 9), etc.

#### *Track 9 -- Drama and Liturgy:*

First Circle: you begin a theater class or join a theatrical group. You explore at least two different kinds of liturgical activity (weddings, funerals, puberty rites, etc.).

Second Circle: you begin intensive study in drama and/or liturgy.

Third Circle: you create and perform a semipublic ritual of a dramatic nature, at least once a year.

Fourth Circle: you create a body of ceremonies for most necessary occasions and (when possible) perform each of them, keeping detailed notes on the results.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to give you the knowledge and the training to perform one of the primary functions of the clergy -- the conducting of rituals. Oddly enough, this is the one area in which Neopagan clergy are often weakest.

#### *Track 10 -- Philosophy and Metaphysics:*

First Circle: you briefly explore three systems.

Second Circle: you pick a particular topic of interest and explore what three or more systems have to say about it.

Third Circle: you pick another topic and explore it intensely.

Fourth Circle: you write or produce a work of new, creative thought based on the topic(s).

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to give you solid intellectual grounds for whatever spiritual beliefs you may be creating or discovering through the rest of this program.

*Track 11 -- Comparative Religion and Mythology:*

First Circle: you visit religious ceremonies of three religions you've never experienced before. You explore briefly the history, myths and beliefs of three religions new to you (may be the same as the ones you visit).

Second Circle: you visit/attend the rituals of one new (to you) religion every other month. You explore three religions as in the First Circle (may be the same or different). You take at least one general class in myth and folklore research technique.

Third Circle: you are intensely involved in the study and practice of both Druidism and the study (if not the practice) of one other faith. Note: if you wish to practice the other religion as well as Druidism, it should not be a traditionally monotheistic or atheistic one (a simple test -- if the majority of mainstream theologians of that other faith condemn polytheism, then you should not try to mix it with Neopagan Druidism).

Fourth Circle: you choose two or more faiths, archetypes, motifs or other aspects and write or produce a comparison.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to familiarize you with a wide variety of religious and mythical symbol systems from around the world. Most Neopagan groups are at least slightly interdenominational; such studies can promote mutual understanding and cooperation between members and clergy of various faiths. The myths and images in particular, along with the experience of a variety of liturgical styles, can serve as a major source of creative inspiration.

*Track 12 -- Mysticism and Altered States of Consciousness:*

First Circle: you explore two or more systems of mysticism. These can be classic works of mystical literature, science fiction and fantasy novels, zen meditation, shamanistic materials, etc. You begin experimental work under experienced guidance. You practice some form of daily meditation and keep a record of your dreams.

Second Circle: you continue exploring other people's mystic visions. You go to at least two workshops or classes or work regularly with a teacher of some form of mysticism. You go through some sort of vision quest.

Third Circle: you continue theoretical studies, and become personally familiar with most methods of altering your state of consciousness.

Fourth Circle: you learn to alter your state of consciousness at will, without the use of artificial aids. You begin guiding others in this Track.

Fifth Circle: you continue as seems appropriate.

Purpose: to give you both theoretical and practical knowledge of several mystical worldviews, and of ways to discover new ones. The altering of your s.o.c. (and that of the congregation) is an essential part of ritual, and should be mastered by every clergyperson.

*Track 18 -- Interdisciplinary Studies:*

As used in this Track, a "project" can be an article or book, a theatrical or liturgical production, a videotape or sound recording, or some other genuinely creative contribution to the field of interdisciplinary studies in general and Druidism in particular (as manifested through your Specialty).

First Circle: you begin exploring the concepts of interdisciplinary work.

Second Circle: you continue studying such concepts, and do a project blending together two or more of the other Tracks.

Third Circle: you continue theoretical work, and do a project blending together four or more of the other Tracks.

Fourth Circle: you do a project blending together eight or more of the other Tracks.

Fifth Circle: your project, which will be the main task of this Circle, is to tie all the Tracks together with your Specialty.

Purpose: to enable you to integrate all your other studies. One of the characteristics of Neopaganism is the recognition that nothing in the universe(s) is truly separate from anything else. Every art, science, technology and philosophy is grist for the Neopagan mill -- and our clergypeople have to plan for the 21st century and beyond.

In every other area of human endeavor, interdisciplinary studies are becoming increasingly critical to theoretical and practical growth and health. Religion will be no exception. The priests and priestesses who are aware of these interlinkings will be the ones who can most help other people and the planet as a whole. An effective clergyperson is a healthy, growing and balanced human being, thoroughly comfortable wherever and however his or her ministry may take them, around the globe or off to the stars!

**A Few Final Notes:**

This system is designed only for *Ar nDraíocht Féin*. Although members and leaders of other groups will no doubt read about it, each will make the modifications appropriate for their own organizations. I'd appreciate it if folks did not use the same terms that we are developing, unless they intend to enforce the same standards.

This system is designed to be as flexible and organic as possible. I'll help the members of ADF to tailor their own programs, based on the system of Circles and Tracks described in this essay. Since I can't be everywhere at once, and can only accept apprentices under the rarest of circumstances, I'm assuming that each participant will read books, attend classes, take apprenticeships with other teachers, or demonstrate already acquired skills on a local basis.

What will constitute "satisfactory results" on testing for each Circle and Track will frequently differ from person to person. Usually you would be expected to do well in classes taken, to have passed whatever tests your teachers devised, and to be able to demonstrate your knowledge and skills to somebody further advanced than yourself.

For example, suppose you are working on your studies in the Movement Awareness Track. You could send me a copy of your "Brown Belt" certificate signed by your sensei, or a letter from your folkdance teacher listing the dances you have learned, or a videotape of a ritual you had choreographed, etc. It would not be necessary for you to come to New York to demonstrate your progress.

The emphasis is on the attaining and demonstrating of particular knowledge and skills -- not on the precise methods used to gain them. Equivalencies can be arranged for most requirements and members will get "credit" for previous studies, provided they can show that their skills and knowledge have not gotten "rusty" from lack of use.

Unlike other Neopagan training systems, I'd like this one to have both upward and downward (or in our case, "inward and outward") mobility. Members should be required to show on a regular basis that their skills have not rusted, nor their knowledge faded, or risk being returned to their previous Circles. Being a competent priestess or priest is too important to allow folks to rest on their laurels (oakcrowns?). This will probably be the most controversial part of the system, and the hardest to enforce. If anyone can come up with an alternate solution to the problem of "coasting" clergy, I'd love to hear about it.

The cost of administering the system is going to be another problem. The financial aspects are indeed the major reason I've never started anything like this in the past. The time involved in coordinating study programs for a hundred people would be fulltime work for several staff members, who might have trouble earning a living meanwhile. Right now ADF is teetering on the brink of having more people interested in the study program than I can handle. If we continue to grow at the rate we have been, alternate solutions will have to be found. Your suggestions are eagerly solicited.

In fact, your comments on the entire system are welcome. Nothing is going to be carved in stone here, and I'm very open to suggestions for improvement from folks who have been involved, both as teachers and students, in other training systems. It will probably take a few years for the system to evolve into its "standard" form, but in the meantime we have a start.



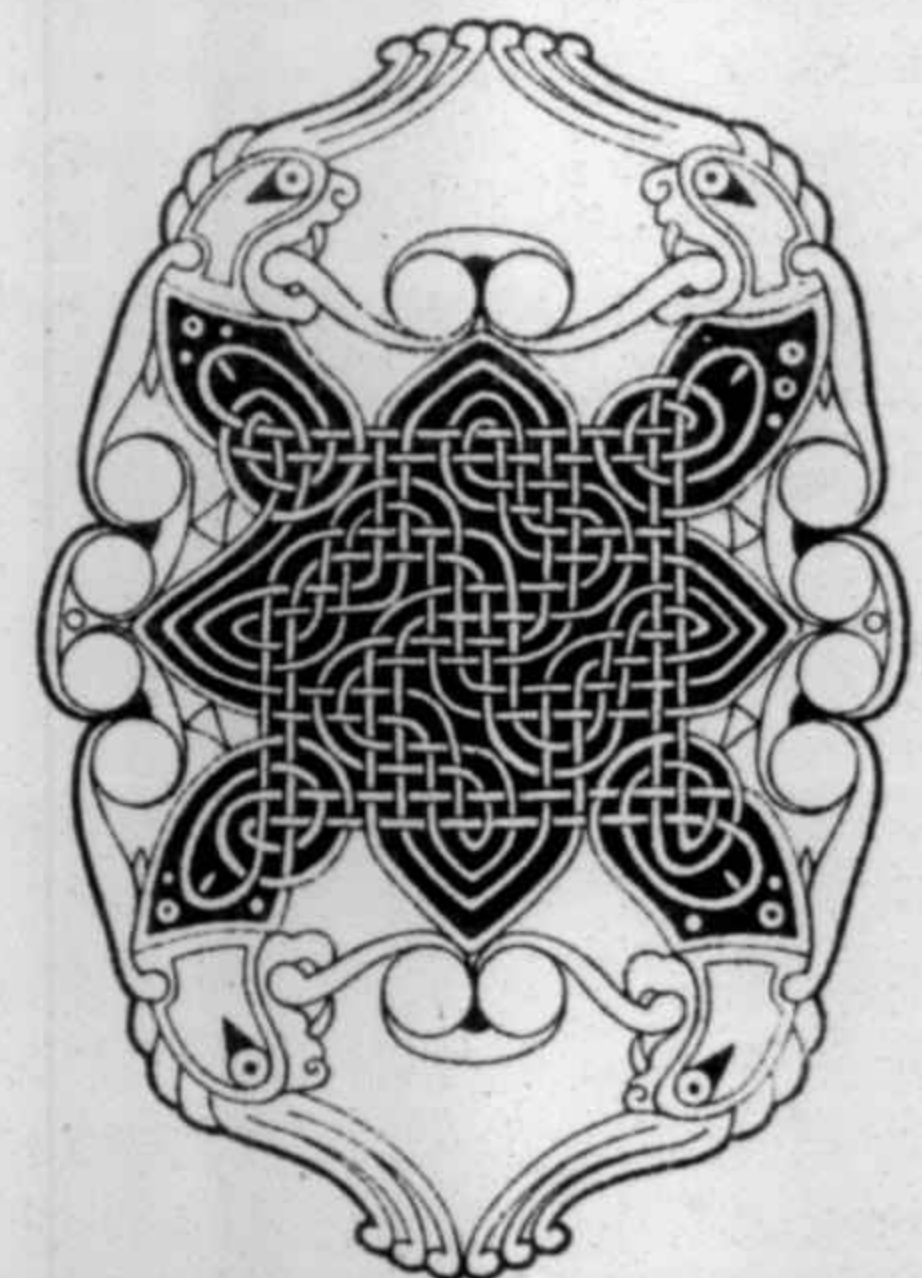
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### Some Notes on Initiation

A number of people have asked me about initiations in *Ar nDraíocht Féin*, and of how these might tie in with our Circle system. But before getting into specifics about ADF, I'd like (as usual) to indulge in just a bit of theory.....

#### Types of Initiation:

There seem to be three major approaches to initiation practiced by various cultures and subcultures around the world. These approaches are often combined and interwoven. I'll attempt in this essay to create a "typology of initiation" to make the distinctions and overlaps clear.

*Type 1: Initiation as recognition of a status already gained.* The ceremonies of Bar/Bas Mitzvah or Confirmation are good examples of this. The basic idea is to gather the community around you, and to announce that you have achieved a particular stage of growth and therefore you now have certain responsibilities as well as privileges. These sorts of initiations are frequently "time-bound," that is to say they happen more or less automatically when you reach a certain age or have been studying a craft or discipline for a specific period of time.

*Type 2: Initiation as an ordeal of transformation.* A mundane example of this would be throwing you into a pool in order to force you to learn to swim. There are a wide variety of traditional techniques for doing this in a ritual way, such as: making you fast for a week, go without sleep, be flogged without crying out, be sexually tempted and/or exhausted, be buried alive or locked in a dark room, go on a vision quest, be led through a night-long guided meditation, etc.

Any or all of these techniques may be augmented by the use of mind-altering substances, depending upon local traditions, but what they all have in common is this: regardless of the specific techniques being used, the goal is to induce an altered state of consciousness within which you are forced to confront Life, Death and your own multiple Selves. While you are in this state of reality-vulnerability, you are capable of re-imprinting yourself with a new worldview (or of having one imposed upon you). This is said to make you a "new person," and indeed the commonest theme in such initiations is that of death and rebirth.

By the way, Robert Anton Wilson has a lot of good material on imprinting and re-imprinting "tunnel realities," in his *Prometheus Rising* (Falcon Press, 1983), which should be available through your local metaphysical shop.

The emphasis on difficulty is both *descriptive* and *prescriptive*: being born again into a new worldview and status is not easy, since it requires giving up (some people say "growing out of") your old identity, which is usually based, at least in part, on your culture's collection of approved tunnel realities. Whatever physical or psychological pain might be involved also serves as a screening mechanism -- if you are likely to buckle under pressure, the tribal elders want to find that out before you get into a position of responsibility where your weakness could endanger others. This is a harsh reality to reside in, but for most of human history it's been a necessary one. If we're unlucky, and Pagans ever have to go back underground, we'd probably have to return to such attitudes again.

As distinct from type 1, this approach believes that the purpose of an initiation is to promote (or force) the achievement of a new growth stage. Although also often time-bound, with this sort of initiation it is possible to fail, with consequent devastating effects upon the body and/or mind of the would-be initiate. These negative effects are considered the unfortunate price that must be paid for safeguarding the welfare of the group.

Type 3: Initiation as a method for transferring spiritual knowledge and power from the initiator(s) to the initiatee(s). (By the way, I'm using the term "initiatee" as distinct from "initiate" to indicate the difference between someone going through the process of being initiated vs. someone who has already been initiated, whether in the near or distant past.) In the Western mainstream occult traditions, this is often called the "transmission of the Gnosis" or the "Apostolic Succession," but it has been used by quite a few different traditions and organizations throughout human history. This approach assumes that the purpose of an initiation is to open you up to a source of external power that has been used by your predecessors.

A properly done initiation of this sort should have the following results: (a) you are better connected to the deity who is the group's magical/spiritual focus, (b) you are better connected to the spirits of your predecessors, (c) your internal psychic hardware and software are rewired and reprogrammed to enable you to handle the group's flavor of energy better, and (d) you are given the ability and right to speak and act as a representative of those predecessors, and thus to fulfill certain spiritual and/or magical responsibilities.

#### Initiations in the Neopagan/Craft Community:

When Valiente and Gardner were inventing the modern Craft, they were unclear as to which of these three approaches they considered the most important. His Masonic background gave him the idea for the ritual "ordeals" of being bound and threatened (type 2). Their Anglican culture, combined with their desire to be in touch with those who had supposedly gone before, inspired the idea of "handing on the Craft" from priestess to priestess as a sort of Pagan apostolic succession (type 3). Masonic rules about minimal times to be spent between Degrees, folkloric references to "a year and a day" being a magical span, and the needs of their congregation for a predictable schedule of promotion, even-

tually led to general expectations that everyone would automatically be initiated/ordained after they had been in the religion for set lengths of time.

This time-binding could have led to any of the three types of initiation, but Gardner and Valiente had further factors to consider. They had to keep each member of their core group happy with his or her personal progress. Simultaneously, they had to generate a sufficient number of clergy to reach the critical mass necessary for survival as a religion. So they decided upon unfailable (type 1) initiations.

As "Gardnerianism" (it really should have been called "Valientianism") spread to America, its monarchical leaders had no trouble at first with American ideals of democracy, because most Americans secretly are in love with British royalty. But in the late 60's, several High Priestesses suffered rude collisions with the counter-culture's egalitarianism. They began to be faced with increasing differences of opinion about the proper purposes and roles of initiation and hierarchy. The Neopagan/Craft explosion of the 70's threw these questions high into the air, and they haven't landed yet.

#### Implications for ADF:

What all this means in terms of how *Ar n̄draíocht Féin* is going to handle initiations is yet to be settled. But, based on this three-part (well they say Druids are supposed to be fond of triads!) typology of initiations, let's explore the possibilities...

If you think of your initiations as recognition for your hard work (type 1), then you should ask yourself from whom you wish to receive this recognition. You could gather together a group of "peers" (members of your own or neighboring groups) and/or "elders" (local Neopagan/Craft clergy you respect), and perform a quasipublic rite of elevation.

If you don't feel that you're already at your desired level, but rather that you are ready to go to that level, then you'll want an ordeal/testing (type 2) initiation, the central parts of which should be private.

If you want to have a close magical/spiritual connection with an already existing tradition, then you're going to have to find representatives of such who would be willing to grant you that contact, in whatever sorts of rituals are, well, traditional for that group.

For those seeking authenticity, however, I should point out that there are no Neopagan Druid groups that actually go back any further than 20 years or so. The oldest of the currently existing Mesopagan Druid orders, on the other hand, seems to have an "unbroken tradition" that goes back two or three centuries. (They might go back a bit further, as might some of the other Masonic Druid groups, but none of them have ever released much in the way of historical evidence.)

The bottom line here is that, as far as "authentic" traditions are concerned, none of the Neopagan or Mesopagan groups are engaging in practices or promoting beliefs that we can prove actually resemble those of the original

Paleopagan Druids. So, just as with the Craft, the odds are that anyone who tells you they can initiate you into an authentic Ancient Druid Tradition is probably (whether they realize it or not) in error.

I won't deny that it's possible some "family tradition Druids" may have survived in the wilds of Wales or the crags of Cornwall, and some of these people may have joined a Masonic Druid order or two in the last couple of centuries. But whatever authentic beliefs or practices they might have brought to these orders is by now inextricably mixed with the Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, Freemasonry, Spiritualism and "Celtic Christianity" of these groups. At this stage it would be damned near impossible to disentangle the authentic Paleopagan survivals from the Judeo-Christian accretions.

### The Role of the Clergy:

The part to be played by a Druid priest/ess in these initiations depends entirely upon which approach or combination of approaches we eventually decide to take. There's also the practical question of whether there happens to be an available Druid clergyperson around at the time someone wants to be initiated. But assuming that there is a priestess or priest in the area when the time is right, exactly what should she or he be doing during the ceremony?

In a recognition ceremony, for example, the initiation is essentially being done by the entire group. In this situation, the clergyperson is "simply" supervising the energy flow as he or she would do in any other group ritual they were leading (the importance of having competent leadership for group ceremonies is a whole 'nother kettle of fish -- one for a future essay).

An ordeal or testing type initiation, however, requires that a judgement be passed as to whether the candidate has successfully achieved the level of growth sought. This judgement may be passed by either (a) the candidate, and/or (b) the initiator, and/or (c) impartial witnesses.

Having the initiatee decide for her- or himself whether or not they have successfully accomplished the initiation's goals, is an option that is open to a great deal of abuse, especially with younger or more inexperienced candidates. The second option requires the initiator to be able to suspend her or his own personal biases (pro or con) towards each initiatee, and can often ensnare all parties concerned in sexual, economic, magical and/or political quagmires.

The third option, using witnesses, is often best, which is why initiatees are frequently expected to be able to "publically" perform certain tasks in order to prove that they have passed their tests. These proofs may be positive and/or negative ones. For example, the candidate may be required to show that she/he is alive, sane, received a key symbol in a vision, has created a good song based on themes presented by the initiator, and so forth. Or, conversely, he or she may be expected to have not screamed all night long, or broken concentration, or orgasmed, or failed to orgasm, or fainted, or forgotten important phrases, etc.

It is absolutely critical to this option that all the participants in the ritual are willing to accept the results, regardless of whether they indicate success or failure. This is very difficult to handle when working with friends, which is why group agreement on standards and on what constitutes "a passing grade" should be arrived at long before any ceremony even begins. If that agreement is sufficiently firm, all parties involved will feel much better the next day. Especially since, if you know you are going to have to pass certain tests in front of witnesses, you are far more likely to put off your initiation until you are genuinely ready -- thus avoiding the problem of "quickie initiations."

As for the transmission of an intact tradition, this is something that will take us many years to accumulate. However, the use of Celtic languages and proper invocatory techniques will certainly help us (both as initiators and as initiatees) to make the desired spiritual and magical connections with our predecessors. I'll have more on this in the future.

#### Some Further Questions:

It has been pointed out that this analysis of initiation is viewing the experience primarily from the point of view of the individual initiate. It might be useful to consider initiation from the point of view of the initiator, the group members, spectators, etc. What are their attitudes, expectations, experiences? What sort of spiritual or magical transformation takes place in these other people, or in the group as a whole? What's the best way to counsel someone who has just failed an initiation? All of these are good subjects for further discussion.

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## A Meditation

For what reason is it that ye sit here under the oak? Why is it that ye have come together out under the stars? Have ye come that ye might not be alone? If so, it is good. But verily, I say unto you: many there are who have come together, yet remain alone.

Do ye sit in the open that ye might come to know Nature? If so, it is good. But verily, I say unto you: many there are who have sat for hours and have risen up knowing less than when they sat down.

Rather, in your coming together seek to know in what way ye may help the one who is next to you, and strive to act justly. And in your sitting down in the fields of the Earth-Mother, open your minds as well as your eyes. Let your meditation grow and branch out as the oak which is over your head. Except that ye have done these things, your sitting is in vain and coming is futility.

And why is it that ye do stand up before others and speak unto them? Do ye teach them the ways of the Ancient Druids? If so, it is good. For they had their wisdom, and that is oft forgot. But verily, I say unto you: in their day, even they also were young in their traditions.

The wise are not constrained to learn only that which they are taught. Yea, even as there is a time for talking, is there also a time for not talking.

In the silence of your being shall ye find that which is not of your being; and in the Earth-Mother shall ye find that which is not of the Earth-Mother; in Be'al shall ye be made aware, and your awareness shall fill you.

Ye shall be like the morning sun, which has risen and whose brightness is already full, but whose path is yet ever upward; and the light of your awareness shall sweep before it all the shadows of your uncertainty.

Then shall ye need wait no more; for this is the great End and all else is but Beginning.

*This is from the old Reformed Druids of North America, and was written around 20 years ago. In the RDNA's polytheology, the Earth Mother is the personification of the material world, and Be'al (i.e., Bel, Belenos, etc.) is the personification of the abstract essence of reality. Despite the psuedo King James writing style, I have always liked the meditations and poems in the old RDNA scriptures, and will share some of them with you from time to time.*

## Initiating Yourself into the First Circle

**The Nature of this Rite:**

At this point I see the First Circle initiation rite as being more properly a "self-dedication" ceremony, one which would combine all three types of initiation discussed earlier in this issue. Since membership in the 1st Circle is open to almost everyone who is sincerely interested in *Ar nDraíocht Féin*, joining it can be said to be an announcement of status and intent (type 1). Yet becoming a Druid is a formidable goal, and it is only fitting (on both the subconscious and the spiritual levels of reality) that the path begin with some genuinely hard work and a mild test or ordeal (type 2). Finally, there is the fact that all of us want to make a closer connection to the spirits of our predecessors and the deities of our ancestors -- however tenuous those links may currently be (type 3).

I say that this is more properly a self-dedication ritual for several reasons. Because ADF is a Neopagan religion, we are always going to emphasize individual autonomy as much as is consistent with the group's survival and health. So let's examine the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of your 1st Circle initiation.

**Your Decisions:**

*Who:* no one can know better than you, whether or not you are destined to walk the Druid path. Even a Druidic friend or lover, who thinks you'd look terrific in a white robe, may be thinking of their own need for companionship more than your actual suitability for the Druidic life.

*What:* exactly what sort of commitments you are ready to make to Druidism in general and this organization in particular, beyond the bare minimum requirements for membership, is a matter between you and the deities.

*Where:* the exact location for a ceremony of this sort is dependent upon your local geography, and the sorts of nature spirits with whom you are most in tune. It must be out-of-doors, but an ocean beach, a river shore, a desert mesa, a mountain top, a cave (good for rainy weather), or a grove of sacred trees are all equally appropriate places.

*When:* only you can decide when you are truly ready to step onto the Druid path, and indeed, several members of ADF made this decision years ago. Even if you are already walking that path, deciding when to join a specific group of fellow travelers is another decision entirely, one that no one else can make for you.

*Why:* you're not being forced at sicklepoint to become a Druid, nor to perform a special ceremony announcing that decision. Yet those of you who know that you are meant to be Druids will hear your own souls, loudly or quietly, insisting that you make your decision and take strong symbolic action to back it up.

*How:* should your self-dedication be done privately, or with witnesses? Should you fast or feast beforehand? Should you practice yogic austerities or tantric ecstasies in preparation? Will it work better if you memorize invocations in one of the old languages, or if you do it all extemporaneously? Should you stay up the night before with your musical instrument and compose a song to greet the sunrise? Or would it be better to munch some mushrooms and spend the night looking for a spirit guide?

#### Some Ideas to Consider:

The answers to these questions can only come from the depths of your own being. They can't be imposed from the outside by others, no matter how well meaning they (or I) might be.

What I can and will do, is to offer some suggestions, based on my years of experience with being both an initiator and an initiatee. Although the initiations for the 2nd and further Circles will be much more structured, as far as the 1st Circle initiation is concerned, all of you are free to modify these suggestions as seems best for you and your life situation.

Camp out as long as you possibly can (at least a full 24 hours) before actually starting the rite. A single weekend can suffice, if you try this pattern: arrive in the general vicinity on Friday night, and camp out in a relatively quiet manner. On Saturday, go to your chosen site (or find it if you haven't already) and clean or clear it as is necessary and ecologically sound. Take some time to meet the local plants and animals, and to greet the spirit(s) of the place. Make sure that you can find your way to and from the spot in the dark, and that any local trains, boats, airplanes or tourists are neither audible nor visible. Around sunset on Saturday, you can prepare for an all-night vigil.

(Larry Cornet's article in the Feedback department of this issue has some excellent advice on Nature attunement, how to find your sacred spot, etc.)

If you are going to use mind-altering substances, use organic ones, and have at least one trusted friend along. Alcohol (whiskey or mead) seems to have been the most common substance among the ancient Indo-Europeans, while tobacco and other Native American herbs might be appropriate for contacting this land's local nature spirits.

Fasting and celibacy are certainly traditional mind-altering methods that were used by the ancient Druids, yet I am inclined to leave them to the later Circles. For the 1st Circle, a more Dionysian approach might be better. If you have a friend who would be willing to attempt to exhaust you, without letting you fall asleep, bring him or her along. If you have several friends who are interested in also doing self-dedications, or in being official witnesses, the

group of you could spend a night alternating singing, dancing and playing with doing guided meditations, "past life regressions" and invocatory rituals. The trick is to force yourself to extremes of personal endurance and excellence, without losing touch with your spiritual center. Neither do you want to go so far out that you endanger your physical or mental health -- easy does it at this stage!

You may want to try to compose a song or poem, or to discover which of the old deities is to be your patron or matron for your early steps on the path. If you have been studying one of the old languages, try to create as much of your ritual as possible in that tongue (if you have friends with you, you might try to speak nothing but that language all night).

You may want to include some traditional Indo-European customs in your vigil and/or final rite. These could include such activities as "feeding" the trees in your grove with barley and honey, making a safe bonfire out of nine sacred woods, etc. Do your own research and use your intuition as to how to adapt these ancient customs.

There is something eternally symbolic about doing an initiation as a sunrise ceremony, and I heartily recommend that you do this. Greet the rising sun, the Earth Mother, the local spirits and all the ancient ones. Tell them who you are (perhaps including a secret or formal name that may have come to you in the night), and why you are there. If you have created a formal robe or talisman to symbolize your Druidhood, put it on now. Announce to the Four Quarters, the Earth and the Sky, from your very Center, that you have chosen to become a Druid. Ask for Their help, with respect and love, then be silent for Their reply.

Listen as long as is necessary, thank Them for Their help, and gently dismiss all lesser spirits (one does not "dismiss" deities!). Then dismantle and put away any ritual tools you may have brought along. Leave the ritual site and spend the rest of the day enjoying and appreciating the area, talking to trees, herding clouds, playing with your friends, etc. Clean up any trash you find, so that when you depart for home, the entire area will be cleaner than when you arrived.

Does all this sound more than a little bit "melodramatic"? Just remember that this is a term that modern intellectuals use (especially if we're male) to describe situations that seem uncomfortably (and "excessive") emotional. But a proper initiation should be as emotionally overwhelming as it is intellectually inspiring and physically ecstatic. If tears are streaming down your cheeks, or you're laughing uproariously, or you're paralyzed with glory (or all of the above) then you are receiving positive Signs of an especially powerful initiation. Don't worry if these intense experiences don't happen, but if they do, consider it a Blessing.

You should also not worry about whether or not you experience strong physical manifestations -- winds rising when you salute a direction, birds suddenly singing at a particularly apt point in the ceremony, lightning bolts crashing down in your vicinity, etc. These sorts of happenings are controlled by such variables as how many years you've been practicing magic, how powerful and awake the local nature spirits are, who the people are (if any) around you at the time, whether your subconscious thinks you need a spectacular sign or not, etc. As with the intense emotional reactions, such events are optional Blessings, not required Signs of Divine Approval.

### What About My Participation?

Some of you have asked about having me initiate you personally to the First Circle. I have to say that it's possible, but wouldn't be easy to arrange. Although I'd be glad to play a supporting role in your ceremony, your initiation would either have to be held close to New York City, and/or you would have to be able to cover the transportation costs to get me out to wherever you are. One possible way to solve the transportation problem would be if your local occult shop or college were to bring me out to do a workshop or lecture. Another way would be to meet me at one of the major Neopagan festivals and do your initiation there.

But going through the hassle of having me physically present may be something you might want to reserve for a later initiation. Not having me there would in no way indicate a "lesser" quality of initiation. I hope I've stressed sufficiently that the 1st Circle initiation should be something each would-be Druid can do for him/herself.

Those of you who decide to do self-dedication ceremonies should send me detailed descriptions of your experiences, copies of your ritual scripts, songs created, etc. (you can put them in your Feedback "zines" if you like). If you do, I'll enroll you at no cost as members of the First Circle of ADF. I say "at no cost" because this has nothing to do with whatever donations we may eventually ask for folks studying for the Second and inner Circles. Religious schools usually cost money to maintain, but nobody can buy a real initiation. Thus entrance to the Circles as such is free.

If you feel that you need additional pre-ceremonial help, let me know the best dates and times to call you collect (weekends are best for me). Remember, I'm absolutely terrible at letter writing, but I'm fairly prompt on returning phone calls.

## An Outline for Druid Worship Rituals

The outline that follows is meant to serve as a basic skeleton upon which to grow the flesh and blood of your own ceremonies. This is the outline by which we are now composing rituals in the Mother Grove. It's based on a "universal liturgical outline" common to most of the world's religions, with some specifically Druidic additions (the Tree Meditation, the Triad Invocations, etc.). I've been doing ceremonies with a highly similar outline for several years now, and they usually seem to have a powerful effect.

I'll have a detailed discussion of this outline for you next issue. In the meantime, you may find it inspirational for designing your own Druidic ceremonies.

- A. Announcing of rite (clearcut beginning)
- B. Consecration of space and time
  - 1. Marking off of physical perimeter if needed (Processional?)
- C. The Tree Meditation
  - 1. Individual centering
  - 2. Putting down roots
    - a. Individual grounding (connection to Earth)
    - b. Historical/psychic connection to predecessors
    - c. Contemplation of events of recent past (spiritual composting)
    - d. Absorbing nourishment from all these sources
    - e. Feeling the sap (Water) flow throughout
  - 3. Extending of branches
    - a. Growing to limits of each aura
    - b. Clearing & settling of each mind, absorbing Air from around
    - c. Receiving light (Fire) from sky and depths of earth
    - d. Circulating creative energy throughout.
  - 4. Intermingling of roots and branches -- creating the Grove
    - a. Rooted in the same Earth
    - b. Drinking same Water
    - c. Breathing same Air
    - d. Receiving same Fire
    - e. Being same Spirit
    - f. Affirmation of group beliefs
    - g. Circulating energy around the Grove
- D. Specification of the deity or deities to be focussed upon
  - 1. Purpose of rite
  - 2. Reminder of why deity(-ies) appropriate

E. Invocation of the Gate Keeper

F. Triad Invocations

1. Of the Ancestors/Predecessors
  - a. Directing of energies downwards and back
  - b. Consecration of Waters-of-Life and sharing (Earth)
2. Of the Spirits (Ancient and Local)
  - a. Directing of energies outwards and back
  - b. Consecration of Waters-of-Life and sharing (Water)
3. Of the Gods/Goddesses
  - a. Directing of energies upwards and back
  - b. Consecration of Waters-of-Life and sharing (Air)

G. The Sacrifice

1. Generation of positive energies (praise via the arts)
2. Offering of those energies to the deities of the occasion
3. Statement of needs, public (spoken) and private (silent)

H. The Return

1. Preparation for return of energies
2. Last consecration and sharing (Fire)
3. Reinforcement of group bonding

I. Using the Energies Returned (worship, rite of passage and/or spell casting)

J. Closing

1. Meditation and regrounding
2. Praise for deities (followthru, affirmations of success)
3. Thanking of Deities (farewells)
4. "Dismissal" of Spirits and Closing of the Gates
5. Pulling back of roots and branches, recentering
6. Absorption of remaining energies, draining of excess
7. Formal announcing of end of rite (Recessional?)

## A Druid Worship Ceremony

## Ar n-draíocht Féin

*This is an example of a ritual created according to the preceding outline. The English prayers were written by Sally Eaton, myself, and others. The Irish translations are by James Duran, Robert Larson, and myself. This particular ritual, with appropriate seasonal modifications, has been performed on several High Days by the members of the Mother Grove.*

*During good weather, the ritual is set up outdoors, in as natural an environment as is possible. If the weather is foul, try to use a cave, cabin, yurt or other premedieval enclosure. The altar is set up in or near the center of the grove. Whenever safe, there should be some sort of main fire available (in the actual center). Two chalices are on the altar, along with a sickle and a small (ceremonially cut) branch (12" - 18") of a seasonally appropriate tree.*

*Each person present should have brought a work of art to offer in praise. The presiding clergy should be dressed in long white robes, all others in white tunics or dresses, all with colorful embroidery and trimming. Regardless of culture represented, the general effect should be premedieval.*

*As currently written, the ceremony assumes that there are two Druids leading, one of whom is more fluent in Irish than the other, who are referred to as "D1" and "D2". All these lines and actions may be taken by a single Druid, or may be parceled out differently according to local circumstances.*

*The people are called to order and formed into two parallel lines some short distance away from the grove. D1 and D2 stand at the head of the lines and speak:*

D1: Tá muid anseo leis na déithe a adhradh.

D2: We are here to honor the Gods.

D1: A dhéithe, a dtugann bhur gcumhacht beatha do gach aon rud atá beo, bígí anseo linn.

D2: O Gods, whose power gives life to everything which is alive, give to us your presence.

*All begin to process towards the grove, singing an appropriate song. Those musicians who have instruments that can be played while walking, should do so. Banners and (if safe) torches may be carried as well. When they arrive at the grove, the lines split and go around the opposite halves of a circle, meeting at the far side.*

*Assuming that there's room to do so, D1 and D2 continue to process around the ring of people in opposite directions, completing a circuit and then going straight towards the altar. They pass on either side of it, then continue until they are slightly beyond the edges of the ring on the opposite side from their entrance. They then turn inwards and return to the altar (thus marking a Druid Sigil:  $\Phi$ ). They wind up behind the altar, D1 on D2's right. In a large congregation, the ring of people will close up behind them. The torches may then be carefully put into the fire, or otherwise disposed of. After all have settled, the following song may be sung by ALL, accompanied by Harp, drum or pipes.*

**O Earth-Mother:**

O Earth-Mother!

We praise Thee:

that seed springeth,  
that flower openeth,  
that grass waveth.

We praise Thee:

for winds that whisper,  
through the shining birch,  
through the lively pine,  
through the mighty oak.

We praise Thee,

for all things,

O Earth-Mother,

Who givest Life.

*D1 leads the Tree Meditation. Musicians present may accompany this.*

*D2 discusses the deities of the occasion and the meaning of this particular festival.*

*D1 and D2 invoke the Gate Keeper:*

D1: *A Oghma, a thiarna na nGeataí a thiarna an pheasa, oscail na geataí dúinn. Tá muid ag siúl i do lorg, tá muid ag siúl ar do bhealach. Scaoil dúinn do theagasc, taispeain dúinn cén chaol a siúl faidh muid slán. Molann muid thu mar gheall ar do chumhacht. Siúil linn, a Oghma.*

D2: *O Ogma, Lord of the Gates, Lord of Knowledge, open the ways for us. We walk in your footsteps, we walk your roads. Reveal to us your teaching, reveal to us the way to walk in safety. We praise you for your power. Walk with us, Ogmá!*

D1: Siúil linn a Oghma...  
D2: ...walk with us Ogmál  
D1: Siúil linn a Oghma...  
D2: ...walk with us Ogmál  
D1: Siúil linn a Oghma...  
D2: ...walk with us Ogmál

*All join in on the following song:*

**Ogma Song:**

D1: We invoke thee Ogma, Opener of every Gate.  
ALL: We invoke thee Ogma, Opener of every Gate.  
D2: You shall reach us, You shall teach us, And reveal our Fátel  
ALL: You shall reach us, You shall teach us, And reveal our Fátel

*ALL repeat until D1 signals. Usually this will be when the four lines have been sung a total of three times each.*

*The main chalice should now be filled with the Waters of Life (Irish whiskey, preferably), and a secondary cup filled with ordinary water or some other nonalcoholic liquid. Both cups are now consecrated to the Ancestors. While each is speaking, the other is directing the energy flow, from the center of the grove downwards and out in a radiating cone, and back again.*

*D1 takes the main chalice in his/her right hand, and the secondary one in his/her left (vice versa if he/she is left-handed), raises both chalices, and speaks:*

D1: A sheana, a shinseara, a mhuintir, beannaí gí na h-uiscí seo dúinn. Roinnigí orainn ceangal na beatha ar talamh. Roinnigí orainn suaimhneas, eolas, agus beannacht. Labhraí gí linn inár gcroí, le go mbeadh muid in aon bhall libhse.

*D1 sips from either or both cups, then passes them to D2. When D2 has them firmly in her/his hands, D1 blesses her/him with the Druid Sigil ☉ marked in the air, saying:*

D1: Seo iad uiscí na beatha!

*D2 acknowledges this, then holds the chalices up and repeats the invocation, while D1 controls the energy flow:*

D2: People of old times, our ancestors, our kindred, hallow these waters. Share with us the bond of life upon earth. Share with us comfort, knowledge and blessing. Speak to our hearts, that we become one with you all.

*D2 sips from either or both, then passes both in a sunwise fashion (to the person on her/his left), blessing them with the Druid Sigil ☉ and saying:*

D2: Behold the waters of life!

*The chalices go around the grove, each person receiving the ☉ blessing from one person and passing it along with the cups to the next. Eventually they return to D1 and are placed back on the altar.*

*The Chalices are refilled, then consecrated twice to the Spirits, all as before, with sipping, passing and ☉ blessing. While each is speaking the other is directing the energy flow, from the center of the grove outwards (and back again) on the horizontal plane, not just to the Four Quarters, but in all directions.*

D1: A sprideanna na seanaimsire, agus na háite seo, a chomhghuaillithe, a mhúinteoirí, beannaíí na h-uisci seo dúinn. Roinníí orainn athbheochan na talún. Roinníí orainn suaimhneas, eolas, agus beannacht. Labhraíí linn inár gcroí, le go mbeadh muid in aon bhall libhse....Seo iad uiscí na beatha!

D2: Spirits of old times, and of this place, our companions, our teachers, hallow these waters. Share with us the renewal of earth. Share with us comfort, knowledge and blessing. Speak to our hearts, that we become one with you all.....Behold the waters of life!

*The chalices are refilled once more, then consecrated twice to the Gods and Goddesses, all as before, with sipping, passing and ☉ blessing. While each is speaking the other is directing the energy flow, from the center of the grove upwards and out in a radiating cone, and back again.*

D1: A dhéithe na seanaimsiri, a mháithreacha, a aithreacha, beannaíí na h-uisci seo dúinn. Roinníí orainn bhur gcumhacht le go ngingfeadh muid an domhan. Roinníí orainn suaimhneas, eolas, agus beannacht. Labhraíí linn inár gcroí, le go mbeadh muid in aon bhall libhse....Seo iad uiscí na beatha!

D2: Gods of old times, our mothers, our fathers, hallow these waters. Share with us your power to regenerate the earth. Share with us comfort, knowledge and blessing. Speak to our hearts, that we become one with you all.....Behold the waters of life!

*At this point there should be a double helix of energy spiraling both upwards and down, with a slow vortex of energy coming in from the sides as well. After a pause for all to absorb the invoked spirits, D1 speaks:*

D1: Has anyone brought praise for the Lady and Lord of this feast, or for the other High Ones?

*All present offer Praise, beginning with the D2, and moving sunwise around the grove, ending with the D1. Each sings a song, recites a poem, performs a dance or plays a tune in turn. During the offering of Praise, the energies flowing through the grove should slowly become stronger and stronger. The D1 ends with his/her Praise.*

*D1 takes the branch and sickle from the altar and goes to the center of the grove. There she/he holds the branch up in her/his right hand (unless lefthanded), touches it with the sickle, and offers it as a symbol of the energies already sacrificed. Instead of a Bhanthiarna (o Lady) and a Thiarna (o Lord), the proper names of the deities of the occasion may be substituted. The energies moving through the grove are focused into the branch "and out the other side" to the deities of the occasion.*

D1: Téann ár moladh suas chuig ar sciatháin iolar; beirtear ár nglórtha suas chuig ar ghuailne na gaoithe. Éistigí anois a Bhanthiarna, a Thiarna, más é bhur dtoil é, agus sinn ag opraíl na h-íobairte seo ar son na beatha. Glacai gí léi, más é bhur dtoil é, agus glanaigí ár gcroíthe, ag roinnt orainn do chuid síochána 'is do bheatha.

*D2 joins D1 in holding the branch, and repeats the sacrifice in English:*

D2: Our praise goes up to thee on the wings of eagles; our voices are carried up to thee on the shoulders of the wind. Hear now, O Lady, O Lord, we pray thee, as we offer up this sacrifice of life. Accept it, we pray thee, and cleanse our hearts, giving to us of your peace and life.

*The branch is placed back upon the altar, or (if one is present) into the fire. The energies in the grove should be very still at this point.*

*D1 asks all present to meditate upon their deepest needs. Those who wish to speak their's out loud may do so. The D1 waits to be sure that all who wish to speak have done so, then turns to the D2, and speaks:*

D1: Of what does the Earth-Mother give, that we may know of the continual flow and renewal of life?

D2: The waters of life.

D1: And from whence do these waters flow?

D2: From the bosom of the Earth-Mother, the ever changing All-Mother.

D1: And how do we honor this gift that causes life?

D2: By partaking of the waters of life.

D1: Has the Earth Mother given forth of Her bounty?

D2: She has.

D1: Then give me the Waters!

*D2 refills the two chalices and hands them to D1, who consecrates them for the fourth and final time in Irish. The consecrations should be modified to refer to the deities of the occasion. During the consecrations, the energies returning to the grove from the Lord and Lady are focussed into the chalices.*

D1: A Thiarna, a Bhantiarna, Éistigí agus freagairt orainn! Bean-naigí na h-uisci seo dúinn. Muide do chlann, a mhol thu, agus anois iarrann muid ort leigheas, beannachtaí, cumhacht agus tinfeadh....Seo iad uiscí na beatha!

*D2 repeats the consecration for the fourth and final time in English:*

D2: O Lord, O Lady, hear and answer us! Hallow these waters. We, your children, have praised you, and now we ask from you healing, blessing, power and inspiration.....Behold the Waters of Life!

*The chalices are passed around the grove as before (with sipping, passing and the ☉ blessing), filling each person who drinks with the power of the deities of the occasion.*

*When all have drunk from the chalices, a song or chant should be sung, coordinating the divine energy flow through breath and movement, thusly: on each exhalation while singing, half the energy is sent in both directions around the grove, and the rest is sent towards the ritual center of the grove (and thus to the deities of the occasion). On each inhalation, energy is absorbed from both the other people and the deities. This should produce a rhythmic and ever increasing flow, back and forth between the people and between them and the deities. This will fade away naturally as the song ends, leaving all present stronger, healthier and more unified.*

*If there is an urgent need for healing or other serious magical working to be done, it would take place at this point, when all present have been filled with the powers of the Lady and Lord of the occasion. Alternately, if any members of the Grove are ready for a rite of passage, such as a Paganing, handfasting, funeral, or elevation (such as the installation of a new Bard for the grove), this would occur now. In any case, the presiding clergy should have been notified before the ceremony began, and the necessary tools gathered. Except for an emergency or a rite of passage, the only Druidic spells to be cast in a High Day ceremony should be those of general blessing upon the Grove*

*and the surrounding land (including any ecological magic that may be needed). Magic done at this point of the ceremony is primarily a matter of channeling the divine energy into the person or thing being affected, rather than the additional generation of human energy.*

*After a pause for silent contemplation, the D1 speaks:*

D1: Tá beannacht na Bantiarna agus an Tiarna orainn!

D2: The Lady and the Lord have blessed us!

D1: With joy in our hearts, let us return to the realm of mortals, to do both Their will and ours.

D2: Every time we invoke Them, They become stronger and more alert to the needs of their people.

D1: But now comes the time when we must prepare to depart. So let us give thanks to those whom we have invited here.

D1: A Bantiarna, a Chiarna, O Lady, O Lord --

D2: Go raibh maith agaibh! We thank you!

ALL: Go raibh maith agaibh!

D1: A dhéithe na seanaimsiri, O Gods and Goddesses of the old times --

ALL: Go raibh maith agaibh!

D1: A sprideanna na seanaimsire, agus na háite seo, O spirits of the old times, and of this place --

ALL: Go raibh maith agaibh!

D1: A sheana, a shinseara, a mhuintir, People of the old times, our ancestors, our kindred --

ALL: Go raibh maith agaibh!

D1: A Oghma, a Thiarna na nGeataí a Thiarna an Fheasa, bíodh na geataí idir na saolta a druidte!

D2: O Ogma, Lord of the Gates, Lord of Knowledge, let the gates between the worlds be closed!

*D2 leads a brief reversal of the Tree meditation to provide recentering, grounding of excess energy, and unlinking.*

*D1 gives the final benediction:*

D1: Teigheadh muid amach faoin domhan, agus muid lan-chinnteach, gur thug ár n-íobairtí taitneamh do na Déithe, gur phreagair siad ár n-urnaí, agus go bhfuil muid ag dul amach faoin domhan faoina gcoimirce.

D2: Let us go out into the world, secure in the knowledge that our sacrifices have pleased the Gods and Goddesses, and that we go forth upon the Earth under Their protection.

D1: Tá an searmanas críochnaíthe againn!

D2: We have finished this ceremony!

D1: Bíodh sé -- so be it!

All: So be it!

*All may now disperse, perhaps singing a Recessional song. Any fires still burning should be carefully doused. The area should be left cleaner than upon the Grove's arrival.*



## Druid Feasts and Pagan Festivals

### Introductory Explanations:

The next section contains a table showing the exact times of the eight Druid High Days for the next three years, as they will be calculated by ADF, along with the deities associated with each. You'll immediately notice that each of the four Major High Days is celebrated long after most other Neopagan groups mark them, so a word of explanation is due.

The solstices and equinoxes (Minor High Days) are calculated in the usual fashion. The Major High Days, however, are counted as occurring whenever the sun reaches a point in the sky that is 16 degrees, 18 minutes, North or South declination. This is based on the research of Robert Larson into the famous "Cologne Calendar" as well as his analysis of the observation angles he believes were used at Stonehenge.

Interestingly, the times that are selected by this method usually correspond within a few hours to those that would be found by calculating the midpoints of the fixed signs (i.e., 15 degrees of Scorpio, Aquarius, Taurus and Leo), and thus are halfway between the solstices and equinoxes.

All the times in the table are listed on a 24 hour clock, in Greenwich Mean Time ("GMT"). To convert this to Druid Standard Time for your locality, subtract one hour for every 15 degrees you are west of Greenwich, England (so it's minus five hours for Eastern Standard Time, six for CST, etc.). If you really want to be exact, subtract four minutes for every degree of longitude from Greenwich to your precise location. For Druid Daylight Time, add one hour after the above subtractions have been made.

The first number in each column refers to the day of the month. The next two refer to the time of day the event occurs. So the first listing, "4/00:08" means that Oimeic 1985 occurred on February 4th, at 00:08 hours (12:08 a.m.) GMT. That was (in round time zones) 7:08 p.m. EST on February 3rd, 6:08 p.m. CST, 5:08 p.m. MST and 4:08 p.m. PST.

This particular holiday also illustrates an occasional problem with scheduling ceremonies. The old Celts reckoned each day as starting with sunset of the night before. Sometimes an event occurs after sunset in some American time zones, and before sunset in others. It therefore may need to be celebrated on different dates by Druids living in adjacent time zones. So the eastern half of North America would have celebrated Oimeic from sunset on the 3rd (to sunset on the 4th) of February, a day after the western half did.

A solution to this problem is to use the more exact method (4 minutes per degree west) of calculation. That way, even if two groups of Druids live on either side of a time zone line, they can jointly figure a correct date (which will probably be that of the zone to the west).

I should also point out that the times were calculated from *The Complete Planetary Ephemeris*, which is based on actual rather than observed planetary positions, so the times may differ by a few minutes from those shown in major astrological calendars.

## A Table of Movable Feasts:

|         | Oime-lc             | Meán<br>Earrach   | Beltane                | Meán<br>Samradh      |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Month   | February            | March             | May                    | June                 |
| 1985    | 4/00:08             | 20/16:07          | 5/10:48                | 21/10:38             |
| 1986    | 4/06:03             | 20/21:57          | 5/16:34                | 21/16:23             |
| 1987    | 4/11:37             | 21/03:45          | 5/22:08                | 21/22:04             |
| Sun     | 16° 18' S.          | 0° Aries          | 16° 18' N.             | 0° Cancer            |
| Deities | Brigid,<br>Angus Og | Angus Og,<br>Danu | Danu,<br>Belenos       | Belenos<br>Aine      |
| -----   |                     |                   |                        |                      |
|         | Lughnasadh          | Meán<br>Foghamhar | Samhain                | Meán<br>Geimredh     |
| Month   | August              | September         | November               | December             |
| 1985    | 7/16:59             | 23/02:00          | 7/08:26                | 21/22:02             |
| 1986    | 7/22:38             | 23/07:53          | 7/09:09                | 22/03:56             |
| 1987    | 8/04:17             | 23/13:39          | 7/20:10                | 22/09:40             |
| Sun     | 16° 18' N.          | 0° Libra          | 16° 18' S.             | 0° Capricorn         |
| Deities | Aine,<br>Lugh       | Lugh,<br>Morrigan | Morrigan,<br>Cernunnos | Cernunnos,<br>Brigid |

You'll notice that two deities have been assigned to each holiday. These are the major and minor deities worshiped by the Mother Grove on each feast. This list is included only as an example. You may want to use Welsh, Gaulish, Norse or Slavic deities instead. You might decide to assign different types of deities to particular feasts. This whole area is very much up for discussion, though I do recommend that at least one female and one male deity be honored at every High Day (though you can alternate which is given preference).

Druid New Moons are celebrated on the sixth night after the night in which the new moon is first visible, in other words, the "first quarter". If indeed the Paleopagan Druids started their months on this date, it marks an interesting departure from their usual habit of starting time measurements from the "dark halves" -- Samhain and sunset starting the year and the day. After all, the period from the first to the third quarter is the "light half" of the lunar cycle. Perhaps they started solar cycles with the dark half and lunar cycles with the light half??

### Pagan Festivals/Conventions:

The following are the festivals that I am planning on attending this summer, with (I hope) other members of the Mother Grove:

| <i>Event</i>           | <i>Location</i>   | <i>Dates</i>    |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Beltane Campout        | New Jersey        | May 4-5         |
| Rites of Spring        | New Hampshire     | May 24-27       |
| Pagan Spirit Gathering | Wisconsin         | June 18-23      |
| Starwood Festival      | central Ohio      | July 18-22      |
| COG Grand Council      | northwest Mass.   | Aug. 29-Sept. 2 |
| Pantheistic Festival   | western Penn.     | Sept. 6-8       |
| Meán Foghamhar Campout | upstate New York? | Sept 21-23      |

The two Campouts are being run by the Mother Grove of ADF. You can write to me for further details. Information about the other events can be obtained by writing to the addresses listed by Larry Cornet in his Calendar (see the last page of his zine this issue).

I'll be giving lectures and workshops at most of these festivals, and will be available for members of ADF to grill (excuse me, converse with) in person. *If the festival organizers voice no objections*, it may also be possible to help members of ADF with their First Circle initiations at some of these events. A Pagan festival isn't always the best time and place for an initiation, but if you really want to do it then, I'll try my best to help. The Campouts, on the other hand, are being organized in part specifically for people who want to do their First Circle dedications.

At the Pagan Spirit Gathering we'll be doing a series of afternoon workshops on June 18th through 20th, culminating in a summer solstice ceremony (similar to that published in this issue) at high noon on the 21st. People who plan to come should bring white robes, Druidic banners, appropriate Praise offerings, etc. Several hundred people will be there, as well as quite a few of the Gentry, so let's give them (and Them) a good show!

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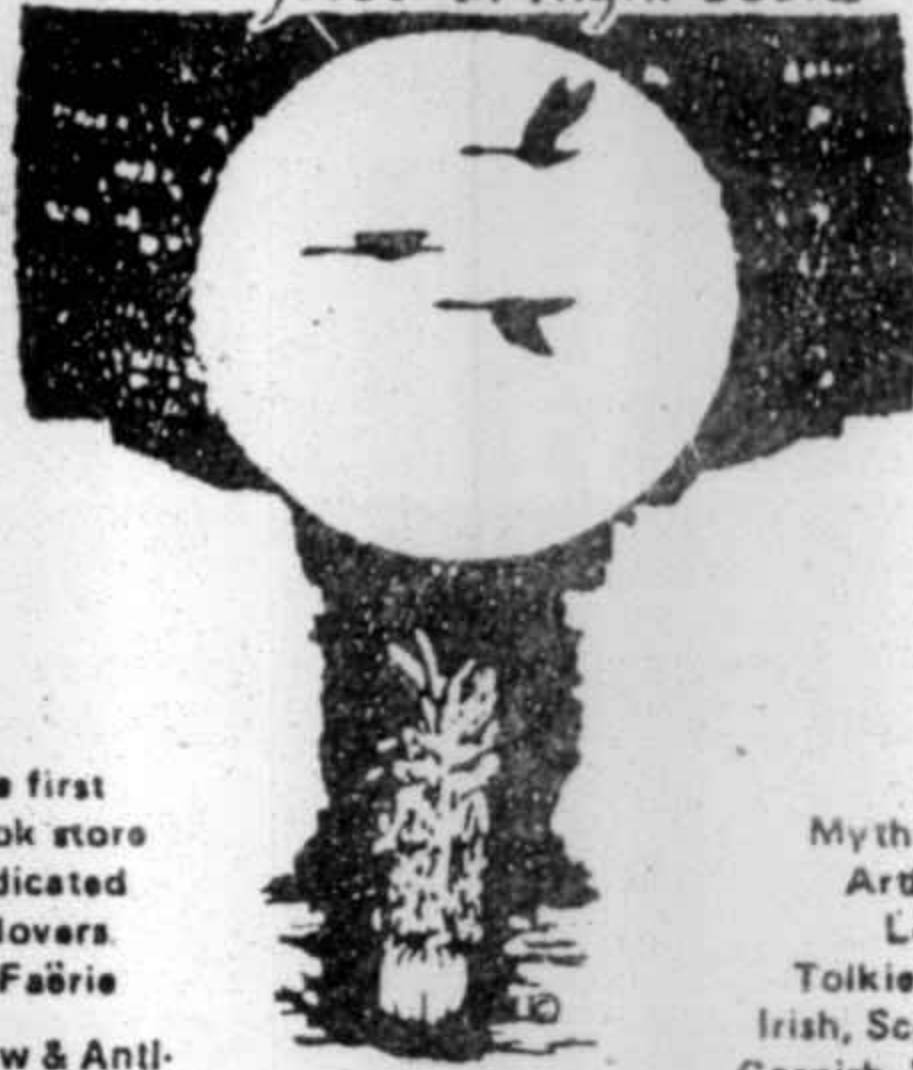
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## Feedback -- Letters from You

As I mentioned at the very beginning of this issue, I've decided that a partial solution to the problem of retyping everyone's letters into my computer is to run the Feedback department, at least in part, as a modified sort of "A.P.A." -- "Amateur Press Association".

For some of you, APAs will be a brand new idea. I'll try to make it clear in this introductory discussion exactly what's involved, and how easy it can be. For others, especially Science Fiction fans, APAs are quite familiar, and what I'm going to have to work to make clear will be the differences between what I'm proposing and the traditional fannish APAs.

There are a variety of advantages to the APA-style of communication. You'll be able to talk directly to each other, thus getting some of the fellowship we're all searching for (and avoiding the black hole in my desk).

You can publish whatever addresses and phone numbers you feel safe revealing. This means, among other things, that those of you who actually live near each other can get together physically as well, thus setting the stage for future groves. (So far we have two or more members in New York City, Syracuse, Dayton, Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area.) But see my comments below about security matters.

You're not limited to straight expository text. You can combine articles, essays, poetry, art, musical scores, dance notations, and comments on zines published in previous issues.

Since most folks have access to at least typewriters, you should be able to provide camera-ready copy for xeroxing/printing, thus avoiding the time and energy that it would otherwise take for me to type it for you.

There are some points to beware of, however. Science Fiction APAs tend to be full of obscure abbreviations, jargon, in-jokes and references to ancient fannish customs that may be totally incomprehensible to newcomers. Those of you who are in fandom should try to avoid using these.

It's very difficult to maintain any kind of editorial control over the contents of zines. Indeed, SF APAs traditionally have little or no editorial control at all. But because ADF is in part an outreach program from the Neopagan community towards the academic community and the various Celtic, Nordic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic cultural movements; I think it's important that we keep DP functioning at the highest possible level of quality. So I'm setting up a minimum set of "Rules" for playing the Feedback game (see below). If you send me something that I can't in good conscience publish, I'll phone you up about it and we can work out some sort of compromise.

We now have over 150 people involved with ADF. If you all send in a zine, even a short one, I'll be swamped by paper. But to start, it probably would be a good idea for each of you to send in at least a one or two page zine, just to let the other members know who and where you are.

There is still the question of financing to be settled. I consider each subscriber who has sent in at least \$20 to be paid up through Samhain 1985, so in DP #4 or #5 I'll do another fund raising effort. But folks who want to have zines distributed as part of the Feedback function of DP should (a) be subscribers and (b) be prepared to include an additional sum to cover the extra mailing and reproduction expenses involved. For now I'm going to say that each zine should be accompanied by \$5 (five dollars) to cover its share of the added costs.

I hope this doesn't seem too expensive, but it's the only way I can see for all of you to be able to meet each other (until we organize our first festival). And you do have to admit that it's cheaper than buying fullpage ads in other Pagan publications that might have only a fraction of their readers interested in Druidism.

I've asked a couple of members who are already "APA-hacks" to rewrite letters they had sent me into typical zine format, and I've retyped a couple of other letter/articles the same way, so you can get an idea of what APAs look like (some minor editing was done on the letters I retyped).

I'm going to refrain from commenting on these letters and articles until next issue, so that my comments will be contemporary with those being made by you.

However, there is one unpleasant point about publishing your letters, zines and other items, that must be mentioned ((*Reprint Alert!*)). Fundamentalist Christians have begun subscribing to Neopagan publications, in order to accumulate names and addresses. They then send harrasing materials to us through the mails, ranging from badly researched anti-Pagan tracts to actual threats of legal and illegal persecution. We have also had a few prisoners ask to participate, and there is no way to guarantee that copies of DP might not get into the hands of guards or other, hostile, inmates.

Therefore I strongly advise that you not use your personal phone numbers or street addresses when sending things in for publication, unless you are already a very public Pagan. If you want other members of ADF to be able to contact you directly, you might want to invest in a post office box (or some sort of commercial mail drop service) and/or a telephone answering service. I realize that this is inconvenient, especially for those living in rural areas, but visits from right-wing fanatics and/or criminals are even more inconvenient (especially for those living in rural areas). It's important to know that anyone who wants can easily get your home address from your telephone number, so just getting an answering machine to screen out the weird calls isn't sufficient ((*end Reprint Alert!*)).

**"The Rules" for Feedback Zines:**

- 1) All zine contributors must be subscribers to DP. Current subs run till Samhain (November 7th) 1985.
- 2) You do NOT have to contribute a zine in order to continue to receive copies of everyone else's.
- 3) Please don't use fannish or academic jargon, abbreviations, or obscure references without defining them.
- 4) Please make clear the differences when you are speaking as a scholar, a visionary, a poet, or a craftsman. Each of these roles has its own discipline, and it's best not to "mix the planes" without warning your readers.
- 5) Try to include only first generation "mailing comments" (on other people's zines) or second generation mailing comments (on other people's comments to third parties). Any more than that gets confusing, and can be more clearly phrased as a topical comment.
- 6) It is NOT necessary to offer mailing comments on every other person's zine in the previous issue.
- 7) If several people have been discussing a single topic, please make one topical comment (or article, essay, poem, etc.) instead of separate mailing comments to each.
- 8) I reserve the right to censor zines if they contain (a) gratuitous four letter words, (b) offensive slurs against minority groups, or (c) personal attacks of a libelous nature that are likely to get me sued. This doesn't mean that controversial topics can't be discussed, just that our language should be felicitous and thoughtful rather than crude.
- 9) You should have wide left margins on the odd-numbered pages, and wide right margins on the even-numbered pages, since all zines will be reproduced as double-sided copies.
- 10) The "masthead" of your zine should include a name and address (and possibly a phone number) that you feel are absolutely safe to publish, plus a title for your zine.
- 11) Pages should not only be numbered, but should also have your name or zine title on every page (so that folks leafing through a 150 page publication can find your stuff).

- 12) Please type or print-out your originals (with a fresh ribbon). Handwritten zines, unless very clearly calligraphed, will be sent to volunteers for transcription, and may not appear in the desired issue.
- 13) For now I'm going to set a limit of six pages (three sheets) per zine, except by prior arrangement.
- 14) You should send a complete set of sharp black and white, camera-ready printing/xeroxing masters on standard 8.5" x 11" paper. Try to avoid large black areas, since they don't repro well.
- 15) You need to include a mailing and reproduction fee of \$5 (five dollars) for every zine you send in for distribution.
- 16) About advertising: it's OK to recommend books, ceremonial supplies, or other stuff you think folks should know about, and you can even suggest places to obtain these items. But if you want to do serious advertising, please break down and buy an ad (see the Business Department for details on how). Extra white space in your zine may be used by me to fit in ads by other people.

**Final Remarks:**

So them's the Rules, at least for now. They're flexible, and I expect to modify them as time goes by. They're designed to make it as easy as possible for me to get your ideas across to each other with the minimum hassle and expense. The restrictions on mailing comments are meant to prevent 27-page zines full of personal conversations the rest of us can't understand. Those on the format are meant to insure that the resulting printed/xeroxed zines are as legible as possible.

Somehow I feel sure you'll let me know your reactions.....

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\*\*\*\*\*  
This is a letter and essay from Judith Anderson, 1001 Milton Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.  
\*\*\*\*\*

I received the Druids' Progress yesterday and thought I must respond. Is toigh leam (Scots Gaelic for "It is pleasing to me"). I have enclosed a copy of a piece I wrote more in a self-explanatory vein than anything else, as I am an avid journal keeper and introspective. I don't wish to bore you, but it may enlighten you as to my reasons for espousing Druidic studies. I often feel that some things in life embrace us before we are even aware of them -- as if they have been truly sent by the Gods themselves.

At any rate -- what can I do for you? I am an unfailing scholar in ancient studies and have spent the last four months concentrating on pre-sixth century Ireland. My studies correspond very closely with the materials in your newsletter. Indeed we have used many of the same sources. However, I am most interested in the social customs and everyday life of early Ireland (down to specific strains of plants, recipes, etc.).

I have found that Celtic religion was such an integral part of lifestyle that to separate the two would be a gross misinterpretation of the times and thought. My notes are extensive and I have only begun to classify and interpret my information. I do intend to continue my studies, seeking more primary sources and obscure material. At some point I will have some presentable product of these self-indulgent hours. I do not yet have a computer to assist in my labours, but will soon have access to one.

In the meantime ..... I am returning to college this summer for teaching certification in secondary social studies and English. I already hold a teaching license for private schools and have had several years of experience.

I hold a B.A. in writing (*cum laude*) from the University of Pittsburgh, with departmental honors (4.0 GPA in my major field). I have minor studies in literature, history and German. I am currently resurrecting my abilities in the German language, as they are a bit rusty, and I have not taught beyond German II. I do have a 4.0 average in my German studies also.

I am a published writer and winner of a major national writing award as well as several smaller localized ones. My major experience is in non-fiction, but I have a poetry award and have recently finished my first novel.

I started college as an art major and still do a fair amount of free-lance artwork. I grow and process herbs and practice limited herbal magic. I love early medieval music. I observe the phases of the moon, the equinoxes and celebrations of Earth. My children are being reared in a Druidic Pagan tradition ..... I read on the average, 5-6 books per week -- very eclectic subjects (whatever strikes my fancy at the moment).....

A remark on your reasons for assuming the Archdruid title -- I singlehandedly started an excellent private school in a year of unprecedented toil, only to have myself "democratically" disposed of after the second year for having "too definite" ideas as to the philosophy and direction in which it should travel. I have learned from that wretched experience to hold on and fight like hell! ...  
Deagh dhúrachd (good wishes)

\*\*\*\*\*

All my life I have felt as if I were born in the wrong time. My thoughts, my interests, my strong spiritual feelings were very much connected to the distant past. There ran in me from an early age a spirit of discontent -- a disenchantment with this world -- that disturbed my parents. I was always very creative, very sensitive to beauty. My mother called it "high strung."

From as early as age six, when my classmates took pleasure in asking one another, "What are you?" (meaning, of course, what is your ethnic heritage), I would proudly answer, "Scots and Irish." I say proudly, although it was more than that. My family are tenth generation Americans, and the old heritage meant little to them. I knew what I "was," but I knew without prompting. I always felt the Scots and Irish blood coursed more fervently in my veins than it did in theirs. Much later I realized there was a name for what I was, a name that when I first heard it seemed like a recognition -- I was a "Celt." That heritage seemed to color everything I thought and did.

I think from an early age I was very much attuned to things, especially to Nature. I think I was also psychic, but the few experiences I had frightened me. I fought to suppress that ability.

I was raised as a Presbyterian, although I never believed in the God of my parents' church. I admired the man they called Jesus, but told my father I didn't believe he was the son of God. My parents laughed it off as another of my weird ideas.

By the time I entered college I was an agnostic. I didn't know what I believed, but I certainly knew what I didn't believe. I must have said hundreds of times, "If there is a higher force or power, then it is Nature. I think I could more easily believe in many gods than in the one god of the Christians." I was having what might be called "religious" experiences at this time, and had been for years -- very deep, moving, intensely spiritual experiences that were of immense comfort to me, and always born through a contact with Nature. For solace in troubled times I began to seek out forests and water and books.

Knowledge was and continues to be what I "believe in." Ever-questioning, ever-seeking, I read widely and learned about poetry, literature, art, music, science, natural sciences, psychology, ancient history, and mythology. My children were born and not baptised Christians. I began to teach them of my two great loves -- Nature and learning.

When they reached school age and were teased by other children for having no religion, I told them to say that they did have a religion, but different from others that are better known.

"What should I say I am?" protested my youngest.

An answer rolled unthought from my tongue, "Say you are a Druid." It was a joke -- a bandage for a tiny wound. Years later the instantaneous arrival of that answer would haunt me.

My oldest daughter, very brilliant and introspective, became interested in herbs and legends and then herbal magic. She espoused Tolkien with a single-mindedness, and we began to share thoughts, ideas, and psychic experiences that we could not share with others.

Several months ago, at a time of great personal crisis, I wakened one day with a compulsion to study the Celts. Too strong to be ignored, it became an obsession. I read general material and decided to write a novel set in fifth century Ireland, a period about which I knew little.

As I began to read general material about the period and the Druids and Celts, I began to laugh at statements made by supposed scholars in the field.

"I know this isn't true," I would tell my daughter. "I don't know how I know it, but I know for a fact it isn't true."

Then, more surprising, I would tell her something I believed by intuition or feeling to be true about the Druids, something I had never read but knew instinctively. Within days I would stumble across my "intuitive fact" in some detailed piece of research and find that I was, in fact, correct. At this point I became a little uneasy about the experience.

Subtly I began to feel in myself a spiritual change -- an awakening, if you will. I began to have strange dreams from which I would awaken refreshed and enlightened. One day I awakened and suddenly realized what I believed and why, complete to ideas that would take a lifetime of teaching and learning to so fully understand.

I know now that all I have thought and felt over 30 years, unprompted, unaware that such ideas had existed previously, was simply the Old Religion. I had no name for it then. That my enlightenment should occur at a time when tragedy struck my life, when I should have been at my lowest ebb, is strange in itself. Instead of despair these days, I find strength and peace and confidence. I don't question it. I only thank whatever gods saw fit to show me the way.

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=====  
This is from Larry Cornett, 23-80 38th Street, Apt. #1L, Astoria, NY 11105  
=====

1/24/'85

FINDING A SACRED GROVE FOR DRUID INITIATION

by  
Larry Cornett ©

A QUANTUM MECHANICAL THEORY OF MAGICK:

In quantum mechanics, matter and energy are described by waves defining the probabilities of different outcomes from the same experiment. These waves manifest as what we have been taught to call matter and energy when observed. Normal waking consciousness occurs when the synaptic switching rate (nerve cell firing rate) in the brain is high enough to spread out the waves associated with individual electrons in the brain to fill synaptic clefts (gaps between nerve cells) with waves of probability of similar amplitude, through the quantum mechanical mechanism of tunneling. The processes at the synapses involve resonances connected by the quantum mechanical propagation of information. The waves are intimately interconnected to each other and with information storage and other mechanisms at the synapses of nerves throughout the whole brain. The sense of individual identity resides in the continuity of the quantum mechanical processes. This theory has been developed mathematically and verified experimentally using data on the synaptic switching rates associated with waking versus sleeping consciousness and the number of synapses in the brains of people and animals. For more information, see "The Nature of Consciousness," by Evan Harris Walker in Issue 7 of Mathematical Biosciences (1970).

Quantum Mechanics predicts the probabilities of different outcomes from the same experiment; it does not predict exactly what the outcome will be. Some people, like Einstein, have hypothesized that there must be some hidden mechanism that uniquely determines the outcomes of quantum mechanical interactions. J.S. Bell showed that if a reformulation of quantum theory is advanced that makes use of hidden variables, then those variables must be non-local and non-temporal in nature. This means that the hidden variables that interconnect events at different locations in space and time do not have any functional dependence on the space-time separation of events.

Deep within, we are the underlying strata beneath the quantum mechanical manifestations of matter and energy (and so is everything). If hidden variables exist, we are the hidden variables. It has been theorized that the hidden variables are consciousness at its most basic level. When our awareness connects with the deepest layer of consciousness interconnecting everything, we may experience the timeless and formless level of existence reported by many mystics.

To psychically obtain information about a target or to psychically influence events, one has to have one's brain resonating with aspects of reality interconnecting the brain with the target. The more one's mind is resonating with non-local aspects of consciousness (hidden variables) resonating with a target, the more communication and direct influence one can have on it. This is how many forms of telepathy and magick work. This theory has been developed mathematically and experimentally verified. For more details, see The Compleat Quantum Mechanical Anthropologist, by Evan Harris Walker, of the U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratories, Aberdeen Proving Ground (1974).

It is the non-local "hidden" variables that we share with nature that make it possible to "attune oneself" to nature. These hidden variables (the fundamental essence of consciousness) are the underlying strata upon which the potentials for manifestation (the waves of probability described by quantum mechanics) propagate upon and the essence that gives these potentials their existence. These hidden variables are that which manifests matter and energy, as well as nature spirits and other subtle entities of consciousness.

PSYCHIC EXERCISES:

To read theories of magick is like reading about sports. You may pick up a few ideas; but to properly appreciate it and to become proficient, you must participate and play the game. Modern physics and consciousness theory provide a framework for understanding psychic phenomenon, but this framework is no substitute for getting in shape and becoming proficient at the mental athletics of magick.

The Elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Spirit) represent thoughtforms that can be used to develop and channel psychic abilities. By meditation on the Elements, neurological circuits can be activated that resonate with non-local aspects of the Universe. The best book this author has seen containing practical mental exercises for working with the Elements is Basics of Magic-Handbook 1. It is available for \$5.00 from the Church of Seven Arrows, 4385 Hoyt St-201, Wheatridge, Colorado 80033. Another useful book is Initiation to Hermetics, by Franz Bardon.

There is evidence that the ancient Celts may have used different correspondances from the elemental correspondances in the above books. I am just beginning research on these myself, and I know of no authentic ancient Celtic texts with exercises. Use correspondances that work for you in your meditations.

Other useful exercises include the many forms of meditation in which one experiences "unity with the Universe" and other non-local states of consciousness. Many Yoga books contain such exercises. A good practical exercise is the tree meditation in the Spiral Dance by Starhawk. In this exercise, one visualizes one's body as a tree, sinks roots into the Earth, channels "power" from the Earth, sprouts branches (often from the crown chakra), channels the power along the branches, and becomes kind of a psychic fountain of energy. When working outdoors, it can be very very useful to do the tree meditation combined with specific exercises to link with nature. Attune to the water in the Earth and to the Earth, when sinking roots, attune to the wind when sprouting branches, and experience the sun warming you. Note how your roots and branches experience the same elements as your surroundings and how they interlink with the psychic energy fields of surrounding people and places. You can go further, and mentally become the Earth, water, wind and air to further attune oneself (resonate one's mind with) your surroundings. Channeling love energy to resonate your emotions with your surroundings in a nice way can also be very useful, as well as visualizing light connecting you to everything. Variations of these techniques can be done indoors.

There are many useful psychic exercises. The remainder of this article contains specific instructions on how to work with nature to find "power spots" for Druid initiation rituals.

DRUID INITIATION:

Druids were ancient Celtic scientists, sorcerers, priests, and bards who lead rituals in sacred groves. The purpose of First Circle Druid Initiation is to announce one's choice to become a 20th century Druid and to get Nature's help.

The first step in specific preparation for the Druid Initiation Ritual is to locate a suitable area in which to do the magick. This area should be wild, psychically powerful, and receptive to the ritual planned. It is strongly suggested that you visit the area, attune to the spirits of the land, and find suitable power spots in which to do the magick before your initiation camp-out and ritual.

Each plant, animal, rock, or other entity has a spirit (consciousness resonance matrix). These spirits can join together as a spirit of an area in a hive-mind. Nature spirits include real biological intelligence and are quite powerful and much less abstract and controllable than the elementals that many magickal people who perform all their rituals indoors are familiar with. It is possible to sense nature spirits, determine if they

are receptive to a ritual planned, and obtain their help if they are.

Spectacular physical manifestations can happen when working with nature spirits in the wild. I have personally seen foxfire mark the boundaries of a magick circle that was ritually attuned to nature the day before. I have seen sites selected for rituals be dry and comfortable with a round hole in the clouds overhead, on cold and rainy days. Birds have joined in rituals, flying around the circle and joining in chants. Often, the wind responds to invocations. Generally, these spectacular manifestations happened unexpectedly and channeled tremendous amounts of power into the magick being performed. It is suggested that you do not consciously try for specific manifestations. Let Nature channel her power into the magick in her own way. If approached with respect, nature may give you many pleasant surprises.

Spectacular physical manifestations are not a necessary sign of success. If you need a spectacular manifestation and nature spirits know this, you will get it. The best success in magick is on the inner plane and more subtle than spectacular manifestations. This success involves beneficial transformations in consciousness that last and helpful chains of synchronicity in your life.

If nature spirits are approached with disrespect, by attempting to command rather than listening to them and inviting them to work with you, nature spirits may flee, rebel or attack. I once attended a ritual in a forest with some pseudo-Crowlyites who attempted to perform the "Ritual of the Barbarous Names" and then to extend the circle several hundred yards in all directions. While the forest in general had loud insect and frog noises, the area at which the ritual took place got quiet immediately when the main ritualist declared that all spirits were subject unto him. One participant was apparently possessed by an angry spirit and kept repeating "You killed my children, your children will never live in peace." When the priestess stepped out of the circle, she was attacked by bees; and bees covered the Book of the Law. Magicians should know better than to attempt to command spirits whose true name they do not know!

#### Finding and Preparing the Sacred Grove:

Rituals to find suitable power spots and to get the aid of friendly nature spirits performed at least a day before the main ritual get the best results. This gives Nature time to gather her children and to prepare.

When entering a wild area to find a site for a ritual, find a place that feels good. Then do the following, either individually or, if in a group, as a guided meditation:

- .Relax while standing upright and focus on your breathing. Breathe deep breaths from the diaphragm. Breathe together if in a group.
- .Feel the wind and let it relax you and awaken your spirit within, as your deep breathing takes you into non-ordinary reality.
- .Picture in your mind's eye a light inside you. As you breathe, feel the light expand and feel yourself glowing, balanced and purified with energizing light.
- .Connect with your inner self (your "higher" self), and feel your intuitive self operating.
- .Feel yourself as the wind, full of life and intelligence, connecting with all around.
- .Feel yourself as the Sun, warm, alive, channeling the will to communicate with nature and energizing all around.
- .Focus on your water self, emotional, intuitive, and connected with all.
- .Feel yourself as the Earth, and note how your physical body is able to wander while remaining part of Mother Earth.
- .Focus on your spiritual self, note the light within, feel it as love, expand and extend the light and love beyond the immediate area of your body to the surrounding area-where you will go to contact nature spirits and to find a sacred grove (or other power spot).
- .Telepathically (by thinking, it is so) send out signals to nature spirits to emerge and be aware of your presence. Say why you have come and invite them to join in sharing and mutual celebration.
- .Visualize the light and love energy you are channeling extending out and merging with the light from distant places.

- .Feel the Earth and the power of the Earth flowing up through your body and feet.
- .Feel the energy from the sky, and channel this energy also to energize a "carrier signal" of light and love for communicating with nature.
- .Visualize the light expanding and merging. Continue sending telepathic signals.
- .Now go deeper. Close your eyes, sit on the Earth and feel your connection while you channel more light and love.
- .If in a group, someone should start playing a drum at a rate of one beat per second, and you should listen to the drum and let it take you deeper.
- .Affirm that you are a nature magician, a medicine person, who knows and communicates with nature.
- .Let this part of yourself emerge to full consciousness. Let the drum and the connection to your inner self awaken that part of you that naturally communicates with other life forms. Let it awaken your telepathic sense. Continue sending telepathic signals to nature.
- .When you feel ready and an inner urge to begin, open your eyes a crack and look around while continuing to channel love and light. You may see light coming from certain areas that are receptive. You may test your connection by communicating (mentally) instructions for signals for yes/no responses-like light getting brighter for yes and darker for no, and then ask questions. (You may get responses via feelings instead of light. Perhaps the type of response to this work will be unexpected; follow your intuition on interpreting it)...
- .When you have found an area that seems to be responsive and receptive, begin walking to the site, while beaming love energy. Extend your aura to the site and sense the energy. If the vibes are good, enter the area; if not, locate another more receptive area. When entering the site, look around. Perhaps the responsive energy will be concentrated around some singularity (a bush, a tree, a moss covered rock, or other entity that stands out). Perhaps the energy will be more general. Use your intuition and feedback from the spirits to guide your actions. If it feels right, send out a signal that you would like to touch the singularity (or the ground). If the response is good, approach beaming love energy, touch or hug the singularity or the ground. One can knock on wood to energize some nature spirits. Treat the spirits as you would other Pagans you meet the first time-be sensitive, open, and listen.
- .Now that you have made some contact with spirits that seem receptive, deepen the communication. Breathe deep breaths from the diaphragm, and with each breath, feel more refreshed. Now imagine that your spine is the trunk of a tree, and from its base roots extend deep into the Earth. Deep into the moist, rich Earth. Recognize the Earth as the depository of things of the past. For a moment, meditate on something in your recent past that made you feel energized and psychic. You can draw energy from the past and from the Earth. Feel your roots absorbing such nourishment. Now feel the energy rising. Feel the moist, warm energy rising. Feel it bursting up from the Earth and rising up your spine, as sap rises in a tree. Now imagine that you have branches. Feel the branches extending and interweaving with your surroundings. Feel the warm, moist energy of the Earth flowing through your branches. As it flows, feel your mind being purified, centered, and connected to the Earth. Note how your branches absorb energy from the air. Feel them receiving light (fire) from the sky. Feel the warmth of the Earth rising also. Feel the energy circulating. Notice how your branches intertwine with the branches and energy fields of your surroundings. Notice how your roots also intertwine. Feel the energy dancing between you and your surroundings. Notice how you and the life around you are rooted in the same Earth, drinking the same water, breathing the same air, receiving the same fire, sharing the same spiritual essence. You are one with the magickal grove. Telepathically awaken the far memory of the spirits, when people and nature spirits communicated regularly. Explain to the spirits the purpose of your coming to them and the nature of the ritual you plan. If they are receptive and it feels right, explain to them the details of the ritual and invite them to join. Listen, you may receive suggestions on how to improve the ritual.
- .If you don't get good feelings in response to your explanation of the ritual and are unable to come up with a ritual that gives good responses, do not try to force a good response. You would only be fooling yourself. Thank the spirits for their attention, trigger your memory, pull back your "roots and branches," channel any excess energy you feel into the Earth (placing your hands on the Earth and visualizing and feeling the energy going into the Earth) and move to a more receptive site. If it is hard to find a site that is really receptive, it is time to look for another

- general area in which to find a suitable sacred grove. You should also consider any impressions you got of why nature wasn't receptive in the area you were in, and re-think your plans for a ritual, as necessary and appropriate.
- .If the spirits you contacted are receptive, ask what the best place for camping, for group ritual (if applicable) and for individual vision questing (for yourself) is. You may see light or receive other psychic signals leading you to suitable sites. You may be at one of them. Before you leave the site, tell them when you plan to return to do the ritual and invite the spirits to join in and to bring their friends. You can also ask nature to provide guidance for working in balance with nature and to bring a teacher to provide further guidance when you return.
  - .Before you leave the site, thank the spirits, channel love energy, trigger your memory of the experience, and, if it feels right, leave an offering of tobacco, beer and honey (poured on the ground), or other suitable material. Leave in peace and love. Proceed to the other sites that were indicated by the spirits until you have found the sites you need for camping and for ritual. Do similar meditations at each site. Channeling love energy and leaving offerings may be appropriate at some of the sites that were not receptive to the detailed ritual. Check to be sure that the sites at which you do this are receptive to this. In general, try to remain in a peaceful and loving state of consciousness throughout the entire process.
  - .Before leaving the general area in which the ritual and camping is to be performed, channel love energy towards the sites you found, thank the spirits of the land, pull back your "roots and branches," channel any excess energy you feel back into the Earth, and leave in peace and love. Naturally, the general area should be at least as clean, and preferably cleaner, than you found it.
  - .If you work with the techniques of Wicca or ceremonial magick, you may find that by casting a circle, calling the elements, the Goddess, the Gods, and the local nature spirits while you are at receptive sites, you may be able to greatly increase communication and give the spirits of the land a taste of what to expect. Through use of drums and other power raising techniques, it is even possible to energize receptive nature spirits. The results can be quite interesting. If you are not sure what a circle is, check out Starhawk's Spiral Dance or almost any good book on Wicca or ceremonial magick. When consecrating space in the wild or "casting a circle," do not set up the perimeter as a barrier to all outside forces; it should be a beacon to attract friendly nature spirits, a container for holding magickal power, a vehicle in which to change consciousness, and a barrier to spirits who it isn't right to be with.

#### A Few ideas for Druid Initiation Weekend:

Approach the camp site ritually by maintaining silence or by using chanting and drums. If you located the camp site and sacred grove prior to the initiation weekend, you should have the details worked out with nature. If you haven't located suitable sites, approach the area in silence, and locate suitable sites using the previously described techniques.

Assuming you did the previously described work to locate a suitable camp site, sacred grove, etc., place your gear on the ground when you arrive at the camp site and meditate, tuning in to nature. The tree meditation, followed by becoming the wind, Sun, etc. is good for this. Greet the nature spirits, channel love energy, and tune in to the spirits. Notice if anything feels different. After setting up camp and relaxing for awhile, it is good to go to the ritual site to meditate, etc. Don't forget to keep your ritual space open to friendly nature spirits and to work with nature in your rituals. One thing that is fun and worthwhile in nature is to bring instruments, such as a rattle and a drum, to tune in to nature's sounds, and to make music in time to nature's sounds. You may be able to get some very interesting back and fourth exchanges of music going with selected creatures of the wild, and get into an amazing jam session.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

There are other ways of working with nature spirits. This is one approach. The author thanks Selena Fox for teaching the basic guided meditation technique for locating and contacting nature spirits at a tranceworking session sponsored by the Chameleon Club in 1981, Isaac Bonewits for the outline of the expanded tree meditation, and Carlos Castaneda, Black Eagle, Pasha, the Gods, the Goddess and various nature spirits for teaching the rest of the good methods.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4/4/'85

Available by subscription (\$3.00/yr) from the Atlantic Pagan Council  
c/o Larry Cornett, 23-80 38th St., Apt. 1L, Astoria, N.Y. 11105

Report Number Two

The Druids' Progress

| Date                           | Event, Time and Location                                     | Description  | Contact   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 4/19-21<br>\$10<br>(\$20 door) | Magickal Healing Retreat, Stewartstown, Pa.                  | Intermediate level workshops on herbalism, massage, hermetics, alchemy, etc. Pot luck meals                      | Earth Song Community<br>P.O. Box 5628<br>Baltimore, Md. 21210                                   |
| 5/3-5                          | Native American Women's Council, New York                    | Ritual, workshops  | J.S. Gonzalez<br>R.R. #1, Box 237<br>Magnolia, Ky 42757   |
| 5/4-5                          | Beltane Full Moon Festival, Wisconsin                        | Ritual, workshops, pot luck  | Circle<br>P.O. Box 219<br>Mt. Horeb, Wi. 53572  |
| 5/18-19                        | Earth Song Community Beltane Stevenson, Md                   | Tapestry Coven hosts ritual, games, bardic sharing, Maypole dance, etc.  | Earth Song Community<br>P.O. Box 5628<br>Baltimore, Md. 21210                                   |
| 5/18-19                        | Making Magick Weekend New York City                          | Selena Fox & Moonstar lead rituals & workshops on Wiccan shamanism, healing and nature magick                    | Enchantments<br>341 E. 9th St.<br>New York, N.Y. 10003  |
| 5/19                           | Rainbow Family Picnic, New York City                         | Pot luck picnic north of Sheep's meadow in Central Park. Bring instruments, esp. percussion                      |   |
| 5/20                           | Channeling the Goddess Within 7:30-10:00 PM E. Hampton, N.Y. | Selena Fox leads Triple Goddess workshop and vision quest  | Deborah Perry<br>P.O.B. 768<br>Amagansset, N.Y. 11930   |
| 5/23-27<br>\$30                | ELF Fest '85 Near Bloomington                                | Workshops, rites, magick etc. with theme of planetary healing and wild magick                                    | E.L.F.<br>P.O. Box 1082<br>Bloomington, Ind. 47402  |
| 5/23-27                        | Rites of Spring Very private site north of Boston            | Workshops, ritual, music, etc with Andras Corbin, Dierdre Pulgram, Selena Fox, Isaac Bonewits, Sally Eaton, etc. | The EarthSpirit Community<br>Box 365<br>Medford, Ma. 02155                                      |
| 5/24-6/2<br>\$5                | Sommarsthing Camptonville, Ca.                               | Private campout with music, workshops, rituals. General back to nature theme.                                    | Freya's Folk<br>1040 Sutter, #1<br>San Francisco, Ca. 94109                                     |
| 5/25-26<br>\$100               | N.A.T. Seminar Dayton, Ohio                                  | Native American Tarot Seminar Covers Native American lore, Medicine Way and reading tarot                        | J.S. Gonzalez<br>R.R. #1, Box 237<br>Magnolia, Ky. 42757  |
| 5/31-6/3                       | Wic-can Festival North of Toronto, Canada                    | Magickal festival with camping, ritual, etc. Some cabin space available  | Janice Cardie/Paul Tobin<br>550 Brimorton Drive, #114<br>Scarborough, Ontario<br>M1H 2E9 Canada |
| 6/2                            | Summer Celebration Hanover, Pa.                              | Circle Aeyrie sponsors pot-luck picnic to celebrate Summer   | Earth Song Community<br>P.O. Box 5628<br>Baltimore, Md. 21210                                   |
| 6/7-8                          | Earth Renewal Gathering, Indianapolis, Indiana               | Native American Ways   | J.A. Gonzalez<br>R.R. #1, Box 237<br>Magnolia, Ky 42757   |

|                                     |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 6/8-14<br>6/15                      | Sanctuary Work Week Shamanic Journeys   | Fix Circle Sanctuary Barn<br>Nevill Drury leads experiential seminar  | Circle<br>P.O. Box 219<br>Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin 53572  |
| 6/16<br>6/17<br>6/18-23             | Mother Earth Ministry<br>PSG Preparation Day<br>Pagan Spirit Gathering<br>Wisconsin | Stone circle ritual, vision quest<br>Prepare for Pagan Spirit Gathering<br>Camping, ritual, music, etc with<br>Selena Fox, Jim Alan, Margot Adler,<br>Isaac Bonewits, Nevil Drury, Deirdre<br>Pulgram, Jeremiah Gwynallen, Starhawk | "<br>"<br>"   |
| 6/20-23                             | Goddess Gathering Ohio  | Camping, rituals, workshops, music, etc. (Send SASE for details)  | Riversong<br>P.O. Box 1966<br>Youngstown, Ohio 44506  |
| 6/21-23                             | Celebration of Summer Texas   |   | Nexus International<br>P.O. Box 45061<br>Dallas, Texas 75245                                      |
| 7/1-7                               | Rainbow Gathering Missouri Ozarks   | New-age workshops, music camping, bonfires, estatic dance, rituals  |   |
| 7/18-21                             | Starwood East-Central Ohio  | Camping, rituals, workshops, music, estatic bonfire dance, vision quest, biofeedback, etc.  | A.C.E.<br>3130 Mayfield Rd.,<br>Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118  |
| 7/19-21<br>\$20<br>(\$30 after 6/1) | British/Celtic Shamanic Retreat Site TBA Date tentative                             | Silver Web sponsors ceremonies, Totem search, etc. British and Native American practices Limited registration   | Earth Song Community<br>P.O. Box 5628<br>Baltimore, Md. 21210                                     |
| 7/19-22                             | Gathering for Life On Earth Central Ontario, Canada                                 | Spiritual-political synthesis, networking among Pagan polirical activists, worship of the Gods as immanent, etc   | Pagans for Peace<br>c/o Sam Wagar<br>Dragonfly Farm<br>Lake St Peter,<br>Ontario, KOL 2K0, Canada |
| 7/27-8/3                            | Wiccan Shamanism Wisconsin  | Apprenticeship Training   | Circle<br>P.O. Box 219<br>Mt Horeb, Wi. 53572   |
| 8/3-4                               | Lughnassad Festival Wisconsin   | Ritual, sweatlodge, etc.  | "<br>"<br>"   |
| 8/8-11                              | Harvest Survival & Gathering, Conowingo, Md.  | Ritual, bardic sharing, workshops, etc.   | Earth Song Community<br>P.O. Box 5628<br>Baltimore, Md. 21210                                     |
| 8/24-31                             | Wiccam Shamanism  | Apprenticeship Training   | Circle  |
| 8/29-9/2                            | COG Grand Council N.W. Massachusetts  | Annual meeting of the Covenant of the Goddess and festival  | Contact a COG Coven for details   |
| 8/30-9/2                            | Sister Moon Gathering S.W. Wisconsin  | Workshops, rituals, holistic healing, etc.  | Tri-Unity Center<br>903 E. Johnson St.<br>Madison, Wisconsin 53703                                |
| 9/6-8                               | Pantheistic Festival 25 miles west of Pittsburgh, Pa.                               | Rituals, workshops, etc. with Gavin & Yvonne Frost, Malcolm Mills, etc. Register by 7/17  | Church of Universal Forces<br>P.O. Box 03195<br>Columbus, Ohio 43203                              |
| 9/20-22                             | Northwest Fall Equinox Gathering S.W. Washington State                              | Workshops, ritual, dance etc at State Park  | Northwest Fall Equinox<br>P.O. Box 14015<br>Portland, Or. 97214                                   |
| 9/20-22                             | Fall Equinox Retreat Wisconsin  | Rituals, sweatlodge, workshops vision quest, feasting, etc.   | Circle<br>P.O. Box 219<br>Mt Horeb, Wi. 53572   |
| 9/25-30                             | Spiral Gathering Georgia  | Workshops, rituals, etc.  | First Humanist Church of Atlanta,<br>Box 8264,<br>Atlanta, Ga. 30306                              |



word "Believe", it will do until something better comes along.

I do have a qualification to make to your statement on p. 11 that "monotheists in power always seek to silence competing voices." This may be true, but we must remain aware that being a polytheist does not necessarily guarantee immunity: look at how the Hindus reacted against the Sikhs last fall in India.

Regarding Sally Eaton's Invocation: Writing it out in Gaelic does me no good. What we need is a phonetic transcription.

Additional Comments from Other Correspondence:

I find it hopeless even to attempt reading dot-matrix Celtic.

The suspense in waiting for Druid's Progress #2 is almost tangible. I certainly do hope your work situation improves, because I really want to see how this thing develops.

As I've mentioned to you, I am willing to transcribe stuff for DP, keeping in mind that my computer is a CP/M system requiring 5 and 1/4 inch soft sector floppy discs. WordStar is the word-processing software. One of these months or years I plan to attach a modem, at which point I'll warn you.

As for your correspondence idea, I would be able to transcribe short (and well-enunciated) letters from cassette to disc and then to paper to mail them out for you, assuming you provide postage and such. But I'd be much more efficient transcribing material from notes than from cassette. // I think that the APA format for a portion of DP could be a useful idea, although I would not like to see the entire newsletter in that format. With the type of organization you are trying to set up, the usual APA requirement of a contribution every other issue would be rather awkward. Leave it as an optional affair. As for myself, when submitting something in APA format (in other words a zine, such as these two pages), I will avoid using obscure jargon whenever possible, and will explain the few terms that crop in. Possibly the most useful term is CT (which I've avoided using here), which can be translated as meaning "comment to" or "comment about", as in "Ct Sally Eaton's Invocation: Writing it out in Gaelic..." Also useful are the slashes used in this paragraph, in order to separate somewhat divergent thoughts.

I'm rather hopeful about this whole thing, and am looking forward to DR#2.

This is all for now. I might be able to review a book or two next time; and/or garner some thoughts together on a philosophy of ecology.

++++  
**This is from Frank Dufner, who is currently between houses.**  
++++

I recently heard a tape made at Starwood 84, of your talk on Druids. To say the least I was quite surprised and pleased with it. After nearly 20 years in the Neopagan movement, I was, to tell the truth, expecting still more of the same crud. However, your talk was a very pleasant surprise. For it sounded as though someone in our community is finally trying to do some real, serious research into a Pagan Religious Order and attempting to reconstruct what it was.

At the time I heard your tape, I was reading a book by Ward Rutherford, *The Druids: Magicians of the West*, an Aquarian Press book (1983). In it the author uses classical writings of the time to give the reader a possibly better picture of the Celts, and their religious order, the Druids. He looks at the Celtic belief system, their myths and social structure and at the Druid's doctrines, beliefs and practices; as viewed from the classical writings. However, he also puts forth a most interesting hypothesis, in that he suggests that the Druids, like other Indo-European religious orders, are the inheritors of, and outgrowth of, Shamanism. He points to the many seeming similarities between Druidic and Shamanic practices....

Following on Rutherford's suggestion about Shamanism, I have begun reading *Shamanism: Archic Techniques of Ecstasy*, by Mircea Eliade, a Bollingen Foundation book. This is quite an undertaking, but so far this does look to be a most promising direction to go. I hope to be able to send you a report on my findings some time next year....

*[I'm omitting here some long quotes from Rutherford's book.]*

As for my talents, I like to read and condense material, and do cross-referencing. But sadly, my library is pitifully small now.... I neither speak, read, nor write any other language than American English. However, I would like to learn Welsh or Gaelic. Can you recommend a good home study tape course?

As for my occult credentials! I am the founder and, until a little more than a year ago, the male head of Blue Star Coven in New York City. I am at present an elder in one of the covens which have hived off from Blue Star. I am a third degree within the G.A.N.C.E.W. tradition of Wicca. Margot can fill you in more....

Yes, there is every reason to believe that some kind of quality controls can be applied to the American Neopagan community. It has already been done in the Toronto Wiccan community of Canada by Tamara and Richard James. They founded a council of the existing Neopagan and Wiccan community in Toronto, and managed to get all of its members to agree to give up the right to initiate just anyone, without that person first passing an agreed upon basic test for that degree. All the member covens of this council maintain their autonomy and all their rights, except for this one.

The person wishing to be initiated is tested by members of a coven other than their own. If a neophyte feels he or she is being held back by their coven leaders, they can address their request for testing to the council, and know that (should they pass their test) they will be initiated. The James have also established a Wiccan church and it is recognized as a legal religion in the province of Ontario -- no mean trick that! They hope to have chapters in all the provinces eventually. They have done all this in the five years since their arrival in Toronto. If they could do it, I see no reason why you cannot succeed in putting some genuine guidelines down for a real Neopagan religion which will last even after you and I have passed on from this plane.

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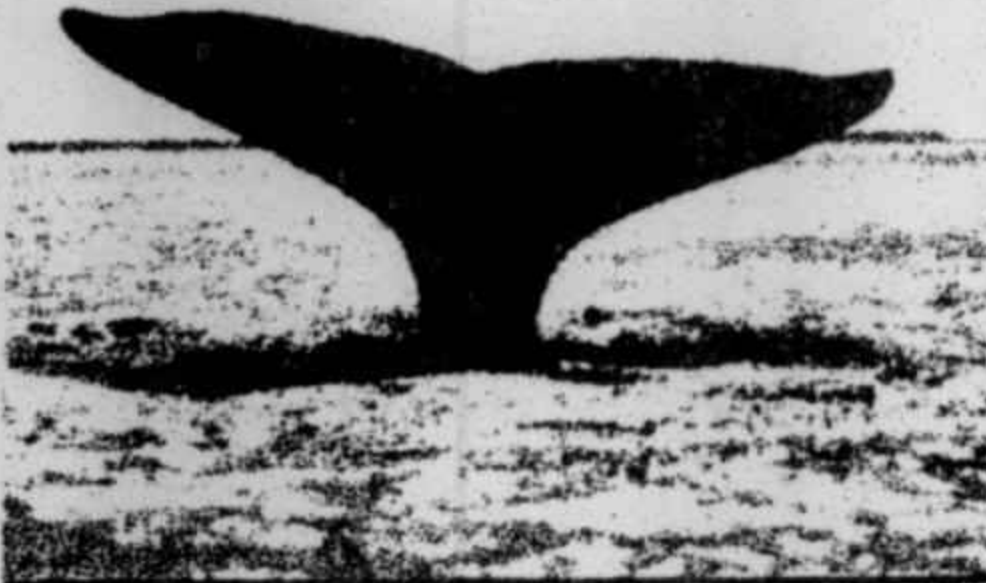
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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CA 95470

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#####  
This is two letters from Andrew F. Gillis, Box 3101, West Lafayette, IN 47906.  
#####

It was with great pleasure that I read your book *Real Magic*, when I was in high school. At that time I had just been introduced to Druidism, and had no idea that you were one, or that I would end up being one. The young lady who introduced me to the religion was not a member of the new movement, but rather her religion had been passed down through the ages in the small Welsh croft where she grew up. Some years passed and fate drew us apart. I have since come to the conclusion that I was meant to be a Druid all along. The only problem is that there are no other Druids that I know of in the area. I have contacted a couple of groups in the midwest, but have yet to get a reply....

One concern that I have currently is that I hear people who say that they are Druids merely for the shock value. It is very dismaying to me. I feel that if a set of Druidic references were readily available, and the religion made some low-key efforts to explain itself to the public, it would greatly decrease this problem. Comments on this matter would be appreciated.

Yet another problem that I see, and you might accuse me of being a snotty purist because of it, is that of diffusion between the Pagan religions. I have nothing against a little borrowing here and there, but in Starhawk's book of Wiccan rituals was a candle-mass service to the Lady of the Harp and the Flame, who is not Wiccan at all, but a minor Druidic goddess. I fear that this will reach the point where it won't matter what you say you are, we will all be using the same rituals and praising the same gods and goddesses.

#####

Thank you for the copy of *The Druids' Progress* #1. It was most welcome and enclosed is a thirty dollar contribution to the cause. The effort you are putting forth is most needed and very much appreciated.

As for my own skill, I am a photographer, do a fair job at layout and graphic arts and do a lot of religious counseling in my spare time. I am afraid that my contact with other Druids has been very little. I see this as one of the major problems in the movements -- how to reach all those people out there who know they are Druids, but are totally isolated.

The rest of this letter is input to add to the huge mountain that you must have already gotten. First off, I think that the title of the upcoming book should be changed to *A Druid's Handbook*. Perhaps you remember the problems with the title of *The Witches Bible*. Small changes often alter things more than they seem to warrant.

You mention counseling, and I feel that this is a much needed service in the movement. Despite the fact that we tend to think of ourselves as well-adjusted persons, free from the stereotypes of society, there seems to be a lot (from the little I've seen) of divorces, suicides and depression. One way to address this need and make us more respectable in the eyes of society as a whole, would be if we could get the clergy certified by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. If you have no objections, I will start on it right away.

As for your assertion that the Druids never used Stonehenge, it is my understanding that, while the Druids did not build it, it was in use at the time the Druids were at their peak of power in Britain, and that they did use it for reckoning the seasons. There is a professor at Ball State who is in Britain doing research on Stonehenge; when he returns I shall have more to write. Personally, I could care less.

As far as item #9 in "What Neopagan Druids Believe," your mention of the fact that the Druids were ascetic raised my eyebrows, as I had always heard just the opposite. The rabbinical tradition is that you have to be married to be a rabbi. It seems to work quite well, and many of the Christian movements have taken it up. It seems not only to offer the priest many insights into interpersonal relationships, and an excellent means of moral support, but also greatly reduces the abuse of power. I am unable to believe, with all the power that the priests' class had, that they were not just as corrupt as the later Catholic church. As for myself, I believe that the pursuit of pleasure, in and of itself, is a path that leads away from enlightenment. Yet if one leads a pious life in search of truth and enlightenment, all sorts of perks turn up of their own accord.

As far as Druidism being political, anything that makes one question and think is a threat to a lot of the present government's policies.

As far as liturgical languages, the assumption of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is still in debate, and no matter what you make the liturgical language, people will still think in their native tongue. Realize also that English is a very adaptable language, and I have yet to find a concept that I could not express (it may have taken a while...).

I also disagree about you getting results because of the Law of Similarity. In the first place, one doesn't want to be more like the people who a couple of thousand years ago worshipped the same Gods we do (we couldn't do it anyway, we are vastly more complicated in our concept of divinity). Rather, one wants to be more like the Gods/Goddesses we worship. The bard does not pray to a creative deity to save his soul, but to be a wellspring of creativity himself (Law of Identification).

I also think that the reason you are getting better results with Irish as opposed to English is that you associate Irish with nothing but Druidism, while you use English to forestall all those people you can't pay in mistletoe. If you were to take a vow of silence, and only opened your yap when dealing with a god/dess, you might have the same rate of result! I am not against a liturgical language, but one must keep in mind the problems that the Catholic Church had with Latin. Originally, Latin was used because everyone could understand it, and it was quite soothing. It later went on to become the "secret code" of the Church, to keep the true word from the people. Also, I think there will be more than a few people who will learn a little Gaelic and claim to be sons/daughters of archdruids. Gods, I have enough trouble with the rabbis sending me people claiming to be true descendents of the high priest of Isrealll Certain ceremonies, such as weddings, should be mostly in English anyway.

In DP you mentioned that you were interested in knowing how the lower (providers) classes were ministered to. One thing that we must keep in mind is that the Druids were high officials, not unlike a bishop of today. While they themselves only ministered to the powerful, I get the impression that they also oversaw the ministry to the lower classes, through lower ranking clergy. I myself have never claimed to be a Druid, but rather a lay-brother of Druidism.

One thing that struck me about DP was the tone of paranoia. Not so much about rightwing "Christians", but about you being replaced. I have had quite a few groups that I have helped organize, only to have them choose some one else to lead them. I've come to accept that I am an organizer, not a leader, and to insist on leading would only hold the group back. Different times call for different leaders as well. One of the reasons a lot of people think you would make an ideal archdruid is the sense of humour, balance and clearheadedness that was so evident in your first book. Don't turn paranoid/egomaniac on us just when we are about to get it all together! I, for one, will not let someone who is not a scholar take your place! Count on it!

I also feel a need to present ourselves to the public, since there are several organizations who are trying to slander our beliefs. It is no surprise to me that they are after everyone from Mormans and Catholics, to Druids, Bahais and Wiccans, but leave Anton La Vey and his ilk alone. Anton enforces their message that you either believe and do exactly as they say, and are "saved", or you are damned to hell. If we do not refute these people (who I think are closer to being followers of the anti-Christ than those they oppose), then we will be held in account for not only those of our own who suffer and perish, but those of other beliefs as well! I would be more than happy (a whole

lot more) to loan my small experience to such an endeavor. We also should keep in mind that we are protected by the Constitution in this matter. It is no shame to use that protection.

I think the first thing that needs to be done is to come up with a set of rituals. Many people ask me what Druids believe, and I can tell them. Then they ask what are Druidic ceremonies like, and I have to say that I have no idea. If one is not a practicing Druid, then what are you? I have friends who would like to attend Druid rituals, and two friends who want me to marry them next summer. Life goes on, and Druids need to rejoice and celebrate it. Even if we change them later, there is a need now.

I also think that we should have a celebration of the beginning of menstruation for young women. I realize that there is no proof that this was done, but Druidism is based on the agricultural concept of fertility, while modern society places a very negative connotation on this event. A small ritual welcoming a daughter into her womanhood would place a positive meaning to this blessed event.

As for religious persecution, we here in the midwest are in a very strange position. On the one hand, the Constitution protects us, but the state courts just convicted a number of people for withholding medical treatment on religious grounds. There is also a very strong and militant rightwing Christian movement, the KKK, and (in Muncie, IN) a large Satanic movement. One could probably win a harassment case, but it would give the Satanic groups a free hand, since we are considered satanic by most Christian groups. Perhaps we should appeal to the Pope??

That seems to be it for now, glad to hear you are employed!

Andrew F. Gillis

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That seems to be it for now, glad to hear you are employed!

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## CIRCLES IN THE SKY #3

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This is METALOGUE PUBLICATIONS #18,  
brought to you by the discordiaphilic dendrites of Eric S. Raymond aka  
Eric the Flute aka Sunspark aka Amphigoricus the Turgid who can often be  
found in or near House Absolute, 22 S. Warren Ave., Malvern Pennsylvania  
(215)-296-5718 if not engaged in programming and/or metaprogramming...

For those of you that haven't seen one before, this is an apazine. It is a personal 'magazine' intended for publication as part of an Amateur Press Association, which is the form Isaac is moving the Druid Chronicles to. The APA is a very effective organizational form that has served the peculiar needs of science-fiction fandom for a couple of decades now, and seems likely to serve the Neopagan community equally well.

Note the masthead above ('colophon' is the preferred term). Apahacks (members of the apazine network in SF fandom) value originality and style in colophons. 'Zine titles are often derived from a favorite image or joke or allusion. Mine, for example, is meant to suggest ritual circles, orbits, and the horizon line (and just how \*will\* we fix the solstices and equinoxes when we live in orbital colonies?). Think up a good one for your 'zine.

One thing found in most 'zines but missing from this one is mailing comments. These are written about the previous mailing and there hasn't been one yet.

For those of you who care, this text was composed under MS-DOS 2.0 on an IBM PC using WordStar 3.24 & 3.30, with a printer driver I customized for the GRAFTRAX III PROM set controlling an Epson MX-80 printer.

What follows is a slightly revised version of the letter I wrote Isaac on receipt of the first Druid Chronicles. It is the first CITS to appear in DC; #1 and #2 were published in Pagan APA.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am a shaman of the Horned God with a strong emotional commitment to and a lot of history in the Wicca, and I don't know how that would fit with the ADF. I'm not sure I could or would change my primary identification from 'witch' to 'druid'.

On the other hand, what you are attempting to do is of enormous intellectual and theoretical interest to all neopagans, and I want to contribute. I will write as regularly as my schedule permits for these pages, and you can consider me a fellow-traveler.

Since my first contacts with the Neopagan community I've shared your distaste for the romanticism, bad scholarship, and fuzzy thinking that persists in many segments of it. In my four years as a coven leader and publicly active pagan I have insisted that my students be both mystics and scientists, and that rigorous philosophical analysis and open-minded

skepticism are tools that should be every bit as important to any pagan as ability to compose chants and ceremonies.

I will support your effort because I hope that the ADF will raise the general Neopagan community's expectations about the level of scholarship and rigor to be demanded in our reconstructions and our polytheologies, and because I expect the results of your translations and scholarly work to be directly applicable to my work in the Craft.

Your manifesto under "What Neopagan Druids believe" is fine stuff, particularly as it addresses these issues. I might be a touch more conservative about the objective effectiveness of magick than you are, and a bit less friendly to the hypothesis of the Gods as "individual and independent entities", but on the whole I find this a concise and well-stated precis of the best in Neopagan thought.

I have some criticisms and warnings to utter, however, where you get into politics. A careful reading of your text suggests that you and I use very different meanings for the word 'politics', and I think I'm representative enough of a large chunk of your potential audience that the differences can use some airing.

Before we start on political philosophies, though, there's one slightly ambiguous 'political' statement you made that I want to address. You recommend that Druids (and, by extension, other neopagans) should be chaplains for (among other things) the "anti-nuclear" movement.

Do you mean anti-nuclear-*weapons* or anti-nuclear-*energy*, or both? I have no trouble agreeing with you on the first, but I will and have argued that a proper respect for Gaia demands that we favor nuclear energy over burning more fossil fuels; see Petr Beckman's The Health Hazards of Not Going Nuclear for details (I was once sent a formation announcement for a 'Pagans Against Nukes' group which I responded to by challenging the would-be organizer to read Beckman's book and offering to pay for his first mass mailing if he still wanted to do it after that. He did, and he didn't, and the organization died a-borning. This remains one of my proudest memories.).

Regardless of one's opinions about nuclear power or nuclear weapons, these are separate issues and should be so addressed.

Now to philosophy. Among other things, I am a Discordian zenarchist, which is one way of saying that I'm particularly sensitive to the traps of power and politics. To me, 'politics' connotes followership, mass action and the subordination of individual beliefs to a collective goal. Politics began the first time primate A persuaded primates B and C to bash primate D on the head "for the good of the tribe, of course", and depends on some version of Hobbes's assertion that a group of people may ethically perform acts which would be unethical on the part of any individual in that group.

In my view of reality, *politics is evil* and Hobbes's principle is the most tragic error in the history of human thought -- the original and major justification for every form of tyranny from death camps to income taxes.

Your reaction is probably that this is too narrow a use of the term, but I'll argue that yours ("anything which involves power of any sort") is vastly too broad and vague. I claim that most of the positive aspects under what you call 'politics' are more properly described simply as 'acting from one's principles' or 'vocation'.

You mentioned Sapir-Whorf. Terminology matters, because it both reflects and constrains thought. To the extent that you use 'politics' as a lump term covering both individual-actions-from-principle and collective-coercion-under-leadership, you unwittingly help perpetuate politics-as-evil.

For years I've been urging neopagans to beware of the distinction between politics and vocation. Neopagans should act from principle *against* politics and political methods, not for them. I personally have yet to join any political movement because I don't see that anything political action can oppose is more inimical in the long run than the political method itself.

Vocation (individual-action-from-principle) is what we ought to be supporting. Your essay, like many other well-intentioned discussions of similar issues in the Neopagan community, tends to muddy the distinction between that and action-under-leadership. Whether you agree with my ethical position or not, that's a distinction you ought to be careful about for the sake of clear thought and good communication.

\* \* \* \* \*

Back to present time again. A point I should have made in that letter but didn't is that success at political action is much more dangerous to the integrity of a religious movement than failure. A comparison of the beliefs, methods, tactics and results of Christianity before and after the Donation of Constantine illustrates this very well.

BLESSED BE  
AND  
HAIL ERIS!

.....  
This is from Pat Taylor, Box 33284, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.  
.....

I was so impressed by your first issue *The Druids' Progress* was far more than I had expected. You're off to a great start.

I had called myself a Druid for several years without having much knowledge of Druidism outside of a few references from Frazier's *Golden Bough*. I'm not sure why I did this, other than to say it "felt right". (I've always had Pagan leanings but was never really comfortable with any of the other Pagan factions I had encountered.) So I was surprised and pleased to find through subsequent research and contacts that the label I had assigned to my religious beliefs was indeed correct. It reinforces the conviction that we are somehow drawn to certain ideas by forces beyond conscious reasoning.

As for contributions, I'm not sure there's much I can add from a scholarly standpoint. I figure most people in the movement have equal or greater access to research material, and are equally equipped to interpret this material. I do have some questions, though.

Will we be using any sort of identity symbol? There seems to be an innate human need to express religious identity through symbols. After all, Christians have their crosses, Wiccans have their pentagrams, etc. I've often felt the need for a symbolic representation of my faith, but didn't know what would be appropriate.

This may stem from inadequate research, but I am curious as to why I have found no reference to Druid burials. Celtic tombs have revealed much concerning the religious beliefs and social status of the interred; yet there seems to be no concrete evidence that would distinguish the tomb of a Druid from that of a noble or commoner. There are none of Pliny's purported golden sickles, no lyres, and while some "Druidic" trappings would have succumbed to decomposition, some should have survived.

This is doubly confounding when you consider that status was felt to continue into the afterlife, indicating that a Druid would likely choose to be interred as a Druid, thus assuring recognition after passage. How is it that a class so distinguished in life should be so indistinguishable in death? Speculation among the bizarre minded may give rise to the notion of a "lost barrow of the Druids," akin to Tarzan and the lost graveyard of the elephants (and soon to become the latest adventure in the continuing saga of Indiana Jones). Well, since we obviously don't ascribe to this passion, what other explanations seem likely?

Did Druids fall from favor when no longer able to perform priestly functions, possibly becoming (as Frazier's *Priestly Kings*) their own sacrificial victims? Was anonymity in death part of the secretive nature of the class? Have we overestimated the Druids' importance in their society, seeking evidence of merit where none was given? I'm interested in any info (short of total speculation) that would shed light on this issue.

As to whether the newsletter should be made available to non-Druids, I would recommend doing whatever you feel is necessary to keep the project solvent.

I have initiated what you might call a "self improvement course towards Druidism." I have joined Toastmasters to gain confidence and experience with public speaking. I picked up a modern Irish language course with tapes, which I promptly abandoned out of frustration. I don't think Irish is a language easily learned without the aid of an instructor. Perhaps I'll renew my efforts when I have more time to devote to it. A week ago I gave a presentation on Druidism to a Pagan group known as "Children of the Night" (some of the members know your brother [Michael, a Wiccan priest who lives in Minneapolis]).

I am interested in writing something that would help children understand Druidism. So much of the philosophic jargon we use to define beliefs is beyond the comprehension of children. They can relate to respect for Nature and empathy with other living creatures, and are open-minded enough to accept psychic powers. In fact, I feel that if the Neopagan movement is to survive, it will require the building of allies among youth. They must be provided options for making independent decisions before Judeo-Christian indoctrination robs them of the ability to make choices. The only way we can provide religious alternatives for kids is to be able to express our ideas on a level they can understand.

My daughter has several friends who are interested in learning about Druidism, and I would love to teach them; but I don't yet have enough info or skill to instruct them (and also I don't want any angry parents throwing bricks through my windows). A small book, written on a child's level, would serve as an excellent "passive teaching technique" as well as affording better protection to my property. I would appreciate any encouragement (even downright help) you or others could provide to assist me with this project.

May the Gods walk beside you,

Pat Taylor